

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
 29C-270

10. U.T.M.

117	518	816	810
Zone		easting	

 one acre

4	4	7	6	0	4	0
usgs sheet:			Pgh East 1:24000			

11. status (other surveys, lists etc.)
 Allegheny County Survey

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

13. date(s) (how determined)
 1893; 1899
 14. period
 1881-1900

15. style, design or folk type
 Romanesque Revival

19. original use
 School
 20. present use
 School

16. architect or engineer
 U.J.L. Peoples

17. contractor or builder
 C.A. Balph

18. primary building mat./construc.
 Brick

21. condition
 Fair
 22. integrity
 Excellent

23. site plan with north arrow
 [Blank area for site plan]

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

24. photo notation
 [Blank area for photo notation]

25. file/location
 [Blank area for file/location]

**USE THIS COPY
 FOR DUPLICATING**

26. brief description (note unusual features, integrity, environment, threats and associated buildings)
 Oakland School is located on a mid-block lot and is essentially centered on its site. Play spaces, including basketball courts in the front yard, surround the building.
 The primary north-south axis of the brick building is two stories----(continue on back if necessary)

27. history, significance and/or background
 The Oakland School was one of three schools in the Oakland Sub-district. Its name was changed to Holmes School in about 1894 to honor a local sub-district school board member. The original portion of Oakland School is the oldest Pittsburgh public school building still in educational use by the Board of Public Education, but it is slated to close in June 1986.
 The Pittsburgh Board of Public Education has architectural ----- (continue on back if necessary)

28. sources of information
 "Big Money for the Oakland School," Pittsburgh Post, March 23, 1899, p. 2.
 (continue on back if necessary)

29. prepared by:
 Martin Aurand
 PHLF

Computer Coding (BHP Survey Grantees Must Complete)

30. date
 4/86
 revision(s)

31. county 003 32. style 18; _____; _____; _____
 33. construction material 03; _____; _____; _____ 34. roof _____; _____
 35. design type _____; _____; _____
 36. historic function 0 8 0 30 1 P; _____; _____; _____
 37. construction feature _____; _____; _____ 38. ext. walls 03; _____ 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 Dawson Street near Edith Place
 4. survey code
 5. present name Holmes Elementary School
 6. other name (historical name if any) Oakland Public School

S/20/116

ADDITIONAL DATA/PHOTOS
number all continuations from front

4. survey code

26. (cont.)

in height on a raised basement of rock-faced stone. A central section, however, projects from the facade and is three full stories. The principle block, which ends in two-story polygonal projections, has flat-headed first story windows and rounded arch second story windows. There are recessed spandrels between floors so that each two story window bay reads as a verticle recess. The cornice has a dentil row. The central section has a first floor porch behind five openings with stone rounded arches and stone balustrades. The central opening is largest and leads to the entry. Namestones above the porch read "Oakland School Building." The second and third stories of the central projection have alternating groupings of flat-headed and rounded arch windows. Second story windows have terra cotta ornament and there is a broad terra cotta frieze of swags. All roofs are hipped.

The Oakland School interior displays a monumental staircase in a central two-story open space. A central stair splits to each side. The stair balustrade and the second floor railing around the rectangular open court are filigree metalwork with cast iron newel posts with finials and cast iron columns with ornamental bases and capitals. Garlands detail the bases of the stair and second floor. The central space is entered through a large arched opening. There is paneled wood wainscoting and wood flooring throughout the halls. Doors have high transoms and windows high in the hallway walls light the classrooms. A third floor auditorium is closed and inaccessible. A tall central bell-tower has been lost.

27. (cont.)

drawings for a "Fourteenth Ward" school for this site designed by Ulysses J. L. Peoples. This design was never executed. The school that was built was apparently erected in two stages. The central section and two bays (?) of each wing date to 1893. The remainder of the wings, according to a newspaper article, date to 1899. This article names Peoples as the architect for the additions, so it seems quite likely that he designed the original portion of the executed building as well. The interior court arrangement is similar to that at Peoples' McCleary School, and the elaborated staircase is a dramatic gesture of the type characteristic of Peoples' work. In its final form, the building somewhat resembles Peoples' Wightman School.

The building has required adaptation to remain in use: restroom additions (1907), fire escapes (1916), bell tower removal for structural reasons (1954), and auditorium condemnation (1957 ?). But a large auditorium and playroom addition designed by Marion M. Steen in 1938 was never built, and specialized spaces are still lacking. Thus the building will close. Its future is uncertain. This is unfortunate because the building's rather glum exterior masks a delightful and dramatic interior.

significance: architecture.

Verbal boundary description and justification.

The nominated property consists of Allegheny County Block and Lot 29C-270 which encompasses the school building and its contiguous grounds.

EVALUATION

EVALUATOR(S)

