HISTORIC DESIGNATION STUDY REPORT
September 2014

I. NAME

Historic: **Fifteenth District School / Cold Spring Avenue School / William McKinley School**

Common Name: **V. E. Carter Human Resources Center**

II. LOCATION 2001 West Vliet Street / 2014 West McKinley Avenue and Milwaukee Public Schools Playground at 1255 North 20th Street

Legal Description - Tax Key No. 3641201111 (SCHOOL)
LYNDE'S ADDN IN SW ¼ SEC 19-7-22 BLOCK 1 LOTS 1 TO 22 INCL & N ½ VAC W MCKINLEY AVE ADJ

Tax Key No. 3641211110 (PLAYGROUND)
LYNDE'S ADD'N IN SW ¼ SEC 19-7-22 BLOCK 2 LOTS 1-2 & THAT PART LOTS 17-18 COM NE COR SD LOT 18 TH S 100'-TH W 135'-TH N .98'- TH NELY & NWLY ALG ARC OF CUR (RAD -50' CH BEARING N 0DEG 10MIN 30SEC E 97.98') 128.22'-TH N 1.04'-TH E 135' TO BEG & S ½ VAC W MCKINLEY AVE ADJ SD LOTS 1 & 18

III. CLASSIFICATION Sites

IV. OWNER V. E. Carter Development Group Inc.
2001 West Vliet Street
Milwaukee, WI 53205 (SCHOOL)

City of Milwaukee Playground
5225 West Vliet Street
Milwaukee, WI 53205 (PLAYGROUND)

ALDERMAN Ald. Robert Bauman 3rd Aldermanic District

NOMINATOR Ald. Robert Bauman

V. YEAR BUILT 1885, 1888, 1898, 1958 (Milwaukee Sentinel 1887 February 18 page 7 column 3 and March 13 page 6 column 1; Board of Public Works Annual Reports 1888 page 14 and 1898 page 19; Milwaukee Permit Records 2001 West Vliet Street)

ARCHITECT: Mollerus and Lotter (1898) (Board of Public Works Annual Report 1898 page 19)
Frederick Seyring (1885, possible attribution, see text)

VI. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

THE AREA

The Fifteenth District School / McKinley School was built at the northwest corner of McKinley Avenue and North 20th Street. McKinley Avenue is located on the city's near west side just over a mile and a half from the Central Business District. The neighborhood is predominantly residential with houses built in the 1870s and 1880s. There are examples of Queen Anne, Gothic Revival, and Italianate style buildings with later houses and duplexes filling in the empty lots through the turn of the twentieth century. These latter houses were designed in the Arts and Crafts style or vernacular front gable form.

This portion of the west side was originally the domain of large land holdings and multi-acre estates. Some were treated as gentleman's farms, some as investments. In the area bounded by West Wisconsin Avenue, West Vliet Street, North 12th Street and North 27th Street five individuals owned over 75% of the property and included Elisha Eldred, Hans Crocker, William P. Lynde and Cyrus Hawley. These men were among the pioneer residents of the city and they quickly emerged as leaders in the civic, business, professional and entrepreneurial arenas of Milwaukee. Over time as the city grew, they subdivided their land to create residential neighborhoods. (West Side Neighborhood Historic Resources Survey, City of Milwaukee, September, 1984, Immigration and Settlement pp. 6-8)

The street layout followed the grid pattern established by the earlier development to the east. The 1856 City Charter, as well as the 1874 Charter, required all new streets and alleys to align with all existing and adjacent platting (Roger D. Simon, "The Expansion of an Industrial City: Milwaukee 1880-1910." PhD. Dissertation, History, University of Wisconsin, 1971 p. 23). This was done to prevent the misalignment of streets that had occurred when Kilbourntown and Juneautown were platted. The charter resulted in a uniform grid pattern that became the only legal way to subdivide city land into residential lots. The west side continued to be divided into subdivisions and by 1885, all the land to 27th Street had been platted except a few minor parcels. (West Side Neighborhood Historic Resources Survey, City of Milwaukee, September, 1984, Immigration and Settlement pp. 6-8)

Public transportation went hand in hand with subdivision development. The first horse cars lines were established in Milwaukee in 1859 and primarily served the dense central business district. The West Side Railway Company established its Wells Street horse car line in 1874 that terminated at today's 35th Street. A route was added to Juneau Avenue from North 12th Street to North 27th Street in 1879. The West Side Railway put its first electric trolley into use on April 4, 1890. This fast, efficient and all-weather electric trolley greatly increased property values west of North 27th Street and the area developed rapidly in the 1890s. Such transportation advances helped in the development of the blocks around Fifteenth District / McKinley School. (West Side Neighborhood Historic Resources Survey, City of Milwaukee, September, 1984, Transportation pp. 10-12)

Cold Spring Avenue, as West McKinley Avenue was originally known, was named for the western terminus of the street, Cold Spring Park. The park, in turn, was named for the natural spring located in the northwest corner of the grounds. The grounds were bounded by 27th Street, 35th Street, West Juneau Avenue and West Vliet Street, the equivalent of 16 city blocks. The entrance was located at the east end of the park on 27th Street and was accessible by two plank roads in the early years and the street railway system later. A grove of trees stood on the

grounds and the whole area was surrounded by a forest. (West Side Neighborhood Historic Resources Survey, City of Milwaukee, September, 1984, Recreation and Entertainment pp. 8-11)

Racing was a favorite sport at this location with mention of racing on the site going back as early as 1848. The Wisconsin Regional Agricultural and Mechanical Association used the park for a race track in 1866 as did the Milwaukee Driving Park Association for a few years after 1877. Local driving clubs of the well-to-do held invitational trotting races there in the 1860s and 1870s. The location was also the site of the second annual State Fair. It also housed Civil War soldiers as Camp Washburn until vacated in 1864. Traveling circuses, the William Cody Wild West Show and the Milwaukee Light Horse Squadron performed martial arts there. A hotel, called the Cold Spring House, was located adjacent to the park and provided accommodations for visitors and racers. It was notorious for its gambling, cockfights, courtesans and dances. After the State Fair declined to purchase the property for a permanent location, the land was ultimately subdivided into building lots in 1891. This is today's Cold Spring Park/McKinley Boulevard Historic District. (West Side Neighborhood Historic Resources Survey, City of Milwaukee, September, 1984, Recreation and Entertainment pp. 8-11)

The portion of Cold Spring Avenue west of North 27th Street was renamed McKinley Boulevard on May 5, 1902 just months after President William McKinley died on September 14, 1901. The remainder of Cold Spring Avenue, including the portion that is part of this nomination, was renamed McKinley Avenue on December 20, 1926. (Milwaukee Legislative Reference Bureau Street Files)

The Fifteenth District / McKinley School was built in the heart of this growing West Side and the school property extended along Cold Spring Avenue, later McKinley Avenue, between North 21st and North 22nd Street.

Building Description

The Fifteenth District School / McKinley School is located along that portion of West McKinley Avenue (vacated today) between North 21st and North 22nd Streets. It was built in three stages during the 19th century and a fourth addition was constructed in 1958. Today, the grounds include all of the property from West McKinley Avenue to West Vliet Street. There is no landscaping around the school. The Fifteenth District / McKinley School was built to the sidewalk line at both its east (North 20th Street) and west (North 21st Street) entrances. It appears that there was only minimal setback from McKinley Avenue on the south side of the building when first constructed. The south side of the school property is now paved and extends to a grassy playground. The north side of the school grounds once contained houses and commercial properties but over time, these have been removed and added to the school property. This area is paved in asphalt and appears to be used mostly for parking.

The first portion of the school was constructed at the northwest corner of North 20th Street and West McKinley Avenue (then known as Cold Spring Avenue). The second portion was built to the rear or west and the third portion, connected to the second, was built fronting North 21st Street. Originally the school hugged W. McKinley Avenue because, as stated above, there were houses and commercial buildings to the north to Vliet Street. The fourth portion is a one-story wing that extends from the northeast corner of the original portion of the building along North 20th Street.

Each of the original three sections was built with cream color brick, now painted. All three are two stories high with raised basements and hip roofs. All three have chimneys (some altered) and either louvered lanterns or a cupola. All three are predominantly rectangular in footprint with the first two segments having slight offsets on their south elevations. This creates a shallow "u" shaped configuration. The third segment is also a shallow "u" in footprint to enable its east elevation to fit around and join the west wall of segment two.

The original main entrance fronted North 20th Street and is the most articulated of the original two portions. It is identified as section “A” in the 1888 Rascher Fire Insurance map. The entry bay projects from the body of the building and is crowned with a large gable in which is set a three-part Diocletian window. On the second story below the Diocletian window is centered a rectangular plaque which once might have held the school's name. Below the plaque is a grouping of three tall windows. To either side are single narrow windows. The actual entry doors at the first story are concealed by a one-story enclosed porch. Openings are located on the north and south sides of the porch and are not visible when facing the school and a grouping of four windows in the porch fronts the sidewalk.

The foundation of Section “A” consists of rusticated stone above which are the rectangular openings of the basement windows. A dressed stone beltcourse/watertable forms the lintels above the windows. Both the second and the third stories are each delineated with brick beltcourses that serve as a continuous sill for the rectangular windows. Windows consist of two-over four sash and are grouped either in threes or arranged singly across the elevations. Windows are stacked above one another on the facades. Modest corbeling defines the cornice area. There are two smaller and one large dormer on the south slope of the roof. The smaller dormers have three fixed windows. The large dormer once matched, but now has metal louvers in place of the windows.

The second portion of the building, identified as Section “B” on the 1888 Rascher Map is located to the west of the original school and is connected by a two story hyphen with windows. It repeats much of the scale and detailing of the original portion of the building including roof ventilators, chimney (here original), and the delineation of stories with banding and fenestration.

The third segment of the school fronts onto North 21st Street. It was built in 1898. It is of Classical Revival style as defined by such details as a modillion cornice and two-story tall pilasters and pilasters that frame the entrance. The building nevertheless is generally of the same scale and height of the earlier two portions of the school. This addition features a hip roof, a raised basement story and tall windows stacked vertically across the facades. Windows are grouped into pairs and divided from one another by the simple brick pilasters. The pilasters rest on the beltcourse or watertable that defines the basement story. The pilasters terminate in simple caps below the cornice. In keeping with the Classical Revival vocabulary, the brick basement story features penciled rustication

The main elevation of this addition fronts North 21st Street and deviates from the other three elevations. The center portion of the façade consists of a seven unit projecting bay that features paired windows, pilasters and the main entrance. The entrance is centered on the façade and is demarcated by an arched opening framed by simple pilasters. The entry itself is recessed in the arch and features an arched transom. The pilasters that frame the entrance support a simplified cornice. Above the cornice appears a plaque, possibly an area that once held the name of the school. At the second story, above the plaque, is a three-part bay window.

To either side of the seven bay entry “wing” are small side entrances at the raised basement level. Three tall and nine square windows are grouped above the side entrances. Completing these side wings are blank walls articulated only with large framed rectangles at the second story, which in turn are framed by two-story pilasters.

The east elevation of the 1898 addition wraps around and joins the 1888 addition. There are no pilasters on this elevation.

The south and north elevations feature the two-story pilasters and paired windows.

The north elevation was always meant to be the rear or unseen portion of the school. A one story boiler house and coal house with tall smokestack was built at the junction of the 1888 portion and

the 1898 portion of the school in 1915. It was designed by Van Ryn & De Gelleke, the architects who were designing many buildings for the school board at this time.

The last addition to the school consists of a one-story, flat roofed structure built to the north east corner of the 1885 portion of the school in 1958. It was designed by Lefevre-Wiggins, and cost $125,000. This addition contained six classrooms and two toilet rooms. It is of contemporary design, with a strip of windows above a brick base, essentially a box attached onto to the north elevation. Today, all of its windows have been boarded up.

Alterations to the building include the blocking up of some windows with brick, and the boarding up of some window openings. Virtually all windows have heavy wire mesh screening over the openings. Modifications to two of the chimneys and the conversion of two of the dormers into ventilating units has also taken place but this is not documented in the permit records. There is significant peeling of the dark color paint that was applied after the Carter Center acquired the building. Otherwise the building is in a good state of preservation.

The adjacent playground is located to the south of the school building and features some playground equipment in a grassy area. It is fenced off with chain link fencing that matches the school property. The only access appears to be from the school property. It was created by the vacation of McKinley Avenue between North 20th and North 21st Street and occurred around 1970.

BRIEF HISTORY OF MILWAUKEE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

One aspect that is striking about the history of Milwaukee is the importance ordinary people attached to education. Newspaper articles are filled with stories of parents lobbying for various reforms and insisting that their children have decent, well-built school buildings.

Municipal education during Milwaukee's territorial period tended to be a sporadic affair in which schools were established wherever a room and a teacher could be found. The 1827 Michigan School Law, under which Wisconsin initially functioned, determined how many families were required to establish a common school in the territories and how taxes would be levied to support it. The law also provided for the selection of school commissioners, directors, and inspectors. These positions were sometimes elected and sometimes appointed. Despite the provision for free public schools, however, Milwaukee's first public schools were private schools, since the settlers had concerns more immediate than that of education. Milwaukee's first public school classes were held in 1835-1836 along the banks of the Milwaukee River. It appears that classes were held on both sides of the river during this year as each side of the river constituted a separate settlement at that time. (Buck, Pioneer History, 1840-1846, pp. 308-311; Stearns, p. 437; Roots, p. 3)

When Milwaukee incorporated in 1846, its citizens ensured that education would be a responsibility of the new municipal government. The Common Council quickly appointed a Board of School Commissioners to administer educational activities with one commissioner representing each ward. The Board acted directly through the school principals for the first 13 years. Some school buildings were acquired through purchase, but most schools were located in rented spaces. By the 1847-1848 school year, eight public schools were in operation with a total registration of 865 pupils and total school expenditures of $3,512.99. (Roots, pp. 3-4)

The decade of the 1850's was a period of both growth and recession. In 1852 five substantial brick buildings were erected, each capable of housing 350 pupils. They were two stories high in addition to a basement. One was located in each ward. The total cost of the five structures was $15,000 and John A. Messenger, brick maker, was the contractor. (Flower, History of Milwaukee,

1881, p. 519; Buck, Pioneer History 1840-1846, p. 314) Curriculum advances were made in addition to the improvements in the physical plant, and textbook uniformity was established. The German language also became part of standard education, since 2,577 children out of a total school population of 5,914 were of German origin. As the need for higher education became evident, two short-lived high schools were established. Both closed due to the recession brought on by the Panic of 1857. The Panic of 1857 caused enormous funding problems for the school system as a whole and temporarily set back the progress of public education. In 1859 Rufus King was elected by the Board as the first Superintendent of Schools to bring order to the disrupted school system. (Roots, p. 5)

From the 1860s through the 1870s the Milwaukee Public Schools experienced a period of steady growth. A graded plan was introduced which replaced the class or departmental system. Students were now promoted from grade to grade as they successfully completed a period of study. School district boundaries were drawn to conform to ward boundaries. The first city kindergarten, following on the heels of the privately sponsored ones, was instituted in 1879 and became part of the city-wide public school system in 1881. (Roots, pp. 6-8; Watrous, p. 416)

Under the superintendence of William A. Andersen (1883-1892), the school system developed into the multi-faceted operation that it is today. Under Andersen's administration an unprecedented 26 schools were built or annexed into the system. A number of these schools are still in use today. In addition to keeping up with the physical demands of a growing school population, Andersen also made progressive curriculum revisions. He promoted the addition of supplementary readings to various grades and encouraged public readings and dramatic presentations. Andersen also wrote a textbook for an experimental physics class and began a dialogue with teachers to discuss new methods of instruction and new courses. Cooking classes were made available to girls above the fourth grade level. (Roots, p. 9) Before he left office, Andersen saw his teaching staff grow to number 517, a significant increase over the 126 instructors working just 21 years earlier. The teachers were dispersed across 35 schools. The average three-story school structure held 14 instructors, one per classroom. (Roots, p. 17, 23) By 1898, Superintendent Henry Seifert reported that there were 47 school buildings in the city as well as 22, one-room moveable classrooms. (Tanzilo pp. 27-28) Funding for school buildings slowed by the mid-to-late 1890s as the country went through a nationwide depression and recession. (Tanzilo, p. 28) It picked up again after the turn of the twentieth century and school board reports are filled with the documented needs of an ever-expanding student population. Both maintenance and new construction were expensive.

After the turn of the twentieth century, school buildings tended, with some exceptions, to be less ornate and more utilitarian in appearance. Concrete and steel skeleton construction was introduced in 1904. (Tanzilo, p. 30)

School building design had historically been a process of requesting proposals and selecting among the submissions. This tended to give a variety to the early schools although the budget conscious School Board and Common Council often used a plan, with some variations, more than once. In 1852 the design of contractor John A. Messenger was used for five public schools. In 1856 Edward Townsend Mix picked up school commissions while in Milwaukee designing the Newhall House Hotel. The Seventh Ward School was subsequently built as was the Second Ward School building at the southwest corner of 9th Street and Juneau Avenue, completed in the fall of 1858. It was a mirror image twin of the Seventh Ward School. Mix decided that Milwaukee could use his talents and decided to stay in the Cream City. The Second Ward School still stands, now part of the Pabst Brewery Complex. This practice continued into the 20th century and Robert Tanzilo in his book Historic Milwaukee Public Schoolhouses documents other examples.

The Milwaukee Public schools opened its Architectural Division in 1906 with D. C. Otteson as director. He had previously supervised the construction of Milwaukee Central Library which opened in 1898. The Milwaukee firm of Van Ryn & DeGelleke worked for the school board half

time from 1912 through 1924 and produced some of the city's most notable high schools including Riverside, Bay View and Washington. After Otteson's death in 1922, the department was reorganized as the Bureau of Buildings and Grounds and named Guy E. Wiley as assistant chief of the department as well as in-house architect. He would work for MPS for 31 years. In 1932 Bohumil Jelinek, was hired as bureau chief. Despite in-house staff, some school buildings such as Emanuel Philipp School (1932) and Gaenslen School (1939) were designed by outside firms, in these two cases by Eschweiler and Eschweiler. (Tanzilo pp. 31-32)

After World War I construction of new school buildings focused on high schools and meeting the needs of the burgeoning neighborhoods growing to the west, north and south sides of the city. Expansion of school sites to create or enlarge playgrounds also occurred. The construction of schools for new educational concepts, like the junior high school, took place as well as schools for manual trades, adapting schools for social center functions and schools for handicapped. By 1943 Milwaukee Public Sschhols had 118 buildings as well as 33 playground buildings under its management. (Tanzilo, p. 33-35) School design continued to involve interiors meeting new educational needs and exteriors following the national stylistic trends. Pulaski, Rufus King and Gaenslen showed the marked influence of the Art Deco while some continued in the English Collegiate Gothic style.

World War II brought an abrupt change to the architectural landscape, including schools. The postwar world experienced a baby boom and a large new generation of children needed to go to school. MPS once again turned to outside architectural firms to supply designs. The resulting additions to existing schools and the new schools were less than memorable, characterized by flat roofed, plain surfaced buildings devoid of architectural detail.

Desegregation and population changes ultimately left some neighborhood schools closed while busing children to distant buildings.

Waves of change rolled over MPS since the 1960s. Desegregation and busing was followed by magnet specialty schools and resurgence in the popularity of neighborhood schools. The establishment of School Choice and Charter Schools as well as a declining population of school age children and an aging infrastructure has all impacted on Milwaukee's collection of public educational buildings.

Milwaukee Public Schools completed its most recent 10-year plan and issued a report in 2011 that assesses needs, enrollment projections and holdings among other things. Current enrollment stands around 80,000 pupils and there are 161 school buildings. According to Wikipedia, the Milwaukee Public Schools system is the largest school district in the state of Wisconsin and one of the largest in the United States by enrollment. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wikw/Milwaukee_Public_Schools, accessed August 4, 2014)

As the number of students decreases, more school buildings are closed. Since 2004, 32 buildings have closed; some 16 remain vacant while others have found new uses, either for educational purposes or for adaptive use as housing. (Tanzilo, pp. 137-138)

Schools, even when closed, are more than four walls holding a collection of students and teachers. They remain powerful symbols of the importance of education, symbols of strong architectural design and symbols of the coming together for a common good.

Overview of Schools on the West Side

The neighborhood surrounding the Fifteenth District School / McKinley School was rapidly growing in the last three decades of the 19th century. Within the boundaries of West Wisconsin Avenue, West Vliet Street, I-43 and the Miller Brewing Company numerous schools both private and public served the very large student population and probably had the highest concentration

of educational institutions within the city. Five public primary schools were constructed between 1885-1936 as well as one public high school (West Division). There were three parochial grade schools (Friedens, Bethlehem, Gesu), two prominent Catholic High Schools (Marquette, Holy Angels), The Girls Trade and Technical School, the State Normal School, Concordia College, Spencerian Business College, and Marquette University.

Generally, most of Milwaukee's educational efforts revolved around primary education during this period since high school attendance was not mandatory and not viewed as significant for most families. Out of 17,000 students enrolled in 1883, 12,000 fell into first three grades and only 261 in high school. Class size averaged 66 students per teacher while intermediate classes had 54 and upper classes only 44. Class size also fluctuated from school to school and it was not until 1912 that a formal attempt was made to equalize the number of elementary pupils per classroom. Primary school construction followed settlement patterns so buildings are dispersed chronologically from east to west across the area referred to in the preceding paragraph.

Tracking individual school buildings is best done by location. Initially, school district boundaries coincided with ward boundaries. Later, school district boundaries did not relate to the ward boundaries and some districts were reconfigured. This has led to numerous name changes in the schools over time. The school that is the subject of this nomination for example is listed as the Second District Primary #2 in the 1885 city directory but is listed as the Fifteenth District School in the School Board Annual Report for 1885 since the Fifteenth District was created out of the Second District. Likewise, this school was also referred to in various documents as the school in Lynde's Addition or the Second Ward school.

The first primary public school in this portion of the west side was the 14th District School (later 16th District) located on West Kilbourn Avenue between 18th and 19th Streets. It was completed in 1877 and designed by architect Henry Koch.

The Fifteenth District School / McKinley School, the subject of this nomination, was built in 1885, enlarged in 1888 and again in 1898. The last nineteenth century addition was designed by Mollerus and Lotter.

The third public elementary school was the 27th Street School, earlier known as the Fifteenth District Primary and then Fifteenth District #2. The Romanesque Revival style building was built at McKinley Avenue and 27th Street in 1892, just seven blocks from the school that is the subject of this nomination. It was designed by Walter Holbrook.

A fourth elementary school was known as the Sixteenth District School # 2 and built at the northeast corner of 28th and West Wisconsin Avenue in 1890. It was later demolished and replaced with the Jacobean Revival / Collegiate Gothic style school currently standing, designed by Van Ryn and DeGelleke in 1920.

The last of the west side public elementary schools is the Story School at Juneau Avenue and 38th Street, built in 1935 to replace an earlier Town of Wauwatosa school on the site. Guy Wiley was the architect of this Art Moderne building.

History of Fifteenth District School / McKinley School

It is something of a challenge to researching the construction of public schools as mentioned above. They were referred to by their ward number or their school district number and often the media would use the two interchangeably. The subject of this nomination was originally part of the Second Ward and referred to in various reports and articles under that ward name up to the time of construction. It was also referred to as the school in Lynde's addition, or

Lynde's Addition in the Second Ward. Likewise newspaper reports and Common Council Proceedings would refer to schools, school plans and architects but not necessarily which "plans received" were by which architects. Missing or unpublished school board reports and missing annual reports for various departments for certain years add to the confusion. Lack of original architectural drawings has also led to confusion as later drawings, with names of architects, have been used to identify architectural firms. These were often as-built drawings and prepared by architects doing later modifications. This has resulted in misidentifications and incorrect attributions.

All through the 1880s the Milwaukee Sentinel is full of stories on neighborhoods requesting school buildings, requesting updates to schools, complaining of overcrowding in addition to arguing over matters of curriculum (German language, vocational instruction, and so on).

It is clear, however, that by the early 1880s the residents and the school board were calling for a new school building in the Second Ward, which at that time encompassed all of the city lying West of the Milwaukee River between Cedar (today's Kilbourn Avenue) and Vliet Streets. Just like proposals today, the matter had to go before the Common Council and its committees, the Board of Public Works and the Board of School Directors. The back and forth nature of the deliberation often made residents impatient and irritable, not unlike today.

On September 17, 1883, the Board of Public Works asked the Common Council for additional funds not to exceed $20,000 in order to erect a new school building on six lots located on Cold Spring Avenue (now McKinley Avenue) between North 21st and North 22nd Streets. The Sentinel reported on this matter on September 21st concluding that there would not be enough money to pay for both a new Second Ward and a Fourth Ward School and that aldermen were quarreling over who should get a school. (Proceedings of the Common Council 1883-1884, September 18, 1883 page 211; Milwaukee Sentinel 1883 September 21 page 5 column 2)

The budget for an amount up to $20,000 was approved by the Common Council on October 1, 1883. (Proceedings 1883-1884 October 1, 1883 page 230) By December, an authorization for the Board of Public Works to procure plans and specifications was sent to the committee on schools. On January 2, 1884, the school board approved the construction of a school building in Lynde's Addition to have eight rooms, and be built to accommodate an addition.

The committee on schools met on January 5, 1884 to review the plans for two unnamed schools, although it is likely these were the Second Ward and Fourth Ward Schools. Architects who submitted drawings included Henry Koch, Charles Gombert, Frederick Douglas and Frederick Seyring.

The matter of the submission of plans gets a bit muddy at this point. The Common Council felt that they had gotten burned by the extra $2,000 spent on giving the new Fifth Ward School ornamental towers. That school was dubbed the "White Elephant" and received sarcastic comments from councilmen. Alderman Stirn had succeeded in passing a resolution adopted on April 17, 1883 that would require all future school buildings to use the same plans. It was thought that this would be cost efficient and eliminate the need for requesting plans over and over again. However, local architects "unanimously agreed to send in no bids, declaring that the scheme was exceedingly impracticable, as schoolhouses of one design cannot be adapted to every locality. The matter, therefore, remains in abeyance, and the cost of schoolhouses remains undetermined." (Milwaukee Sentinel 1883 September 21 page 5 column 2)

Yet it appears that some bids were received for model schoolhouses. On October 1, 1883 the Board of Public Works reported that they had received plans and designs for model schoolhouses from two individuals, Frederick Seyring and R. Tonnig. Interestingly, these two individuals were not among the established architects in the city so they may have not participated in the boycott mentioned above. Seyring did live in Milwaukee from 1882 through 1897; R. Tonnig does not appear in the Milwaukee City Directories.

In late January 1884 the council's committee on public buildings looked "again" at Seyring's plans for model schoolhouses only to find the specifications missing. Architect Sering insisted he had supplied them and that they must have gotten lost. He was give two weeks to furnish new ones. (Proceedings 1883-1884 October 1, 1883 page 228; Milwaukee Sentinel 1884 January 31 page 3 column 3)

It is this reference to Seyring and the model schoolhouse plans that seems to indicate that Seyring twice submitted plans, once for model schoolhouses and once for a school through the normal request for plans.

To complicate matters, the Common Council rescinded its authorization to fund a new Fourth Ward and Second Ward School on January 7, 1884 with the money to go toward the construction of the 6th Street bridge and viaduct instead. (Milwaukee Sentinel 1884 January 7 page 3 column 4)

On January 21, 1884 the council reversed itself and adopted a substitute resolution to go forward on the school in Lynde's Addition Second Ward, with an eight-classroom building, designed to allow for an addition, to not exceed $20,000. (Proceedings 1883-1884 January 7, 1884 page 332, January 21, 1884 page 335; Milwaukee Sentinel 1884 January page 3 column 4)

In March 1884, the Board of Public Works decided to proceed to secure bids for a number of public buildings, including the subject of this nomination. Steam heating was not included in the cost of the project and it was expected that the building would be completed after "the next school vacation." The joint meeting of the Board of Public Works and the Common Council's committee on schools officially adopted the Second Ward school plans. (Milwaukee Sentinel 1884 March 19 page 5 column 2 and April 15 page 4 column 6)

In June it was reported that the school board was about to re-advertise for construction bids for the new Second Ward / Lynde's Addition school. In July the Sentinel announced that Charles Kraatz was awarded the general contract bidding $18,393 and won over nine other bidders. Sloteman & Kruse were awarded the plumbing contract for their bid, the lowest, of $549. (Milwaukee Sentinel 1884 June 17 page 4 column 7 and July 12 page 3 column 1)

The new schoolhouse in Lynde's Addition was not completed in time for the opening of school in September, 1884. That month, the Board of Public Works was authorized by the council to install a suitable stem heating and ventilating apparatus at a cost not to exceed $3500, the money coming from the general city fund. (Proceedings 1884-1885 August 18, 1884 page 165 and September 1, 1884 page 171)

In December 1884, as the school was nearing completion, a resolution was introduced to council to pay Frederick Seyring $250 for the plans he submitted for model schoolhouses. His were considered better than the other submittal by E. Tonnig. Initially, the first installment of $250 was made at the time of selection. The balance of $250 was to be paid later when a schoolhouse would be constructed and Seyring would then furnish all details and specifications. The resolution was adopted. This latter portion of the resolution seems to suggest that the Second Ward /Fifteenth District School was not built from the model school house plans designed by Seyring, although we cannot be certain. However, we do know Seyring was one of the four architects submitting plans for schoolhouses in January 1884. No records are shown of a specific architect receiving payment specifically for the Fifteenth District / McKinley School. (Proceedings 1884-1885 December 8, 1884 page 264)

The new school building on Cold Spring Avenue / McKinley Avenue was inspected by the Board of Public Works and the chief engineer of the fire department along with his two assistants on January 16, 1885. The school was found to have been built according to contract

and was accepted. The principal, M. H. Cook, was on the premises the next day, Saturday, and classes began with the official opening on Monday January 19th. (Milwaukee Sentinel 1885 January 6 page 3 column 2 and January 16 page 3 column 4 and January 17 page 3 column 2)

In August 1885, Frederick Seyring was still petitioning to receive the final $250, plus interest, owed for his submission of three model school plans. His petition went to the committee on schools, the committee on judiciary, and back to the committee on schools. Finally, the council voted to pay him in 1886. (Proceedings 1886-1886 August 17, 1886 page 189; October 26, 1885 page 266; December 17, 1885 page 312; March 1 1886 page 430 and March 15, 1885 page 497; Milwaukee Sentinel 1886 Apr 10 page 3 column 3, and April 22 page 7 column 2)

It was anticipated that the new Fifteenth District School would be enlarged at some point and the requirements of the original drawings specified that the school had to be designed to receive an addition. It had been one of the smaller schools constructed at the time and the surrounding neighborhood had a rapidly growing school age population.

It was no surprise that within a short time, the School Board was petitioning the common council for an addition to what was now officially called the Fifteenth District School. It was reported that almost 200 students were seated in the basement and in a poorly ventilated office. Many children within the district were required to travel long distances to attend other schools since the school was out of space. (Milwaukee Sentinel 1887 February 18 page 7 column 3)

The Sentinel reported in March 1887 that one of the basement classrooms was ”drowned out by the recent thaw” and that an addition would cost about $25,000 and that the school had been designed with enlargement in mind. (Milwaukee Sentinel 1887 March 13 page 6 column 1)

The addition to the Fifteenth District School was completed in the summer season of 1888. The addition had six classrooms, an exhibition hall and cost $25,376.53. Contractors included J. H. Lenichek (main contract), W. E. Goodman (plumbing), M. Coogan (steam heating), Favorite Desk & Seating Co. (desks), G. A. Spence & Company (gas fixtures), Milwaukee Gas Light Company (gas pipe). No architect’s name is listed in the Board of Public Works Annual Report for the year 1888. (Page 14-15) Its very close similarity to the first portion of the school and its same approximate size probably means the same architect was involved or that the school board was working off plans submitted along with the original portion of the building.

Yet another addition, the second, to the school was competed on December 16, 1898. This addition consisted of eight classrooms and was designed by Mollerus & Lotter. Contractors included: David Turner (mason work), H. H. Chalker (cut stone work), Joseph Skobis (cast and wrought iron work), Erdmann Schulz (carpenter work), Joseph Romberger (galvanized iron, slate and tin work), P. F. Kennedy (plumbing and gas fitting work), P. F. Kennedy (extending sewer for conductor), P.F. Kennedy (extending sewer to old building), W. C. Wagner (painting and glazing work), and A. J. Lindemann & Hoverson Co. (steam heating).

The school remained in this configuration for many decades. A boiler house and chimney was added to the north junction of the 1888 and 1898 additions in 1915 at a cost of $18,000. Van Ryn and DeGelleke were the architects for this project. Major remodeling of the toilet rooms took place in 1926. After the fire department ordered the vacation of seven basement classrooms in 1957, a new one story, flat roofed addition was added to the northeast “corner” of the first portion of the school in 1958 at a cost of $125,000. Occupancy was granted December 30, 1959. Lefevre-Wiggins were the architects of record. This addition contained six classrooms and two toilet rooms. This addition like most after World War II did not make any attempt to match the material, height, design or detail of the original school. Additional updates to the interior took place in the early 1960s with new heating systems, new furnishings and updates to rest rooms.

After Milwaukee Public School Ownership

When the Milwaukee Public Schools no longer needed the McKinley School due to changing demographics, it sold the property to the V. E. Carter Child Development Corporation on Land Contract on April 1, 1985. The land contract was satisfied on December 5, 1991.

Veledis E. and Lorraine Ester Peters Carter believed in the education of the whole child and believed that affordable child care could be joined with early educational programs to give a child a lasting foundation for life.

Lorraine Carter earned her bachelor's degree in education and sociology from the University of Nebraska at Omaha in 1952. She subsequently worked as a special education teacher in the Chicago Public Schools and then began work for Milwaukee Public Schools in 1958. She taught at a number of schools and there met her husband Veledis Carter, also a special education teacher. Both recognized the importance of affordable child care and its influence on child development. They opened the Carter Center at 1821 West Juneau in the early 1970s. The non-profit V. E. Carter Development Group Inc. was founded in 1971. They moved to the former McKinley School in 1980 and purchased the property on land contract in 1985 and fulfilled the land contract in 1991.

Over the years the V. E. Carter Development Group operated not only a day care center but the Carter School of Excellence, a K-5 charter school, and offered social services on the premises. There were also two north side drop-in child care centers and case management services for non-violent offenders.

The child care /education division served over 400 children annually and welcomed children from infancy to 5th grade. Carter School of Excellence had one of the highest elementary school math scores in Milwaukee.

Their social services department had home visitation, case management, tutoring, mentoring, parenting, and nutritional education as well as training for educators through the Healthy Relationship & Marriage Resource Center.

The Carter Center was a member of the Wisconsin Association of Family and Children Serving Agencies; Child Abuse Prevention Network, National Black Child Development Institute, Wisconsin Association Concerned with School-Age Parents, and Milwaukee Marriage Partnership.

Their name was changed from the V.E. Carter Child Development Corp. to V. E. Carter Development Group in September 1992.

Veledis Carter died in 1984 and Lorraine Carter died in April, 2007 at the age of 75.

The Carters knew that family services would also help the child and a whole range of programs came to rent space in the former school building.

City building permits list occupancy permits for numerous programs and training activities beginning in 1980:
Project Become-job placement and counseling for high school students
Shalom High School
Child Care training for 400 providers
Universal Counseling Clinic
C.H.U.R.C.H. Inc.
Ministers' Tutorial Program Inc.
Baptist Association of Christian Educators

Mid-Town Neighborhood Association, Inc.
Archdiocese of Milwaukee –Black Catholic concerns
MATC day care
Welfare Advocacy Center
Daisy Hentz DBA Daisies-charm and finishing school
Florence L. Bryant-medical secretarial and training services
Medical college of Wisconsin Dept. of Preventative Medicine
Hmong/American Friendship Association of Wisconsin
Brother Booker Ashe Day Care and School
Council for the Spanish Speaking
Iria's Clean Home Service
Uihlein Family Health Project
Milwaukee Comprehensive Community Health Inc.
Parent Education Project of Milwaukee

Some of these programs were temporary, granted a variance by the Board of Zoning Appeals. Others may have moved to different locations or simply closed. Most rented one or perhaps several classrooms in the building.

Michael Carter, son of Lorraine and Veledis, served as executive director after Lorraine's death. Per the State of Wisconsin's Department of Financial Institutions the last annual report was filed by the V. E. Carter Development Group Inc. in 2012. The registered agent has resigned as of April 2014 and the corporation is considered delinquent. The building has sat vacant since 2013. (Jesse Garza, "Carter championed child care," Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, April 6, 2007; V. E. Carter Development Group Inc., charity details http://volunteer.truist.com/bayer/org/10252466774.html accessed August 1, 2014; Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions, Corporate Records Search https://www.wdfi.org/apps/CorpSearch/Details.aspx?entityID=6C11953&hash=16569871... ; Milwaukee Board of School Directors. May 31, 2007 Excellence in Education Award, Lorraine P. Carter.

VII. SIGNIFICANCE

The Fifteenth District School / McKinley School is significant as a very good example of the evolution of architectural styles in Milwaukee's educational buildings. Its first two portions adhere to the more cubic, vertical form with hip roof that was popular through the 1880s and into the 1890s. Elements from the Romanesque revival can be seen in this period. The third portion of the school shows that styles had shifted to the Classical Revival in the late 1890s with shallower and less dramatic roof lines. The Classical Revival utilized elements from classicism such as modillion cornices, pilasters both plain and fluted, and ornament from the classical vocabulary. This is in keeping with nationwide trends in architectural design.

School buildings were routinely enlarged by the construction of additions. The Fifteenth District School / McKinley School was one of the few whose major additions were kept in scale with the original building. The Fifteenth District School is an example, perhaps the only one known that was designed specifically to accept an addition. It is possible that the first addition to this schoolhouse was part of the original submission of plans. Very little discussion about the design of the first addition is found in the Proceedings of the Common Council or the Milwaukee Sentinel. Most of the other school houses had additions that were significantly different from the original building.

The building is in a good state of preservation with many of its details intact including the wood ventilator, dormers, and window openings. The brick had been painted and is currently peeling but the building can be cleaned.

The building is one of the earlier surviving schools in the MPS system.

The adjacent playground, separately addressed as 1255 North 20th Street, visually appears as an extension of the school property and was created when McKinley Avenue was closed off between North 20th and North 21st Streets.

VIII. THE ARCHITECT

FREDERICK SEYRING

Frederick Seyring may have been the architect of the original portion and the first addition to the Fifteenth District School / McKinley School but the evidence is not conclusive.

Frederick Seyring first appears in the Milwaukee city directories in 1882. He lists himself alternately as architect, civil engineer and surveyor. From 1882 through 1885 Frederick shares his quarters with a Helen Seyring, presumably his sister. Helen may have been the Helen Seyring who married Hugo S. Grosser and her absence in the Milwaukee city directories after 1885 agrees with biographical information about Grosser.

Frederick meanwhile lived at a variety of addresses in Milwaukee. The Milwaukee Sentinel and the Common Council Proceedings are the only places he is mentioned and this is in connection with the submittal of plans and specifications for three model school houses (October 1883, December 1884) as well as a submission for designs for two school houses in January 1884. Architects submitting plans included Henry Koch, Charles Gombert, Frederick Douglas as well as Seyring. Neither the paper nor the School Board nor the Common Council reports list the specific schools for which the designs were requested but it is thought that this refers to the proposed Fourth Ward and the Second Ward (Lynde's Addition) since these two were much in discussion at the time. We do know from records that Henry Koch was ultimately selected as the designer for the Fourth Ward School, still standing at the northwest corner of North Eighth Street and Michigan Street. Constructed in 1884, the former Fourth Ward School is oldest standing building still used as a school house by the Milwaukee Public Schools.

The design of the Fifteenth District School / McKinley School is very simple in form and detail and quite unlike Henry Koch's Fourth District School or other Koch schools. Likewise, both Gombert and Douglas had a leaning toward the Gothic Revival and often applied corbelled, arcaded cornices to their work. The more starkly designed Fifteenth District School / McKinley School was likely the work of an architect with less training and background that the other architects mentioned here. It could very well have been the work of Frederick Seyring, either as part of his model school house submittal or his submittal for the Second Ward and Fourth Ward Schools. It is possible also that the city used Seyring's model designs without having him supervise the construction. That would account for the city paying him the $250 balance and only after Seyring pursued the payment for several years.

Seyring was elected as County Surveyor in 1886 and directories show him in this position in 1886 and 1887. He later lists himself as surveyor and architect then as civil engineer in 1897, his last year in Milwaukee. It is possible that Seyring relocated to Chicago to join his sister and her family (they moved there in 1892) or else moved elsewhere. Likely brother-in-law Hugo S. Grosser had had a variety of occupations including editor of the Milwaukee German language Herold and public school teacher on Milwaukee's south side. After their relocation to Chicago, Hugo S. Grosser became city statistician. It could be that Seyring's likely brother-in-law found him work in Chicago. (John W. Leonard, edit., The Book of Chicagoans, Chicago: A. N. Marquis & Co., 1905, volume 1 page 248, Google Books; Milwaukee City Directories)

MOLLERUS & LOTTER

Architects Mollerus and Lotter were responsible for the design of the second addition to the school, built in 1898 and fronting on North 21st Street. Henry P. Mollerus Jr. first appears in the city directories in 1889, serving as a clerk at the Mollerus and Augspurger Company, a dealer in oils on Buffalo Street in today's Historic Third Ward. It is assumed that the J. M. Mollerus of the oil company was probably a brother or uncle. Henry P. Mollerus Jr.'s own household consisted of William Mollerus (a butcher) and Henry Mollerus who ran a saloon and boarding house on Winnebago Street. Mollerus Jr. originally worked in his family's business as a porter in the rooming house/saloon.

In 1891 Mollerus started work as a draftsman for architects Rau & Kirsch and after a couple of years found work as a draftsman for Charles A. Fink in 1893. In 1895 Henry listed himself as an architect and presumably worked out of the family home and business on Winnebago Street. The next year, 1896, he formed the partnership with Henry G. Lotter and the two had an office on the seventh floor in the Pabst Building, a prestigious office building built by Captain Pabst at the northwest corner of North Water Street and East Wisconsin Avenue. They moved to offices on Milwaukee Street in 1898.

Henry G. Lotter remained an architect throughout his career. He is first listed in the city directories as a draftsman with H. C. Koch & Co. in 1889 and then later with architect Edward V. Koch in the Colby-Abbot Building. In 1893 Henry G. Lotter lists himself as an architect, then as a student in 1894, then as a draftsman for H. C. Koch & Company again in 1895. Lotter formed a partnership with Henry Mollerus Jr. in 1896.

During their brief partnership, Mollerus & Lotter designed the Brown Street School now Brown Street Academy (1898) as well as the addition to the Fifteenth District / McKinley School (1898). They also designed the Otto Zielsdorf House at 2931 North Marietta Avenue in 1899 as well as the 1899 portion of the Clinton Burnham Foundry Co. building at 1527 West Bruce Street.

Three of the commissions show the influence of the Classical Revival style. The Brown Street School / Academy shares some details with the Fifteenth District / McKinley School including the penciled rustication of the raised basement story and the two-story tall pilasters. The Zielsdorf House features a prominent classical portico with four, two-story columns supporting a large, highly detailed pediment.

It is not known why the two men dissolved their partnership after 1900.

Henry P. Mollerus Jr. rejoined his family's business in 1901. By this time, his father had left the rooming house and saloon business to head up the Union Oil and Paint Company (1896) and then the Henry Mollerus Co. (1898) which also dealt in paints, oils and varnishes. Most of the other members of the family were also working for the Henry Mollerus Co. at this time. In 1904 Henry Jr. opened his own business, Milwaukee Varnish Company with factory and offices on Washington Street. By 1907 the company had moved to 27th Street. (Milwaukee City Directories)

When their partnership terminated, Henry G. Lotter practiced alone in offices on Milwaukee Street and listed himself as both architect and superintendent beginning in 1903. It is apparent that Lotter might not have been comfortable in the classical idiom. None of his later commissions show the influence of the Classical Revival. Perhaps Mollerus might have been the partner to favor this vocabulary.

For one year, Lotter took on Edward E. Fischer as partner in 1906. Beginning in 1908, he was listing himself as architect and sanitary dairy construction. He is known to have designed a number of houses in Milwaukee as well as commercial buildings (946 North Van Buren Street 1922), and a commercial garage (311 East Juneau Avenue 1926). His house designs varied from the late Queen Anne/Colonial Revival style of the Louis Kuhn House at 2905 North Summit Avenue (1903)

to the Arts and Crafts of the Henry Hamm House at 3332 North Shepard Avenue (1920) to the period revival of the Mrs. H. Rahte residence at 2222-2228 East Park Place (1925).

Interestingly, Lotter carved out a niche for himself in dairy barn design. An ad from 1907 showed the Edgewood Farms at Pewaukee Lake owned by F. A. W. Kieckhefer and was titled "The Designing of a Sanitary Dairy Plant." Lotter described himself as a dairy expert and architect and that he could provide plans for "dairy buildings, feed barns, sanitary stables, cow barns and piggeries, brick or stone silos, poultry buildings and country residences". (Amazon.com sale site http://www.amazon.com/Sanitary-Dairy-Plant-Architecture accessed September 2, 2014).

The Holstein-Friesian Register of July 15, 1912 reported that Lotter had published "a very artistic booklet, charmingly illustrated" on what a dairy barn should be. "Dairymen will find this little work interesting." (The Holstein-Friesian Register of July 15, 1912 page 996 http://books.google.com/books?id=PB5JAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA996&lpg=PA996&dq=Henry+G+Lotter+architect&source=bl&ots=v-BW2YacYi&sig=ocWkCxpuZ5SobnvhobXwlMKSCjc&hl=en&sa=X&ei=znsHVOf_C9KWgwS9zoGQDA&ved=0CEIQ6AEwCQ#v=onepage&q=Henry%20G%20Lotter%20architect&f=false)

An ad entitled "Dairy Barn Architecture" was placed in The New Country Life magazine, May 1917, page 19 and featured a drawing of a progressive-looking barn. (http://books.google.com/books?id=yqRMAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA19&lpg=PA19&dq=Henry+G+Lotter+architect&source=bl&ots=WLWskFoYjd&sig=GWknSljngUZHeiy7HoKwdVnZFxc&hl=en&sa=X&ei=znsHVOf_C9KWgwS9zoGQDA&ved=0CDIQ6AEwAw#v=onepage&q=Henry%20G%20Lotter%20architect&f=false, accessed September 2, 2014)

Lotter became a member of the American Institute of Architects in 1922 and remained a member through 1927. (Milwaukee City Directory; The AIA Historical Directory of American Architects Wiki Pages ahd1027249 http://public .aia.org/sites/hdoaa/wiki/Wili%20Pages/ahd1027249.aspx accessed September 2, 2014)

Research on both men is ongoing.

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IX. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Fifteenth District / McKinley School and adjacent playground be given historic designation as City of Milwaukee Historic Sites as a result of their fulfillment of criteria e-1 and e-5 and e-9 of the Historic Preservation Ordinance, Section 320-21(3) of the Milwaukee Code of Ordinances.

e-3 Its exemplification and development of the cultural, economic, social or historic heritage of the city, state of Wisconsin or the United States.

Rationale: The decades of the 1880s and 1890s were ones of explosive population growth in Milwaukee. As a consequence, the numbers of school age children rose to unprecedented numbers. A public school education was by this time no longer a luxury for the rich but considered important among all economic levels of society. Having decent schools with proper lighting, good ventilation and sufficient heating as well as sufficient seating space became paramount. Numerous articles in the newspapers attest to the public demands for better built schools and better equipped facilities. The City of Milwaukee and the Milwaukee Public Schools could have answered the demands with temporary structures or frame buildings but instead, invested in purchasing property and erecting fire-proof masonry buildings the size and scale of which made them the visual centers of their neighborhoods. Recognizing that education was important for a productive citizenry and economy, more schools were built in the last two decades of the nineteenth century than previously and really reflected the maturation of Milwaukee's public school system.

In its new use post-public school, the building became an early example of adaptive use of a former schoolhouse and housed a day care and family services to create a new kind of a community center that could address the needs of a neighborhood in poverty.

e-5. Its embodiment of the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type or specimen.

Rationale: Although a resolution was adopted in 1883 to have all future schools built upon the same school house plan, Milwaukee's established architectural community fortunately rebelled at the concept. They believed that a design had to fit the criteria dictated by site and population and even curriculum. To our benefit today, the designs of various architects were chosen for the numerous school houses built, even though a number of them repeated the basic form, fenestration and massing in two or more buildings. Despite this no two buildings are identical. The design of the Milwaukee public schools followed the nationwide trends, evolving from the Italianate to the Queen Anne, Romanesque to Classical Revival, Collegiate Gothic and Moderne.

So how does the Fifteenth District / McKinley school compare to its contemporaries? It is a very good representation of the modest sized school, lacking the bells and whistles of some of the more prominent school buildings constructed later and designed by some of the top architectural firms in the city. The first and second portions of the school do not resemble any of the other extant schools nor do they resemble any of the schools that have long been demolished. Despite the simplicity of the school, it is not devoid of architectural character and it does exhibit some elements from the Romanesque Revival at

the main entrance on North 20th Street. The two early portions may have been designed at one time with the second portion only being constructed when overcrowding occurred and funding allowed. The simple design of the school may be attributed to Frederick Seyring, an architect/surveyor/civil engineer about whom we have little information and no other known commissions in Milwaukee. The Fifteenth District / McKinley School may have been part of his submission for a model school house or may have been a submittal specifically for this commission. If the schoolhouse were based on his model plans, it would be the only surviving example of the attempt to reign in school construction costs through having a standardized plan. The last 19th century addition to the school falls squarely in the period where Classical Revival, made popular by the Columbian Exposition of 1893, was being widely used by units of government to convey order and permanence. It is a good example of this design and its scale and dimension work in harmony with the earlier portions of the school.

e-9 Its unique location as a singular physical characteristic which represents an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community or the city.

Rationale: the Fifteenth District / McKinley School was the largest structure built in its West Side neighborhood. Only churches with their steeples were taller. It was visually prominent and could be seen even when houses and commercial buildings lined Vliet Street.

Preservation Guidelines for the Fifteenth District / McKinley School
and
Adjacent Playground

The following preservation guidelines represent the principal concerns of the Historic Preservation Commission regarding the historic designation of the Fifteenth District / McKinley School and adjacent playground at 2001 West Vliet Street. The intent of the commission is to preserve the historic, existing exterior features of the site. Note: the playground property to the south of the school functioned as a part of the school property and is accessed through the school grounds. Although it dates to around 1970 it forms a visual part of the school since McKinley Avenue has now been vacated between North 20th and North 21st streets.

Building maintenance and restoration must follow accepted preservation practices as outlined below. Any exterior changes including repair of ornamental trim but exclusive of routine painting will require a certificate of appropriateness. Most certificates are issued on a staff-approved basis and only major new construction or alteration requests typically will go before the Historic Preservation commission. The Commission reserves the right to make final decisions based upon particular design submissions.

A. Roofs

Retain the roof shape. The installation of skylights where they would be visible from the street are not permitted as they would have a negative impact on the building. Skylights however may be added to roof slopes if they are not visible from the street or public right of way. No changes can be made to the roof shape which would alter the building height, the roofline or its pitch. Locate mechanical systems and vents on portions of the roof not visible at all from the public right of way and paint them out to minimize impact. If the building gets re-roofed, consultation with historic preservation staff is required to review and approve the new roofing material, flashing, and gutters. Very light colors or very dark colors such as black are not permitted. Use of these materials is on a case-by-case basis as some of the products are not compatible with Nineteenth Century Schoolhouses. There appear to be built-in gutters. These should be retained and repaired. Should a satellite dish be installed it should be placed where it is not visible or less visible from the street. Removal of the rooftop chimneys would require consultation with Historic Preservation staff but in general, corbelled chimneys are an important part of the skyline of the buildings. The louvered ventilators, the south dormers and the polygonal domed cupola may not be removed. No rooftop construction or addition is allowed, as this would have a negative impact on the historic character and proportions of the building. The construction of other rooftop features requires review by Historic Preservation staff and a Certificate of Appropriateness.

B. Materials

1. Masonry

a. Unpainted brick or stone must not be painted or covered. Painting masonry is historically incorrect and could cause irreversible damage if it was decided to remove the paint at a later date. Covering masonry with other materials (wood, sheet metal, vinyl siding, etc.) is not allowed.

b. Re-point defective mortar by duplicating the original in color, hardness, texture, joint finish and joint width. See the masonry

chapters in the books, As Good As New or Good For Business for explanations on why the use of a proper mortar mix is crucial to making lasting repairs that will not contribute to new deterioration of the masonry. Using much harder, contemporary Portland cement mortar will not make a lasting repair and can damage the historic brick and stone. Replaced mortar joints should be tooled to match the style of the original. Do not use mortar colors and pointing styles that were unavailable or were not used when the building was constructed. Consultation with historic preservation staff and a Certificate of Appropriateness is required before starting any re-pointing.

c. Removal of the paint is encouraged. It is in poor condition and requires regular upkeep. In the future should masonry cleaning be required it should be done only with the gentlest method possible. Sandblasting or high pressure water blasting or the use of other abrasive materials (baking soda, nut shells, dry ice, etc.) on limestone, pressed brick or cream brick surfaces is prohibited. This method of cleaning erodes the surface of the material and accelerates deterioration. The use of accepted chemical products to clean masonry is allowed and a test panel is required before general commencement of the work. Work should be done by experienced individuals as the chemical cleaning process can have a negative impact on the masonry. Consultation with historic preservation staff and a Certificate of Appropriateness is required before any cleaning would begin. .

d. Repair or replace deteriorated masonry with new material that duplicates the old as closely as possible. The use of EIFS (exterior insulation and finish systems) which is synthetic stucco is not permitted. Consultation with historic preservation staff and a Certificate of Appropriateness is required before attempting work on the masonry

2. Wood/Metal

a. Retain original material, whenever possible. Do not remove architectural features that are essential to maintaining the building's character and appearance. The wooden louvered ventilators and metal cornice must be retained. The wood shingling of the south dormers must be retained although new wood shingles can replace deteriorated ones.

b. Retain or replace deteriorated material with new material that duplicates the appearance of the old as closely as possible. Covering wood or metal with aluminum or vinyl or other substitute material is not permitted. Spot replacement or spot repair of any deteriorated elements is encouraged rather than complete removal and replication. Structural wood epoxies are suggested for the lasting repair of damaged or decayed areas of wood trim. Any new elements must replicate the pattern, dimension, spacing and material of the originals.

C. Windows and Doors

1. Retain existing window and door openings. Retain the existing configuration of panes, sash, surrounds and sills, except as necessary to restore them to the original condition. Do not make additional openings or changes in existing fenestration by enlarging or reducing window or door openings to fit new stock window sash or new stock door sizes. Do not change the size or configuration of the original window panes or sash. Use storm windows or protective glazing which have glazing configurations similar to the prime windows and which obscure the prime windows as little as possible. The use of structural wood epoxies is strongly encouraged to repair any minor damage or decay to wood windows.

2. Most of the windows currently visible on the building appear to be two-over-four sash. Windows on the 1898 addition feature a transom above one-over-one sash. In the event any windows need to be replaced, consultation with Historic Preservation staff is required to determine appropriate glazing patterns. New glass must match the size of the historic glass. New windows must be made of wood. Do not fill in or cover openings with inappropriate materials such as glass block or concrete block. No glass block are permitted in the basement windows since they are elevated and at grade and are visible from all vantage points of the public right of way. Do not use modern style window units, such as horizontal sliding sash or casements, in place of double-hung sash or the substitution of units with glazing configurations not appropriate to the style of the building.

   Any original windows on the building must be retained and repaired if at all possible. Vinyl, vinyl clad, metal, and metal-clad or fiberglass prime window units are not permitted. Wood combination/storm screen units or fixed storm windows that fit the shape of the original opening are permitted. The entry doors have been boarded up and are not visible. It is recommended that they be retained if original. Any replacement doors must be appropriate to the historic period of the building. Any changes to doors and windows, including installation of new doors and windows, require consultation with Historic Preservation staff and a Certificate of Appropriateness.

3. Steel bar security doors and window guards are generally not allowed where they are visible from the street. If permitted, the doors or grates must be of the simplest design and installed so as to be as unobtrusive as possible. A Certificate of Appropriateness is required for this type of installation.

D. Trim and Ornamentation

There should be no changes to the existing historic trim or ornamentation except as necessary to restore the building to its original condition. A replacement feature must match the original member in terms of scale, design, color, appearance and wood species. Existing historic trim, located at the cornice must not be removed unless it is for the purpose of repair. Spot repair is preferable to wholesale replacement of details. Wood epoxy repair is often highly desirable for permanently repairing smaller areas of decay or damage to wood trim. Metal cornices are also repairable. Consultation with Historic Preservation staff is required before any changes or repairs are made to the building.

E. Additions

What constitutes the front of this building has changed over time. The main elevations were located at North 20th and North 21st Streets. The south elevation fronting McKinley Avenue was a primary elevation fronting a street but is now closed off with access to the playground to the south. The original rear of the building, fronting Vliet Street, has become the de facto front façade although it is architecturally less prominent. No additions will be permitted on the North 20th and North 21st Street elevations or the south elevation as this would greatly alter the character of the building. Any other additions require the approval of the Commission. Ideally an addition should either compliment or have a neutral effect upon the historic character of the building. Approval shall be based upon the addition's design compatibility with the building in terms of window proportion and placement, building height, roof configuration, scale, design, color, and materials, Additions must be smaller than the original building and not obscure the historic building.

F. Signs/Exterior Lighting

The installation of any permanent exterior sign or light fixture on the building or its property shall require the approval of the Commission. Approval will be based on the compatibility of the proposed sign or light with the historic and architectural character of the building. Consultation with Historic Preservation staff is required to assist in the selection of exterior fixtures. Plastic internally illuminated box signs with a completely acrylic face are not permitted.

G. Site Features

New plant materials, paving, fencing, garden structures or utility structures or landscaping shall be compatible with the historic architectural character of the building. Historically, the grounds consisted of grassy lawn with some pavement and trees were planted in the city's terrace area. Should a new fence be built in the future examples of appropriate fencing can be found in As Good As New and Living With History and in the historic image of the school. An existing retaining wall is located along the North 20th Street property line. It may remain or change back to a bermed appearance as in the historic photograph. Consultation with Historic Preservation staff is required before starting any work that would involve the landscape features, parking, walkways, driveway or the placement of utility or garden structures.

H. Guidelines for New Construction

It is important that new construction be designed to be as sympathetic as possible with the character of the structure. Any request to construct a new garage would be subject to review for code compliance and appropriate design and would require a Certificate of Appropriateness.

1. Site work

New construction must respect the historic site and location of the building. It should be accomplished so as to maintain the appearance of the building from the street as a freestanding structure. Any new construction would be located in such a manner as to not impact the character defining features of the building.

2. Scale

Overall building height and bulk, the expression of major building divisions including foundation, body and roof, and individual building components, such as overhangs and fenestration that are in close proximity to a historic building must be compatible to and sympathetic with the design of the building. New construction is to be smaller in size and shorter in height than the historic building.

3. Form

The massing of the new construction must be compatible with the goal of maintaining the integrity of the building as a freestanding structure.

4. Materials

The building materials which are visible from the public right-of-way and in close proximity to the historic building should be compatible with the colors, textures, proportions, and combinations of cladding materials used on the historic building. The physical composition of the materials may be different from that of the historic materials, but the same appearance should be maintained and materials not available when the building was constructed should be avoided.

I. Guidelines for Demolition

Although demolition is not encouraged and is generally not permissible, there may be instances when demolition may be acceptable if approved by the Historic Preservation Commission. The following guidelines, with those found in subsection 9(h) of the ordinance, shall be taken into consideration by the Commission when reviewing demolition requests.

1. Condition

Demolition requests may be granted when it can be clearly demonstrated that the condition of a building or a portion thereof is such that it constitutes an immediate threat to health and safety and is beyond hope of repair. This would generally be in case of a major fire or a natural catastrophe.

2. Importance

Consideration will be given to whether or not the building or portion thereof is of historical or architectural significance or displays a quality of material and craftsmanship that does not exist in other structures in the area.

3. Location

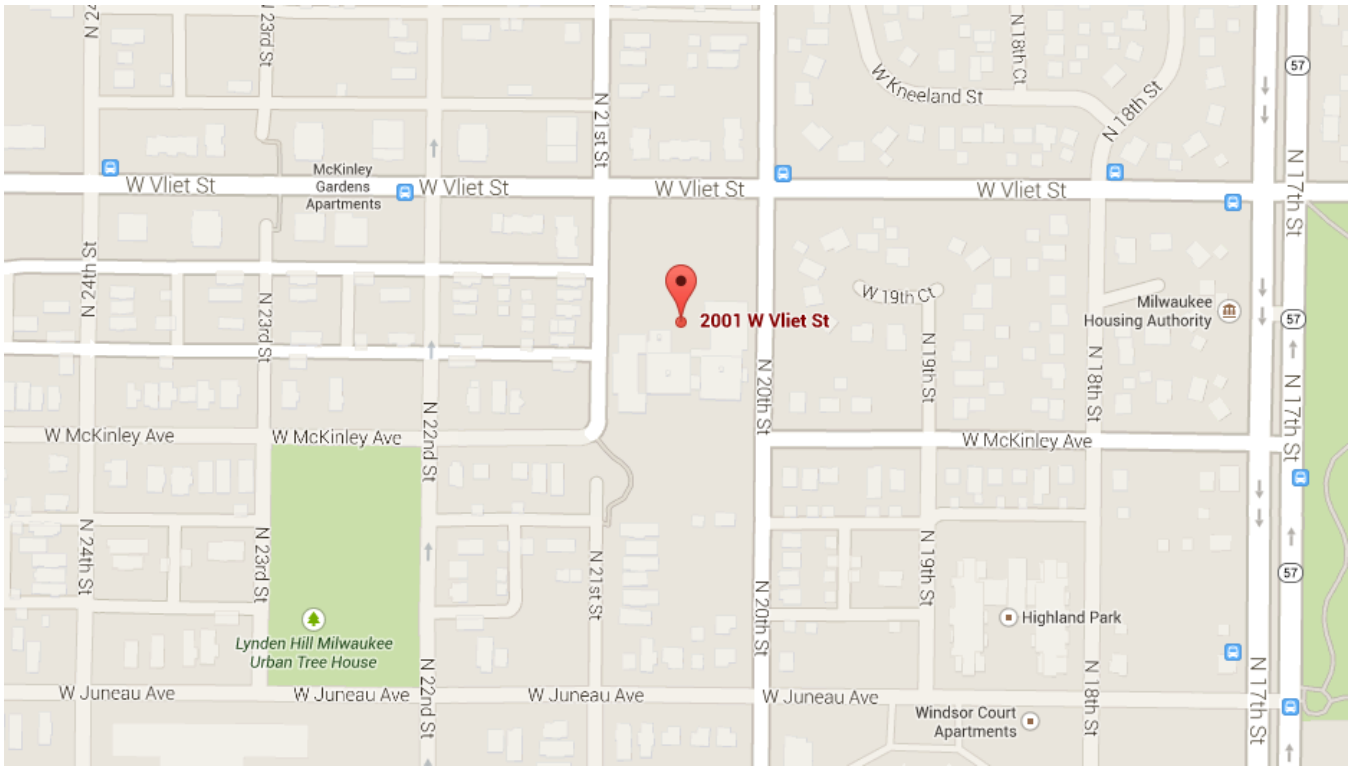
Consideration will be given to whether or not the building or portion of it contributes to the neighborhood and the general street appearance and has a positive effect on other buildings in the area.

4. Potential for Restoration

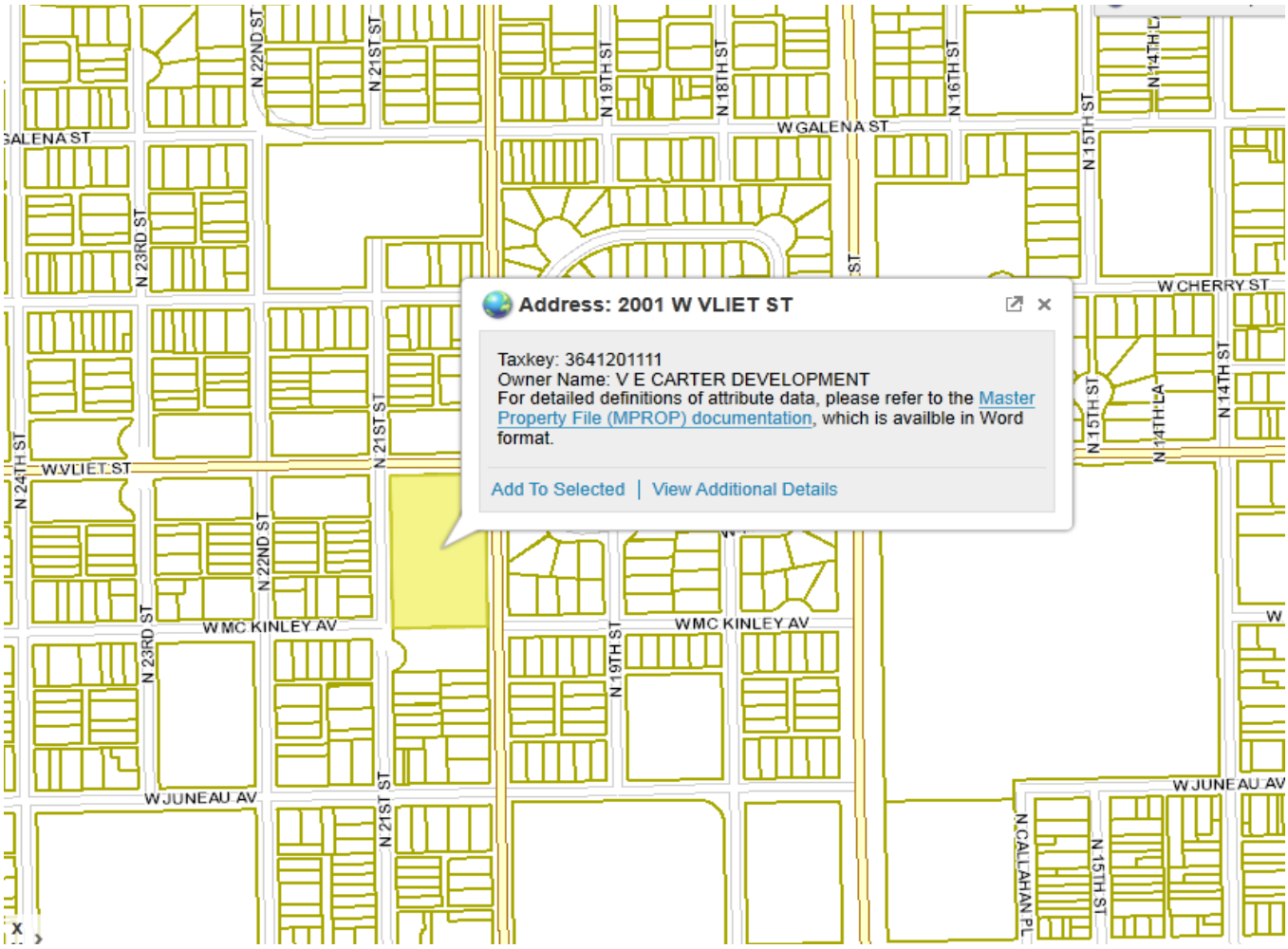
Consideration will be given to whether or not the building is beyond economically feasible repair.

5. Additions

Consideration will be given to whether or not the proposed demolition is a later addition that is not in keeping with the original design of the structure or does not contribute to its character. The 1958 addition to the school house is out of character with the remainder of the building and a proposal to demolish it would be supported by staff.



Proposed Historic Designation
For the former
Fifteenth District / McKinley School / V.E. Carter Human Resources Center
2001 West Vliet Street
And
The Milwaukee Public Schools Playground
1255 North 20th Street
September 2014


Address: 2001 W VLIET ST
Taxkey: 3641201111
Owner Name: V E CARTER DEVELOPMENT
For detailed definitions of attribute data, please refer to the Master Property File (MPROP) documentation, which is availble in Word format.
Add To Selected | View Additional Details
W GALENA ST
W CHERRY ST
W VLIET ST
W MC KINLEY AV
W JUNEAU AV
N 22ND ST
N 21ST ST
N 19TH ST
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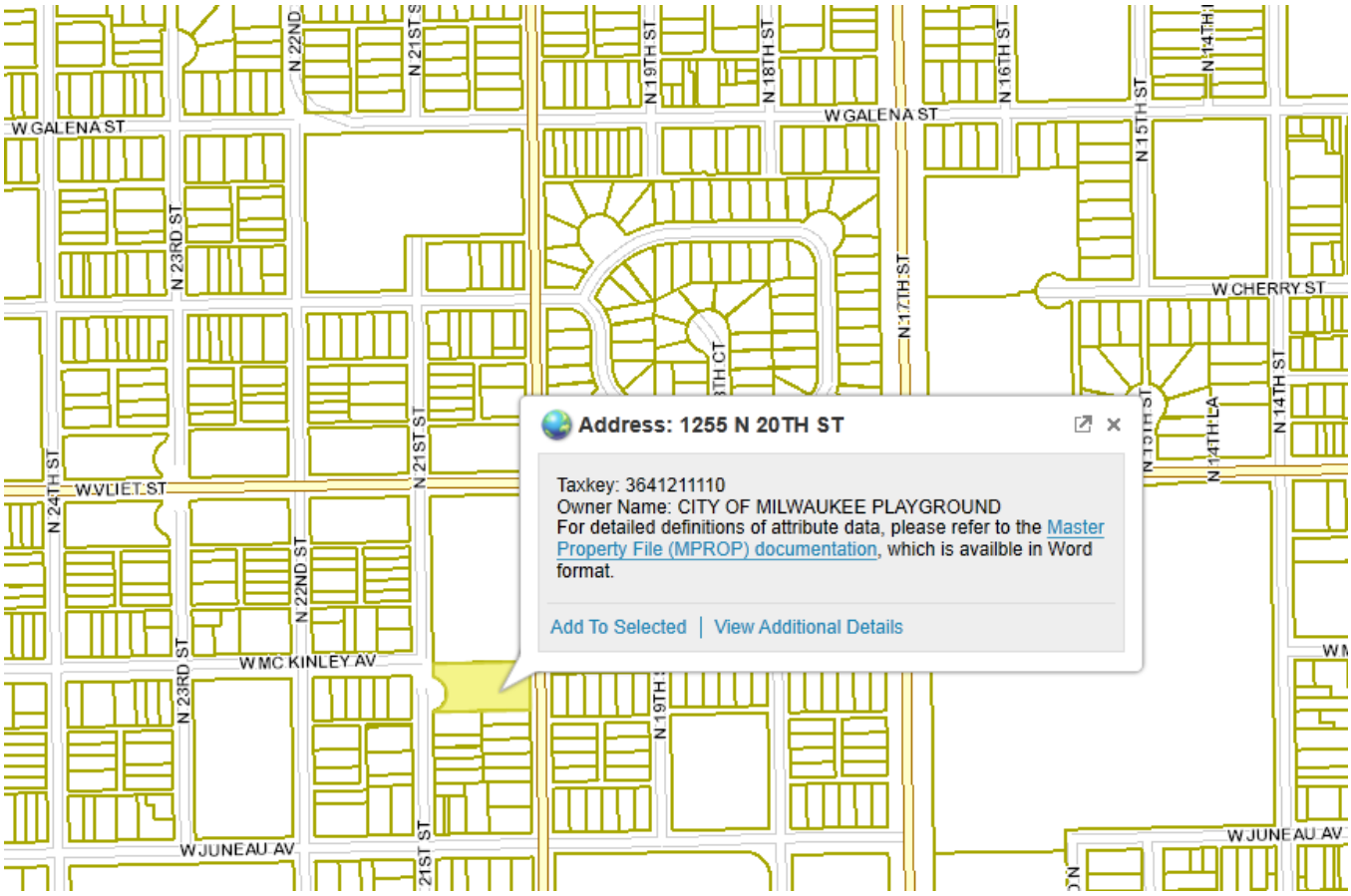
N 15TH ST
N 14TH ST
N 23RD ST
N 24TH ST
N CALLAHAN PL


W GALENA ST
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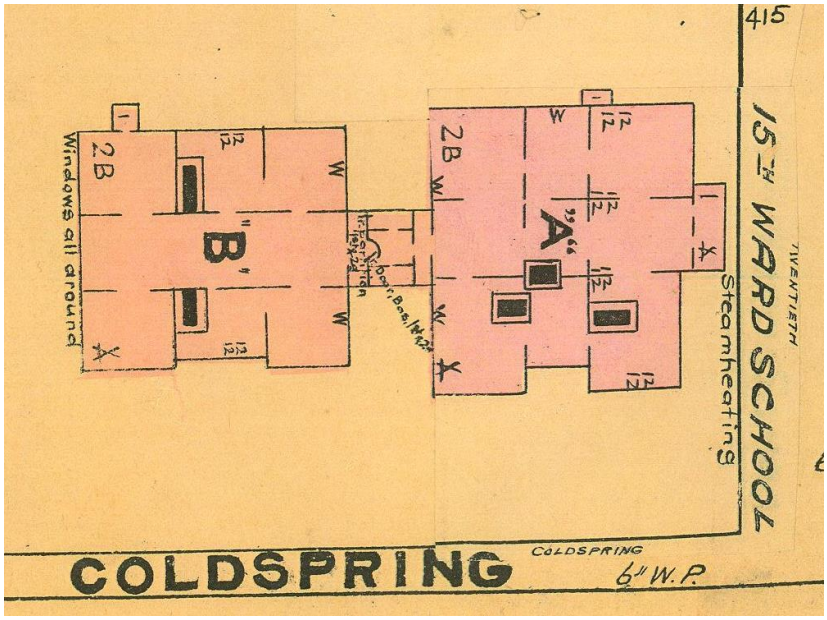
N 17TH ST
W CHERRY ST
N 14TH ST
N 24TH ST
W VLIET ST
N 22ND ST
W MC KINLEY AV
W JUNEAU AV
Address: 1255 N 20TH ST
Taxkey: 3641211110
Owner Name: CITY OF MILWAUKEE PLAYGROUND
For detailed definitions of attribute data, please refer to the Master Property File (MPROP) documentation, which is availble in Word format.
Add To Selected | View Additional Details

Survey Photos 1984

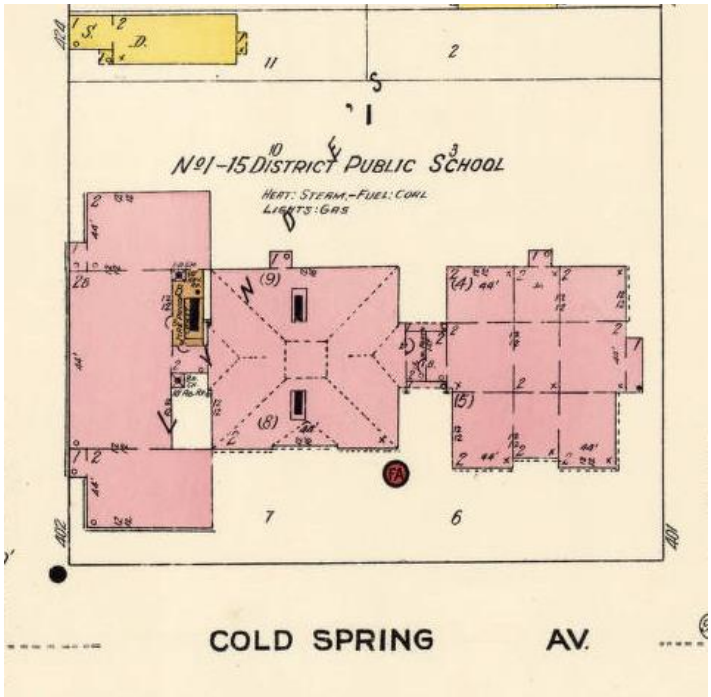
Fifteenth District / McKinley School 1925 above and today below

South elevation of 1888 addition



1888 Rascher Fire Insurance Map

North 21st Street elevation



Sanborn Fire Insurance Map 1910 Volume 3 page/sheet 274