

PENNSYLVANIA HISTORIC RESOURCE SURVEY FORM
 BUREAU FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION Box 1026
 PA HISTORICAL & MUSEUM COMMISSION Harrisburg, PA 17120

7. Local survey organization
 Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation

8. property owners name and address
 Pittsburgh Board of Public Education
 341 South Bellefield Avenue
 Pittsburgh, PA 15213

9. tax parcel number/other number
 27C-320
 11. status (other surveys, lists etc.)
 NR District
 Allegheny Co. Survey

10. U.T.M. 117 518161310
 Zone easting
 four acres
4471810410
 northing
 usgs sheet: Pgh. East 1:24000

12. classification
 site () structure () object ()
 building (X) district ()
 thematic (X)

13. date(s) (how determined)
 1916
 14. period
 1901-1920

15. style, design or folk type
 Neo-Classical

19. original use
 School
 20. present use
 School

16. architect or engineer
 Edward Stotz

17. contractor or builder

18. primary building mat./construc.
 Steel; limestone

21. condition
 Excellent
 22. integrity
 Good

23. site plan with north arrow

 24. photo notation

 25. file/location

BLACK AND WHITE PRINT(S)
 3 1/2" x 5" enlargement or medium format contact
 note location of negative in block 24.

26. brief description (note unusual features, integrity, environment, threats and associated buildings)
 Schenley High School is a three-story, forty-bay school with a distinctive triangular shape. The three rounded corners are the exterior's most demonstrative features. The school has a flat roof and unadorned architrave cornice. The limestone facade is severely simple. Large windows lining the exterior walls are (continue on back if necessary)

27. history, significance and/or background
 At the time of its construction in 1916 and well into the 1940's Schenley High School was nationally noted as a precedent-setting school building. It incorporated the most modern and lavish of facilities and was controversially expensive at the time of building; in fact it was the first school building in the country to cost over \$1,000,000 to build. (continue on back if necessary)

28. sources of information
 J.J. Donovan. School Architecture: Principles and Practices.
 NY, the Macmillan Co., 1921. (continue on back if necessary)

29. prepared by:
 Lu Donnelly
 PHLF
 30. date 5/85 revision(s)

Computer Coding (BHP Survey Grantees Must Complete)
 31. county 003 32. style 22; _____; _____
 32. construction material 06; 25; _____; _____ 34. roof _____; _____
 35. design type _____; _____
 36. historic function 08 0 3 01 P; _____; _____
 37. construction feature _____; _____; _____ 38. ext. walls 25; _____ 39. plan _____
 40. facade width 6 41. roof material _____ 42. stories E 43. depth _____
 44. ext. design _____; _____; _____
 45. int. design _____; _____; _____

1. County Allegheny
 2. municipality Pittsburgh
 3. street address or specific location Bigelow Boulevard and Centre Avenue
 4. survey code
 5. present name Schenley High School
 6. other name (historic name if any) N/A

26. (cont.)

replacement aluminum double sash with opaque upper sash. Slight projections mark the springing points of the rounded corners, and a central projecting entry pavilion on the northwest facade facing Bigelow Boulevard consists of three recessed entries with massive wood paneled doors with architrave frames. Above, six Ionic columns frame two stories of even fenestration and support the namestone reading "Schenley High School".

A greenhouse is suspended from the western corner on the rear elevation. The building is terraced into the hillside and exposes a full basement level at the west corner. An auditorium forms a central strip through the hollow triangular plan creating light wells on either side.

In general, the interior plan has classrooms around the outer edge and a corridor along the inner edge of the triangle, with stairways at or near the three corners. Large support posts mark the inner edge of each corner. Hallways and classrooms have simple plaster walls highlighted by oak moldings around doorways and blackboards.

Today many of the specialty rooms shown on the original plans have been altered to standard classrooms. But some rooms, including a home economics suite used as a day-care center, retain their original appearance and function.

The athletic facilities, while remarkable in 1916, are small by today's standards. The swimming pool is narrow, but competition length, and there are integral bleachers overlooking it. The gymnasiums are located in the basement, and are not easily accessible for public athletic events. Schenley has no adjacent playing fields and only a small parking lot on the grounds, but a proposed major addition to the lower portion of the building will enhance the athletic facilities and increase parking.

27. (cont.)

Edward Stotz, at this time the most experienced school architect in Pittsburgh and designer of two of the city's three other high schools, here employed a new style. Schenley contrasts greatly with Stotz's Victorian Gothic Fifth Avenue High School of twenty years earlier. Its styling is Neo Classical in demeanor and detail, but also progressive, anticipating the Art Moderne of the thirties with its rounded corners and flat roof. It is ironic that the two high schools which followed Schenley, although noteworthy buildings in their own right, stylistically followed a reverse progression. Westinghouse (1921) has similar limestone sheathing and restrained Classical ornament, but it has neither the compactness nor brilliance of Schenley's plan. Taylor Allderdice, (1927) while suavely elegant on its exterior and interior, employs a Beaux Arts style nationally at its peak much earlier.

Schenley High School is the epitome of the platoon school, a type of school advocated by William Wirt, the superintendent of Gary, Indiana schools in the 1910's. He advocated expensive and complete school facilities to accommodate large numbers of students, who would rotate between classes in shifts or platoons. He also advocated evening and weekend use of the school by the local community. Thus by educating more students per facility, and doubling its use as a community center, the extra cost was justified.

EVALUATION

EVALUATOR(S)

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OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION Box 1026
PA HISTORICAL & MUSEUM COMMISSION Harrisburg, PA 17120

ADDITIONAL PHOTOS -- References:

27. (cont.)

Stotz followed Wirt's directives in a concrete way by incorporating the following spaces into Schenley High School: 40 classrooms, 11 laboratories, 11 shops, four crafts rooms, seven domestic science rooms, two music rooms, six commercial rooms, a library, two gymnasiums, a swimming pool, reception rooms, rest rooms, and a 1600 seat auditorium and full stage. The school originally had a central telephone switch board connecting every room in the building and a master electric clock and bell system. It was built to accommodate 1800 students in 1916; enrollment peaked in 1940 with approximately 3,000 students.

The school was named for Mary Croghan Schenley, granddaughter of General James O'Hara, an early Pittsburgh entrepreneur and owner of vast amounts of local real estate. Mrs. Schenley owned much of the land in the Schenley Farms district until the turn-of-the century when it began to be developed as a high-class residential and institutional district under the guidance of Franklin F. Nicola. Schenley High School was part of this development, and is part of the Schenley Farms Historic District now listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

significance: architecture, education
Verbal boundary description and justification.

The nominated property consists of Allegheny County block and lot 27G-320 which encompasses the school building and its contiguous grounds.

1. County

Allegheny
Schenley High School

2. Municipality

Pittsburgh

3. Street address or specific location

Bigelow Boulevard and Centre Avenue

4. Survey code

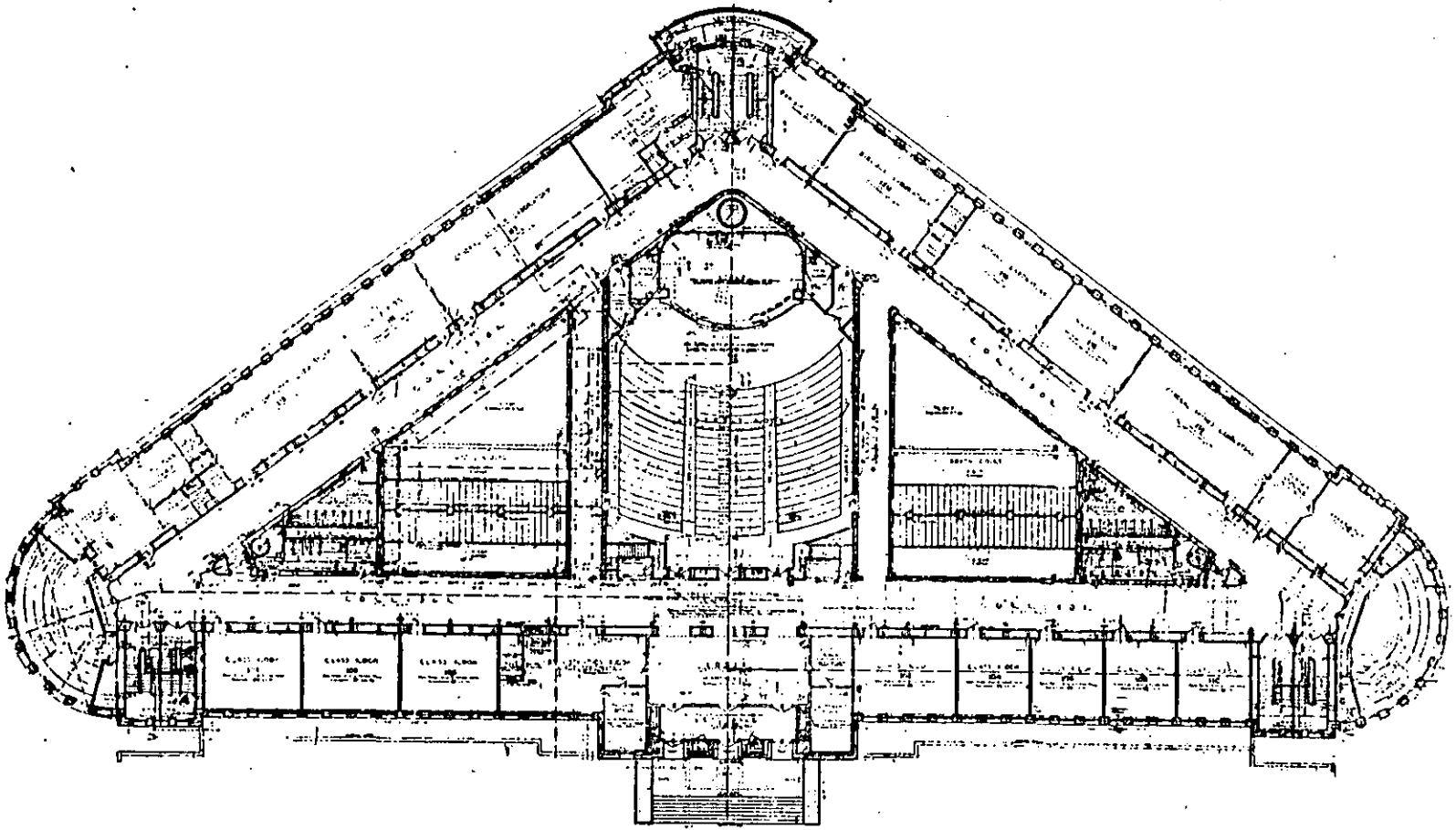
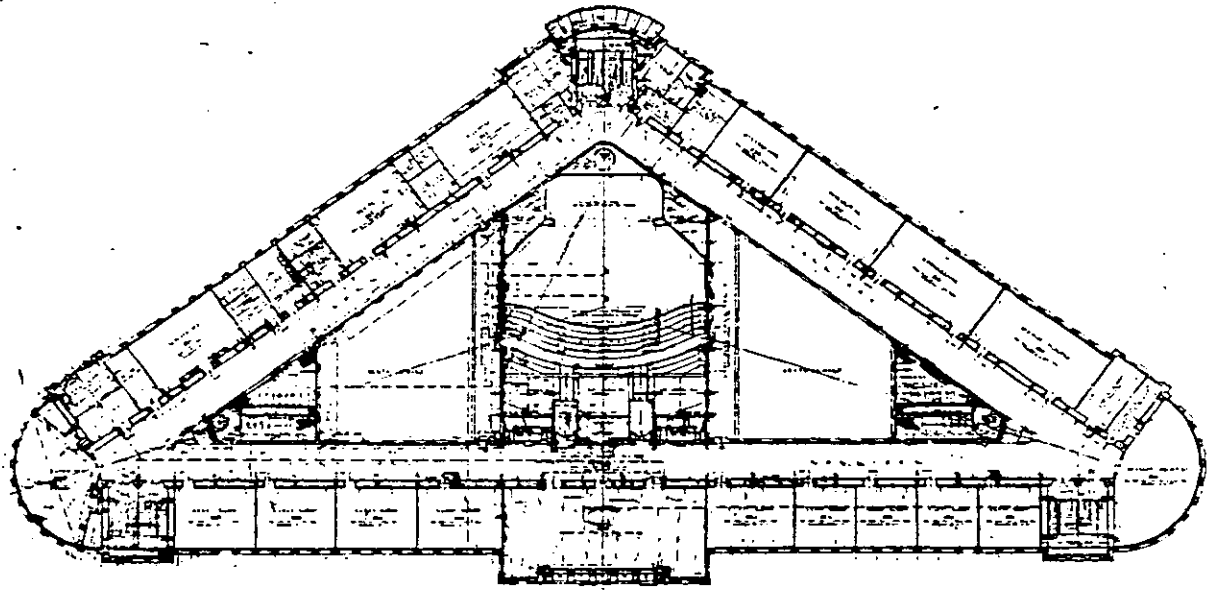
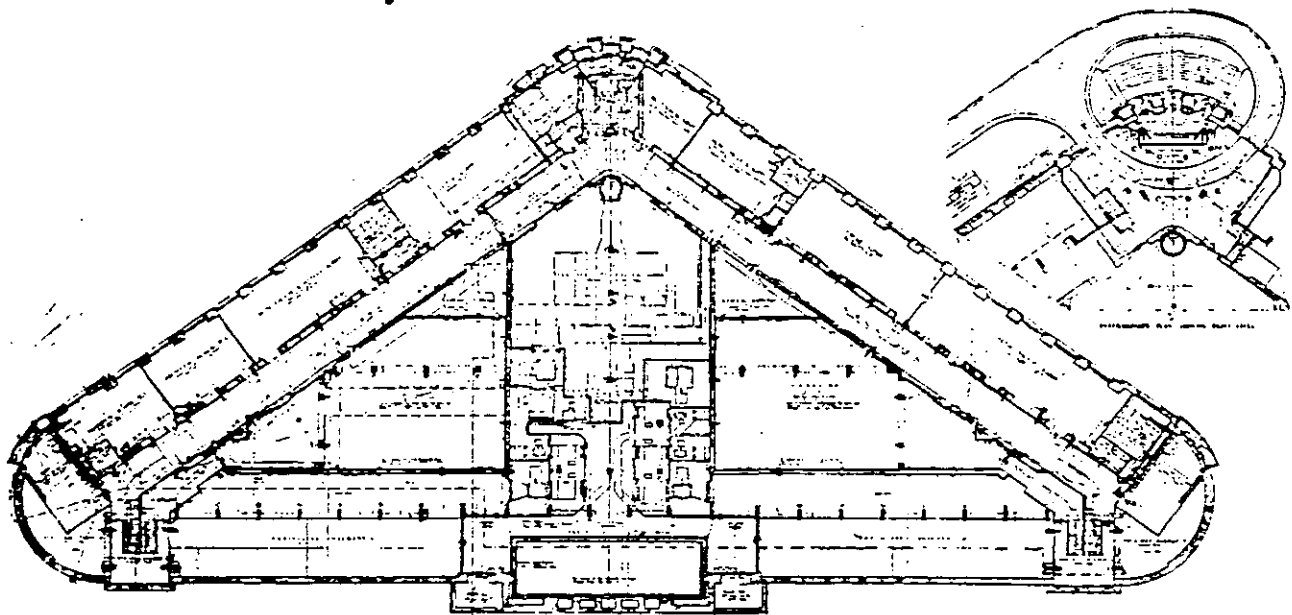


FIG. 612:—SCHENLEY HIGH SCHOOL, FIRST FLOOR PLAN, PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA.



Mr. Edward Stutz, Architect.

FIG. 613. — SCHENLEY HIGH SCHOOL, THIRD FLOOR PLAN, PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA.

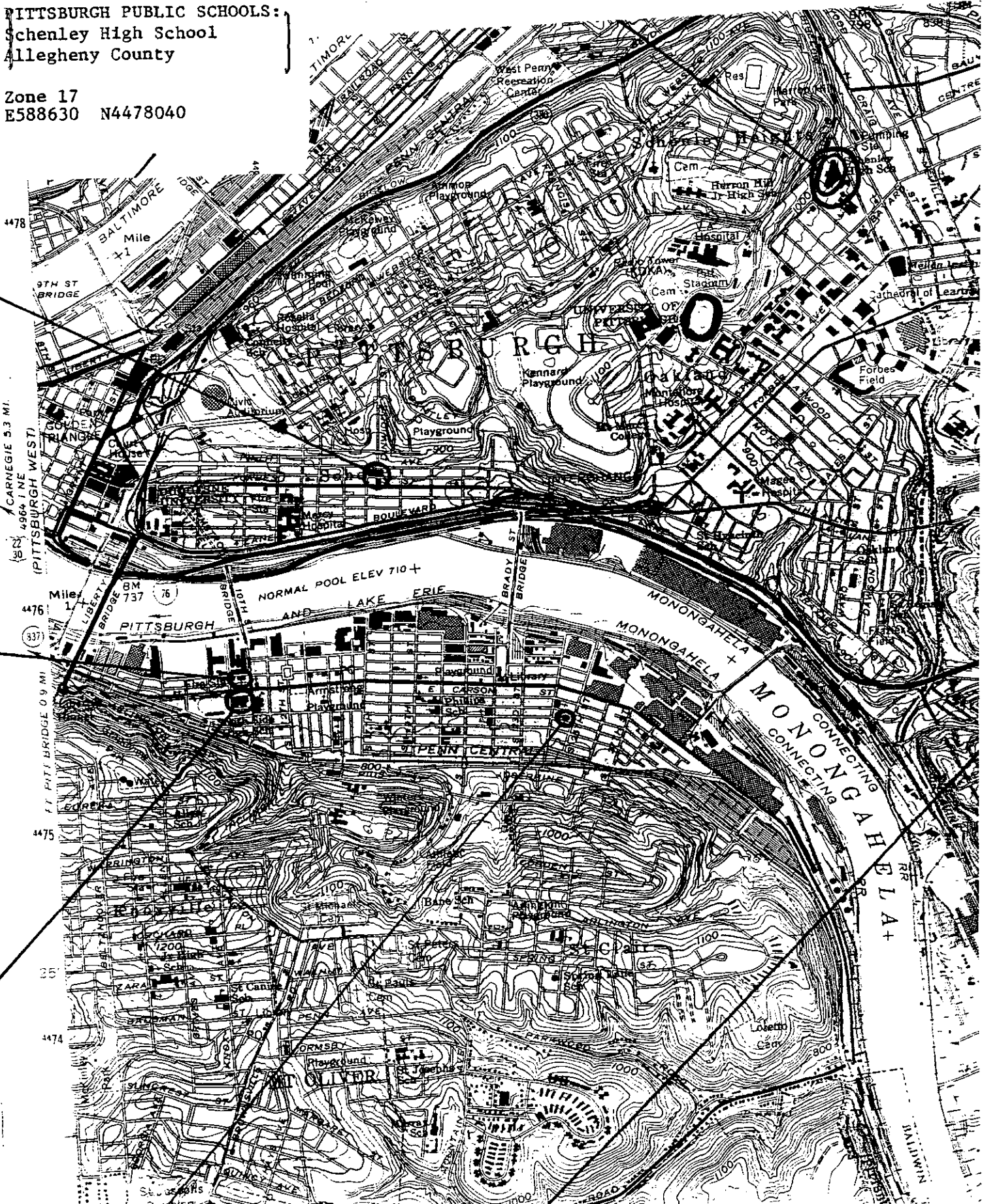


Mr. Edward Stutz, Architect.

FIG. 614. — SCHENLEY HIGH SCHOOL, BASEMENT FLOOR PLAN, PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA.

PITTSBURGH PUBLIC SCHOOLS:
Schenley High School
Allegheny County

Zone 17
E588630 N4478040



Zone 17
E585720 N4475560