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INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY/DISTRICT  
MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST  
INTERNAL NR-ELIGIBILITY REVIEW FORM

Property/District Name: Elmer Wolfe High School Survey Number: CARR-1436

Project: Proposed Rehab/demolition Agency: S/PSCP

Site visit by MHT Staff:  no  yes Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Eligibility recommended  Eligibility not recommended

Criteria:  A  B  C  D Considerations:  A  B  C  D  E  F  G  None

Justification for decision: (Use continuation sheet if necessary and attach map)  
Located at 115-119 N. Main Street, the school lies north of the Union Bridge Historic District. Elmer Wolfe School was constructed as a high school in 1931 but served grades 1-11. Two wings were added, each angled away from the school: one in 1951, the second in 1969. The 1931 brick school building rises two stories in height and is characterized by its fenestration, projecting entrance pavilions, and pre-cast stone accents such as string course, capstone and rectangular panels. The interior of 1931 section retains a high level of interior fabric in its wood trim, floor plan, and doors. In our opinion, Elmer Wolfe is eligible for the Maryland Register for its association with the development of education in Union Bridge and the County. In the 1920s and 30s, the County consolidated rural schools and built congregate schools in communities such as Union Bridge, Manchester and Mt. Airy. Although additions were constructed, the original section remains as an intact example of this earlier period. The school design reflects the educational needs and philosophies of the early-to-mid twentieth century. Elmer Wolfe served as the principal of the nineteenth century school building in Union Bridge 1918-1931. He worked actively to secure the new school and then died shortly before it opened. The new school was named after the popular educator. The school currently serves as an elementary school.

Documentation on the property/district is presented in: Attached to this form

Prepared by: Carroll County Public School

Lauren Bowlin 4 November 1994  
Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services Date

NR program concurrence:  yes  no  not applicable  
B. Anderson 15 Nov 94  
Reviewer, NR program Date

Survey No. CARR- 1436

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA - HISTORIC CONTEXT

I. Geographic Region:

- Eastern Shore (all Eastern Shore counties, and Cecil)
- Western Shore (Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles, Prince George's and St. Mary's)
- Piedmont (Baltimore City, Baltimore, Carroll, Frederick, Harford, Howard, Montgomery)
- Western Maryland (Allegany, Garrett and Washington)

II. Chronological/Developmental Periods:

- Paleo-Indian 10000-7500 B.C.
- Early Archaic 7500-6000 B.C.
- Middle Archaic 6000-4000 B.C.
- Late Archaic 4000-2000 B.C.
- Early Woodland 2000-500 B.C.
- Middle Woodland 500 B.C. - A.D. 900
- Late Woodland/Archaic A.D. 900-1600
- Contact and Settlement A.D. 1570-1750
- Rural Agrarian Intensification A.D. 1680-1815
- Agricultural-Industrial Transition A.D. 1815-1870
- Industrial/Urban Dominance A.D. 1870-1930
- Modern Period A.D. 1930-Present
- Unknown Period (  prehistoric  historic)

III. Prehistoric Period Themes:

- Subsistence
- Settlement
- Political
- Demographic
- Religion
- Technology
- Environmental Adaption

IV. Historic Period Themes:

- Agriculture
- Architecture, Landscape Architecture, and Community Planning
- Economic (Commercial and Industrial)
- Government/Law
- Military
- Religion
- Social/Educational/Cultural
- Transportation

V. Resource Type:

Category: Building

Historic Environment: village

Historic Function(s) and Use(s): Education/school

Known Design Source: \_\_\_\_\_

## HISTORY OF ELMER A. WOLFE SCHOOL

Elmer A. Wolfe Elementary School is located in the northwest area of Carroll County in the Town of Union Bridge. The school's namesake was born and grew up in the Union Bridge area. He received his B.A. from the University of Maryland, his M.A. from Pennsylvania University and did post graduate work at Yale University. He taught in a private Quaker School in Baltimore, and when the original Union Bridge School was opening in 1913, he returned to be its first principal. The next five years he successfully conducted the Maryland Correspondence School which offered courses for the Army and Navy personnel during the World War I years and for others taking college entrance exams.

Returning again to Union Bridge School as principal in 1918, he remained as its respected principal until his death on May 24, 1931. "Prof Wolfe", as he was affectionately known, was to be the principal at the new school which he had worked so tirelessly to realize its completion. The fall of 1931 found the new school open and under the leadership of Professor Robert Unger.

In appreciation of Professor Elmer Ambrose Wolfe's untiring efforts to secure a new high school building, his services as a citizen of the community, and as a teacher, the building was named for him and his name would live on for the sake of posterity. See the additional information attached relating to "Prof Wolfe".

When Elmer A. Wolfe High School opened in the fall of 1931, it serviced grades 1-11. In 1950 Elmer A. Wolfe High School graduated its first class to complete 12 years and in 1959 the last class graduated as the new Francis Scott Key High School had been built consolidating the Taneytown, New Windsor and Elmer Wolfe High Schools.

Elmer A. Wolfe opened as an elementary and junior high school in 1960. In 1966 it became an elementary school servicing grades 1 through 5 and from 1970 to 1994, it accommodated grades K - 4. At the beginning of the 1994-1995 school year, Elmer Wolfe Elementary commenced housing students enrolled in pre-school classes through the 5th grade.

Attachment  
9/29/94  
a:baa/wolfe

## ELMER WOLFE HIGH SCHOOL

### CAPSULE SUMMARY

Survey No.: CARR-1436  
Date of Construction: 1931  
Location: Union Bridge, Maryland

The Elmer Wolfe High School is a two-story brick school building located in the northwest area of Carroll County in the town of Union Bridge. The school is situated on the north edge of Union Bridge, on the west side of North Main Street. Since its opening in the fall of 1931, the school has served the children of Union Bridge, first as a high school, then as an elementary and junior high school from 1960 to 1967, and finally as an elementary school from 1968 to 1995. The building reflects three distinct periods of construction. The original school building is a two-story brick building with art deco detailing and large sash windows. The county expanded the school in 1951 with a two-story, brick classroom wing that extends diagonally from the north end of the original building. In 1969, a one-story, brick cafeteria was added to the rear of the original building. The three sections of the school each reflect the typical school construction of their eras. Except for the replacement of the interior finishes within the original section with modern materials, the interior retains its original appearance and configuration.

The Elmer Wolfe School is historically significant for its association with the development of public education in Union Bridge and Carroll County. The Elmer Wolfe School represents the consolidation and modernization of public schools during the 1930s that transformed the public school program. It was part of a wave of high schools constructed during the 1930s that replaced the small local schools scattered throughout the county. The design of the school embodies the distinctive characteristics of 1930s school design, with its special purpose rooms, numerous well-lighted classrooms, and art deco-influenced front facade.

**Maryland Historical Trust  
State Historic Sites Inventory Form**

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF  
HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Survey No. CARR-1436

Magi No.

DOE  yes  no

**1. Name** (indicate preferred name)

historic Elmer Wolfe High School

and/or common Elmer Wolfe Elementary School

**2. Location**

street & number 115-119 North Main Street  not for publication

city, town Union Bridge  vicinity of congressional district

state Maryland county Carroll

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: vacant

**4. Owner of Property** (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Carroll County Public Schools

street & number 55 North Court Street telephone no.: 410-751-3000

city, town Westminster state and zip code Maryland 21557

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. liber

street & number folio

city, town state

**6. Representation in Existing** Historical Surveys

title N/A

date  federal  state  county  local

pository for survey records

city, town state

# 7. Description

Survey No. CARR-1436

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved    date of move _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

See continuation sheets.

# 8. Significance

Survey No. CARR-1436

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** 1931 **Builder/Architect**

check: Applicable Criteria: A B C D  
and/or  
Applicable Exception: A B C D E F G

Level of Significance:  national  state  local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

See continuation sheets.



## Summary

The Elmer Wolfe Elementary School is a two-story brick school building located in the northwest area of Carroll County in the town of Union Bridge. The school is situated on the north edge of Union Bridge, on the west side of North Main Street. Since its opening in the fall of 1931, the school has served the children of Union Bridge, first as a combined elementary-high school, then as an elementary and junior high school from 1960 to 1967, and finally as an elementary school from 1968 to 1995. The building reflects three distinct periods of construction. The original school building is a two-story brick building with art deco detailing and large sash windows. The county expanded the school in 1951 with a two-story, brick classroom wing that extends diagonally from the north end of the original building. In 1969, a one-story, brick cafeteria was added to the rear of the original building. The three sections of the school each reflect the typical school construction of their eras. Except for the replacement of the interior finishes within the original section with modern materials, the interior retains its original appearance and configuration. The school retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, feeling, and association.

## Description

The original 1931 building has a rectangular plan, with the long side facing the road. The two-story building is constructed of tile covered with brick veneer laid in nine-course American bond and supported by a concrete foundation. The flat parapet roof of the building emphasizes the horizontal lines and blocky massing of the building. A stone stringcourse extends across the front facade above the second floor windows and wraps around the side elevations. The edge of the parapet roof is trimmed by cast stone coping. A stone plaque that reads "Elmer Wolfe High School" is located at the center of the parapet.

The symmetrical front elevation is dominated by two projecting entrance pavilions with stepped parapet roofs that rise above the main block's roof line. The two vertical pavilions punctuate the five-part facade and balance the horizontal massing of the front facade. They also mark the entrances and the interior stairwells. Double metal doors topped by segmental arch transoms are located in recessed

entrances. Pairs of tall, narrow, six-over-six light windows are located on the second level of the entrance pavilions. Between the doors and windows, the bricks are set in chevrons, creating a zig-zag pattern. The lintels above the entrance and windows are marked by rows of brick headers. Cast stone medallions with a book and quill motif are located in the center of each pavilion parapet.

Sets of five, large, wood-sash, six-over-six light windows are another dominant feature of the primary elevation. The sets of windows are located on either side of the entrance pavilions, with identical sets of windows aligned on the first and second stories. Double rows of brick headers frame each aligned pair of window sets. Inset stone panels are located between the first and second story window sets. Light wells below grade level allow sunlight to reach the basement interior.

The south end elevation includes a single, central bay. The sloping site provides a basement entrance at grade level. Double metal doors topped by a transom lead to the basement corridor. A pair of wood-sash, six-over-six light windows is located on the first story, directly above the doorway, with an identical pair on the second story.

The interior of the 1931 building is defined by a double-loaded corridor plan. Central corridors run the lengths of each floor, providing access to the classrooms on either side. Carpeting now covers the original corridor flooring. Two stairhalls provide access between the floors. The stairhalls consist of concrete stairs, smooth plaster finish walls, and wood baluster caps and handrails. The first and second floors each include six classrooms. In the original layout, the principals's office was located opposite the north stairhall on the first floor. That space now serves as a storage area. The science laboratory occupied the corresponding second floor room. The basement included three classrooms and the boiler room. The northeast basement room served as the cafeteria and adjoined the home economics room; the home economics teacher prepared the students' lunch (Bertier 1995:102). No cafeteria fixtures remain; the room most recently served as the computer room.

Between 1968 - 1970, the school received a major renovation: tile floor, fluorescent lights, and drop ceilings were installed ("The History of Education in Union Bridge, Maryland"). Though these changes have

altered the original finishes in the corridors and classrooms, the original configuration remains substantially unchanged. The classroom finishes originally consisted of yellow pine trim, maple floor, picture molding, and smooth finish plaster walls. Linoleum tile now covers the floors and the ceilings are covered with acoustical tile drop ceilings. The original closets and wardrobe hooks along the rear of the classroom and the blackboards along the side and front walls remain. The classroom doors are two-panel, yellow pine doors, with nine-light opaque glass windows. The original transoms have been blocked. The basement rooms were completed with rougher finishes such as cement floors and painted cinderblock walls.

A combination gymnasium/auditorium occupies the center of the west side of the building and rises the full two stories. A stage spans the north end of the room. The interior finishes include maple flooring and yellow pine trim and twelve-foot wainscoting. Four windows along the upper level of the west elevation provide natural light. The gymnasium originally had folding doors along the hallways, which were opened during basketball games to provide space for spectators. The second floor corridor originally had windows that overlooked the gymnasium, also allowing spectators to watch the games (Bertier 1995:115). These folding doors and windows have been replaced with walls.

In 1951, a wing was added to the original 1931 building. The Carroll County Board of Education selected the same architect, Bernard E. Starr, who designed the original building to design the addition. Starr located the addition on the north end of the original building. The addition is shaped like a bent "L." The first leg of the "L" is connected to the north end of the 1931 building. It repeats elements of the original building, such as alignment, roof height, and stone coping at the edge of the parapet, to bridge the transition between the two sections. The second portion of the addition is located at a forty-five degree angle from the portion of the addition attached to the principal block of the building. The diagonal positioning and lower height of this section set it apart from the rest of the building. The 1951 addition is constructed of concrete block covered in brick veneer laid in running bond. The windows are steel-sash, five-light louver windows. The addition includes no ornamental features.

The addition is connected to the interior of the 1931 building at the north end of the original corridors, which were extended through the north wall of the original building to meet the corridors in the new wing. The construction of the addition moved the primary entrance to the north end of the building. An overhanging flat roof shelters the new entrance into the 1951 addition.

The addition provided nine additional classrooms and a larger principal's office. The original layout and interior finishes remain primarily intact in this section of the building. The plan consists of double-loaded corridors on both the first and second floors. The corridor finishes include asphalt tile over concrete sub-flooring, concrete block walls, and acoustical tile ceilings. The classrooms also were finished with tile floors, concrete block walls, and acoustical tile ceilings. Carpeting has been installed over the floors. One interior layout change was the removal of an interior wall between two second floor classrooms to provide a large room for the Media Center. Stairhalls are located at the east and northwest ends of the 1951 addition. They consist of concrete stairs, concrete block walls, and metal balusters and handrails.

In 1969, a second major addition was constructed in order to add a new cafeteria to the school. The one-story addition was connected to the southwest corner at the rear of the original building. The firm Smeallie, Orrick and Janka, Architects, of Baltimore designed the addition. The cafeteria wing is constructed of concrete block covered with brick veneer laid in running bond and is topped by a flat roof. Due to the sloping site, the cafeteria is located at a lower elevation than the ground floor of the rest of the building. The south elevation of the cafeteria is nine-bays wide. Double metal doors occupy the center bay. The windows are tall thin windows with large fixed panes above small, louvered panes. Rows of brick headers mark the sills, lintels, and roof edge. Columns of brick stretchers frame the sides of the windows.

The cafeteria is connected to the original 1931 building at the south cross axis. The short hallway across from the south stairhall was extended to provide a passageway and stairway down to the new cafeteria. Loading dock facilities are located along the outside of the auditorium/gymnasium wall.

The cafeteria addition includes a dining hall, bathrooms, and kitchen facilities. The cafeteria is finished with vinyl tile flooring, concrete block walls, and acoustical tile ceilings. The entryway and kitchen areas include ceramic tile flooring.

A flagpole stands in front of the center of the original 1931 building. Sidewalks lead to the original entrances. A driveway extends from North Main Street to a parking lot north of the building. A playground area is located behind the building.

The setting of the Elmer Wolfe School remains primarily rural. A few houses line North Main Street in the school's immediate vicinity, but the vistas to the north, east, and west consist of wooded areas and fields.

## Summary

The Elmer Wolfe School is historically significant for its association with the development of public education in Union Bridge and Carroll County. It was part of a wave of high schools constructed during the 1930s that replaced the small local schools scattered throughout the county. The Elmer Wolfe School represents the consolidation and modernization of public schools during the 1930s that transformed the public school program. The design of the school embodies the distinctive characteristics of 1930s school design, with its special purpose rooms, numerous well-lighted classrooms, and art deco-influenced front facade.

## Education

### Development of Public Education in Maryland

Public education developed slowly in Maryland, from a few scattered free schools to an integrated system with modern facilities enrolling the majority of school-age children. By 1864, most counties had made some provisions for public education, but these local efforts were not standardized. In that year, the General Assembly enacted the first uniform, centralized system of tax-supported public schools in Maryland. Property owners were taxed ten cents for every one hundred dollars of assessed value; the state allocated the funds to localities in proportion to their school-age populations (Brugger 1988:307). Public schools developed slowly; by 1870, the state funded three high schools, forty-nine grammar schools, 159 graded common schools, 1,266 ungraded common schools and seventy-two classical, technical, and professional schools (Walsh and Fox 1974:512).

The first decades of the twentieth century were characterized nationwide by an increasing concern over education, sanitation, labor conditions, and child welfare. Public education was swept along with the general trend of reforming, standardizing, and centralizing public institutions. Several studies during the first

decades of the twentieth century demonstrated the need for improvement of Maryland public education. According to the 1910 census, Maryland ranked thirty-first in illiteracy in the nation. The problems in public education were blamed on insufficient staff, lack of performance review of county programs, the influence of politics in the selection of county superintendents and teachers, and the absence of attendance laws (Walsh and Fox 1974:517). To combat the uneven quality of public education throughout Maryland, Governor Albert C. Ritchie introduced a plan in 1922 to distribute evenly Maryland's educational budget. He sponsored the creation of a general fund for financing school buildings, teachers' salaries, and textbooks (Brugger 1988:456). The state also tried to improve teacher qualifications and the number of certified teachers. Capital expenditures for public schools in Maryland counties rose from \$93,000 in 1920 to about \$943,800 in 1930 (Brugger 1988:493).

Until the 1950s, Maryland public schools remained segregated. The Public Instruction Act of 1865 allocated funds for schools for black children, but did not require counties to fund or establish these schools. As late as 1916, no counties had high schools for black children (Walsh and Fox 1974:513-515). These inequities continued. During the mid-1930s, Maryland spent \$67.61 on white students, while only spending \$48.01 on black students (Walsh and Fox 1974:726).

Immediately following World War II, school enrollments increased dramatically, outstripping the abilities of local governments to fund the new demands on public schools. According to the 1950 census, the Maryland school-age population increased by 187,000 in ten years. To meet these demands, the state approved a bond issue in 1949 that marked the beginning of a state-wide school expansion program. Public school enrollment in 1950 reached nearly 349,000 (Brugger 1988:567). During the 1950s, the student population grew even faster. The state opened an average of thirty new classrooms every week (Brugger 1988:597). While the majority of this growth occurred in the newly developed suburbs around Baltimore and Washington, D.C., Maryland's rural counties also experienced rising school-age populations. A wave of new, larger, consolidated school buildings were built to accommodate the increasing numbers of students.

The expansion of the public school system occurred at the same time as the separate public schools for blacks and whites gradually were integrated during the 1950s and 1960s. Though integration in Maryland did not prompt the violent protests and school shutdowns that followed in other states, desegregation did spark controversy. Protests against desegregation were held in Westminster (Carroll County) and a few other places (Brugger 1988:600).

#### Public Education in Carroll County

In the 1850s, thirty academies with a combined enrollment of nearly 1,000 students were located in Carroll County. The academies received just three percent of their funding from public sources (Walsh and Fox 1974:213-214). In 1863, the first public school in Union Bridge was built (Wolfe 1994:68). Under the Maryland General Assembly's public school law of 1864, the Carroll County School Commissioners were established to organize the county public school system. The first school buildings they operated were located in rented old buildings that formerly had been private schools and academies. The president of the school board selected the textbooks, which the students rented from the county (Lynch 1939:88). By 1894, Carroll County operated 133 schools with a student population of 6,940 (Lynch 1939:88). The majority of the schools were one-room buildings with small student bodies from the immediately surrounding area. In 1896, the Free Text Book Law was passed; under this law, public school students received text books free of charge. This law contributed to increased attendance and better text books (Lynch 1939:90).

Westminster High School, the first county high school, was opened in 1899. This led residents of other areas of the county to request high schools. The organization of high schools in Mt. Airy and Taneytown followed in 1911. The county opened additional high schools at Union Bridge, Manchester, Sykesville, and Hampsted in 1917. Another wave of high schools were organized in 1922 at Manchester, New Windsor, Mechanicsville, and Charles Carroll. These schools were for white students; a high school department for black students was organized at Union Street in 1922 (Lynch 1939:93). School buildings of this era often accommodated grammar school classes and secondary-level classes in the same building.

The opening of these high schools in Carroll County was part of general movement to improve public education through standardization and consolidation. The efforts at consolidation date to at least 1916, when Superintendent Maurice Unger began merging the student bodies of one-room schools. The Superintendent began sending seventh-grade students from one-room schools to the nearest two-room schools, or to even larger consolidated schools (Prall 1990:2). Inadequate transportation handicapped the Board of Education's ability to close the smaller local schools. In 1928, the three primary administrative challenges facing the Board of Education were consolidation, transportation, and new buildings (Lynch 1931:94).

Not all of the newly organized secondary schools were housed in new school buildings. The construction of new facilities lagged behind the Board of Education's efforts to consolidate schools and modernize the curriculum. The lack of modern school buildings was seen as a serious obstacle to the improvement of public education in Carroll County (Lynch 1939:94).

The school curriculum also was modernized and standardized. A 1922 standardized test given to all Carroll County students revealed that most of the students were not performing at their grade level (Lynch 1939:92). In response, the Board of Education directed the Superintendent to provide adequate supplemental reading material, standard arithmetic practice tests, and an increased use of general testing materials. Mandatory physical education also was added to the school day. The high school curriculum included courses in math, English, social studies, history, natural and physical science, French, and Latin. Courses also were offered in commercial subjects, industrial arts, home economics, and music. The stated purpose of the curriculum was to produce students

"who are socially efficient, healthy, capable of becoming intelligent citizens, worthy home members, morally upright, efficient in the thinking and reasoning processes necessary for practical living and equipped so far as possible with a knowledge of the vocation which is most suited to their capacities and desires" (Lynch 1939:93).

By 1937, Carroll County included ten public high schools with a combined enrollment of 1,125 students (Lynch 1939:93). The largest of the high schools was the new Westminster High School, dedicated on January 15, 1937.

Carroll County also experienced the post-World War II population growth that affected the rest of the state. The 1950 census indicated that since 1940 the Carroll County population had grown by 5,447 and had reached a total of 44,501 (Warner et al. 1976:205). This era heralded a period of unprecedented business growth and development in Carroll County. Rising crop prices during World War II and the Korean War, followed by increased suburbanization as Baltimore commuters settled in the county prompted prosperity and population growth.

The primary issues facing the Board of Education during the 1950s and 1960s were school expansion and desegregation. To fund the expansion of the school system, the Superintendent of Schools proposed a school-road bond issue. With these funds, the Board of Education planned an expansive building program that included both improvements to existing schools and the construction of new schools. School enrollment increased thirty percent between 1946 and 1952, prompting the Board of Education to warn that double sessions would be necessary unless more school construction was initiated. A new high school, Francis Scott Key High School, was opened in 1957.

The Board of Education pursued a policy of gradual desegregation that prompted some protests but overall was accomplished without disruption, albeit slowly (Warner et al. 1976:216). The first steps included providing a full staff of teachers at two schools for black students, Robert Moton School (Westminster) and Johnsville School (near Union Bridge), integrating teachers meetings, and allowing black and white children to ride on the same school buses (Warner et al. 1976:215). Small numbers of black students were admitted to previously all-white schools in 1955. In 1962, the Board of Education initiated a plan to integrate all first grade classes. During the early 1970s, the student population was more completely integrated (Warner et al. 1976:225-228).

During the 1960s, Carroll County undertook a new wave of school consolidation and construction. A new South Carroll High School was constructed to replace smaller high schools in Mt. Airy and Sykesville. A new Westminster High School was constructed to replace the 1937 building. By the 1970s, Carroll County operated four consolidated high schools, Francis Scott Key, South Carroll, Westminster, and North Carroll.

#### Education in Union Bridge and the Establishment of Elmer Wolfe School

The series of school buildings erected in Union Bridge reflect the evolution of education in Carroll County. This evolution from small, privately-run schools to one- or two-room public schools to larger and larger consolidated schools represents the growth of public education in the county. Until the mid-nineteenth century, Quakers ran the principal school in Union Bridge; the Friends School was located on Locust Street, between Main and Benedum Streets (anon. "The History of Education in Union Bridge, Maryland" (from hereon cited as "Education in Union Bridge")).

After the enactment of a statewide system of public education in 1864, small public schools were established in rural communities throughout Maryland. Union Bridge was ahead of some locales; the first public school for white students in the town was established in 1863 (Wolfe 1994:68). By 1868, a two-room schoolhouse stood at the corner of West Locust and Wythe Streets. The basement of a local church also provided additional classroom space. A four-room school later replaced the two-room schoolhouse ("Education in Union Bridge"). A photograph of the 1914-1915 classes of first and second graders depicts a portion of the Union Bridge Grammar School; the building was a brick building on a raised foundation with a front porch (*Carroll County Times* 1990). Area black students attended the Priestland African School, which opened in 1874 on Quaker Road (Bertier 1995:122).

The Union Bridge school covered only grade school work until 1913, when new principal Elmer A. Wolfe introduced high school-level work ("Education in Union Bridge"). Wolfe added Latin, German, Algebra, and Geometry to the curriculum. Before becoming principal at the Union Bridge School in 1913, Wolfe taught at a private Quaker School. Wolfe was born and raised in Union Bridge. He received his bachelor's

degree from the University of Maryland and his master's degree from Pennsylvania University (Ensor 1988). Wolfe's educational background epitomized the drive to hire certified teachers with improved qualifications during the early to mid twentieth century. Wolfe left his post as principal to conduct the Maryland Correspondence School until 1918 when he resumed the principalship of the school (Ensor 1988). He remained principal until his death in 1931.

In 1917, the Union Bridge school was officially listed as a high school (Lynch 1939:93). The first class at Union Bridge school to receive high school diplomas was graduated in 1922. Graduating classes from 1922 - 1927 ranged in size from eight to seventeen students. Two portable buildings were erected to handle the growing class size ("Education in Union Bridge").

In 1930, the State Superintendent received complaints about the school buildings in Sykesville and Union Bridge. The Union Bridge School was condemned in 1930, forcing the classes to meet in the old Blue Ridge College buildings owned by the Lehigh Portland Cement Company ("Education in Union Bridge"). The state office requested that the Carroll County Board of County Commissioners include sufficient funds to build adequate school facilities in the levy of June 1930 (Lynch 1939:95).

The Board of Education awarded the construction contract for the new Union Bridge school to Allan F. Ferrar (Carroll County Board of Education 1931). Bernard E. Starr (1892 - 1969) was the architect. Starr was a registered architect and a principal with the firm of Starr & Long in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania (Baldwin Memorial Archive). The new school was to be completed and ready for occupancy by September 1, 1931 (Carroll County Board of Education 1931).

The School Board selected a site for the new school building north of town. The local newspaper reported that there was "controversy [over] locating [the] new school in Union Bridge out of town" (*The Pilot*, March 20, 1931). Despite any misgivings over the location, construction of the new school began in March (*The Pilot*, March 27, 1931). The School Board planned to tear down the old school building about April 1 (*The Pilot*, February 20, 1931).

The new school opened on schedule, though on a sad note. Elmer Wolfe, who was to have been the principal of the new Union Bridge School, died before its opening. In appreciation for his years of service to the community, the new school was named the Elmer Wolfe High School. From 1931 to 1959, the graduating class size grew from nine to twenty-seven students. A new classroom wing was added in 1951, also designed by architect Bernard E. Starr, to accommodate the growing class size. The 1959 class was the last class graduated from Elmer Wolfe High School. Carroll County consolidated the classes of Taneytown, New Windsor, and Elmer Wolfe High Schools in the newly built Francis Scott Key High School.

The controversy over public school integration did not leave the Elmer Wolfe School untouched. After the Priestland African School was closed in 1938, black students attended classes in one of the old Union Bridge School portable buildings on Whyte Street. After that building burned down, another building in town served as a temporary school until the county provided bus transportation to Robert Moton School, a segregated black school in Westminster (Bertier 1995:122). Elmer Wolfe was one of the first schools affected when the county Board of Education slowly began implementing desegregation. Six black students were enrolled in the previously all-white Elmer Wolfe School in the fall of 1955, prompting complaints from white parents (Warner et al. 1976:216). The students were admitted, and old high school yearbook photos depict integrated classes by at least 1959 (Bertier 1995:100).

After losing its high school classes, the Elmer Wolfe School underwent several additional reorganizations and received another major addition during the 1960s. From 1960 to 1967, students from grades 1 - 8 attended the school. In 1968, the middle school grades were transferred to New Windsor and Taneytown, leaving grades 1 - 5 at Elmer Wolfe. A new cafeteria was added to the building in 1969. In 1970, the student body was shifted to K - 4. (In 1994, a fifth grade class was moved back to Elmer Wolfe.) During the early 1970s, changing methods of classroom instruction were implemented, such as "team teaching." In place of single classroom instruction, teachers at each grade level shared in teaching all students of that grade, with each teacher concentrating on a special area of expertise.

The Parent Teacher Association took an active role in contributing equipment and supplies, such as books, musical instruments, a fire alarm system, carpets, curtains, and film projectors ("Education in Union Bridge"). Elmer Wolfe School was the town's school for sixty-four years and was a focus for community activities as two generations of residents were educated here.

### **Architecture**

The evolution of school architecture reflects the development of educational practice. The small, decentralized nineteenth-century public schools typically were housed in old, reused buildings or in small, wood-frame one or two room school houses. As education was reformed and centralized and curricula were expanded, school buildings became more permanent, larger buildings. Concerns over unsanitary conditions in the old schools also provided impetus for the construction of new modern facilities. School buildings also reflected popular architectural styles of their days as befitted important public institutions.

#### Early Schoolhouse Design in Carroll County

After the Maryland General Assembly passed the Public School Law in 1865, the Carroll County School Commissioners were organized. The County School Commissioners rented existing buildings that had been used as private schools for use as public schools under the newly revised and expanded state educational system (*The First 150 Years* 1986:84).

The typical nineteenth-century, one-room rural schoolhouse in Carroll County was an unpainted frame building located on a one-acre lot near a country road. The building typically was gable roofed with the entrance on the gable end facing the road, usually with a western exposure. The front entrance opened directly into the main room. The side elevations contained three windows. The interior was simply furnished. Students sat at rows of desks on either side of the room, boys on one side, girls on the other. A row of nails for coats and hats lined the walls on each side of the door. A water bucket and washbasin sat on a bench near the entrance. A stove in the center of the room provided heat; a long pipe led from

the stove to the chimney in the back of the building. A small platform in front of the blackboard occupied the rear of the building. The teacher's desk stood in front of the platform (Lynch 1939:89).

These one-room buildings were replaced in some communities with larger two- or four-room schools around the turn-of-the-century. The slightly larger school buildings typically were built of either wood frame or brick and featured simple ornament typical of the period, including front porch spindlework or cupolas.

#### Public School Design in the Early and Mid Twentieth Century

Consolidated schools with modern amenities and wide curricula required more complex buildings than the simple schoolhouses of the previous era. New schools in the 1930s typically featured a variety of special purpose rooms, including art and music rooms, science laboratories, auditoriums, gymnasiums, home economics rooms, libraries, and industrial arts rooms. These facilities were designed to encourage and enable the modern school programs of the era (Barrows 1939:xviii). Modern schools also had many more classrooms than earlier schools. These multiple classrooms typically were accommodated by double-loaded corridor plans. Another common feature of schools from this time period is large banks of windows, which in combination with the corridor plans, provided improved light and ventilation to the classrooms.

School buildings of the 1930s typically followed one of two architectural trends: colonial revival, either Georgian or Spanish Colonial depending on the region, or modernistic (Short and Brown 1939). The modernistic design most commonly found in schools was part of the architectural style commonly known as art deco or art moderne. Art deco architecture, so dubbed after the 1925 Paris decorative arts exhibit that first popularized the style, features regular, blocky massing with highly-stylized geometric designs. Flat roofs and projecting towers are common elements of art deco buildings. Art moderne variations on this style typically feature rounded corners and horizontal banding. Modernistic design typically was associated with the automobile, the machine, and with a conscious effort to be "modern."

Elmer Wolfe High School is an example of the modern school plan type with art deco-influenced exterior detailing. The front elevation of the two-story, brick building is defined by a symmetrical facade

punctuated by two projecting pavilions with stepped parapet roofs. The pavilions included brick detailing in a chevron pattern. Chevrons, or zig-zag patterns, are typical motifs of art deco design. Broad bands of tall sash windows provide extensive light to the classrooms. The plan is organized around wide double-loaded corridors on each floor. A combination gymnasium/auditorium is located at the rear of the building.

Similar designs for schools were construction throughout the nation. A combination elementary - high school in Moose Lake, Minnesota, completed in 1936, has a similar design: brick, two-story, regular massing, large bands of sash windows, two balanced projecting entrance stair towers, double-loaded corridor and combination gymnasium/auditorium (Short and Brown 1939:258). No known direct connection exists between the schools in Union Bridge and Moose Lake; their similarities simply emphasize the broad national trends in school design.

The Elmer Wolfe School retains the character-defining features associated with public school design of the 1930s. A classroom addition constructed in 1951 to accommodate the growing class size typifies school design of the early 1950s; it does not substantially diminish the qualities of integrity of the original building. A 1969 cafeteria addition, located at the rear of the building and connected by a single passageway, also does not diminish the qualities of integrity of the original building.

**Maryland Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan Data**

Geographic Organization:

Piedmont

Chronological/Developmental Period:

Modern Period (1930 - present)

Historic Period Themes:

Architecture, Landscape Architecture, and Community Planning  
Social/Education/Cultural

Resource Type:

Category:

Building

Historic Environment:

Rural

Historic Function and Use:

School

Known Design Source:

B.E. Starr, architect

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*The Pilot*

- 1931a Vol. XXXII, No. 17. February 20. Union Bridge, Maryland.  
1931b Vol. XXXII, No. 21. March 20. Union Bridge, Maryland.  
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## Warner, Nancy M., Ralph B. Levering, and Margaret Taylor Woltz

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**Boundary Description and Justification**

The boundary consists of the L-shaped, 10-acre parcel historically associated with the Elmer Wolfe School since 1931. The parcel is bounded on the east by Main Street. At the point where the driveway to the school property intersects with Main Street, the property boundary runs northwest for approximately 250 ft., then turns north-northeast and runs approximately 372 ft. At that point, the boundary turns northwest and runs for approximately 450 ft.; it then turns southwest to form the rear edge of the property, running for approximately 320 ft, then turning south-southwest and running 532 ft. At that point, the boundary turns east-southeast and runs until it reaches Main Street, approximately 735 ft. The boundary then turns north-northeast and runs approximately 330 ft. until it reaches the intersection of the school driveway and Main Street.

## INDEX TO SLIDES

The information for items a - e is identical for each slide.

2. a. inventory #: CARR-1436  
b. historic name: Elmer Wolfe School  
c. location: Carroll County, MD  
d. photographer: D. Cannan  
e. date of photograph: August 1995  
f. description: interior, first floor corridor
3. interior, stairwell
4. classroom (room 203), 1931 building
5. classroom (room 203), 1931 building
6. front (east) elevation
7. front and side (northeast) elevation, view southwest
8. front (east) elevation
9. front (east) elevation
10. detail, front elevation, entrance
11. detail, front elevation, sign plaque
12. front (east) elevation
13. front (east) elevation
14. detail, front elevation, entrance
15. front and side (southeast elevation), view northwest
16. playground behind school
17. cafeteria (southwest elevation), view northeast
18. rear elevation (west), view east
19. rear elevation (west), view east
20. side elevation (northwest), view southeast

CARR-1436

Elmer Wolfe High School  
Carroll County  
Slide List 2

21. side elevation (northwest), view southeast
22. side elevation (north), view south
23. n/a
24. front (east) elevation, view southwest
25. front (east) elevation, view southwest

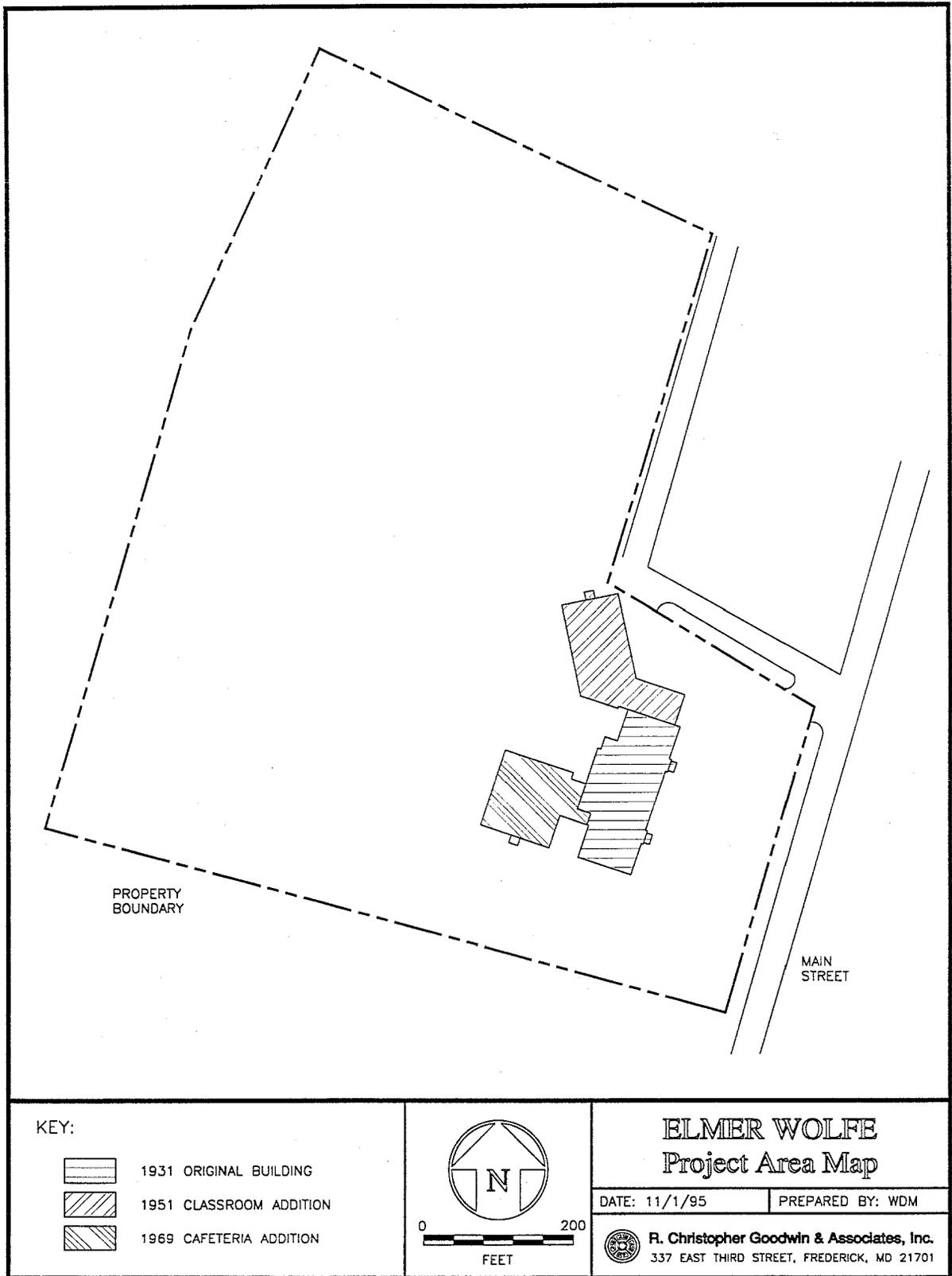


Figure 2. Elmer Wolfe School Site Plan, indicating three phases of construction

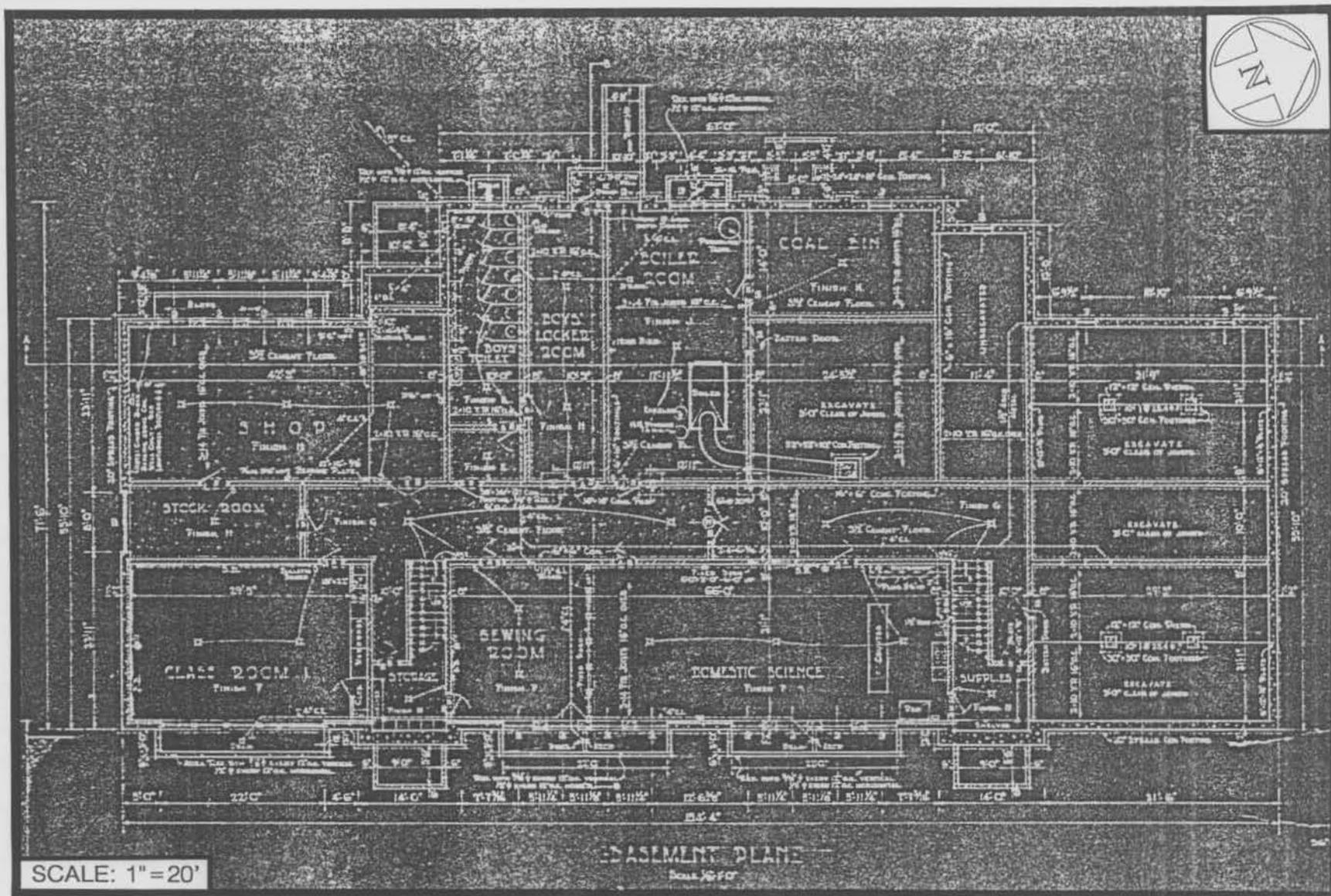


Figure 3. 1931 basement floor plan, Elmer Wolfe School

CARR-1936

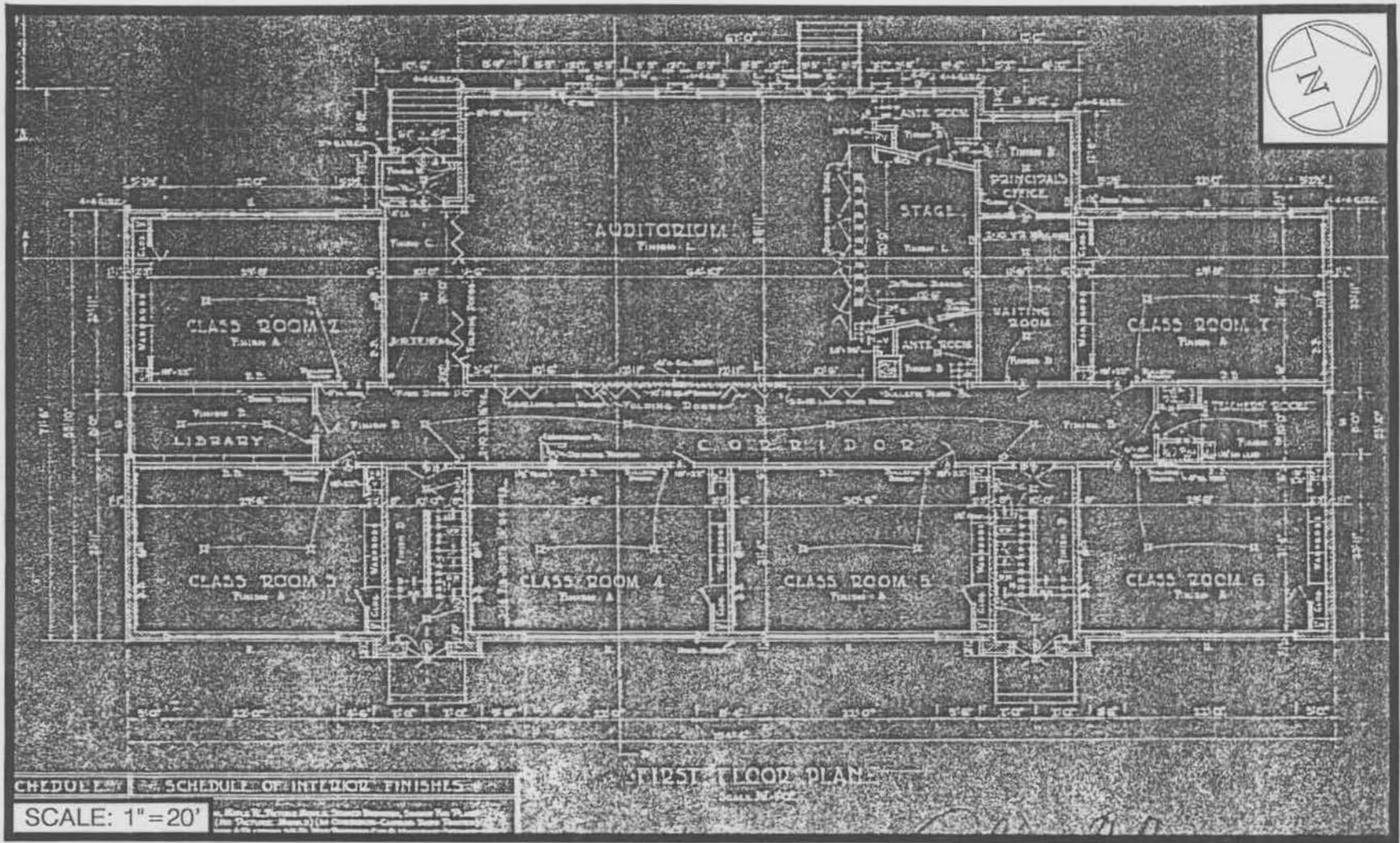


Figure 4. 1931 first floor plan, Elmer Wolfe School

CARR-1936



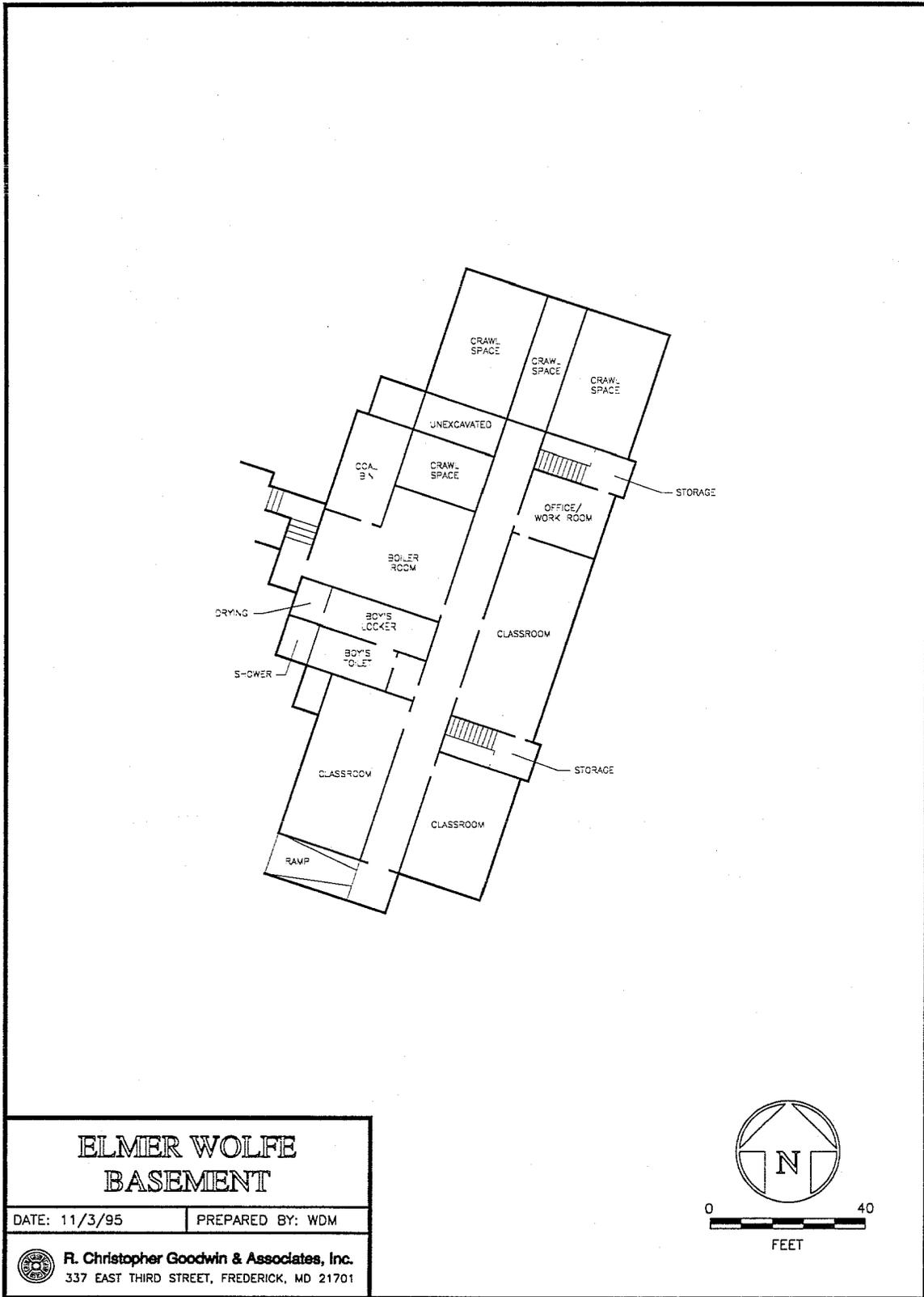


Figure 6. Basement floor plan, Elmer Wolfe School, with current room designations

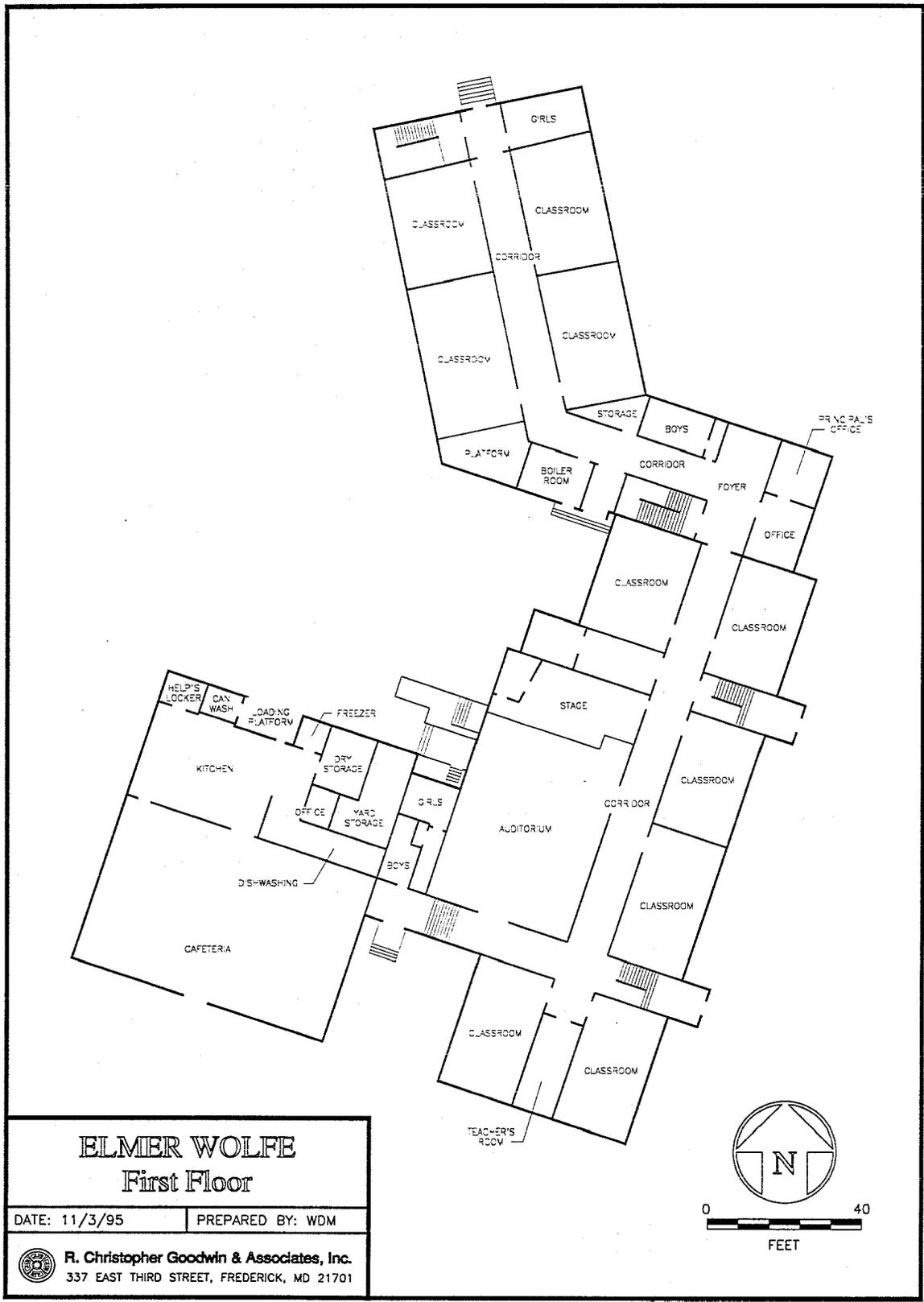


Figure 7. First floor plan, Elmer Wolfe School, with current room designations

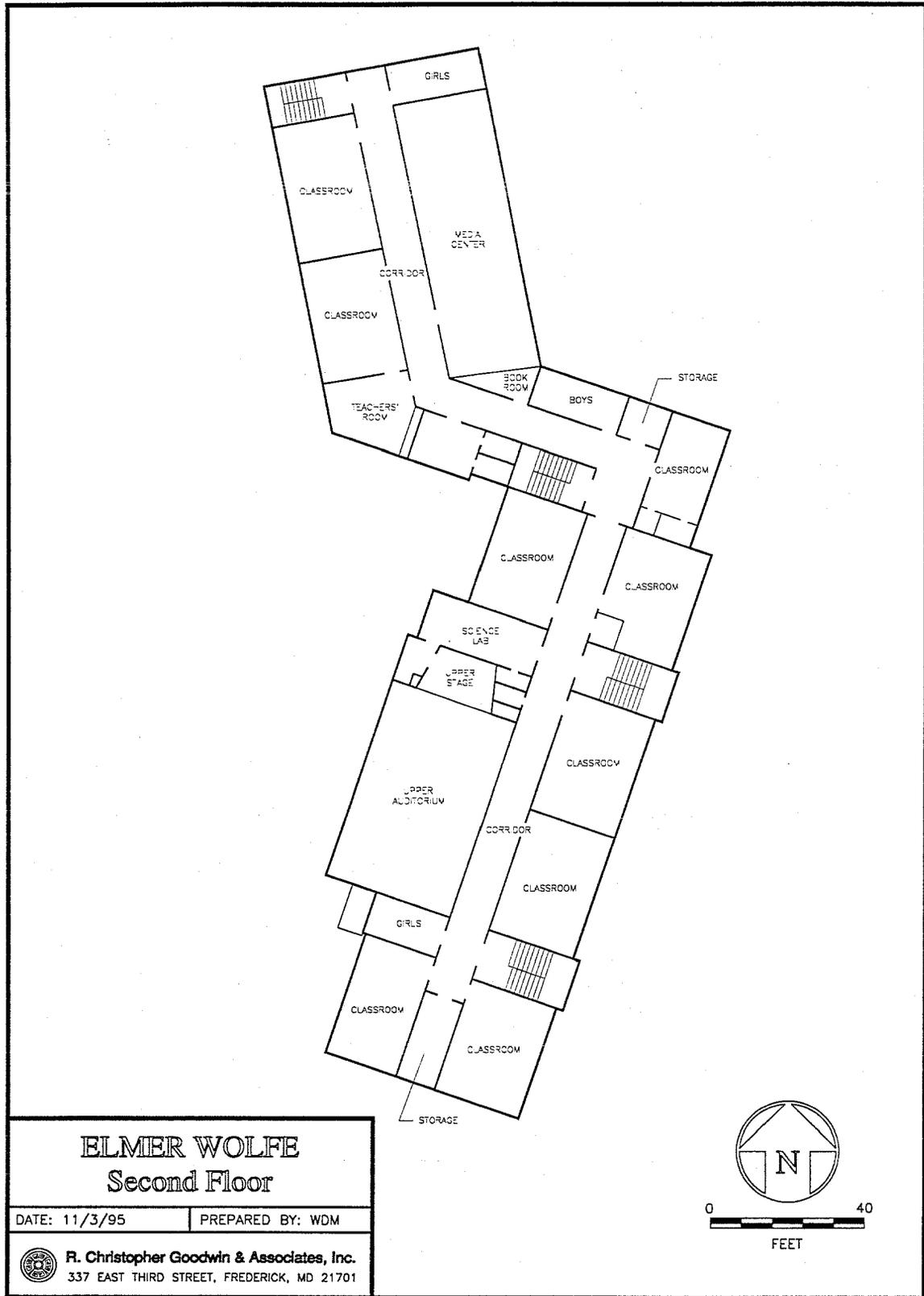
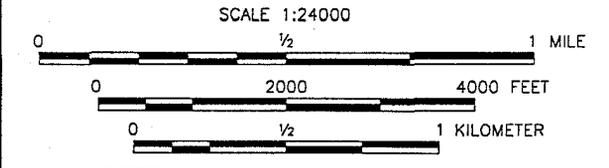
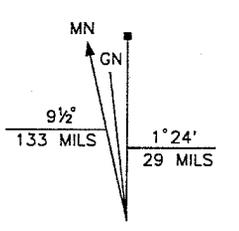
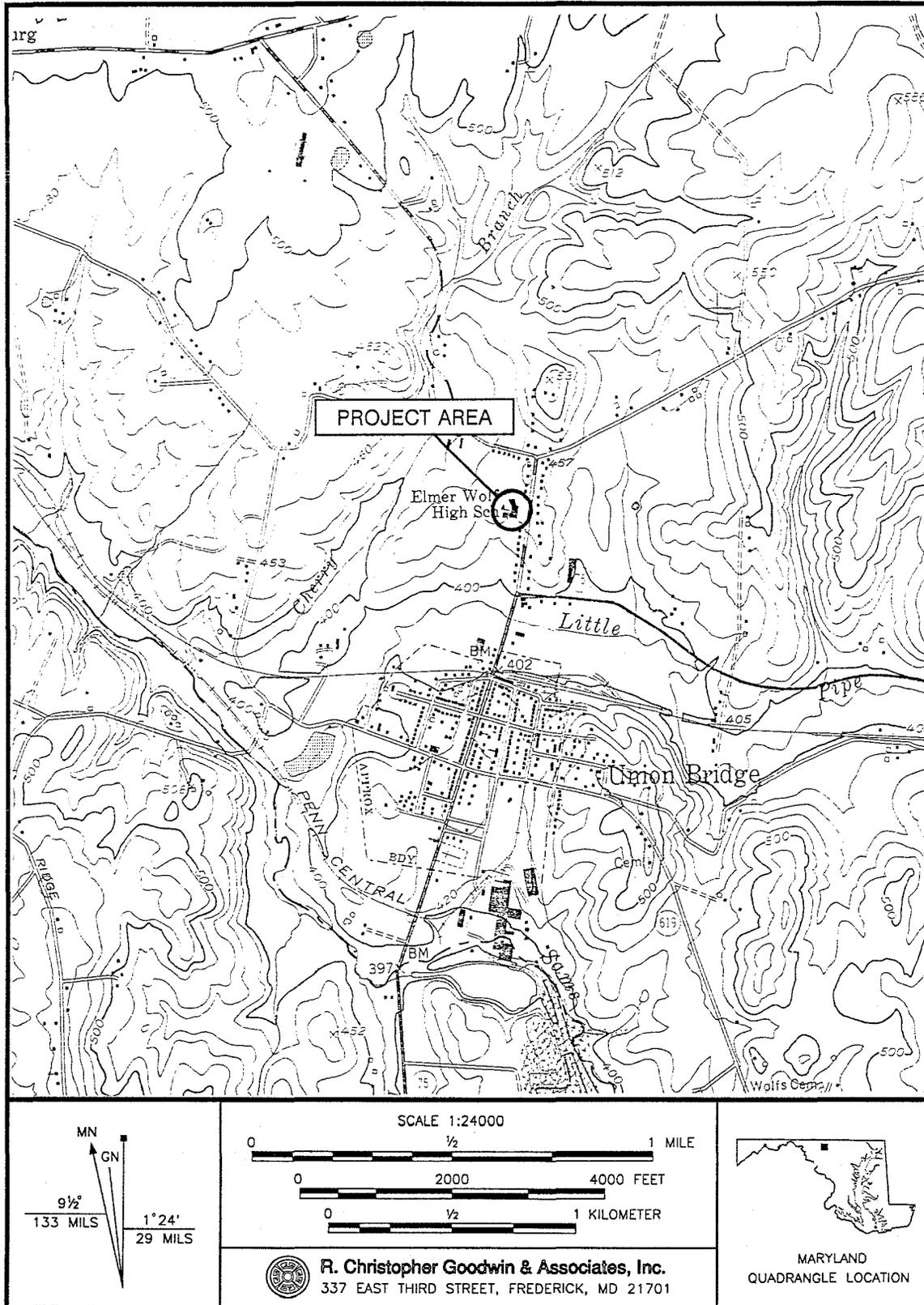


Figure 8. Second floor plan, Elmer Wolfe School, with current room designations



 **R. Christopher Goodwin & Associates, Inc.**  
337 EAST THIRD STREET, FREDERICK, MD 21701

Figure 1. Portion of 1971 photorevised U.S.G.S. 7.5 minute Union Bridge, Maryland, showing location of Elmer Wolfe School in Carroll County, Maryland



## INDEX TO PHOTOGRAPHS

The information for items a - f is identical for each print.

1. a. inventory #: CARR-1436  
b. historic name: Elmer Wolfe School  
c. location: Carroll County, MD  
d. photographer: D. Cannan/H. McAloon  
e. date of photograph: August 1995  
f. location of negative: MD SHPO  
g. description: front elevation  
h. number of photograph: 1 of 24
2. front elevation
3. front and side elevations, view northeast
4. detail, front elevation, sign plaque
5. detail, front elevation, entrance
6. 1951 classroom addition, front elevation, view southwest
7. 1951 classroom addition, end elevation, view south
8. 1951 classroom addition, rear elevation, view northeast
9. connection between original building and 1951 addition, view northeast
10. 1969 cafeteria addition, view northeast
11. 1969 cafeteria addition, view northwest
12. rear connection between 1931 building and cafeteria, view southeast
13. side connection between 1931 building and cafeteria, view northeast
14. interior corridor, 1931 building
15. typical classroom, 1931 building
16. doorways, typical classroom, 1931 building
17. coathooks, typical classroom, 1931 building
18. gymnasium/auditorium, 1931 building

CARR-1436

Elmer Wolfe High School  
Carroll County  
Photo List 2

19. classroom, 1951 addition
20. classroom doorway from corridor, 1931 building
21. doorways from stairhall into corridor, 1931 building
22. stairhall, 1931 building
23. stairhall, 1951 building
24. view from second floor classroom toward west illustrating rural setting











CARR-1436

ELMER WOLFE HIGH SCHOOL

CARROLL CO., MD

D. CANNAN

8/95

Maryland SHPO

front elevation

3 of 24

ELMER A. WOLFE HIGH SCHOOL

A black and white photograph of a brick school building. The name "ELMER A. WOLFE HIGH SCHOOL" is inscribed in large, light-colored letters on a dark brick background. Below the inscription, there are several multi-paned windows with white frames. The sky above is a uniform, dark grey.

CARR-1436

Elmer Wolfe High School  
Carroll Co., MD

D. Cannan / H. McAloon

Aug 95

detail, front elevation, sign plaque

4 of 24



CARR-1436

Eimer Wolfe High School

Carroll Co, MD

D. Cannon / H. McAloon

Aug. 95

detail, front elevation, entrance

5 of 24



CARR-1436

Elmer Wolfe High School

Carroll Co., MD

D. Cannon / H. McAloon

Aug. 95

1951 classroom addition, view SW

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CARR-1436

Elmer Wolfe High School

Carroll Co., MD

D. Cannan/H. McAloon

Aug 95

1951 classroom addition, view S

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CARR-1436

Elmer Wolfe High School

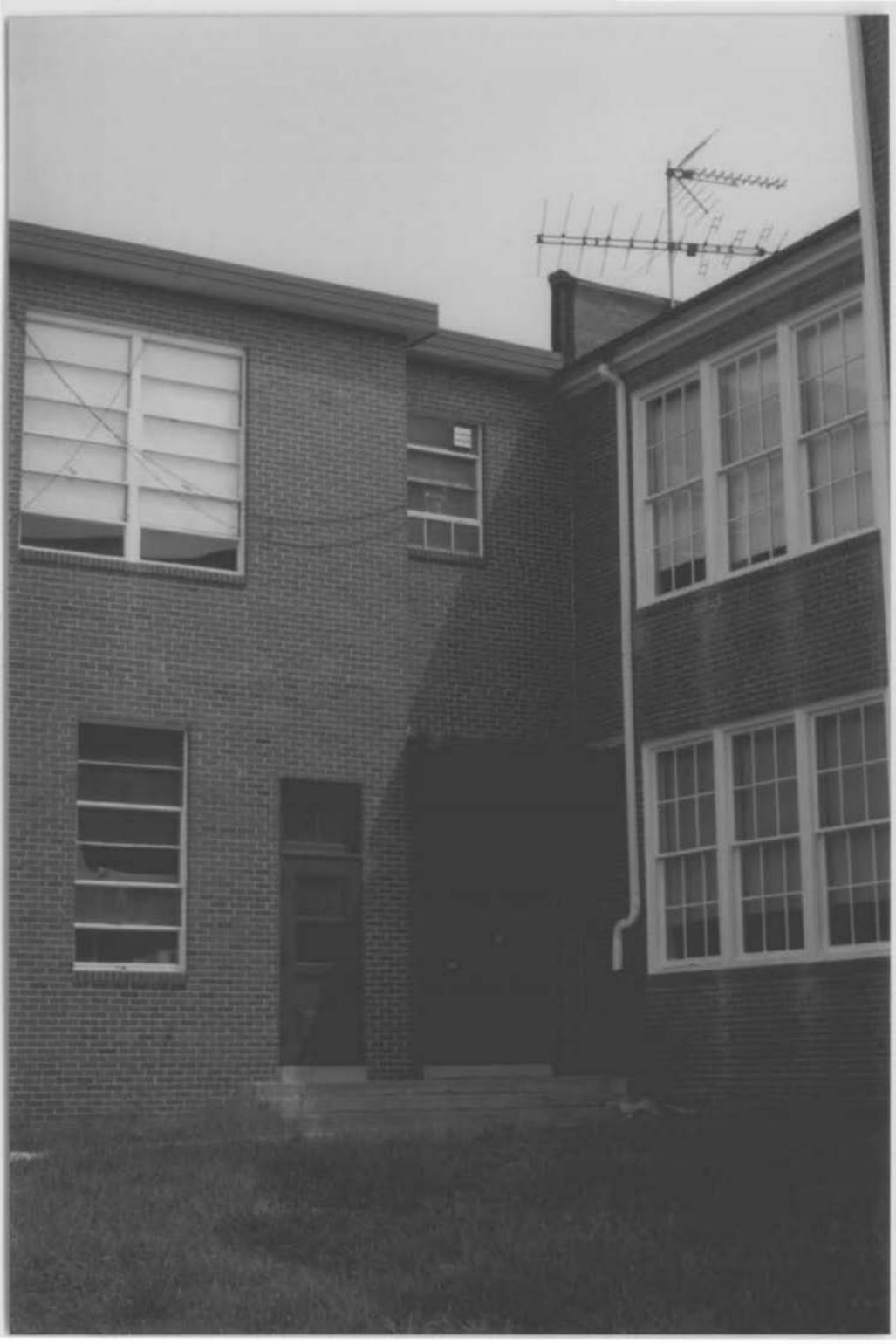
Carroll Co, MD

D. Cannon | H. McAloon

Aug 95

1957 classroom addition, view NE

8 of 24



CARR-1436

Elmer Wolfe High School  
Carroll Co., MD

TON CLARK (07) 3848 0281 H N H N-02 2

D. Cannon / H. McAloon

Aug 95

connection between original building & cafeteria,  
view SE

9 of 24



CARR-1436

Elmer Wolfe High School

Carroll Co., MD

D. Cannon / H. McAloon

Aug. 95

1969 cabinet addition, view NE

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CARR-1436

Elmer Woffe High School

Carroll Co., MD

D. Cannon/H. McAloon

Aug. 95

1969 cafeteria addition, view NW

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CARR-1436

Elmer Wolfe High School

Carroll Co., MD

D. Cannan / H. McAloon

TOI CLARK (89) 848 9281 H N H H-02 2

Aug. 95

rear connection between 1931 building & cafeteria, view SE

12 of 24



CARE-1436

Elmer Wolfe High School

Carroll Co., MD

D. Cannon | H. McAloon

TOM CLARK L123848 3281 H H N 11-02 2

Aug 95

Side connection between A31 building & cafeteria, view NE

13 of 24



CARR-1436

Elmer Woff High School

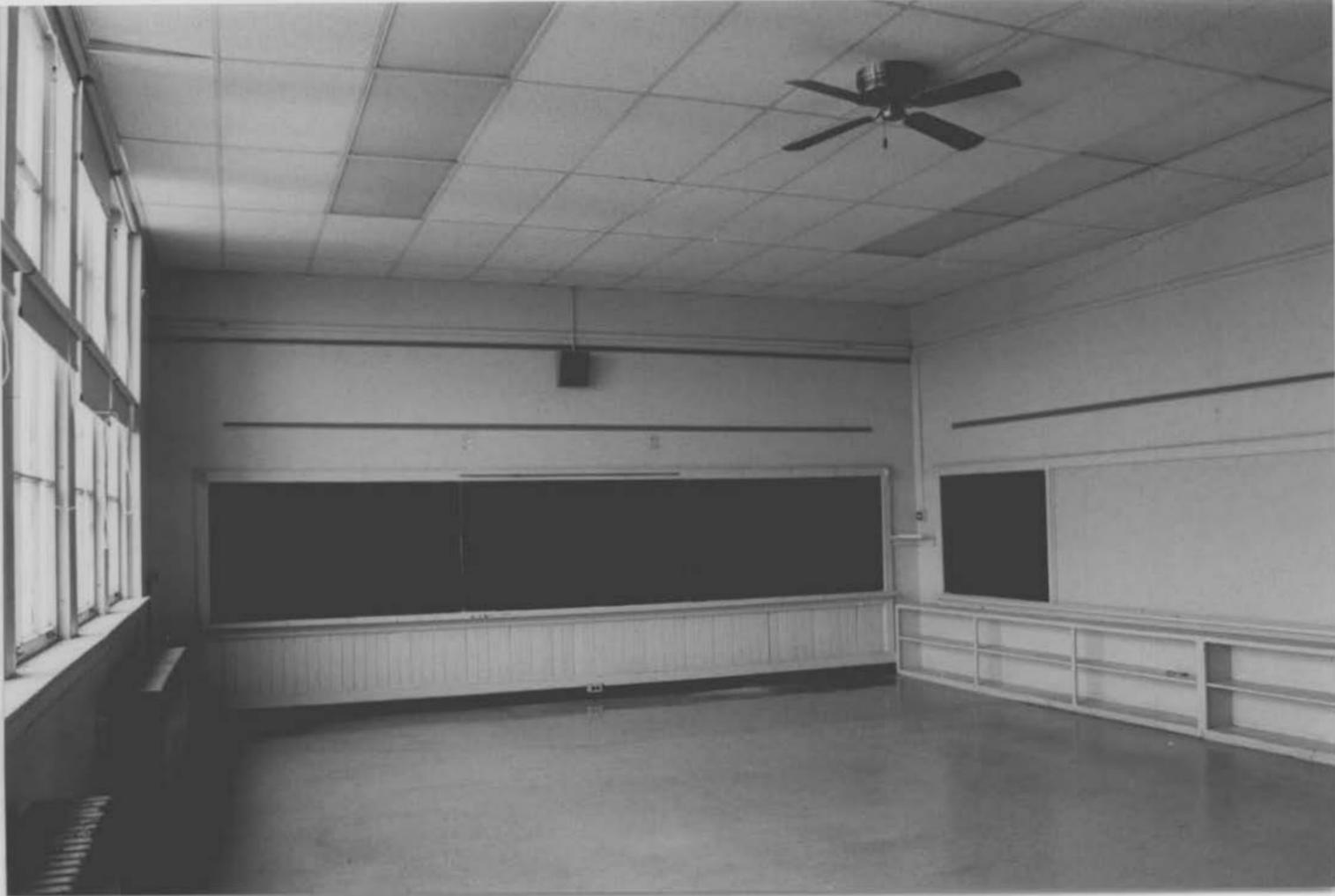
Carroll Co. MD

D. Cannon/H. McAloon

Aug. 95

interior corridor, 1931 building

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CARR-1436

Elmer Wolfe High School

Carroll Co., MD

D. Cannon / H. McAloon

Aug. 95

typical classroom, FBI building

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CARR-K36

Elmer Wolfe High School

Carroll Co., MD

D. Cannan / H. McAloon

Aug 95

doorways, typical classroom, 1931 building

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CARR-1436

Elmer Wolfe High School  
Carroll Co., MD

D. Cannon / H. McAloon

Aug. 95

coat hooks, typical classroom, 1931 building

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CARR-1436

Elmer WOTE High School  
Carroll Co., MD

D. Cannon / H. McAloon

Aug. 95

gymnasium (auditorium)

18 of 24

TOM CLARK (281855 828) H H N H H N 2



CARR-1436

Elmer Wolfe High School

Carroll Co. MD

D. Cannon / H. McAloon

Aug. 95

classroom, 1951 addition

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CARR- 1436

Elmer Wolfe High School  
Carroll Co., MD

TOM CLARKK093154 0281 H N H H-01 2

D. Cannan / H. McAloon

Aug. 95

classroom doorway from corridor, 1931 building

20 of 24



CARR-436

Elmer Wolfe High School

Carroll Co., MD

TOM CLARK 0120154 3281 H H H H-81 2

D. Cannan/H. McAloon

Aug. 95

doorways from stairhall into corridor, 1931 building

21 of 24



CARR- 1436

Elmer Wolfe High School

Carroll Co, MD

D. Cannon / H. McAloon

TON CLARK (251855 928) H H H H-HN 2

Aug. 95

Stairhall, 1931 building

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CALL-1430

Elmer Wolfe High School

Carroll Co. Md

Dr. Cannon / H. McAloon

Avg. 95

Stairhall, 1951 building

23 of 24



CARR-1436

Elmer Wolfe High School

Carroll Co. MD

D. Cannan / H. McAloon

Aug. 95

View from second floor classroom to W

24 of 24



1931 SERIAL PVS 1969 ADDITION

ELMER WOLFE SCHOOL

UNION BRIDGE

CARR-1436



1951 AT ANGLE

1931 SECTION

ELMER WOLFE SCHOOL

UNION BRIDGE

CARR-1436



CARR-1436

ELMER WOLFE SCHOOL

UNION BRIDGE



1931 - EAST FACADE

ELMER WOLFE SCHOOL

UNION BRIDGE

CARR-1436



CARR-1436

ELMER WOLFE SCHOOL  
UNION BRIDGE





CARR-1436

ELMER WOLFE SCHOOL  
UNION BRIDGE

Kodak  
Royal



INSECT TO MOVE TO LOBBY? 1931

ELMER WOLFE SCHOOL  
UNION BRIDGE

CARR-1436

CARR-1436