

FINAL

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 Lora B. Pearson School

other names/site number Colescott School/School No. 4

### 2. Location

street & number 115 West Colescott Street

N/A not for publication

city or town Shelbyville

N/A vicinity

state Indiana

code IN

county Shelby

code 145

zip code 46176

### 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 consider significant  
 nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

James A. Hester  
Signature of certifying official/Title Deputy SHPO

11/4/2009  
Date

Indiana Department of Natural Resources  
State or 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 certifying official/Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

entered in the National Register.

See continuation sheet

determined eligible for the National Register.

See continuation sheet

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:)

Lora B. Pearson School  
Name of Property

Shelby County, IN  
County and State

**5. Classification**

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

- private
- public-local
- public-state
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

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

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

| Contributing | Noncontributing |            |
|--------------|-----------------|------------|
| 1            | 0               | buildings  |
| 0            | 0               | sites      |
| 0            | 0               | structures |
| 0            | 0               | objects    |
| 1            | 0               | Total      |

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

Indiana's Public Common and High Schools

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

None

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION: School

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Multiple Dwelling

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Art Deco

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls BRICK

SYNTHETICS

roof SYNTHETICS

other STONE: Limestone

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

SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS

Lora B. Pearson School  
Name of Property

Shelby County, IN  
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 the 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, 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 significant within the past 50 years.

#### 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 if 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
- # \_\_\_\_\_

#### Areas of significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Education

#### Period of Significance

1939-1959

#### Significant Dates

1939

#### Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

#### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

#### Architect/Builder

D.A. Bohlen & Son

#### Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

Lora B. Pearson School  
Name of Property

Shelby County, IN  
County and State

### 10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property 1.24 acres

#### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

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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 Carol Ann Schweikert, Historic Preservation Consultant

organization \_\_\_\_\_ date 12/27/2008

street & number 307 N. 10<sup>th</sup> Street telephone 317-776-1239

city or town Noblesville state IN zip code 46060

#### 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 Human Services, Inc. - Debbie DeBord, Executive Director

street & number PO Box 588/1585 N. Indianapolis Blvd. telephone 317-372-8407

city or town Columbus state IN zip code 47201

**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 listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance to the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.)

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this 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 the 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 Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Continuation Sheet**

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*Lora B. Pearson School, Shelby County, IN*

The Lora B. Pearson Elementary School is a 3-level masonry school constructed in the Art Deco style with a modern, 3-level addition on the rear. The school was constructed utilizing modern construction materials including reinforced concrete, steel, glass block and asphalt tile flooring.

**Site**

The Pearson School is located in the Susan J. Colescott Addition to Shelbyville in a residential area. The site is landscaped along the north and part of the west and east elevations. A circular drive to and from Elm Street allows for passenger drop-off at the rear entrance. Much of the remaining site along the east, south and part of the west side is an asphalt parking lot.

**Exterior**

The original Pearson School is a rectangular, reinforced concrete structure faced with brick and limestone. The flat roofline has a brick parapet. The limestone coping has fluting along the primary elevation, but a smooth finish on the east and west elevations. Limestone bands run around the exterior of the building at the window sill height of the double-hung openings on both the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> floors. In areas where there are taller window openings, such as the stairhall windows on the south elevation, this band is not aligned with the sill. The concrete walls on the raised basement are visible approximately 3 to 4 feet above ground on all four elevations of the original school.

The modern addition, also rectangular, is positioned perpendicular to the original school. Faced with EIFS, the new addition was constructed to blend with the original structure, but not appear historic. The foundation material, rusticated concrete, is raised above ground. Coping and narrow bands and corner accents are slightly different in color to mimic the architectural features of the original school. The addition also features a flat roof and wide ribbons of windows, similar to the school.

**North Elevation (Photo #1)**

On the north side, the primary elevation fronting Colescott Street, remains almost exactly as it was constructed. Here, only the historic school is visible. This elevation is symmetrical and faced with brick and limestone. Visually, it is dominated by an ornate stone element running the full height of the façade (Photo #2). This element is framed by large blocks of limestone carved with fluting. These blocks run from the parapet to the entrance where they turn 90 degrees, drawing the eye to the doors. At the ground level, the entrance is composed of three single doors with individual limestone door surrounds. A single transom, made of glass block, spans the width of the 3-door entry. A canopy faced with stainless steel protects the entry. Double-hung, 9/9 window sashes are centered on the upper (3<sup>rd</sup>) story. Limestone blocks carved with enlarging squares are centered above each window opening. Metal panels with geometric designs highlight the elevation between the canopy and windows. The limestone surround rises above the roofline with a stepped limestone parapet.

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, two groups of six windows, evenly spaced, span the elevation on either side entry. This layout is repeated on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor. The historic steel, 1/1 windows have simple limestone sills. On the basement level, ribbons of multi-pane windows are off-center on either side of the entry and are not aligned with those on the upper floors. Each group is framed by pipe railing.

**East Elevation (Photos #3, 4, & 5)**

The East elevation is composed of three sections: the east end of the main body of the school, one-story stage portion of the auditorium and the modern addition.

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An exterior entry is located in a one-story block that extends out from the main body of the school (Photo #3). The double-door entrance has steel-frame doors framed with glass block. A limestone band runs across the top of the doorway and continues around all three sides. Coping on the parapet roofline on the entry block is carved with fluting. Three 9/9, double-hung windows are centered on the upper floor above the entry. This section of the elevation extends slightly out from adjacent sections.

The fluted coping from the main elevation continues along the northeast corner of the east elevation. Here, the parapet is also slightly taller than the rest of the east elevation. The ground floor (2<sup>nd</sup>) has a pair of tall steel, awning windows with two operable sections. The rest are stationary. The limestone band abuts these openings approximately 1/3 up from the bottom of the window. The upper floor has no window openings and is relatively unadorned except for the limestone band and slightly projecting rows of brick on the corners. The elevation south of the middle section is a mirror image of the north except the roofline is slightly lower with smooth coping. The raised basement along this elevation is visible, but has no window openings.

The stage wing stretches out from this end of the school's rear elevation (Photo #4). To more easily describe this portion of the school, all three elevations of the stage wing will be described here. The parapet with fluted coping and limestone band are repeated on all three sides. All three are also capped by a deep brick band, similar in color to the concrete foundation. The east elevation has two openings, a door (now enclosed) with a small, multi-pane window above. On the south elevation, four casement window openings are symmetrically spaced with slightly recessed brick panels above. The west elevation is a blank, brick wall.

Visually, the east elevation of the addition is divided into three sections (Photo #5). The largest, and most prominent, is positioned the farthest away from the school. The 1<sup>st</sup> floor of this section includes three window groups. A single window near the southeast corner is followed by a group of five windows. The next opening is a wide entry, deeply recessed into the elevation. The final opening is a group of five windows. This layout is repeated on the upper two floors, minus the entry. North of this section, toward the original school, the addition narrows with a deeply recessed, three-story addition. A small, one-story section with 1/1 windows runs along the front of this area. Above and behind the one-story section, both floors have just a single pair of windows near the south end.

The addition narrows again as it joins the original school. The connecting points are staggered and located between architectural elements to minimize the visual affect. The main entry for the building was re-located from the north elevation to the new addition in a one-story section that flows into the rear of the school. This entry has an arched roofline with metallic-sheathed canopy and metal roof. These elements are clearly modern additions, differentiating this area from the historic school. Recessed behind the entry, the addition rises to a full 3-stories before abutting the original south elevation. The roofline coping and banding continues from the previous sections.

**South Elevation** (Photos #4 through 8)

Both the new addition and the original school are visible on the south (rear) elevation. The addition is off-center on the rear with the original school visible east and west of the addition.



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On the rear of the school at the east end, a row of 1/1 windows is visible above the roofline of the stage wing. Adjacent to the stage wing, an entrance for a stairwell is located within a 1-story square block. Above this block, a tall, thin opening with glass block spans floors 2 and 3, providing light for the stairwell. A narrow chimney mass runs along the west side of the one-story block. Between the chimney and addition, the 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> floor elevations are pierced by varying window configurations. The 2<sup>nd</sup> floor has a series of single, 1/1 windows. The upper floor has two groups of 1/1 windows. No openings are located in the basement or 1<sup>st</sup> floor level.

The rear elevation of the historic school is also visible on the west side of the addition (Photos 7&8). A second chimney mass, like the one previously discussed, is visible adjacent to the addition. Another exterior entrance, this one within the main body of the school, accesses the stairwell at this end. The tall, narrow glass block opening is repeated above this entrance. All three floors have ribbons of 1/1 windows.

The addition's south elevation (Photo #6) is largely a solid wall with just one group of four, 1/1 windows on each floor near the southeast corner. The bands, roofline coping and rusticated concrete foundation are repeated here.

**West Elevation** (Photos #7 through 9)

The original school and new addition are both visible along the west side, but, as with the previous two elevations, the new and old are clearly distinguishable. On the west elevation of the school, the roofline coping and banding continue across along with the simple corner brickwork. As with the east elevation, the fluted coping continues along the corner section. The west elevation of the school has no exterior entrances. The central section is a single flat plane running the full height of the elevation. Like the east elevation the central section projects slightly out from the adjacent sections. Both the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floors have a set of three, 9/9 double-hung window sashes. The basement level has a 3<sup>rd</sup> set of multi-pane windows with shorter sashes. A pipe rail window well surrounds the basement openings.

No window or door openings are found in the flanking sections. Only the limestone bands and corner brickwork provide visual interest.

On the west side of the school, the connection between the school and the new allows for a narrow void between the two buildings (Photo #8). The "L" configuration of the new addition in this area is unadorned except for the elevation bands and corner treatment. The only opening is a doorway on the lower floor. The electrical meters for the housing units are located in this space along with outdoor amenities such as a patio and landscaping.

The west elevation for the new addition is a simple straight wall pierced by ribbons of windows. The elevation bands continue along this elevation along with the corner accents. The rusticated concrete foundation material is visible above ground.

**INTERIOR**

The original school was laid out along a wide east/west hallway. Stairs accessing all three levels are located on the south side of the hallway at both the east and west ends (Photos #18 & 24). Walls in the stairhalls have glazed tile and plaster walls with asphalt tile on the steps and landings. Tall, narrow openings filled with glass block provide natural light. The cast aluminum railings have simple horizontal railings with small cast panels. Doors between significant spaces, i.e. hallways and stairhalls and auditorium, are set in glass block openings (Photos #15 & 16).

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A single flight of stairs from the ground-level entry to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor is found in the center of the hallway on the north side. A one-story auditorium with stage runs north/south on the east end of the school. The new addition is positioned perpendicular to the original school with a north/south hallway. The floors in the historic school and new addition are not aligned, necessitating stairs and an elevator to access the same level in the adjacent building. Throughout the school, the window openings have rounded edges with simple steel sills. The doorframes and trim are steel.

**1<sup>st</sup> Floor – Basement level in historic school/Ground level in new addition**

When constructed, the 1<sup>st</sup> Floor level (basement) was not utilized for classroom space. Since basement-level classrooms were a later addition, materials, finishes, trim, doors, etc., were later alterations. Today, a wide hallway runs the full width of the building (Photo #10). An original steel safe built in the south wall remains intact. Five housing units, community room and offices are all located within the historic school (Photo #11). The interior spaces on this floor have modern finishes, doors and trim. Floors are carpeted throughout the public spaces.

Individual housing units, laid out in an open plan, are a mix of efficiency, 1 and 2-bedrooms. They have carpeted living and bedrooms with linoleum in the kitchens and bathrooms (Photo #13). The ceilings are slightly lower (2 to 3 inches) in the center of the rooms to retain the full height of the windows.

The modern addition was joined to the original school on the south elevation where an original window and a small section of the rear elevation were removed for a doorway. The new addition on this floor includes the building's main entry and a large lobby. A single-flight stair and elevator provide access to the basement level of the historic school (Photo #12). The design in the stair railing is similar in design to those found in the historic school. The lobby and stairs are carpeted with modern finishes, trim and doors.

A north/south hallway from the 1st floor lobby accesses the housing units and laundry room on this floor of the addition. The housing units are all 2-bedroom with open plan layouts. Since this area is new construction, all materials, doors, windows and trim are modern, not dissimilar to the new basement apartments in the school. Flooring materials in the units include carpeting in the living and bedrooms and linoleum in the bedrooms and bathrooms.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Floor**

In the historic school, the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor is at ground level. In addition to the main entry, hallway and classrooms, the footprint on this floor originally included an auditorium and stage along the east end of the school.

Originally, the main entrance to the school was through three doors centered in the north elevation. These doors open into a lobby with a wide set of steps leading up to a set of double doors (Photo #14). Glazed tile covers the lower third of the lobby walls with textured block above. The high ceilings are intact with perforated panels and simple crown molding. The lobby floors are asphalt tile; a lighter shade runs through the middle with a darker shade for the border and base trim. The steps are physically divided into three sections by two sets of steel handrails. Additional handrails are attached to the walls on both sides.

A set of double doors framed by glass block leads from the lobby to the main hallway. The wood doors have five rows of three clear glass panes. The hallway is a large volume of space with high ceilings and asphalt tile floor (Photo #15). The flooring is laid diagonally with lighter tiles through the middle and darker tiles forming a border.



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Like the lobby, the lower third of the hallways walls have glazed tile with chair rail. Unlike the lobby, the glazed tile was used as base trim. Above the tile, the walls are plaster. The original ceiling heights are intact with white perforated panels.

Most of the original classroom doors remain operable as the entrances into the individual housing units. The remaining doors are intact to relate the original layout, but are inoperable. Each classroom door is wood with 15 glass panes (Photo #15). The glass is a clear, privacy glass. The original hardware remains in most cases with the addition of deadbolt locks for security. Small nameplates, probably for teacher or class names, are also intact on most doors.

The housing units on this floor include four one-bedroom and one efficiency. The original classroom walls remain intact with newly constructed walls dividing those spaces into housing units (Photo #19). The reconfigured classrooms retain their original size window openings and art deco style radiator covers. Large blackboards also remain in many units. The original coat nooks and closets along what was the rear classroom wall were also retained and re-used as storage in the bedrooms and bathrooms (Photo #20). These elements include shallow nooks, approximately 4 feet high, centered on the wall. The coat nooks are framed by steel trim. At either end of the nook is a small closet, similar height, with wood doors.

High ceilings were retained throughout the apartments except in small areas over the kitchens where bulkheads were created to accommodate mechanicals (Photo #19). Since the classrooms were not subdivided originally, doors for the bedrooms and bathrooms are modern. Baseboards on the original walls are wood; new walls have vinyl base. The floors are a mix of carpet and linoleum.

Units 219 and 220 on this floor were converted from offices. The message board and glass block around the entry into Unit 220 were retained to convey the different use of these spaces (Photo #15).

At the east end of the main hallway, a wide set of steps leads to the original auditorium (Photo #16). A set of double doors with steel frames is set in a glass block opening. The auditorium has been subdivided into two spaces. The area for the audience remains a large space with movable office partitions and  $\frac{3}{4}$  walls for storage, food pantry, etc. The original high ceilings, window openings and hardwood floors are intact. Glazed tile was utilized on the lower fourth of the walls. The original exterior entrance remains operable.

The stage itself was enclosed as an individual housing unit with a solid wall on the inside of the stage opening. The housing unit is accessed via a doorway in the adjacent stairhall. The proscenium arch and stage front with storage were retained and are visible from the office area (Photo #17). The flat arch over the stage has fluted sides and theater faces carved in the upper corners. The trim and storage along the front of the stage retains its stained finish.

To connect the school with the new addition, two windows on this level were removed from the south elevation. The narrow passageway between the old and new contains a staircase and elevator. One window was used for the elevator opening, the other for a doorway to the stair. The exterior brick is visible to convey this as an exterior wall originally. An existing door in the school's hallway was utilized as an access point from the hallway to the addition.

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The 2nd floor in the addition is very similar to the lower level, except for a slight change in the footprint as the addition narrows to join the historic school. The change eliminates the lobby and stair, which are unnecessary on this level. Ceiling heights are typical for new construction. The addition's north/south hallway accesses five, 2-bedroom housing units and a laundry room. The housing units are all 2-bedroom with modern finishes, trim, windows and doors (Photo #21). The floors are carpeted in the hallway, living and bedrooms. Linoleum was used in the bedrooms, bathrooms and laundry room.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Floor**

The east/west hallway within the historic school remains as it was built with original ceiling heights, door layouts, flooring and trim (Photo #22). The classroom doors were retained as entries into the individual housing units. The hallway details match the 2<sup>nd</sup> with glazed tiled on the lower third and plaster above. The original ceiling heights remain intact with drop pendant light fixtures. The stairhalls at the east and west end of the hallway were retained. The stairhall doors are framed by glass block. These doors are style like the classroom doors with individual glass panes. The stairhalls have the same wall details as the hall, glazed tile and plaster. One- and two-bedroom housing units are located on this floor of the historic school.

As with the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, the housing units were contained within existing classrooms with two exceptions. First, two classrooms were located on the south side of the hallway, between the stairs. To provide access to the new housing units, part of one of these classrooms was utilized for a hallway to the addition and space for refuse collection. The rest of this classroom was incorporated into the housing unit in the adjacent classroom, creating a 2-bedroom unit. The most significant impact to this arrangement was the loss of part of the storage nook along the rear wall.

Second, in the middle of the hallway on the north side (above where the main lobby/entry are on the 2nd), were the school's only restrooms (Photo #23). Doors into the girls' and boys' restrooms face each other, tucked beneath an arched opening in the hallway wall. The arch and doors (fixed in place) remain and the restroom spaces were incorporated into housing units as bedrooms. To access these bedrooms, doorways were added in the adjacent two classrooms. This change also eliminated part of the storage nook.

As with the floor below, interior amenities remain including chalkboards and Art Deco radiator covers (Photo #28). Ceilings remain at their original heights except where bulkhead were created for mechanicals (Photo #27)

The new addition joins the historic school on the east side of the staircase at the west end (Photo #25). Like the lower floors, the school requires a staircase/elevator to access the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the addition (Photo #26). In this area a section of what was the original brick exterior wall remains visible.

This floor of the new addition matches the 2<sup>nd</sup> with a north/south hallway, five 2-bedroom housing units and a laundry (Photo #30). The materials and finishes are all modern construction including carpet in the hallway, living rooms and bedrooms and linoleum in the bathrooms, kitchens and laundry. The ceiling heights are typical for modern construction.

**SUMMARY**

The Lora B. Pearson School is a 3-level, Art Deco school with a 3-level modern addition. Although rehabilitated from its original school function into senior-housing, the historic school retains its significant, character-defining features including hallways and stairs, classroom doors, window openings and high ceilings. Most housing units

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were contained within the school's original classroom spaces leaving the majority of the original classroom walls intact. The modern addition was joined to the school via the rear elevation with little affect to the school's significant features and without affecting the primary (north) elevation nor its east or west ends. The exterior materials on the addition reflect the original school, but are clearly modern and distinguishable from the original.

Interior amenities/features like Art Deco radiator covers, blackboards, storage closets and stair railings remain intact. Although the auditorium stage was incorporated into a housing unit, the prescenum arch and storage along the stage front remain.

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*Lora B. Pearson School, Shelby County, IN*

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The Lora B. Pearson School is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Indiana's Multiple Property Documentation form "Indiana's Public Common and High Schools." The school fits the criteria for the property type: Two or more room consolidated rural and urban schools. Additionally, the school reflects the Art Deco style, an architectural style utilized almost exclusively for public and commercial buildings. Pearson is the only Shelbyville elementary school listed in the Shelby County Historic Sites and Structures Inventory. The only other Shelbyville school buildings noted in the inventory are the gymnasium (c. 1922), high school (c. 1911) and jr. high (c. 1917).

**History**

The Shelbyville school system dates back to the early 1800s. The earliest school was a log building on the public square. A one-room brick school was constructed around 1827. In the late 1830s, the Shelby County seminary, a 2-story brick building, was constructed in Shelbyville. It burned in 1852, was re-built in a different location in 1856 and burned again in 1865. A third seminary, known as School No. 1, was built in the same location with 12 classrooms in 1867. The school opened with 580 students and 10 teachers and included 3 years of high school classes.

When legislation was passed providing education to black students, an elementary school was constructed in 1870 for them on South Harrison. Originally known as School No. 2, it was later named Booker T. Washington School. This school closed in 1949 and the students were integrated into their neighborhood schools. The building was demolished sometime after 1972.

Although specific details are sparse on the early growth in the school system, enrollment in the schools in Shelbyville continued to rise over the next 20+ years to more than 1,000 students in 1880. In 1884, School No. 3, another elementary school, opened in Shelbyville. This school was known as the Hill Building for many years before it was re-named the Thomas A. Hendricks School. In the 1890s, three schools were constructed in Shelbyville, including a new high school, School No. 4 on Colescott Avenue, where the Lora B. Pearson School stands and School No. 5 on Hamilton Street, later named for Alvin C. Kibbey. The seminary (School No. 1) on Franklin Street was then utilized as an elementary school.

Enrollment grew in Shelbyville as a result of the overall increase in the local population and due to the stringent attendance laws in Indiana. In 1899, the state attendance laws were tightened requiring all children between ages 6 and 15 to attend school except those between 13 and 15 who, if working, could attend for 12 consecutive weeks only. Just two years later, the age was extended to 16 with no employment exceptions.

Another elementary school, Walkerville School, was constructed in 1900. Locally, in 1901, two Kindergartens opened in Shelbyville at Colescott and Franklin Street schools. At Colescott the Kindergarten classes were held in a separate building on the corner of the lot. At this time, the Shelbyville school system included five elementary schools and one high school. Enrollment in the 1910s reach over 2,100 students with about 50 teachers.

The high school, which opened in 1896, was expected to last for many years, but by 1910, had over 200 students enrolled. With the growth in attendance, a new high school opened in 1912. The old high school was used for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades from all the elementary schools.

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As the continued student population grew, the elementary schools became crowded with Grades 1 through 6. After an addition to the high school in 1918 for the Jr. High students, the 6<sup>th</sup> grade from each elementary school moved into the Junior High building. In 1922, a new high school gymnasium was added to the high school complex.

In 1923, a new elementary school, known as the Charles Major School, opened to replace the Franklin Street School (School No. 1). To reduce expenses during the Depression, the Kibbey School was "temporarily" closed in 1931 and the Kindergartens were eliminated in 1932. However, with funding from the federal government, School No. 2, Booker T. Washington, was remodeled and the brick exterior stuccoed in the late 1930s.

In 1941, an addition was built at Charles Major School and Booker T. Washington School was closed. Charles Major was closed in 1983 and demolished in 1985 to make way for a senior citizens apartment complex. The Kibbey building, which was closed during the Depression, never re-opened. In 1942, the building was sold and later demolished.

During this time, Shelbyville's school attendance continued to grow. In 1951, there were 2,000 students and just ten years later that number had increased to 3,000. To meet the growing demand for more classroom space, in 1956, Coulston School opened, the 1<sup>st</sup> new school since Pearson was built in 1939. The school was described as "incorporating a new architectural style." Students at Walkerville were transferred to this new facility. Walkerville School was utilized for various purposes until it was closed in 1975. Construction continued in Shelbyville with a new high school complex in 1959 and another "modern" elementary school in 1961.

**School Construction**

The Lora B. Pearson School is located in a residential neighborhood in Shelbyville served by a school on this block from 1893 through 2000. A brick, 2-story school, known as School No. 4, was constructed in this block of Colescott Avenue in 1893. This building housed students from Grades 1-6 for more than forty years and kindergarten in an adjacent building for thirty years. Then, in the late 1930s, officials began discussing plans to construct an addition to Colescott School. The classrooms were crowded and additional space was needed.

In 1938, the School Board requested federal funding through the Public Works Administration for an addition to School No. 4. This federal program, created in 1933, was charged with helping fund the construction of public works including hospitals, schools, airports, and affordable housing. The program spent more than \$6 billion on 34,000 projects. More than 70% of schools and 33% of hospitals built between 1933 and 1941 utilized PWA funds.

The funding request for the addition was approved, but shortly after, local sentiment shifted toward the construction of a new school. School board members and parents felt the 1893 building was out-of-date and insufficient for educational purposes. So, in July, 1938, a new proposal was submitted to the PWA requesting funding for the demolition of the 1893 school and the construction of a new one. The new request was approved in September to fund 45% (\$65,454) of the construction of the new school.

The school board selected the D.A. Bohlen & Son architectural firm in Indianapolis as the architect. The firm was already well-known in Shelbyville, having designed the Shelby County Courthouse constructed in 1935, also in the Art Deco style. The firm was founded in 1853 by German immigrant Diedrich A. Bohlen, whose son Oscar joined him in practice in 1884. The firm had a high reputation for its school buildings. At least in part, this was due to their extensive work over multiple decades in planning buildings for St. Mary's of the Woods College in Terre



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Haute, from the 1850s through the 1960s. After the elder Bohlen's death in 1890, Oscar continued the firm, becoming one of the 1<sup>st</sup> registered architects and registered engineers in Indiana. Some of the firm's best-known designs are the Indianapolis City Market in 1886 and the Murat Temple in 1910. In addition to the Shelby County Courthouse, other local designs by the firm include the Presbyterian (c. 1885) and First Baptist (c. 1879) churches, the William S. Major House (c. 1889) and the J.G. DePrez House (c. 1889).

Bohlen & Son may have started or renewed a client relationship with local officials as a result of their commission for Porter Pool and Bathhouse in Shelbyville in 1930. It too is Art Deco/Moderne, like their designs for the Shelby County Courthouse (1936) and Pearson School (1939).

Oscar's son, August Carl Bohlen joined the firm in 1909. August was the architect on the Lora B. Pearson School. He co-authored Indiana's original building codes and designed the façade for Sts. Peter & Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis. The firm remained in business under the name D.A. Bohlen & Son until 1961 when a new partner joined the firm. It changed names again in 1971 before being purchased in 1991 by an engineering firm, which eventually discontinued the name. In all, four generations of Bohlens had practiced architecture at the company.

After school officials voted to accept PWA funding October 5<sup>th</sup>, 1938, plans for the new school moved quickly. On October 12<sup>th</sup>, school officials inspected schools in Indianapolis with the architect to provide input on what plans would best suit their needs. On November 2<sup>nd</sup>, the first draft was submitted and the plans, with corrections, approved. A month later, Shelby Construction Company was selected as the construction company.

The footprint of the new school was much larger than the 1893 school, requiring the purchase of adjacent lots in 1938. These lots provided some playground space, but in 1940 additional lots were purchased to enlarge the playground area.

The last classes were held in the 1893 school building on January 20, 1939. The rest of that semester and for a few weeks that fall, Colescott students attended the Hendricks building. Work began on the new school January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1939 with the demolition of the existing school. The separate kindergarten building on the corner of the lot had all ready been sold and moved.

Construction of the new building was expected to take 10-12 months. Since it was dedicated, November 3, 1939, work apparently proceeded on schedule. When completed, the Colescott School had twelve classrooms on two floors with a small auditorium.

School No. 4 was known as the Colescott School until 1958 when it was renamed the Lora B. Pearson Elementary School. Lora B. Pearson was born in 1873 and spent her entire life in Shelbyville, Indiana. After graduating from Indiana State Normal College, Miss Pearson began her teaching career in 1896 at School No. 5. From 1898 until 1909, she taught at four different Shelbyville schools, including Colescott (1898-1900), before returning to Colescott where she spent the remainder of her career. She taught 1<sup>st</sup> grade from 1909 through 1928 and then art and music in the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades from 1928 through 1941. In addition to her teaching duties, Miss Pearson also served as the school's principal for 32 years. She retired in 1941, just two years after this school was built. In 1958, at the request of parents, former students and local officials, the school board voted to re-name Colescott School to honor Miss Pearson for her 45 years of service to the Shelbyville School system, 34 at the Colescott School. She died just one year later in 1959.

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**School Closing**

Pearson School remained an active part of the education system in Shelbyville until 2000. At the time, Shelbyville had four elementary schools, Pearson, Hendricks, Coulston and Loper. As early as 1997, discussions began on re-configuring the school system. Several scenarios were discussed including adding on to Pearson and Hendricks, closing both, and/or constructing a 600-student elementary school. Also at the center of the discussion was de-centralizing the system's kindergarten, which had been held at only one location since it was re-started.

In August, 1998, after much study and public input, the school board voted to close both Pearson and Hendricks, the only remaining "historic" buildings and construct a new 600-pupil elementary school, with renovations at a later date to both Loper and Coulston Elementary Schools. In addition, the kindergarten would be de-centralized with kindergarten classes at each of the elementary schools. At the end of the 1999-2000 school year, both Pearson and Hendricks schools were permanently closed.

A few years ago, the Shelbyville School Board voted to sell the Pearson School building for redevelopment into senior housing. Those renovations were completed and some of the same students who attended school here, now call the school building home.

**Architecture**

The Lora B. Pearson School reflects the Art Deco style of architecture, a style characterized by linear lines, vertical appearance, stepped façade and stylized, decorative elements including volutes, zig-zags, and chevrons. Popular from 1920 through 1940, the style was commonly used in public and commercial structures, rarely on domestic architecture.

The Lora B. Pearson School is a representative example of this architectural style. The elaborate entry incorporates volutes and geometrical designs. The entry design extends above the roofline, a common design element and demonstrates the linear lines the style is known for. The stylized geometric designs above the canopy are typical as are the volutes along the roofline coping.

The Pearson School is also significant for its depiction of the school type: Two or More Room Consolidated Rural and Urban Schools. Identified in the Multiple Property Documentation form, this school type was developed in the 1880s and 1890s to meet the needs of consolidated and graded schools. Both graded and high school buildings fit in this category since few distinctions were made to differentiate the various classes. Early examples often had architectural elaborations like bell towers, central furnaces, and large banks of double-hung windows.

Around WWI, a new plan was developed, two-rooms deep with a double-loaded corridor. This plan, which gained widespread use, was often oriented with the long side toward the street.

By the 1920s and 1930s, when Pearson was constructed, schools tended to be less vertical with central entries and wings extending off each side. In urban areas, these schools included shallow hipped or flat rooflines. Entry foyers might have a staircase to the raised main floor or split stair, up to the main floor and down to the basement.

Indianapolis architect, Adolph Scherrer, Jr., was commissioned to design a standard school plan in 1919 by the Indianapolis School Board. His plan could be adapted to 4, 8, 12, or 16 classrooms, with various other amenities

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including offices, nurses' office, gym and auditorium. Other architects, especially in Central Indiana, were influenced by Scherrer's plans.

Pearson reflects numerous elements of school architecture during the early 1900s, including central heating system and large banks of windows. The layout exhibits elements from new plans developed in the mid-1910s with its double-loaded corridor and street orientation. Pearson reflects elements of the Scherrer plans including central entry, flat roof, and architectural detailing focused on the central bay.

On the interior, Pearson retains many elements typical for this type of school, including plaster walls, stained woodwork, chalkboards and cloak rooms.

**Summary**

The Lora B. Pearson School served the Shelbyville community from 1939 through 2000. An editorial in the local paper on January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1939 lamented the loss of the 1893 school, which was to be "replaced by a more pretentious structure that will, ere long, be replaced by another to more nearly meet the demands of a progressive city!" This editorial looked into the future, anticipating the demolition of a school not yet built. Fortunately, rather than being demolished, the Lora B. Pearson School was rehabilitated for a new use maintaining its significant presence in the community.

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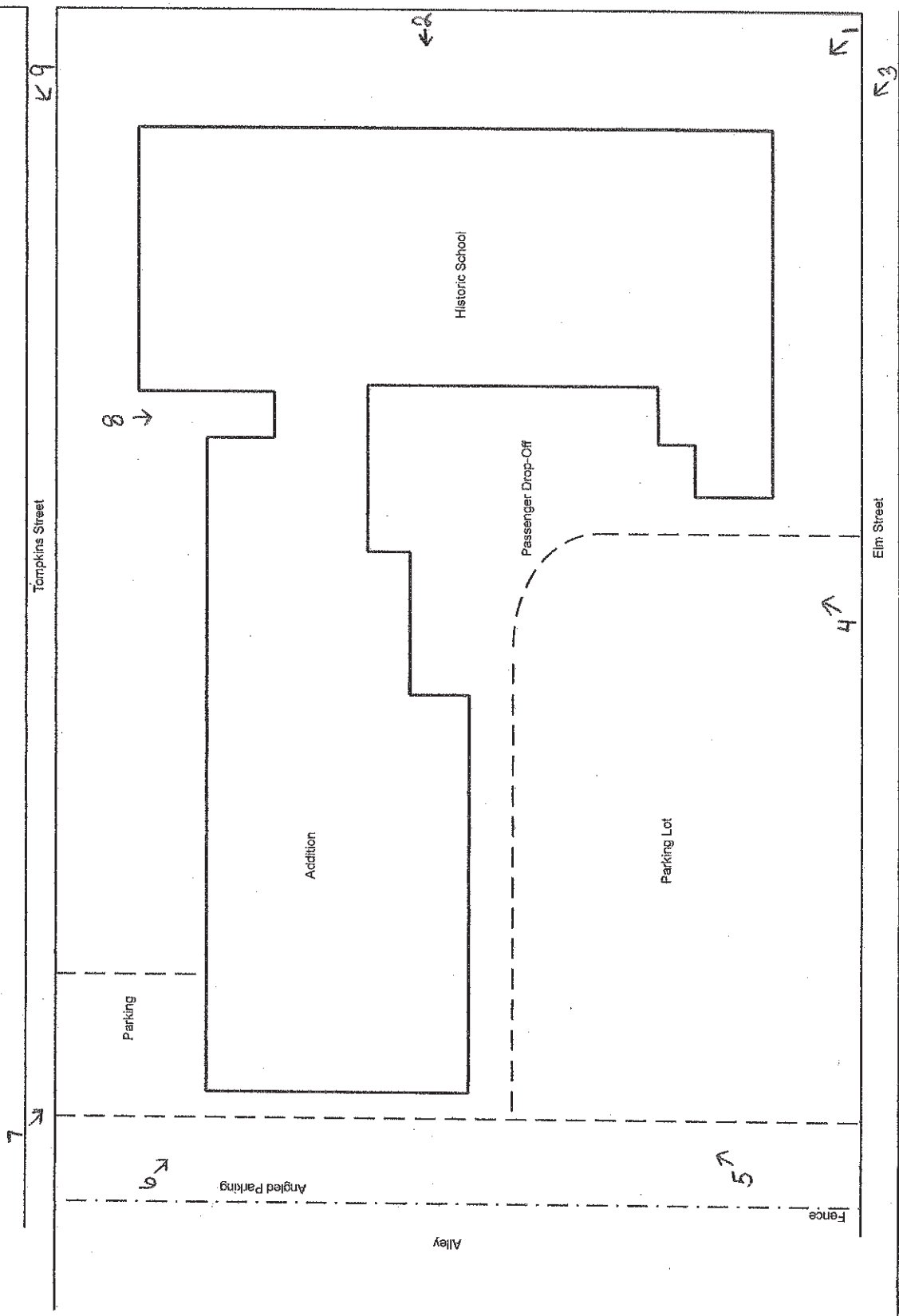
**Boundary Description**

The Lora B. Pearson School boundaries include lots 1, 2, 3, & 4 facing Colescott Street, lots 1 & 2 facing Elm Street and lots 1 & 2 facing Tompkins Street as well as the 16 foot alley running east/west along the south side of the lots facing Colescott, all located in the Susan Colescott Addition to Shelbyville.

**Boundary Justification**

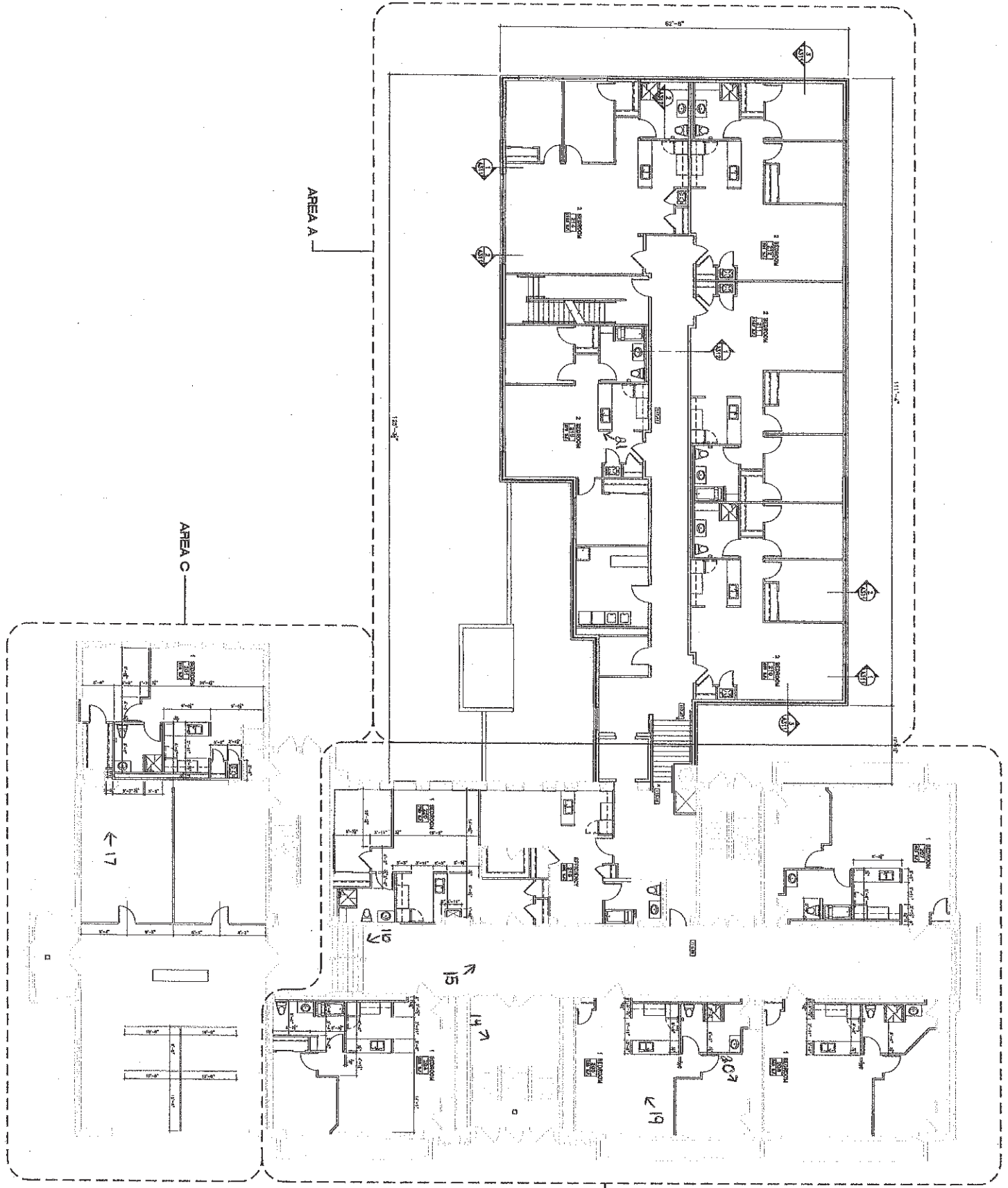
These boundaries include the four lots facing Colescott where the original 1893 School was located as well as the additional four lots purchased between 1938 and 1940 for the larger school and playground space. These boundaries encompass on the school structure and accompanying land originally utilized for playgrounds.





Lora B. Pearson School  
Site Plan

OVERALL FLOOR PLAN - SECOND FLOOR



AREA A

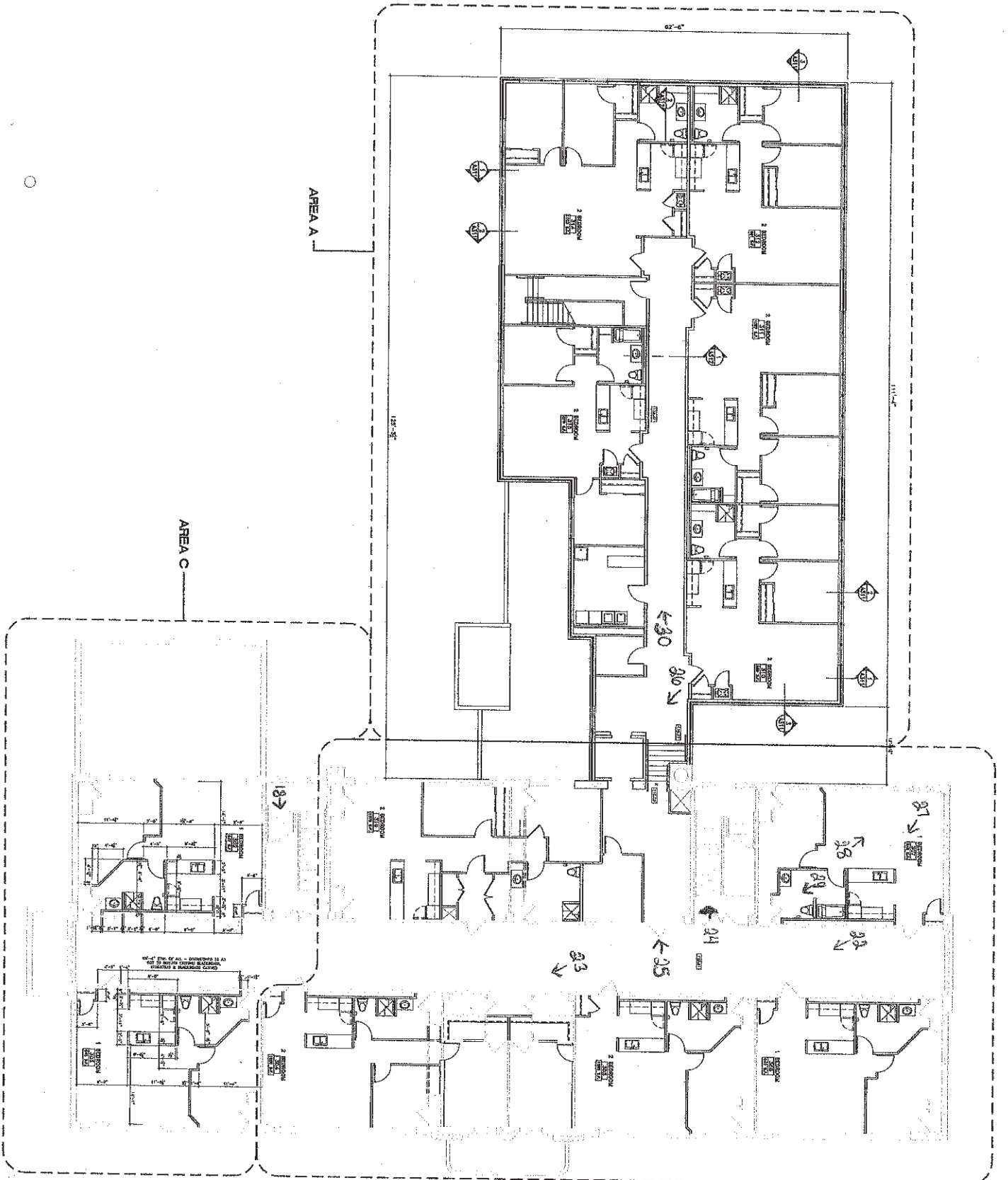
AREA C

← 17

← 15

↗ 14

← 19



AREA C

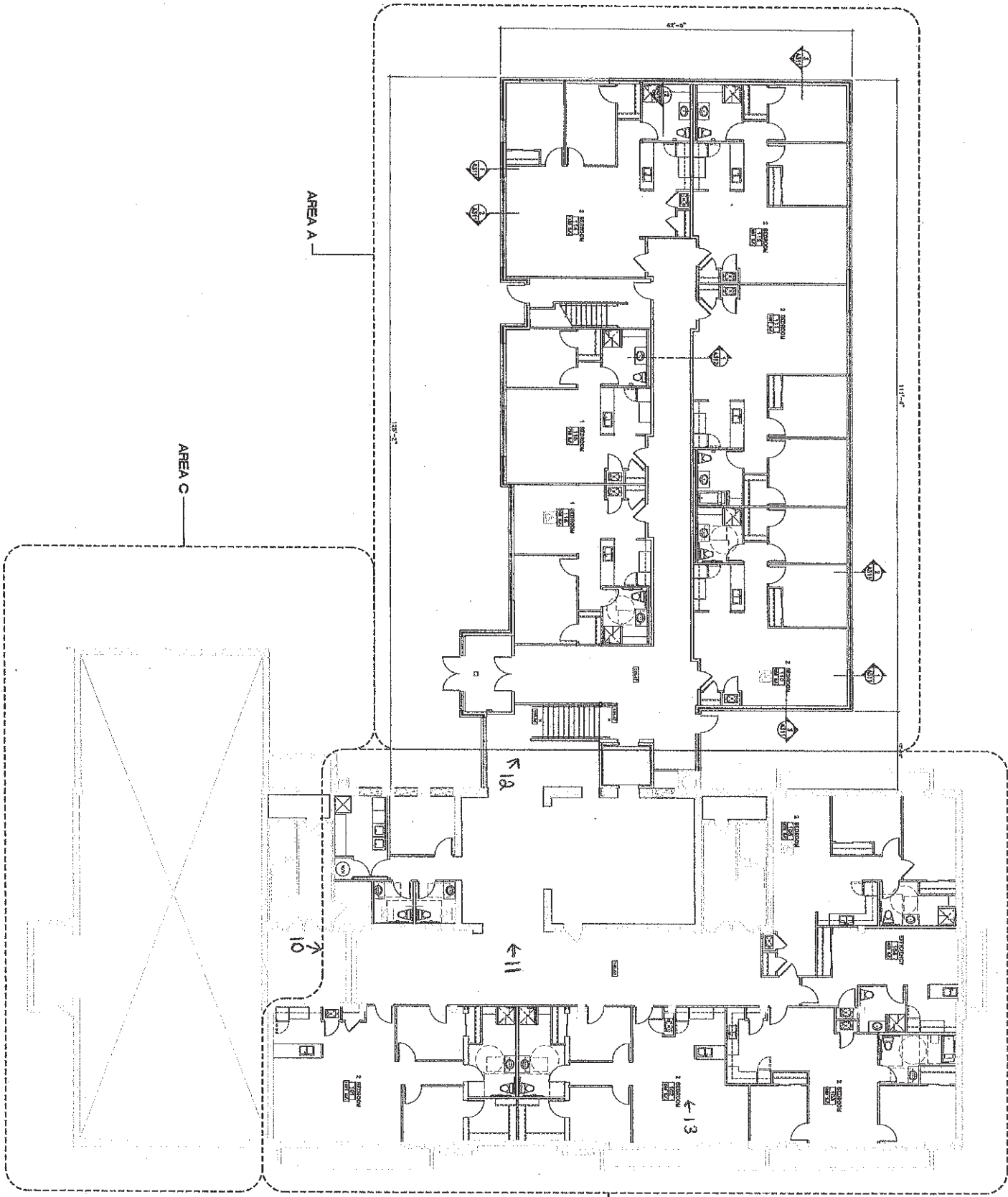
AREA A

OVERALL FLOOR PLAN - THIRD FLOOR



ALL OF THIS PLAN IS SUBJECT TO AS SHOWN IN THE GENERAL CONTRACT DOCUMENTS

OVERALL FLOOR PLAN - FIRST FLOOR



AREA A

AREA B

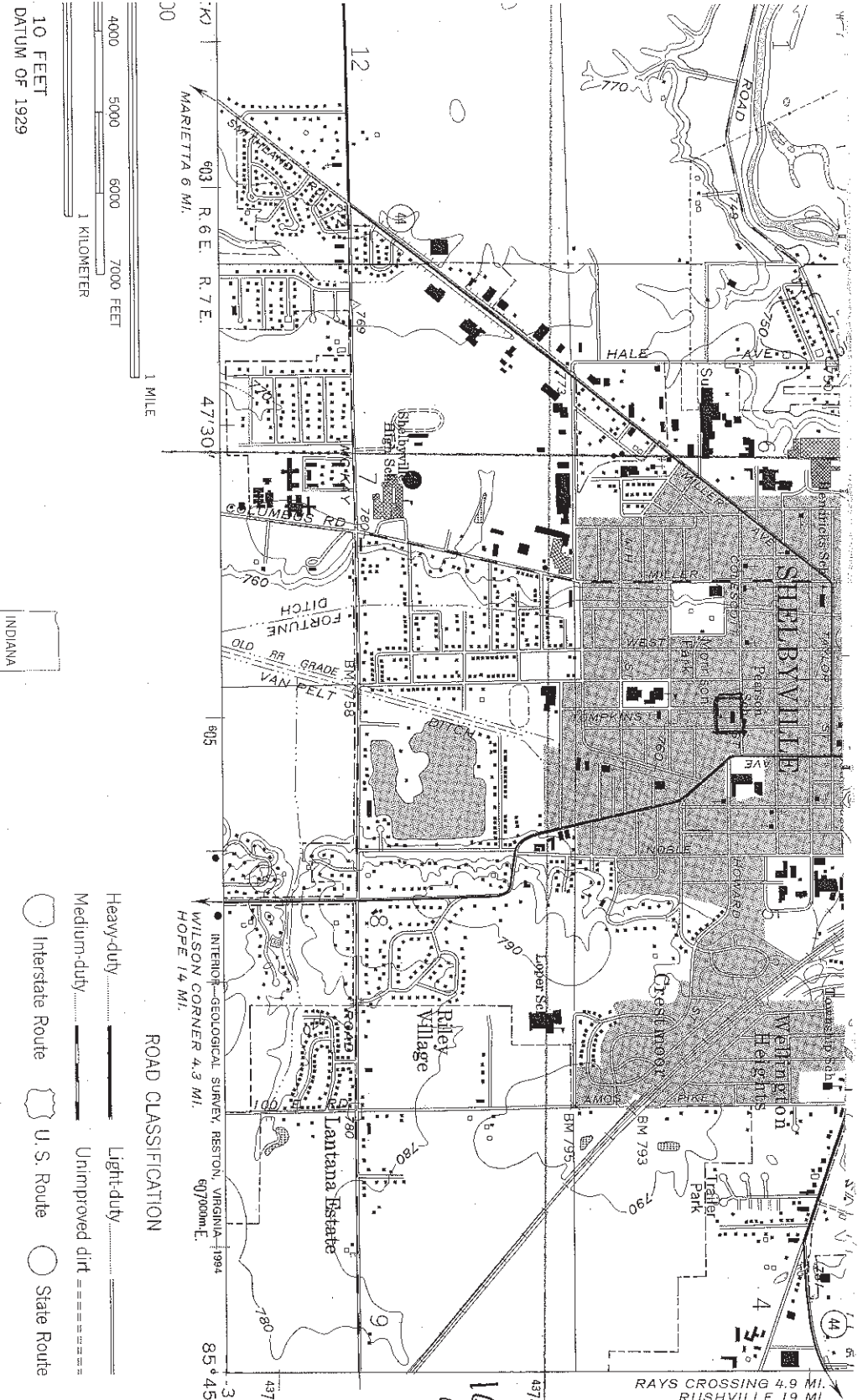
AREA C

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11

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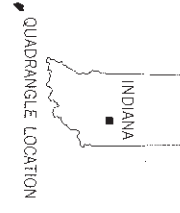
MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
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 URGES, INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA 46204  
 SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

Revisions shown in purple and woodland compiled in cooperation  
 with State of Indiana agencies from aerial photographs  
 taken 1984 and other sources. This information not field checked  
 Map edited 1988

**SHELBYVILLE, IND.**  
 39085-E7-TF-024  
 1962  
 PHOTOREVISED 1988  
 MINOR REVISION 1994  
 DMA 3863 III SE - SERIES V851

**ROAD CLASSIFICATION**

- Heavy-duty
- Medium-duty
- Light-duty
- Unimproved dirt
- Interstate Route
- U.S. Route
- State Route



RAYS CROSSING 4.9 MI.  
 RUSHVILLE 19 MI.

*Lora B. Pearson  
 School  
 115 W. Lakescott  
 Shelbyville, IN  
 Shelby County  
 4374980  
 4374700*

*(WALDRON)  
 3862 1 NW*