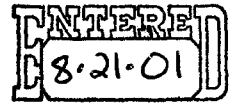


REFNUM 01000898

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 *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an 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 entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name West Technical High School

other names/site number n/a

### 2. Location

street & number 2201 West 93rd Street n/a  not for publication

city or town Cleveland n/a  vicinity

state Ohio code OH county Cuyahoga code 035 zip code 44102

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  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  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Barbara A. Power Dept. Head  
Signature of certifying official/Title Harris, Jr. Date June 7, 2001  
Registration  
Ohio Historic Preservation Office -- OH SHPO  
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting official/Title Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

<input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> other, (explain:)	_____	_____

Technical High School  
Name of Property

Cuyahoga, Ohio  
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property  
(Check only one box)

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

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
6		buildings
1		sites
1		structures
		objects
8	0	Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed  
in the National Register

N/A

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Education\_school

Vacant / not in use

7. Description

Architectural Classification  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Materials  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and Early 20th Century Revivals/  
Classical Revival

foundation brick, concrete  
walls brick, terra cotta  
roof asphalt, metal, glass  
other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See Attached.

East Technical High School  
Name of Property

Cuyahoga, Ohio  
County and State

**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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

- Education
- Architecture
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1910-1951

**Significant Dates**

1911, 1924, 1949

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Frank S. Barnum,  
Walter R McCornack

**Narrative Statement of Significance**  
(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

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

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

**Name of repository:**

WTHS Alumni Association

West Technical High School  
Name of Property

Cuyahoga, Ohio  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property 11.18

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 

1	7
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4	3	7	6	5	0
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4	5	9	1	2	0	0
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Zone Easting Northing

3 

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Zone Easting Northing

2 

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See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Karen Borland and Diana Kulka

organization Sandvick Architects, Inc. date December 2000

street & number 1265 West 6th Street telephone 216-621-8055

city or town Cleveland state Ohio zip code 44113

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

**Additional Items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name City of Cleveland

street & number 601 Lakeside City Hall telephone 216-664-2561

city or town Cleveland state Ohio zip code 44113

**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. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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**West Technical High School  
Cuyahoga, Ohio**

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**Narrative Description**

West Technical High School is located at 2201 West 93<sup>rd</sup> Street on a lot bounded by W. 93<sup>rd</sup> Street to the east, W. 89<sup>th</sup> St. to the west, Sauer Avenue to the north and Willard Avenue to the south. The site is nestled in a residential neighborhood comprised of mainly 1 ½ story and 2 ½ story frame houses. The existing school complex consists of the original school building structure plus several additions constructed from 1911-1972 (Photos: 1-42). The school building is situated at the south end of the site and shares the lot with a parking area, a track, an athletic field and a grandstand to the north. There are two primary entries to the school, one at the corner of W. 93<sup>rd</sup> and Willard Avenue and the other centrally locate on the W.93<sup>rd</sup> Street elevation. Secondary entrances face W. 89<sup>th</sup> Street, Willard Avenue, the athletic field and West 93<sup>rd</sup> Street at the north end. An iron fence surrounds the complex. Abandoned gardens are located in the southeastern portion of the lot, and scattered plants prove evidence of the school's former horticultural program.

**1910**

The athletic field, track, and grandstand, known as West Field, were constructed in 1910 along with a small frame building for storage and ticket sales. The school adapted the lot known as West Field at the time of the school's construction (Photos: 1-6).

**1911-12**

The original portion (western 2/3), 3 story brick building, built in 1911-12, was designed by architect F.S. Barnum and was constructed in the Neo Classical Style. The building's façade fronts West 93<sup>rd</sup> Street, although the main entry is at the southwest corner at West 93<sup>rd</sup> Street and Willard Avenue. The building is rectangular in plan, with projecting bays on the west-side and saw-tooth light-wells on the east-side. The building was designed to accommodate classrooms, an auditorium, machine shops, locker rooms, a foundry, a mill room, and a power plant. The track, athletic field and grand stands are on the north end of the lot (Photos: 5-18).

The building varies from three to four stories and features brick veneer and stone trim. Wood multi-light windows are grouped in vertical ranks surrounded by stone frames and divided by ornamented stone panels. Vertical stone mullions articulate windows on the façade and the spandrels have festoons. The entrances are articulated with classical columns, entablatures, balusters and cartouches (Photos: 10-12). A balustrade parapet accents the main facades (Photos: 15). In order to achieve the maximum light into the classrooms, light-wells divide the block into three sections. Saw-tooth skylights at the base of the light-wells provide light into the basement.

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The building is constructed of fireproof construction and the interior finishes reflect this. Original walls are clay block finished with plaster, or glazed brick, floors are covered with an early quarry tile and ceilings are dropped in many areas concealing original plaster ceiling surfaces. The classrooms display typical educational amenities and the hallways are lined with lockers. (Photos: 34-42)

**1912-1922**

Between 1911 and 1922, three one story utility buildings were built in the north section of the lot. The attached utility building is the power plant built in 1922 (Photos: 6). The power plant is a flat roof masonry wall structure with a rectangular plan. Steel factory sash windows are the only articulation this building offers. The two smaller out buildings include a transformer room and another related structure (Photos: 26-28).

**1922-24**

A three-story addition was constructed to the west of the main block in the same style. This portion was constructed in 1922-24 and was designed by W.R. McCornack, successor to Barnum as the Cleveland Board of Education Architect. This addition continued and enclosed the light wells formed by the building's wings, making them central and internal to the schools massing, and included classrooms and a new gymnasium (Photos: 16-18).

**1922**

One of the notable programs at the school was the Green Thumb Club, a horticultural program. The school had a one-story building constructed, noted as the garden building on the Sanborn maps, some time between 1912-1932 and two green houses that were constructed over the years 1922 to 1932 (Photos: 22-23, 30-33). These buildings are located east of the main school building. The greenhouses were demolished in 1972 and all that remains are the slab foundations. The existing building features a gable roof with modest classical detailing. It demonstrates decades of neglect. Adjacent and nearby are two ramps to a lower level.

**1948**

A one-story addition was built at the southeast corner in 1948 and housed aviation mechanics, welding and the auto body shops. This building feature curved exterior masonry walls. All of the window openings have been closed in with either brick or cement block. (Photos: 19-21)

**1972**

A new larger gymnasium was built to the north east of the school complex and is connected to the main school at the basement and first floor levels. The building is one-story in height and then steps up to two-stories. The entrance is emphasized by the use of white painted cast stone. The exterior brick walls feature brick relief work that mimics the bay division. These design elements are sympathetic to the

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original building's window bay size, and rhythm but is windowless (Photos: 24-25). Two additional, small utilitarian structures of unadorned design accommodate the complex and three small one-story compost bins which are located in a courtyard adjacent to the greenhouse. These resources were considered not substantial/significant to add to the resource count.

The entire complex, developed between 1912 and 1970 with the most significant structures erected between 1912 and 1922, was constructed for the Cleveland Board of Education. It was built at a time when the city, and its school age population was rapidly growing (population 560,663). By 1920 the city's population had grown to 796,841 and advanced from being the sixth largest city in the nation in 1910 to the fifth in 1920. When West Tech, as it is better known, opened on February 15, 1912, the neighborhood was primarily residential. Today, the neighborhood remains residential with 1 ½ to 2 ½ frame houses of singles and doubles, as well as brick apartment buildings. Willard Elementary School, which predates West Tech, is directly across from West Tech at the corner of W. 93<sup>rd</sup> Street and Willard Avenue. Trinity Free Will Baptist Church is also nearby on Willard Avenue.

The building has been vacant for seven years and is showing signs of rapid deterioration throughout as the result of no maintenance and heavy vandalism. A fire in October of 1999, destroyed the stage in the auditorium and charred many of the finishes and damaged windows in that space. The track is overgrown and the grandstands are in an extreme state of disrepair. Despite the neglect and because of its solid construction, the building structure, envelope and interior partitioning remain in relatively good condition. The building is one of two Technical Schools in the Cleveland School district. The East Technical School was constructed in the 1970s.

CONTRIBUTING

West Technical High School Building, built 1911-1912  
(including additions: Power Plant, 1922; classroom addition, 1922-1924; shop addition, 1948; gymnasium addition, 1972)

Transformer building and related building, 1922

Horticultural building, c. 1922-1932

Grandstand structure and 2 ticket booths, 1910

School site including athletic field, track, and remnants of the former greenhouses and gardens

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***Statement Of Significance***

West Technical High School is significant under Criterion 'A' and 'C' as a good example of the early vocational school design and the modern school type developed by its initial architect, Frank S. Barnum. Barnum pioneered fire resistive construction, more functional planning, introduction of modern conveniences and considerations for future planning into Cleveland Schools. The school building type developed by Barnum was reportedly studied and adopted by other cities nationwide. West Technical High School was at one time the largest school in the state and was visited and studied by educators across the country. A 1913 article in the "Cleveland Plain Dealer," "*City Blazes Trail for Education*," stated that the growth of "commercial and technical schools have made a phenomenal record which cannot be equaled by any city in the country." Illustrating the article are images of four schools, including West Tech, with a caption: "*Cleveland Schools Keep Pace With Educational Ideals*."

Frank S. Barnum was a prominent Cleveland architect, responsible for the design of other well-known structures, several of which are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. He served as the architect and superintendent of buildings for the Cleveland Public Schools from 1895 to 1915, during a time of unprecedented growth for the Cleveland Public Schools. The evolution of school planning took place at this time. The building was constructed in several phases, predominantly in the Neo-classical style, and grew rapidly in size in response to Cleveland's rapidly growing population. It embodies in one structure the elements of the modern school type developed by Barnum and utilizes the unilateral classroom lighting approach. It is constructed of fireproof construction and has a flat roof to facilitate the potential addition of floors that may be demanded in the future. The school features an auditorium on the first floor (in lieu of the third floor), and utilizes lockers instead of the cloakroom. The exterior expression of this design approach resulted in the massing of windows on the long wall and a more elongated rectilinear plan to each class room characteristics represented in West Technical High School.

**Development of the Cleveland School System**

The first schoolhouse in Cleveland, a crude structure built of logs, was built in 1806 at the foot of Superior Street. Asael Adams "kept school" for six hours a day for a monthly stipend of \$10 and board.<sup>1</sup> The second school erected in Cleveland was built on St. Clair Street in 1821. The building was one of the few brick structures in the city. It was purchased by the city in 1839 for \$6,000. A tax-supported public school system was introduced to Cleveland, soon after the state legislation incorporated Cleveland, in 1836. The city council appointed a board of school managers, and opened the Bethel Union school. In 1839, the city decided to divide the city into four school districts and buy lots 50 by 200 feet in dimension where upon school buildings would be erected at cost not to exceed \$3,500, including equipment. These buildings were the simplest in design and accommodated 200 pupils.

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<sup>1</sup> "*City Blazes Trail for Education*", Cleveland Plain Dealer, Sept. 6, 1913.



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By 1842 there were 15 public schools in Cleveland, enrolling 1,200 students. In 1846, school manager Charles Bradburn established the first public high school, Central High School, which was also the first public high school west of the Alleghenies.<sup>2</sup> Cleveland superintendent, Andrew Rickoff, established the current education program of classifying students into 12 grades and three divisions of primary, grammar and high schools, which placed students in graded curriculum according to their age and ability.<sup>3</sup> During Rickoff's 15-year tenure, the schools expanded from 9,463 to 26,990 students and from 123 to 473 teachers. National acclaim came to the educational exhibits of the Cleveland Public Schools at the Centennial Exhibition of 1876.

In 1884, an after-school program called the Manual Training School opened, including classes in carpentry, woodturning, mechanical drawing, machine shop, and cooking. The school board opened West Manual Training School and added a two-year business course to the secondary curriculum. William H. Elson, Superintendent from 1905 – 1917, pioneered vocational education by opening a technical school in 1909. Also in 1909, an industrial school opened for non-academically talented children, which devoted a half-day to academic work and the remainder to industrial work, home economics, and physical education.

A greater emphasis on vocational education focus<sup>ed</sup> around a desire to retain students in the upper grade. In 1915, 2/3 of the upper student body left the Cleveland school systems before the legally required age. Secondly, as part of the progressive movement, the course of the schools broadened to include recreation, extra-curricular activities, and public health. Thirdly, efforts in Cleveland schools were made to Americanize the children of immigrants. Many of these concepts trace their origins to an educational commission study of 1905 – 1906 that was implemented by the school board from 1906 – 1910. In 1921, the Bing Act required school attendance until age 18. As a result of these developments in education, the school population in 1918 numbered 106, 862, with 4, 715 in the commercial-technical high schools.<sup>4</sup> In the 1920s, daily enrollment rose to 144,000, which encouraged the construction of 32 schools between 1920 and 1930.

**Vocational Education**

Vocational education aims to make an intelligent producer, either of commodities or of services. Many high schools prepare potential candidates for entrance to higher institutions. Vocational schools prepare students for immediate self-support in a determined-upon occupation. Vocational education is

<sup>2</sup> Van Tassel, David and Grabowski, John. *The Encyclopedia of Cleveland History, Second Edition*. Bloomington: Indiana University, 1996. p.279.

<sup>3</sup> Van Tassel, 278

<sup>4</sup> Van Tassel, David and Grabowski, John. *The Encyclopedia of Cleveland History, Second Edition*. Bloomington: Indiana University, 1996. p.279.

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for two distinct groups of students, boys and girls enrolled in public school(all-day instruction) and workers who have already entered upon employment (part-time and evening schools).<sup>5</sup>

The Smith-Hughes Act of 1917 was a major contributor to encouraging communities to invest in vocational schools. The Federal Act aided in providing to state and local communities federal funds for the salaries of teachers in vocational schools and stipulated in detail the vocational character of the courses to be taught. The Federal and State Acts provided for all-day, part-time, and evening vocational schools.

The trade or industrial training required a separate school. Initially vocational schools were remodeled old factory buildings or abandoned schoolhouses that had outlived their usefulness for general education and remodeled to serve temporarily for industrial training. The special building erected for vocational purposes, as with West-Tech, was rare at the time and obviously the most desired by the School Board. Vocational schools required much more square footage for classroom. At the time classrooms were approximately 22 x 32 feet and accommodated 45 pupils<sup>6</sup>. According to John Donovan's *School Architecture: Principles and Practices*, vocational school buildings should be planned with the following dimensions based on particular industrial work. Shop-floor space should provide 100 to 300 square feet per pupil or 1,500 square feet per shop, ceilings should be 12 to 32 feet, rooms for class recitation, mechanical drawing and laboratories should provide 25 to 90 square feet per pupil, with adequate tool and stock rooms. Other desirable characteristics included windows on both sides and supplemented by skylights whenever possible. The window – glass area should not be less than one-fourth the area of the floor space. Floors should be wood, walls brick or un-plastered for exterior walls and tile or light frame for interior partitions. Stock, tool and supply rooms should be adequate to contain the appropriate materials and the proper heating and venting. The machine room should be located on the ground floor. West Tech's original industrial classroom layout demonstrates many of these planning components.

**West Technical High School**

On February 15, 1912 construction on West Tech High School was complete.<sup>7</sup> Twelve teachers and 24 students from East Tech High School inhabited the new school shortly thereafter. West Tech offered a distinctive curriculum of three different programs: technical, commercial, and academic (college preparatory). The school was known for the quality and variety of its vocational courses. In later years, the school concentrated on class-work rather than vocational schooling. The school partook in

<sup>5</sup> Donovan, John J. *School Architecture: Principles and Practices*. New York: MacMillan Company, 1921. pg.157

<sup>6</sup> Donovan, John J. *School Architecture: Principles and Practices*. New York: MacMillan Company, 1921.pg. 159

<sup>7</sup> "Fifty Golden Years", West Technical High School. 1962.

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training skilled workers during both WW I and II. Of particular note are the following facts. The school offered the first auto driving classes in the U.S. in 1936. It was the first school to offer aeronautics/aircraft classes, and for a long time the only high school to offer metallurgy classes. For many years it was the only high school in the city that could be attended by choice, by west-siders. It was one of the nation's first public schools to get a radio transmitter (in the 1920s) and the school featured an excellent inter-mural broadcasting system. This interschool broadcasting system was the first of its kind in the world, and was based at West Tech's broadcasting studio. West Tech once featured the largest school green house in the U.S., and the only vocational horticulture program in Cleveland.<sup>8</sup>

In 1929, Old West Commerce High School merged with West Tech enrolling 4,026 students. In 1937, the school celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and was visited by over 22,000. In 1938 the school reached its peak enrollment of 4,479 students.<sup>9</sup> In 1947, over 10,000 fans witnessed the first night game under the new lighting system at West Tech Field.<sup>10</sup> As late as the 1970-1 school year, West Tech was the largest high school in the state (as it was in 1938). The school closed at the end of the 1994-95 school year and was threatened with demolition. In the fall of 1999 a fire started in the auditorium and damaged the surface plaster through out the auditorium and destroyed much of the stage.

According to the "Dictionary of Cleveland Biography", the following were among West Tech's notable alumni: Alexander J. Hamilton (1903-1994) an Olympic gold medallist in speed skating; Edward Burk Henning (1922-1993), an art historian and the Cleveland Museum of Art's first curator of contemporary art; Frank Herzegh (1907-1989), an inventor important in the development of tires; Paul Elmer Leimkuehler (1918-1993), who founded a prosthetics business; and Lowell O. Mellen (1897-1993) who was a pioneer in industrial training. Other significant persons included Sante Grazzini, a Pulitzer Prize winner and head of Worcester, Mass., Art School.

**Frank S. Barnum**

Frank S. Barnum, architect and superintendent of Cleveland Public Schools from 1895 to 1915, developed the evolution of the modern school type in Cleveland. The development and evolution of Barnum's design program for educational facilities can be identified throughout the Cleveland School District. Barnum is a well-recognized prominent Cleveland architect. William Ganson Rose summarizes Barnum's accomplishments:

<sup>8</sup> "Commemorative Issue: Recalling 83 Historic Years," The West Tech Tatler, Volume 79, No.2 March 1997.

<sup>9</sup> "A Short History of West Tech (1912-1986)," Partners, West Tech/BP America Education Partnership Newsletter. Vol.1, No.2. Pg.2.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 2.

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"In 1895 Frank S. Barnum was appointed school architect as an era of modern school construction began. The new buildings were fireproof, with flat roofs. Space was used efficiently, and electric light and steam heat were (sic) installed. An assembly hall, gymnasium, shower baths, and adjustable seats were standard features."<sup>11</sup>

Historian Samuel P. Orth describes Barnum's accomplishments further :

"Mr. Barnum, by careful study of conditions and limited by the economies of the board of education, has evolved a radically new type of schoolhouse that has been adopted by most of the large cities of the land... There is absolutely not a waste (sic) square foot in his model. It is compact, comfortable and sanitary."<sup>12</sup>

Frank Barnum was born in 1850 in Norwalk, Ohio and came to Cleveland in 1871. He began his career as a draftsman for Joseph Ireland. In 1876, Barnum opened his own office and two years later he teamed up with Forrest Coburn. Among the firm's significant buildings were the Blackstone Building and Power Block commercial structures, built in 1881, (demolished), Western Reserve Medical School built in 1887, (demolished), the Washington Lawrence House (later Bay View Hospital, built in 1898, still standing). Shortly thereafter, Benjamin Hubbell and W. Dominick Benes joined the firm and designs were drafted for the Western Reserve Historical Society (built 1898, demolished). In 1895, Barnum was appointed architect and superintendent on buildings for the Cleveland Public Schools. He also worked on commissions for two major office buildings in downtown Cleveland, the Caxton Building on Huron Road built 1900, (NR, 1973) and the Park Building on Public Square built 1903, (NR, 1996) said to be one of the first office buildings constructed of reinforced concrete slab floor construction. Barnum planned and constructed more than 75 school buildings. He retired in 1915 and died in 1927.

**Walter Roy McCornack**

Walter Roy McCornack drafted the 1922 addition to West Tech. Walter R. McCornack (1877-1961) was born near Onedia, Illinois. He attended Knox College and MIT, graduating in 1903. From 1909 - 1913, before moving to Cleveland, he worked in the office of Edmund Wheelwright in Boston. Wheelwright studied at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris and worked for Peabody and Stearns, and McKim, Mead, and White before establishing his own firm in 1885. In 1891 Wheelwright was appointed Boston's City Architect and designed a number of public schools, fire houses, police stations, and hospitals while maintaining a "high standard of municipal architecture."<sup>13</sup> Wheelwright's view on the "high standard of municipal architecture" and his training in the beaux-arts is highly reflected in McCornack's work.

<sup>11</sup> Rose, William Ganson. *Cleveland: The Making of a City*, 1950.

<sup>12</sup> Orth, Samuel P. *History of Cleveland, Ohio*. City:Pub, 1910. p. 522.

<sup>13</sup> Withey, Henry F. and Elsie Rathburn Withey. *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased)*. Los Angeles: Hennessey & Ingalls, Inc., 1970. p.649

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McCornack served as the school board architect from 1914 – 1925. In 1915, he establishing a "comprehensive research laboratory to assist the board in school planning and design."<sup>14</sup> The need for such a laboratory was "due to the resignation of several faithful and efficient employees."<sup>15</sup> The board of education had requested McCornack to make a study of the situation and report with his recommendations on whether the Division of Architect should be abolished and private Architects employed, or to continue the Division. On November 24, 1919 McCornack presented his idea which pertained to the "Set-up of Division of Architect" to the Board of Education. Two aspects of the division were approached: *Exhibit A* – Expenses of Division reduced to percentage cost, and *Exhibit B* – Set up of re-organization of Division as recommended by Architect. McCornack addressed that salaries and compensation fixed by the School Board were far beneath the open market, and that capable and efficient men could not be obtained by lower salary rates. Some of the items that McCornack's proposal included were: an increase in salaries by 15%, that those salaries be charged to the *Building Fund* as an *Architectural Cost*, and the cost of the Division of Architect also include the expense which attaches a continuous study and development of school house design and construction. This proposal was to aid the school board into making sound decisions if they chose to hire commercial Architects and dissipate the office of Architect within the school system.

During McCornack's tenure as School Architect he encountered a need to reduce the cost of school construction in Ohio. He felt that there were two major causes for costly school buildings: the State Building Code and Wasteful Planning.<sup>16</sup> He found that following the Collinwood Fire in 1908, the public sentiment had forced a stringent and "inelastic" code requirements. McCornack's charges against the State Building Code included requirements on ventilation, the number of toilet fixtures, load bearing construction, and the fire doors separating stairways from the rest of the building as a "menace to life and limb, rather than a protection in case of fire or panic."<sup>17</sup> He studied absentee statistics of 20 schools to argue that "all types of ventilation which presents reasonable and sound mechanical features should be admitted for use in school houses".<sup>18</sup> He studied 17 schools in Cleveland to indicate that the only period compromising the toilet facilities to be morning recess and that 50 percent of these fixtures could be eliminated by 50%. In addition he found that the structural load on the floors were in excess.

Since 1914, the Architect's office of the Board of Education had diligently been trying to reduce the amount of waste space in school buildings, in order to produce the maximum percentage of available area and the minimum number of cubic feet, through the reduction of corridors. McCornack was

<sup>14</sup> Van Tassel, David D. and John J. Grabowski. *The Dictionary of Cleveland Biography*.  
Bloomington: Indiana University Press. 1996.p. 293.

<sup>15</sup> Cleveland Board of Education Proceedings, Monday November 24, 1919.

<sup>16</sup> McCornack, W.R. *Cost Saving In School Construction*. Realty Record. June 1924. P. 7-8.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

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unsatisfied with this solution due to the changing needs of any school district and their buildings and suggested a "unit" type construction. In previous years, McCornack studied the construction design of office buildings, feeling it to be an appropriate comparison. His new plan for schoolhouses eliminated ventilation ducts and solid walls of the interior, similar to an office building, while the exterior walls would be load bearing. The interior construction would consist of steel I-beam columns. His intention was not to produce a box-like or factory-like appearance, but rather to reduce the construction cost while building a beautiful and durable construction that would last a 100 years.<sup>19</sup> In addition, he felt that a beautiful landscape setting would aid to create a neighborhood center.

McCornack established "a school ideal," and what would result as a new wave of school building. He developed the corridor-less building, with a large number of classrooms built around open huge central recreation court. In theory McCornack holds to the "sensible application of fundamental principles, instead of the blind following of precedent".<sup>20</sup> McCornack's addition to West Tech High School is evident of McCornack's ideas. Other Cleveland school buildings designed by McCornack include the Empire School, Almira School, Addison School and the Waterman Service Building. After 1925, McCornack went into private practice, designing suburban school buildings and become known as a leading advocator for public housing projects and slum clearance under the public works agencies. His public works public housing project, one of the first three in the city, was the 1935-37 Cedar - Central apartments. He returned to Boston in 1939 and served as Dean of the School of Architecture, Regional and City Planning at MIT. He retired in 1945.

Although the school closed in 1994, due to a decision based on the school board, West Tech is a prevailing example of educational architecture in Cleveland. West Technical High School embodies the early concepts of modern school design that developed and evolved in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. It is an excellent modernist school design with classical allusions confined to the entrances and some minor ornamental detail. The different styles found on the additions demonstrate the change in school architecture theory. It was a progressive school that launched educational buildings and educational programs into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. A 1913 article in the "Cleveland Plain Dealer," "Open School Year Sure of Success," emphasizes the impact of West Tech: "the superintendent said he felt that technical and commerce schools have given opportunity to many boys and girls who would not have attended academic schools, and that as a result of those schools attendance at high schools was larger". A postcard of West Technical High School written by an educator post dated on February 28, 1920 reads "We visited two High Schools of commerce yesterday and this West "Teck" mighty nice buildings" (sic). For seventy-five years West Tech offered opportunities to Cleveland's youth by providing an atmosphere that was accommodating to a safe educational experience.

<sup>19</sup> McCornack, W.R. "Cost Saving In School Construction". Realty Record. June 1924.

<sup>20</sup> "Head and Shoulders, Destroyer of Slums, Walter R. McCornack," Cleveland Mid Week. November 23, 1932.

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**Verbal Boundary Description**

West Technical High School encompasses the entire block between streets Willard Avenue to the south, West 93<sup>rd</sup> Street to the west, Sauer Avenue to the north and West 98<sup>th</sup> Street to the east.

**Boundary Justification**

Boundary is based on Existing Tax Map, Sanborn Insurance Maps and Board of Education drawings. The property represents the extent of the property historically associated with West Technical High School.

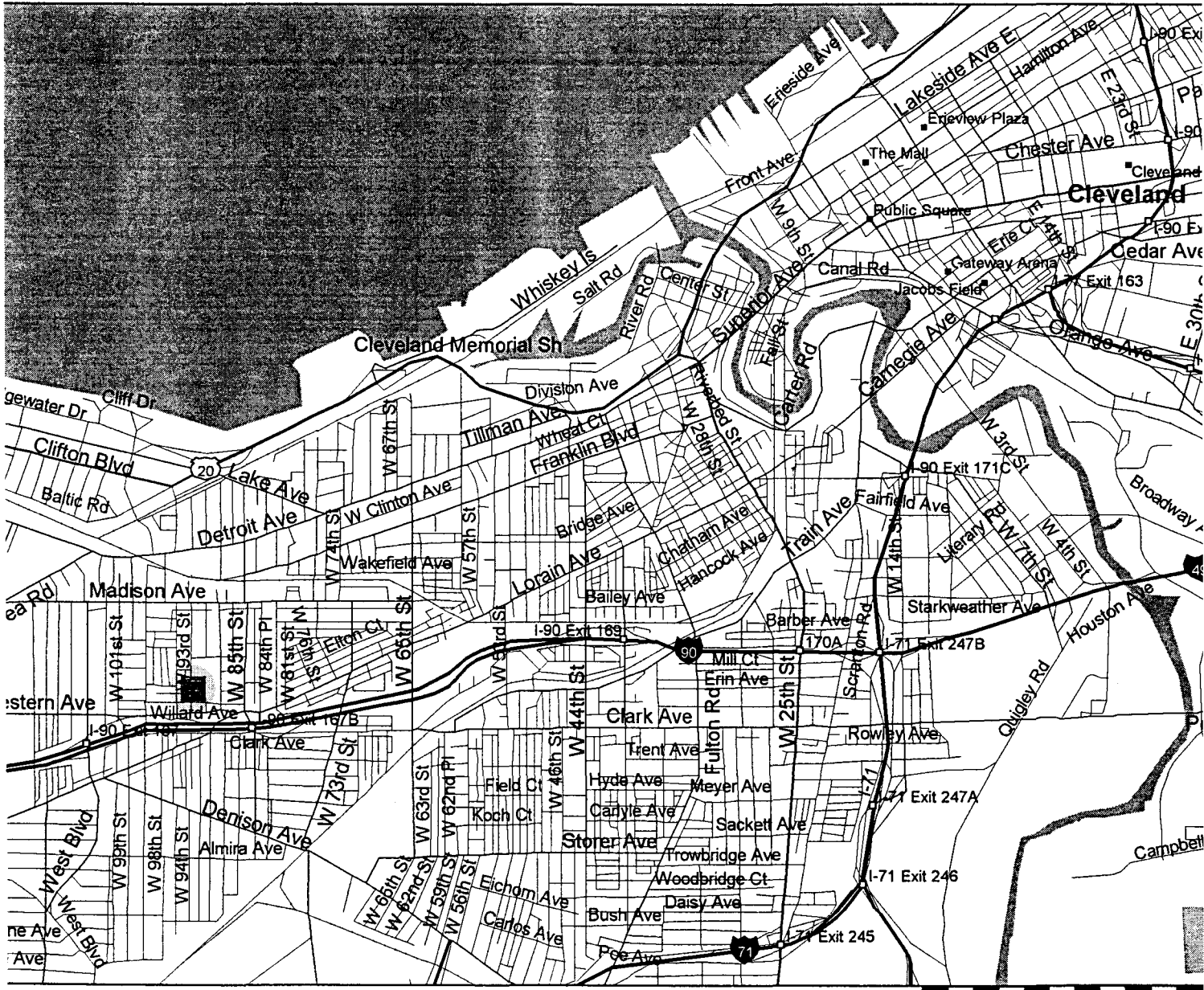
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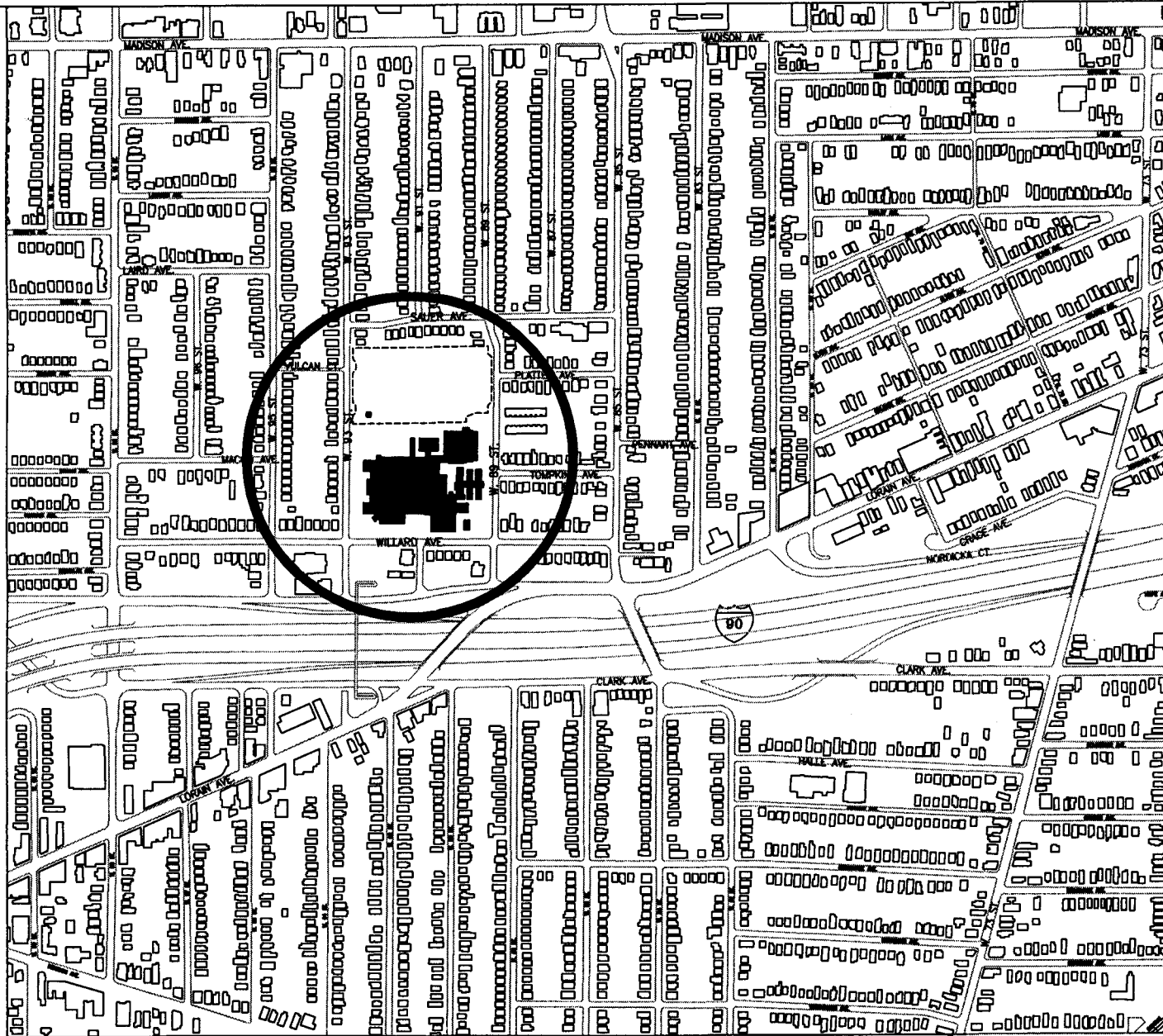
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Location Map





NATIONAL  
REGISTER  
NOMINATION

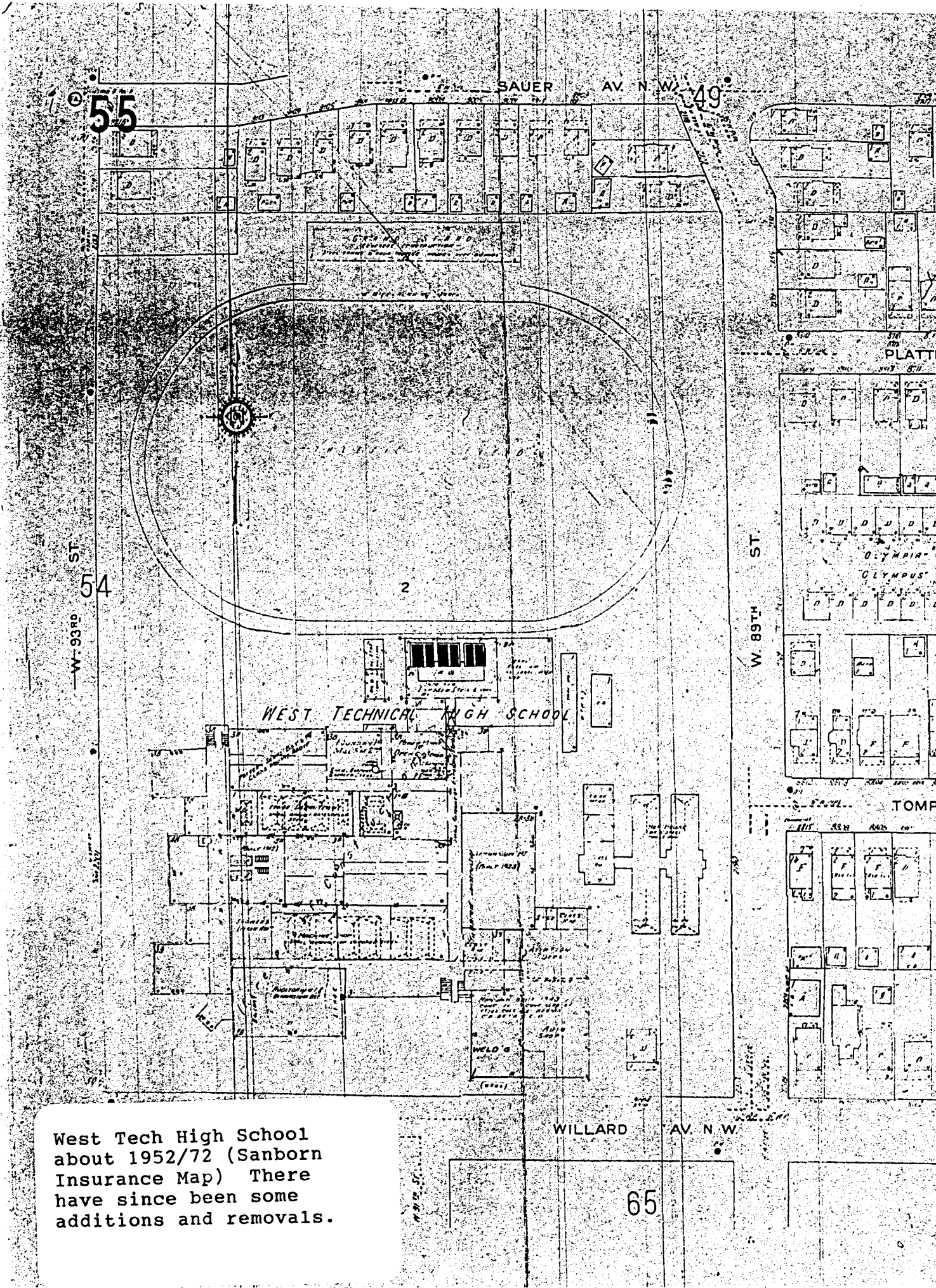


WEST TECHNICAL  
HIGH SCHOOL

2201 WEST 93RD  
CLEVELAND, OHIO

PREPARED FOR  
CUYAHOGA COUNTY ENGINEER  
CLEVELAND, OHIO

PRIMARY TRAVERSE : CLEVELAND REGIONAL GEODETIC SURVEY  
PNEUMATIC LEVELS : CLEVELAND REGIONAL GEODETIC SURVEY  
MAPPING PREPARED BY PHOTOGRAMMETRIC METHODS  
DATE OF PHOTOGRAPHY : APRIL, 1943  
AEROSOL PHOTOGRAMMETRIC SERVICES INC., WILLOUGHBY, OHIO



West Tech High School about 1952/72 (Sanborn Insurance Map) There have since been some additions and removals.

65

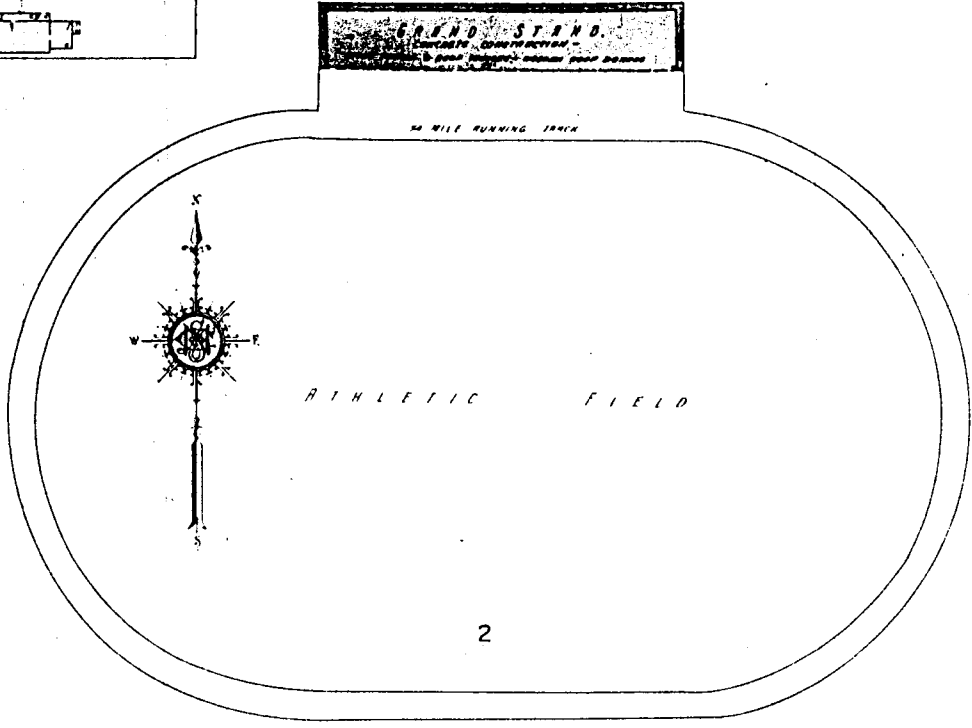
55

W. 93RD ST. 54

SAUER AV. N.W. 49

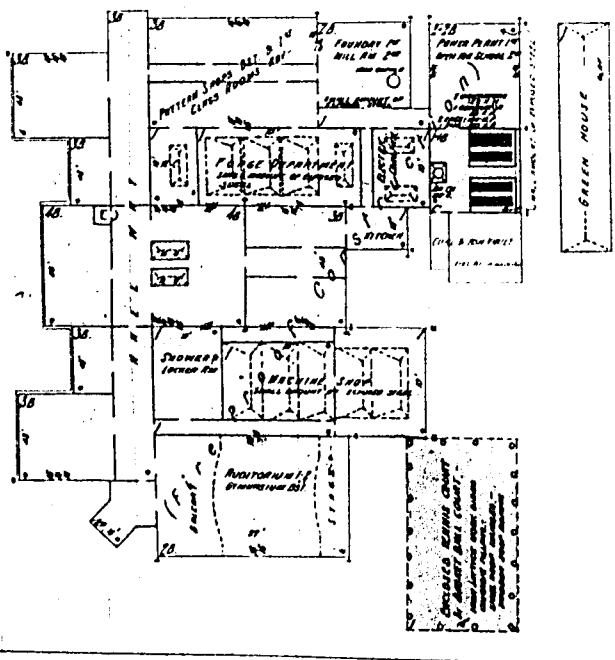
W. 91ST ST.

W. 89TH ST.



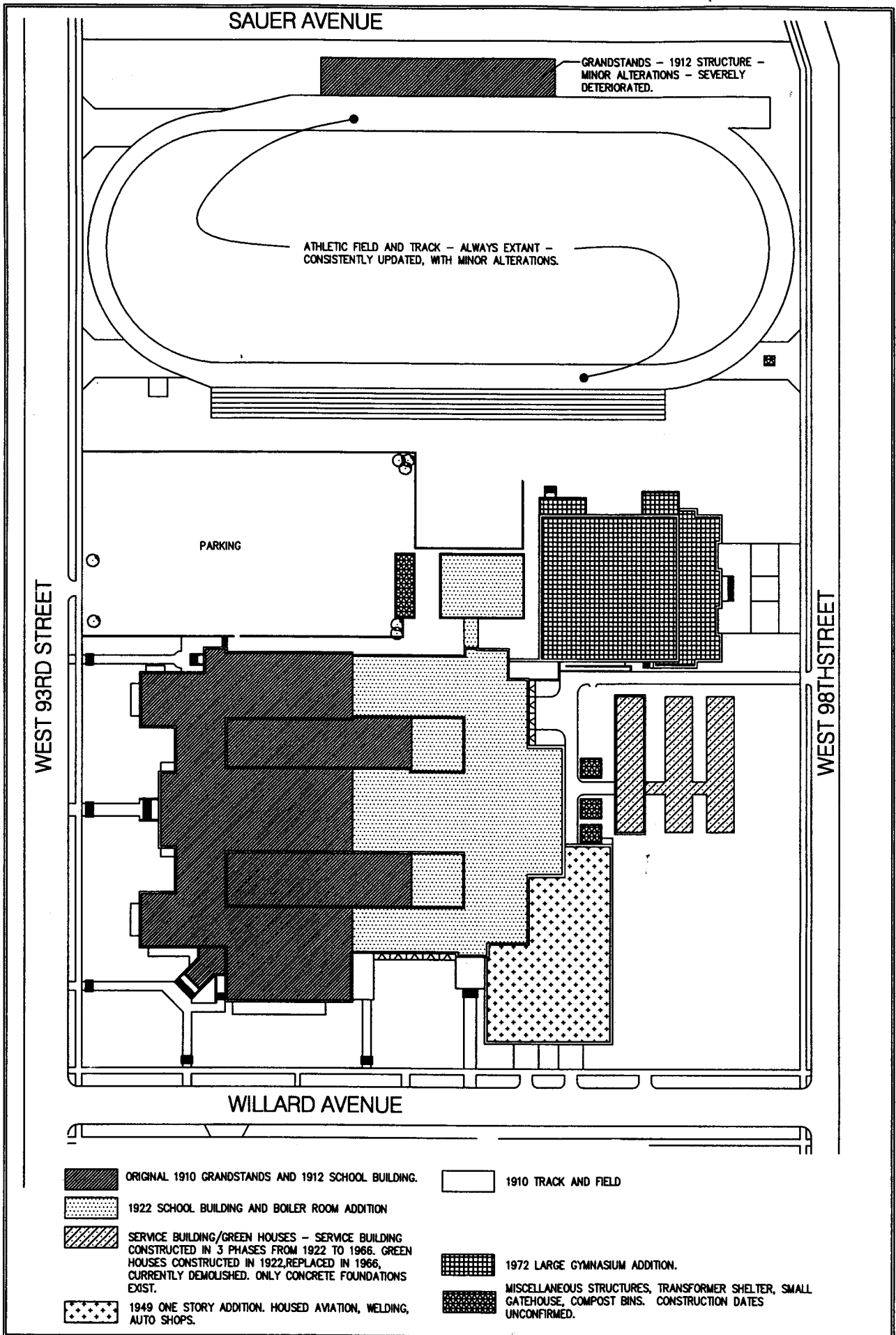
WEST TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL

NEW ON CORNER OF 91ST STREET, 100' x 100' SQUARE, 10' x 10' CORNER -  
 NEW STAIRS AND ELEVATORS, CONSTRUCTION -  
 THE PLAN CONSTRUCTION CONCRETE, STEEL & BRICK, SMALL AMOUNT OF  
 FINISHED STEEL TO SHOW -



West Tech High School about 1913 (Sanborn Insurance Map)

WILLARD AV. N.W.



**WEST TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL**  
 CONSTRUCTION SEQUENCE HISTORY KEY

## Ohio Historic Preservation Office

567 East Hudson Street  
Columbus, Ohio 43211-1030  
614/ 298-2000 Fax: 614/ 298-2037

Visit us at [www.ohiohistory.org/resource/histpres/](http://www.ohiohistory.org/resource/histpres/)

September 10, 2001

Mr. George Hannen  
West Tech LP  
5712 Oakely Terrace  
Irvine, CA 92612



OHIO  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY  
SINCE 1885

Dear Mr. Hannen:

Congratulations on the recent listing of your property into the National Register of Historic Places!

The National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior listed the **West Technical High School** at 2201 West 93rd Street in Cleveland Ohio on August 21, 2001. The nomination was made in connection with a state plan to identify and document prehistoric and historic places in Ohio which qualify for National Register status under provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 as amended.

The Ohio Historic Preservation Office (OHPO) is available to advise you in maintaining the historic character of your property. As you know from previous mailings received from this office, there are no restrictions placed on your property following the National Register listing. However, the OHPO strongly encourages owners of historic properties to consider all options before completing work that could damage the structure or impair its historic integrity. Careful planning can facilitate the sensitive incorporation of contemporary alterations with the historic fabric. The OHPO provides free information on how to sensitively rehabilitate and repair historic properties, upon request.

Thank you for your interest in historic preservation and the National Register of Historic Places.

Sincerely,

Barbara A. Powers  
Department Head  
Planning, Inventory, and Registration

Cc: Diana Kulka, Form Preparer  
Mayor Michael White, City of Cleveland  
Senator Dan Brady, District #23  
Representative Bryan Flannery, District #17  
Robert Keiser, Certified Local Government Contact  
Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency  
Paul Graham, Ohio Department of Transportation