

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Highspire High School  
other names/site number Highspire Elementary School

### 2. Location

street & number 221 Penn Street not for publication  
city, town Highspire vicinity  
state Pennsylvania code PA county Dauphin code 043 zip code 17034

### 3. Classification

<p>Ownership of Property</p> <input type="checkbox"/> private <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local <input type="checkbox"/> public-State <input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<p>Category of Property</p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s) <input type="checkbox"/> district <input type="checkbox"/> site <input type="checkbox"/> structure <input type="checkbox"/> object	<p>Number of Resources within Property</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Contributing</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Noncontributing</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">_____</td> <td style="text-align: center;">_____</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">_____</td> <td style="text-align: center;">_____</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">_____</td> <td style="text-align: center;">_____</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">_____</td> <td style="text-align: center;">_____</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">Total</td> </tr> </table>	Contributing	Noncontributing	1	0	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	1	0	_____	_____		Total
Contributing	Noncontributing																	
1	0																	
_____	_____																	
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1	0																	
_____	_____																	
	Total																	

Name of related multiple property listing:  
None

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register None

### 4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official Date

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

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date

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

### 5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Education / School

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Vacant/Not In Use**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

-Late Gothic Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone, concretewalls brickroof asphaltother concrete

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The old Highspire High School is a two story, brick constructed building located on the southeast corner of Penn and Roop Streets in the Borough of Highspire, PA. The building was erected in various stages from 1875 to 1939. The building's original core was a four room schoolhouse. In 1902, it was expanded by two bays in frontage to the east. At that time, the principal Penn Street facade of the building contained individual, two over two window sash and was capped with a pitched/hipped roof (this roof still exists). In 1915, a major addition to the building was erected on land that was the side yard of the school along Roop Street. This addition had a different architectural appearance than its predecessors including a flat roof and tall multi-pane windows of various lateral groupings. To achieve design and interior lighting consistency, the Penn Street facades of the 1875 and 1902 buildings, and the rear elevation of the 1902 addition, were altered to reflect the same type of window fenestration as the 1915 building. The rear of the 1875 building, however, which faces south into the rear playground area was not altered and to this day displays the original window treatment. In 1926, a third addition was erected, this time abutting the east side of the 1902 structure and of the same design as the 1915 addition. An auditorium/gym was installed in the rear portion of this addition. The fourth and final addition occurred in 1939 when four classrooms and a larger auditorium/gym were connected to the east wall of the 1926 addition. Again, the basic design theme of the multiple-grouped, multi-pane windows along the principal Penn Street facade was repeated, as was the flat roof. With this completion of the school complex, the former auditorium/gym in the 1926 building was converted to a cafeteria. All windows are wood and double hung. The school's main entrance, contained within the 1939 facade along Penn Street, features Art Deco pilaster capitals and concrete cornice fascia. The exteriors of the building's 1915 and 1926 additions are organized into bays separated by vertical piers topped with caps above the roof lines. On the 1915 exterior, a concrete beltcourse above the second story delineates the facade's vertical balance. The foundations are stone in the older sections and concrete in the newer ones. The building has been vacant since 1983 and is suffering from some physical deterioration especially in its older sections. The building's classrooms in some areas retain original wainscotting and contain built-in book shelves and cabinetry in other areas.

 See continuation sheet

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Highspire High School

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The interior of the building contains features which trace the complex's physical evolution. The original 1875 building contained four classrooms (two on the first floor and two on the second floor). Three of these still exist with wainscoting intact and with the classroom on the second floor rear (south side of building) possessing the original two over two, round headed window sash which prior to 1915 also existed on the principal Penn Street elevation. The majority of the original tin ceiling in the first floor front room which faces Penn Street, as well as all tin in the interior corridor, has been removed with the exception of a remaining tin border around the perimeter of the classroom's ceiling. The remaining ceilings are plaster. The first floor rear classroom was converted to restroom facilities. Some wainscoting is retained in the first floor corridor, however none in the second floor corridor.

The 1902 addition, which abuts the 1875 building to the east, contains a stair tower facing Penn Street and originally had, like the 1875 building, four classrooms (two on the first floor and two on the second floor). The wainscoting in three of these rooms is for the most part intact (a statement concerning the fourth room, first floor rear, will follow). Also like the 1875 building, the tin ceiling in the first floor front room of the 1902 section has been removed with the exception of the border, however the tin in the first floor hallway and wainscoting are retained and the ceilings of the remaining rooms are plaster. No wainscoting is retained in the second floor corridor. Another feature of this portion of the building's hallway is a series of multi-pane interior windows, set in the wall separating the hall from the first floor front classroom, which no doubt were installed to aid in illuminating the hall.

Unlike the 1875 and 1902 sections, the 1915 building, which abuts the 1875 building to the west, has multi-paned transoms over several doors leading into the classrooms from the hallways. Two principal features of this section of the building include large open corner rooms (the one on the second floor being the school's library), facing the Penn and Roop Street intersection, and a wood staircase leading onto Roop Street. The rooms have plaster ceilings with the wainscoting removed from the walls in the second floor room, however retained in the first floor room. The staircase has its original newel-posts and spindles, however has lost some of the original wainscoting lining the stairtower walls. The wainscoting in the second floor hallway in this portion of the building, however, is more intact.

The 1926 addition, which abuts the 1902 addition to the east contains three classrooms; two on the second floor and one on the first floor (front facing Penn Street). The rooms on the second floor retain their tin ceilings and wainscoting. Doorway transoms to the classrooms are retained on both floors. The tin ceiling in the first floor room has been removed, however the wainscoting is retained. The floor of the first story rear portion of this

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section of the building was built to grade to form the rear half of what was to be the school's first auditorium. Accordingly, the rear classroom of the abutting 1902 section was altered by partially dropping its floor to unify the auditorium's seating area, and by retaining the balance of the room's raised floor as the stage. This former auditorium which would later become the cafeteria has its original wainscotting and tin ceiling, although the ceiling is peeling away in some areas. Aside from these treatments, the space is not embellished. When converted to a cafeteria, the stage was walled-in and made a health room. Wainscotting is retained in both the first and second floor corridors of this portion of the building.

The final 1939 addition, which abuts the 1926 section to the east, contains four classrooms all facing Penn Street (two on the first floor and two on the second floor) behind which stands the newer auditorium and stage. The classrooms have doorway transoms (second floor only) and plaster ceilings (both floors), however no wainscotting (either originally or presently). The second floor, far eastern classroom is particularly significant in that it contains a series of built in bookcases enclosed with multipane, glass hinged doors. The main entrance to the school, which changed over the years in relation to its physical evolution, was created in the 1939 addition and is centered between the two first floor classrooms. This entrance is highlighted by two impressive eighteen light transoms, between which exits a vestibule. Ceiling hallway lights in this section of the building have their original translucent glass globes. Student lockers are built into the second floor hallway wall. The auditorium seating area has two isles and folding wood seats. The stage proscenium is simply treated with no ornamentation or stylistic features. The stage area, which also served as a gym, has a basement containing locker and shower facilities and a boiler room. The majority of the flooring through all sections of the school is linoleum or similar tile.

It should be noted that in the mid 1980's, the Borough of Highspire attempted to convert the school building to a community center. The plan, which never came to fruition as the necessary funds were not raised, envisioned retaining the 1926 and 1939 portions of the building and razing the older sections of the building for surface parking. Accordingly, and at that time, the Borough prematurely removed certain interior elements of the building (such as tin ceilings and wainscotting) with demolition contemplated. This action, in addition to the fact that the building has been vacant for seven years, has resulted in a moderate amount of interior deterioration and some loss of its integrity. However, most of the interior window and doorway trim remains, as do the hallway transoms, original classroom doors (which are stored on the premises) and interior hallway windows and classroom wainscotting which collectively evoke an historic ambience which characterizes the building as an older school.

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## SETTING:

The Highspire School is situated in the older portion of the Borough of Highspire adjacent to the original downtown area where the old Harrisburg/Lancaster Pike (US Rt. 230) crossed the Pennsylvania Canal. The building stock surrounding the School is primarily late 19th Century and early 20th Century single family homes with several in-fill newer houses. Several churches are also within a block of the School. The main facade of the School faces north onto Penn Street which is quiet and relatively narrow residential street. The rear of the building faces south into the former playground area which borders Broad Street. This section of the building also faces the business district and Rt. 230. The school, while substantially larger than the surrounding buildings in the neighborhood, conforms in height to the two and three story vertical scale of the area. The building clearly acts as the central unifying entity which ties together and gives identity to the old Highspire town center.

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally  statewide  locally

Applicable National Register Criteria  A  B  C  D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)  A  B  C  D  E  F  G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Education  
Architecture

Period of Significance

1875-1939

Significant Dates

1875, 1915  
1926, 1939

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Significant Person

none

Architect/Builder

1875 building: Fisher, G. (architect)  
1939 building: Alexander, H.E. (builder)  
Lawrie & Green (architect)

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Under Criteria A and C of the National Register Criteria, The old Highspire High School is significant in the categories of Education and Architecture because, 1) it was the original high school building in the borough of Highspire and to this day is the largest public building in the community and Highspire's spiritual focus, and 2) its Collegiate Classical design established by the 1915 addition set a theme for subsequent additions and alterations to the building which mirrored the growth of the community. The building stands at the "centerpiece" location in the heart of the Borough and, at the time of its decommissioning in 1983, then as an elementary school, was the eighth oldest school building in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania which was still in operation for educational purposes. Old Highspire High School's significance is also tied to the facility's singular relationship to the Borough of Highspire prior to 1958; it being the community's only high school, center of community activities and the alma mater of its graduated youth. No longer is high school education provided within the Borough of Highspire because its school district merged with nearby Steelton in 1956 and a new school building to accommodate both municipalities opened in Swatara Township in 1958 (after that time the building served as an elementary school until it was closed in 1983). In addition, the Old Highspire School is the principal historic, public building in the community which, through its various additions, reflected the population increases and growth of the Borough. The building also is a good example of a neighborhood high school representing an older, unconsolidated borough school district which pre-dated the regionalization of the suburban school systems. The School at present further enhances and anchors what remains of the community's historic building fabric especially as many historic buildings on the borough's only business street, Second Street, were lost over the years. This occurred due to the widening of Second Street in the early 1950's, which is also US Route 230, and redevelopment demolition activities resulting from various floods.

The school building traces its roots to a relatively early period in the history of public education in Pennsylvania. One year after the Free School Act of 1834 was enacted in the state, three small buildings were erected at another location in Highspire as the community's first school with ages distributed among the buildings.

See continuation sheet

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By this time, Highspire, which was laid out between 1812 and 1814, began to establish its principal industries of logging and whiskey which were tied to it being a river town. Farmers sold their wheat to the famous Highspire Whiskey Distillery. The Distillery in turn shipped its bottled spirits downstream to the Chesapeake Bay and Baltimore for distribution throughout the eastern portion of the United States. Also of importance was the town's location on the Pennsylvania Canal and the main line of the Pennsylvania Railroad. The building of canal boats and establishment of lodging facilities for travelers also contributed to the town's growth.

In 1875, Highspire had expanded sufficiently to justify the construction of a new school building which centralized the operations of the former three structures. This building, erected on Penn Street and adjacent to the Pennsylvania Canal (the bed of which is now occupied by Broad Street, bordering the school property to the south), became the core of what would later become the Highspire High School. No doubt this location was selected because it was a short block from the historic center of town where Second Street (being at that time the turnpike from Harrisburg to Lancaster) crossed over the Pennsylvania Canal. At this time, the population of the settlement of Highspire was approximately 750, or about 50% of Lower Swatara Township of which Highspire was a part. The size of the community's growth required an addition to the school in 1902. One year later in 1903, Highspire was incorporated as a borough and a three year high school was established in the expanded building.

Subsequent additions were constructed in 1915, (with a 1910 Borough population of 1,669), in 1926 (the same year the four year high school curriculum was established and with an increased 1920 population of 2,031) and in 1939 at which time the community had grown to a population of slightly under 2,370 (1940 Census). Though the building's physical evolution spanned a period of sixty-four years, its Collegiate Classical design theme is tied to the 1915 addition (being the most prominent as this occupies the principal corner of the complex at Penn and Roop Streets). This design featured the large, multi-paned classroom windows necessary for appropriate interior lighting. The smaller two-over-two windows of the earlier buildings were enlarged at the same time, and the later 1926 and 1939 additions maintains the same type of fenestration.

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

Borough of Highspire

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property 0.7

UTM References

A 18 347590 4452380  
 Zone Easting Northing

C \_\_\_\_\_

B \_\_\_\_\_  
 Zone Easting Northing

D \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundaries are the legally recorded boundaries of the property.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Jeb Stuart, Principal  
 organization Real Estate Resources, Inc. date 1/26/90  
 street & number 1839 Green Street, Suite 101 telephone (717) 233-3997  
 city or town Harrisburg state PA zip code 17102



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MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- \_\_\_\_\_, Combination Atlas Map of Dauphin County, Pennsylvania.  
(Philadelphia: Everts and Stewart, 1875), republished in 1985 by the  
Dauphin County Historical Society, Harrisburg, Pa., C. Elizabeth Johnson,  
Michael Barton, Sharon K. Sacks, editors.
- William Henry Engle, M.D., D.A. History of the Counties of Dauphin and  
Lebanon in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia: Everts and  
Peck, 1883) reprinted (Lebanon: The Lebanon County Historical Society,  
1977), pp. 391, 392.
- Harry Gross, editor, The Story of Highspire: 150 Years of Growth 1814-1964  
(Sesqui-Centennial Commemorative Book) (Highspire: Borough of Highspire,  
1964)
- The Harrisburg Telegraph, August 4, 1939. p. 1.
- Interview with Richard E. Chubb, 13 Roop Street, Highspire, PA. (Highspire  
native and Highspire High School 1943 graduate) Nov., 1989.
- Robert L. Leight, "Creating a School System: Key Events in Pennsylvania's  
Educational History," Pennsylvania School Board Association Bulletin  
Oct., 1984, p. 11.
- Pennsylvania Department of Education. Buildings By Original Construction Date  
(Oldest to Newest), SY 1982-83 (Computer Listing, SBRO06SB, prepared on  
November 9, 1989, specially for nomination). 1983 was the year of  
decommissioning of the Highspire High School (listed as Highspire  
Elementary School).
- Richard H. Steinmetz, Sr. and Robert D. Hoffsommer, This Was Harrisburg  
(Harrisburg: Stackpole Press, 1976), p. 29.

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ALL THAT CERTAIN tract or parcel of land situate in the Borough of Highspire, Dauphin County, Pennsylvania, more particularly bounded and described as follows to wit:

BEGINNING at a point which is the point of the intersection of the eastern right-of-way line of Roop Street and the southern right-of-way line of Penn Street as shown on the survey hereinafter referred to: thence along the southern line of Penn Street as shown on the survey hereinafter referred to; thence along the southern line of Penn Street South 77 degrees 00 minutes 00 seconds East, 261.72 feet to a bar set on the Western line of lands now or late of James H. Fetzer, Jr.; thence along said Fetzer lands South 13 degrees 00 minutes 00 seconds West, 75.5 feet to a point on the northern line of Stoner's Alley; thence along the northern line of Stoner's Alley 77 degrees 00 minutes 00 seconds West, 30.20 feet to a point; thence South across Stoner's Alley and along the lands now or late of Robert Garber South 12 degrees 40 minutes 00 seconds West, 105.09 feet to a bar on the northern right-of-way of Broad Street; thence along the northern right-of-way of Broad Street North 82 degrees 09 minutes 00 seconds West, 62.11 feet to a point; thence along the northern line of Broad Street in an arc having a radius of 120 feet, 43 feet to a point; thence along the northern line of Broad Street South 77 degrees 19 minutes 00 seconds West, 29.03 feet to a point on the eastern line of an unnamed alley; thence along the eastern line of said alley North 13 degrees, 33 minutes 48 seconds East, 135.33 feet to a point; thence across said alley and along lands now or late of Chubb's Market North 76 degrees 26 minutes 12 seconds West, 104.93 feet to a point on the eastern line of Roop Street; thence along Roop Street North 13 degrees 33 minutes 48 seconds East, 73.77 feet to a point, the place of BEGINNING.

HAVING thereon erected a brick school building.

The above description has been prepared pursuant to a survey of Reed Engineering, Inc., dated June 14, 1983 which survey is attached to this Deed and made a part hereof by reference. After reasonable investigation of the records of the Recorder of Deeds of Dauphin County, and failing to find

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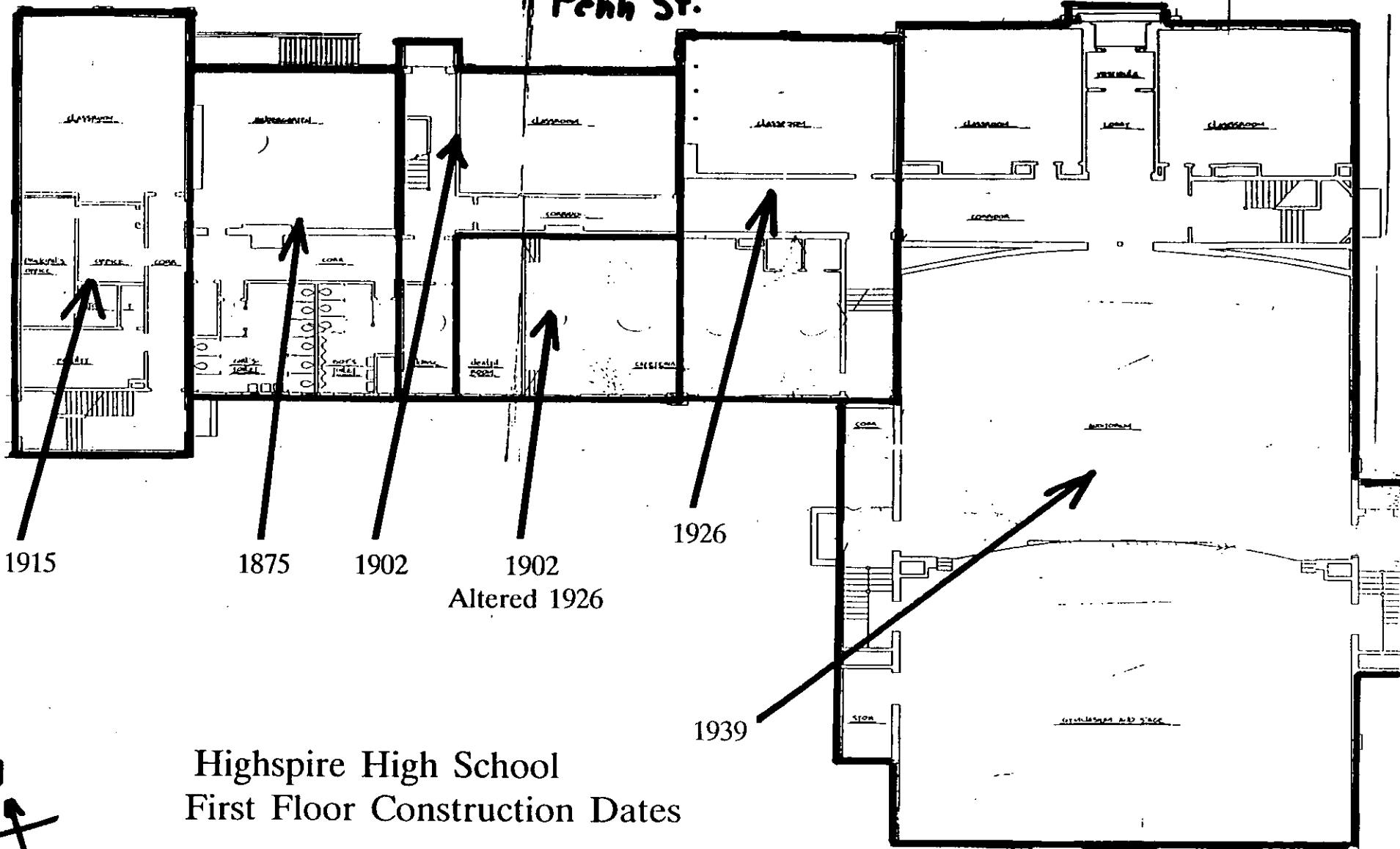
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a specific deed reference, specifically describing the remainder of the aforementioned parcel of land, it is hereby declared that the aforesaid described land has been used as the Highspire School Building continuously since at least 1867.

BEING the same premises which the Steelton-Highspire School District by its deed dated December 22, 1983 and recorded in the Office of the Recorder of Deeds for Dauphin County in Record Book 452, Page 16 quit claimed unto the Borough of Highspire. The said Borough has determined that said premises cannot be used by it for municipal purposes in accordance with the requirements of Section 707(8) of the School Code.

Roop St.

Penn St.



1915

1875

1902

1902

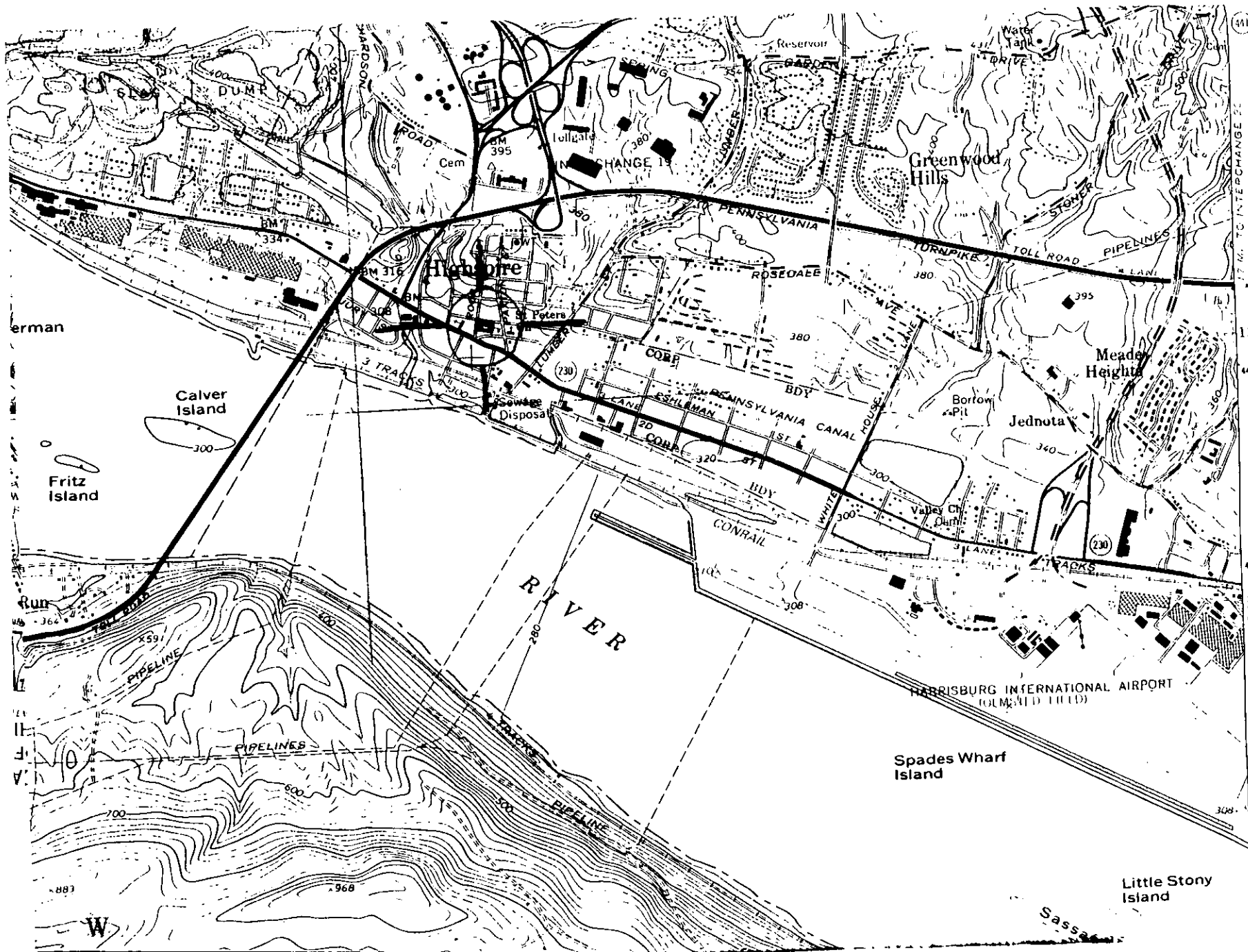
Altered 1926

1926

1939

Highspire High School  
First Floor Construction Dates





Hill Spine Area Section 18 in County  
 28618 - State for Road  
 E 3-17590 N 1452280  
 17 MI. TO INTERCHANGE  
 12'30" 452  
 451  
 ELIZABETHTOWN 6 MI  
 LANCASTER 28 MI  
 (MIDDLETOWN)  
 5664 II NW