

THEODORE ROOSEVELT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

THE THEODORE ROOSEVELT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LANDMARK AND
LANDMARK SITE DESIGNATION REPORT

HISTORIC LANDMARKS AND PRESERVATION DISTRICTS COMMISSION
CITY OF LOUISVILLE

July, 1980

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Historic Landmarks and Preservation Districts Commission

DESIGNATION STATEMENT

On July 16, 1980 the Historic Landmarks and Preservation Districts Commission held a Public Hearing at 7:00 p.m. in the Aldermanic Chambers on the third floor of City Hall on the proposed designation of Theodore Roosevelt Elementary School as a landmark of the City of Louisville. The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the Kentucky public notice statute. A letter, copies of the Legal Notice, and Ordinance 58, Series 1973 had been sent to the owner. An architectural description and a report on the historic and architectural significance of Theodore Roosevelt Elementary School were prepared and given to the Landmarks Commissioners.

Thirty-four people attended the Public Hearing. Eleven individuals, including members of the Roosevelt School staff, city officials, and neighborhood residents, spoke in favor of the designation. There was no opposition voiced at the hearing.

At the regularly scheduled meeting of August 6, 1980 the Historic Landmarks and Preservation Districts Commission voted unanimously to designate Theodore Roosevelt Elementary School as a landmark and its site as a landmark site of the City of Louisville. The landmark site is Block 15-F, Lot 96.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Theodore Roosevelt Elementary School is located on Seventeenth Street between Duncan and Columbia Streets in Louisville's Portland neighborhood. The area is primarily residential in character, but is interspersed with commercial and industrial buildings.

Roosevelt School is a three-story, brown brick structure in a modified Renaissance Revival style. The original building had only two stories, the third floor being added four years later. The present school complex includes two twentieth-century additions.

The main facade consists of five bays, articulated by pilasters. The central, slightly projecting bay contains the round-arched entry and a round-arched window in each story above. The windows and entryway are capped by stone arches with pronounced keystones. The entrance itself has paneled double doors topped by a horizontal transom, with radiating panes. A low pediment crowns this central pavilion. The flanking bays have shallow recessed areas pierced by double-hung sash windows with twelve-over-twelve lights and stone lintels and sills.

A three-story, brick addition to the rear of the original building dates from 1915. This structure is essentially square, but a narrow corridor projects forward, connecting it to the older building, and rearward to form a back entry hall. Like the earlier building, the walls of the addition are articulated by pilasters and recessed areas pierced by windows. Fenestration in the upper stories is in groups of two or five windows on a common sill, with six-over-six lights. A concrete belt course runs through the raised basement and above the windows of this level. A simple cornice and overhanging eaves accent the line of the low-pitched roof.

In 1954, a two and one-half story brick addition was built to the north of the original school building and connected to it by a one-story enclosed passageway.

A one-story, brick utility building and three, frame portable classrooms are also located on the site.

HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

Built in 1865-66, Roosevelt School is the oldest, continuously operating public school in Louisville. Architecturally, it is a significant example of the Renaissance Revival style applied to an institutional building. Throughout its history, Roosevelt has played a vital role in the life of the Portland community.

Originally named Eleventh Ward School, Roosevelt was one of three schoolhouses built during the post-Civil War era of expansion. All three schools were designed in a similar style by the prominent architectural firm of Bradshaw and Brothers. (The other two, First and Third Ward Schools, have been demolished.) Among the surviving works of H.P. and Richard Bradshaw are St. John's Evangelical, First Unitarian and St. Louis Bertrand churches in Louisville.

The original two-story school cost about \$28,000 and contained eight classrooms, each of which could accommodate sixty students. Between 1869 and 1870, the third story was added and the name changed to Duncan-Street School.

The 1914-15 structure, costing \$47,558.19, provided twelve additional classrooms. The architect may have been J. Earl Henry, who was the chief architect and engineer for the school board at this time.

Roosevelt took its present name in 1920 at the request of the student body and P.T.A. of the school.

By 1922, Roosevelt was the largest white elementary school in Louisville, with an enrollment of nearly 1000 pupils. At this time, several noteworthy and innovative programs were in operation. The school received retarded children from all over the city's West End. Nutrition classes were offered and special meals served for underweight children. A shoe shop was also established at the school as part of a vocational training program.

In recent years, the tradition of a community-oriented educational institution has been revived at Roosevelt. Its exemption from the school system's busing plan allows an opportunity for community involvement that few schools enjoy today. In conjunction with its regular educational functions, the school houses a drug education center, a social service agency and a neighborhood museum. Roosevelt School has become a source of community pride and activity in the Portland neighborhood.

SOURCES CONSULTIED

Annual Report of the Trustees of the Male High School, Female High School, and the Public Schools of Louisville to the General Council of the City of Louisville for the Scholastic Year 1865-66. Louisville: Bradley and Gilbert, 1866.

Third Report of the Board of Education of Louisville, Kentucky - 1913-14. Louisville: Gross, Parsons & Hambleton, 1914.

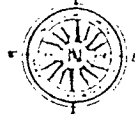
Portland Museum

"Roosevelt the Largest of its Kind in City",
Louisville Post, 26 December 1922.

"The Theodore Roosevelt School", Louisville Civic Opinion, 13 February 1926.

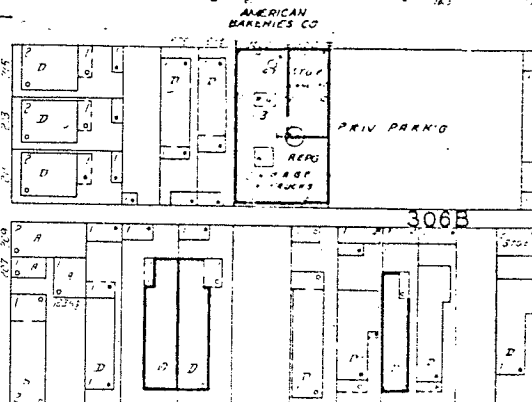
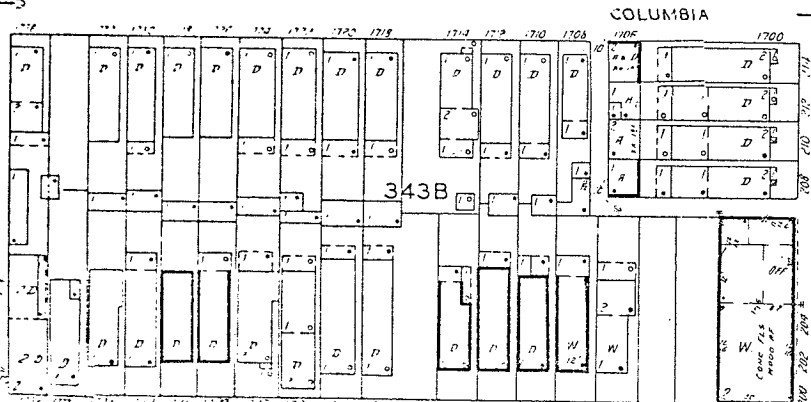
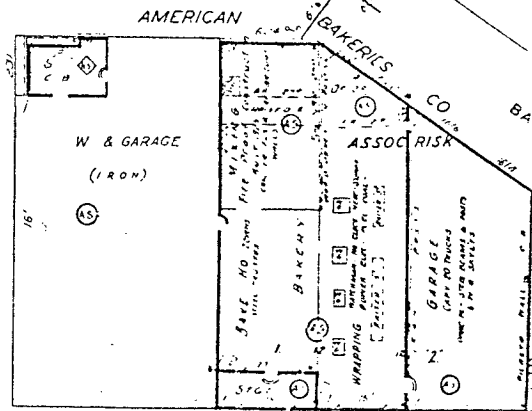
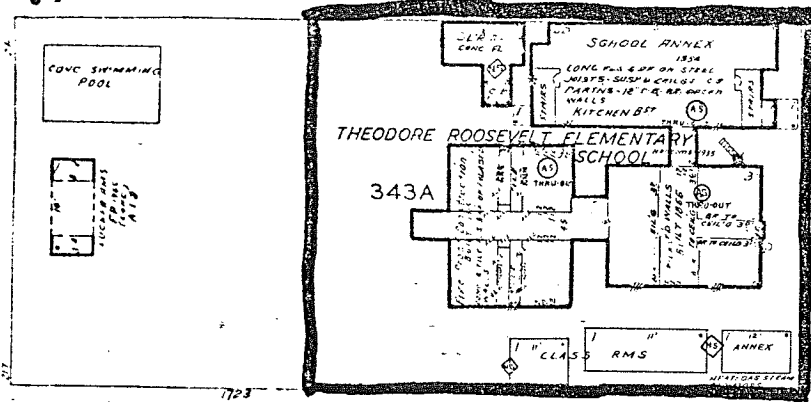
LOUISVILLE KY 12W

15W



12W

DUNCAN



ROWAN

LANDMARK: Theodore Roosevelt Elementary School

ADDRESS: 222 North Seventeenth Street

DATE: 1865-66

ARCHITECT: Bradshaw and Brothers