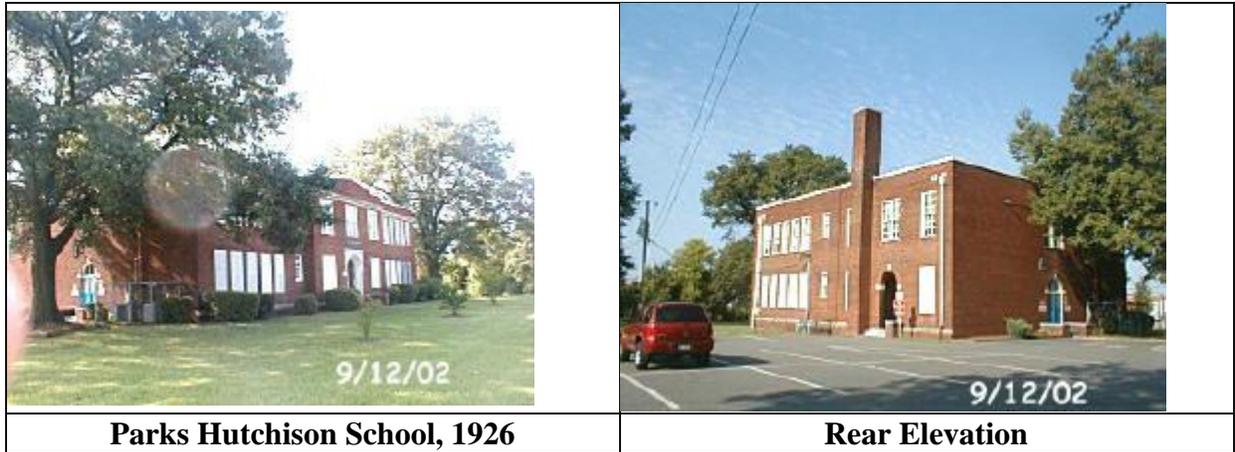


Survey and Research Report On The Parks Hutchison School



1. Name and location of the property. The property known as the Parks Hutchison School is located at 1400 North Graham Street in Charlotte, N.C.

2. Name, address and telephone number of the present owner of the property. The owner of the property is:

Charlotte Mecklenburg Board of Education

701 East Second Street

Charlotte, N.C. 28202

Telephone: (704) 343-6220

The current occupant of the property is:

Management School North

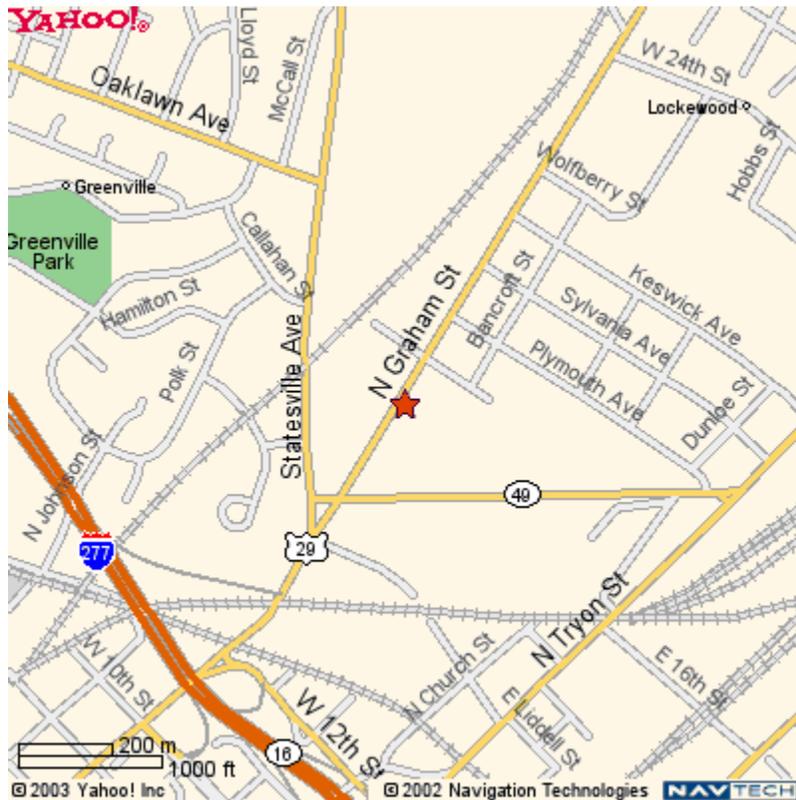
1400 North Graham Street

Charlotte, N.C. 28206

Telephone: (704) 343-6074

3. Representative photographs of the property. This report contains representative photographs of the property .

4. A map depicting the location of the property. This report contains a map depicting the location of the property. The UTM coordinates for the property are: 17515153E and 3899677N.



5. Current Deed Book Reference to the property: The most recent deed to this property is listed in the Mecklenburg County Deed Books #586 p. 512. The tax-parcel number of the property is 079-017-29.

6. A brief historical sketch of the property: This report contains a brief historical sketch of the property prepared by Ryan L. Sumner.

7. A brief architectural description of the property: This report contains a brief architectural description of the property prepared by Ryan L. Sumner.

8. Documentation of how and in what ways the property meets the criteria for designation set forth in N.C.G.S. 160A-400.5:

a. Special significance in terms of its historical, prehistorical, architectural, or cultural importance: The Commission judges that the property known as the Parks

Hutchinson School does possess special significance in terms of Charlotte-Mecklenburg. The Commission bases its judgment on the following considerations: 1) The Parks Hutchison School represents a type of school construction built during the post-World War I movement to consolidate rural schools for whites into larger units. 2) Parks Hutchison School was designed by Louis H. Asbury, an important regional architect and founding member of the North Carolina Chapter of the American Institute of Architects.

b. Integrity of design, setting, workmanship, materials, feeling, and/or association: The Commission contends that the architectural description by Ryan L. Sumner, which is included in this report, demonstrates that the essential form of the Parks Hutchison School meets this criterion.

9. Ad Valorem Tax Appraisal: The Commission is aware that designation would allow the owner to apply for an automatic deferral of 50% of the Ad Valorem taxes on all or any portion of the property that becomes a "historic landmark." The current appraised value of the 4.18 acres of land is **\$177,530**. The current appraised value of the improvements is **\$369,270**. The total current appraised value is **\$546,800**. The property is zoned I-2.

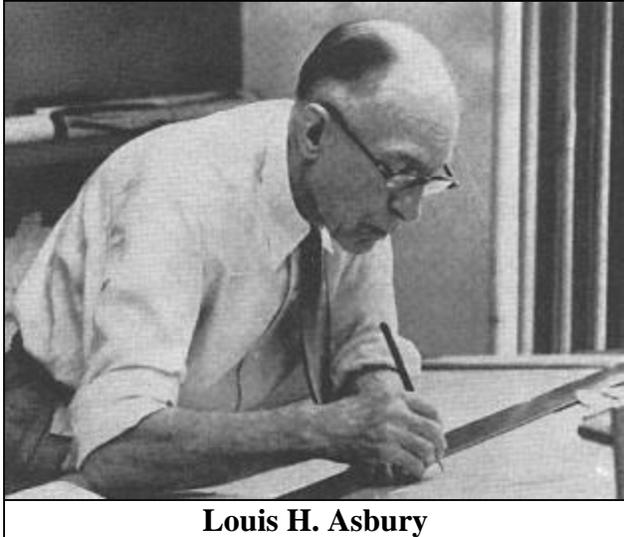
Date of Preparation of this Report: September 1, 2002

Prepared by: Ryan L. Sumner and Dr. Dan L. Morrill

Historical Background Statement

The Parks Hutchison School was erected as part of a statewide movement to consolidate small rural schools into large centralized buildings. The impetus for this effort was a desire to improve education while reducing the local tax dollars spent on schools, made possible due to advances in transportation of children to more distant schools. These "consolidated schools" were built much larger than education buildings erected before the movement and took inspiration from Classical, Gothic, and Tudor architecture. In general, these schools were built for white students, as African Americans in rural areas continued to attend small separate schools.¹

In May 1924, the people of Mecklenburg County awarded the School Board and City Council one million dollars for constructing new schools.² This money allowed the schools to engage "Dr. Strayer and Engelhardt of Columbia University, New York" to survey and recommend sites for six new school buildings and additions to two existing ones³ for which they would also be consulting architects.⁴



Louis H. Asbury

Louis H. Asbury was the principal architect for the project, planning at least four of the six new schools. According to then School Superintendent Harding's memoir, Asbury designed Wilmore School in accord with the Strayer/Engelhardt recommendations and reused the same drawing for Seversville School.⁵ Other sources show that Asbury was also engaged to design Morgan School ⁶ and Parks Hutchison School.⁷

A Charlotte native, Louis H. Asbury (1877-1975), received his professional training in architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology after graduating from Trinity College (now Duke University) in 1900. Before establishing his Charlotte practice in 1908, Asbury was associated with the nationally known firm of Cram, Goodhue, and Ferguson, in either its New York City or Boston office. Asbury and his son, Louis H. Asbury, Jr., had an extensive local and regional practice until his retirement in 1956.

A founding member of the North Carolina Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, Asbury, along with other early professional architects in North Carolina, introduced a higher degree of sophistication and professionalism into Charlotte building. Favoring the Neoclassical and Gothic Revival styles which were popular both nationally and among his conservative clientele, Asbury rendered designs that covered a range of residential, commercial, and institutional buildings, including Myers Park Methodist Church, the former Mecklenburg County Courthouse, the Mayfair Hotel (now Dunhill Hotel), and the Doctors' Building. His work illustrates a new urbanity in the architecture of Charlotte, corresponding with the new importance of the city as a regional center for the textile and banking industries. His practice spanned two important periods of economic prosperity for the city during the post-World War I and post-World War II eras, and the buildings serve as reminders of

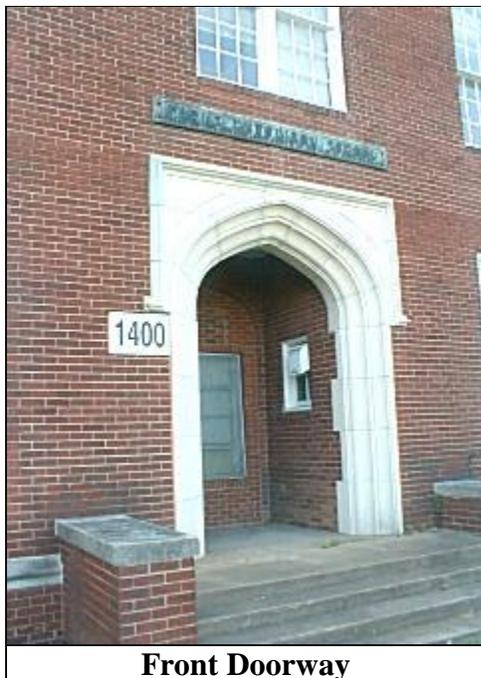
these periods of urban development when Charlotte emerged as the largest city in the two Carolinas.

In June 1925, the City of Charlotte purchased a four-acre lot from the estate sale of Mr. Parks Hutchison. It appears that this school was originally named "Eleventh Ward,"⁸ or "Hutchison Avenue School" (Hutchison Avenue was the name of this part of North Graham Street at the time). Louis Asbury's Job Book shows that he was the architect for the Eleventh Ward School.⁹ The motivation for building the school was to relieve congestion at First Ward School and Fourth Ward School¹⁰ -- both of which were located just a few blocks from the Parks Hutchison site.

The school opened on September 13, 1926, enrolling about 200 pupils in grades one through five, with the ability to add a sixth grade when necessary.¹¹ The first principal was Ms. Fannie Eaton, a former teacher from South Graded School.^{12, 13}

The school continues to serve this community's children. Today the Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) buses the buildings as its "Management School North," part of a program that teaches academic and behavioral skills to students who have been removed from regular schools due to violations of the Code of Conduct.

Architectural Description



The Parks Hutchison School is located within the Lockwood neighborhood, a 55-acre residential area between North Tryon and North Graham Streets.^{14, 15} The school sits

to the front of a 4-acre lot, which is bounded roughly by North Graham Street to the west, Halifax Ave. to the south, an industrial complex to the east, and Armour Dr. to the north. Facing west, the school is situated on a corner lot, measuring 570 feet x 300 feet. The parcel is now surrounded by the trucking and distribution operations that dominate the North Graham Street corridor. The school is surrounded by a grass yard on all sides, with an especially large open area in the rear for students to play. A small asphalt parking area is situated on the north side of the school.

Exterior Description

The school is a two-story, red brick (laid in running bond) building, that possesses its essential physical integrity. It has a rectangular plan, and slight rear projecting "L." The building has a symmetrical front facade, consisting of a central block flanked by projecting pavilions. The front facade is seventeen bays wide.

The central entrance has a Tudor-style archway with restrained, stepped, decorative, stone surrounds. The recessed doorway has been bricked up. Like most of the first-story windows, the window created by infilling the doorway and the two small four-over-four windows on either side of the recessed hall are covered with a heavy metal security grating. The three concrete steps that lead to the former main entrance are flanked by heavy brick retaining walls with concrete caps. Above the central entrance is a copper sign that reads: "Parks Hutchison School."

The school's design follows certain Classical conventions, such as a cornice, which defines the stepped parapets of the three masses and contains a decorative corbelled triple diamond pattern in the central section. The cornice is defined from below by a concrete frieze, with a repeated recessed rectangle pattern common to Greco-Roman design.

There is a variety of window types used on the front facade of the building -- single and paired, following several patterns. Most of the windows are nine-over-nine light, double hung, with wooden sash. Four small four-over-four windows flank the central mass, with one located on either side and on both stories. The windows on the upper half of the left projecting mass are four-over-four, indicating that they might have been replaced -- possibly during a 1998 interior remodeling of this part of the building.¹⁶ The window openings have brick sills, and all of the first story windows are covered with heavy metal security grating.

The most prominent features of the side elevations (north and south) are the entrances located on the first floors, constructed of round brick arches with concrete corner blocks and keystones. These round-arch entrances and doors are flush with the exterior wall. The door on the north elevation appears to be original, including its

five-pane fanlight. The entrance on the south side is a modern replacement with the fanlight covered by a wooden panel. On the south elevation the entrance leads to a long north-south hall that run in a straight line through the length of the building and connects to the north door. Like the entrances on the front and rear elevations, the doors are recessed from the ground via concrete steps flanked by brick retaining walls with concrete tops. The north and south elevations each have a single second story window above the door -- on the south is a double nine-over-nine double hung window, and on the north is a double two-over-two apparently fixed window.

First Floor Interior

The interior of the the Parks Hutchison School has been modified but without irreparably damaging its historic features. Most of the hall doors to the offices and classrooms are original and have six-light windows in the upper halves and paneled lower halves. Many of these doors have four-light transoms, several of which still open. Steam radiators also remain intact throughout and still heat the building. Many original features such as plaster walls, floor moldings, and large window sills remain. The recent changes consist mainly of new walls to divide large rooms into smaller spaces, dropped acoustical ceilings with inset fluorescent lighting, and bluish-gray carpeting; these changes are obviously recent and do not mimic original moldings, hardware, and other original interior features in appearance.

Louis Asbury designed the school's first floor interior in a truncated T-shaped plan. A short corridor leads from the main (front) entrance to a long north-south hall along which three classrooms were originally located. Today the front door entrance has been bricked-up and contains an added window. A drywall partition closes off the east end of the short corridor, turning the short hall into a conference room. An obviously modern door connects this room to the first floor main hallway.

A principal's office flanks the conference room (formerly the entrance hall) on the north. The doorway that connects these two rooms has its original frame and four-light transom. However, the original door has been replaced by a modern one. Original floor and wall moldings remain, as do the deep window sills. The room has its original door, and has plumbing features that are original or date from the World War II era. The principal's office connects to the main hallway via a doorway that contains parts of the original molding but seems to have been lowered to remove the transom.

Asbury designed another room to flank the south side of the entrance hall as a mirror image of the principal's office. It was likely a nurse's infirmary or school business office. The room connects to the conference room (former entrance hall) via its original paneled door, with original framing and four-light transom. Several walls

were recently added to the space to convert the room into an ADA-compliant teacher's bathroom.¹⁷ Plywood partitions create a large stall that contains a modern toilet and sink. As in the principal's office, the original staff water closet remains in the front (in this case northwest) corner. This room also contains a rather large vault that is accessed by a plain door with a built-in combination dial and lever. It is unknown if this was part of Asbury's design, but the feature is labeled the "Old Vault" on a CMS diagram of the building **18** and is shown with walls twice as thick as other interior walls.

The first-floor classroom with the highest level of integrity is located across from the main entrance on the east side of the long north-south corridor. The room is accessed by a modern door, but the original frame and the original transom are in place -- even if they are obscured by a plywood panel in the front and has been sheet-rocked over inside the classroom. This room is the only teaching space that has not been subdivided by new partitions. The original deep window sills are still place, along with the radiators, and the cloakroom. The doors to the cloakroom are modern.

The student restroom is located at the north end of the floor and is accessed via a second short hall that connects to the long north-south hall to the rear (east) entrance. new dividing walls have segmented this space into two distinct bathrooms - the original boys' bathroom and ADA-compliant restroom are accessed by a separate locked door. Modern doors provide access from the hallway and to the ADA bathroom. The large window that once existed in this restroom has been replaced by a plywood panel punctured by an exhaust fan.

Louis Asbury's design called for a classroom (22'-8" X 30'-2") with cloakroom to be located on the west side of the main hall in the building's projecting pavilions to the north and south of the central section of the building. However, neither rooms serves the school as a classroom today.

New walls break the original northwest classroom into three spaces -- a small library, secretary's office, and workroom. A modern wall **19** running east-west bisects the room with the library closest to the principal's office (south section); this room is connected to the main corridor by a recently created doorway and is accessed from the principal's office through a doorway in the room's coat closet. The northern half of this room is cut into a secretary's office and a workroom by a modern north-south wall and modern door. Despite the extensive modifications to this room, it still contains the original moldings around the original walls, its original windowsills, and the original door (leading from the secretary's office to the hall), and four-light transom.

The southwest classroom has likewise been modified for new uses. A new east-west wall divides the room into two spaces, connected by a modern door. The north

section has been modified with linoleum floors as a very small lunchroom, where a limited number of children can sit and eat homemade lunches. A recently created doorway links this room to the hall. The southern section is accessed by the classroom's original door, with its original six-light door and four-pane transom still in place. The southern section now serves the school as a computer laboratory with twelve workstations.

At the north end of the building, a stair tower is located behind original (six-lights each with five-light transom) double doors in the rear entrance vestibule. These stairs appear to be made from steel-reinforced concrete, and contain a concrete-encased rail and balusters.²⁰ At the second-floor landing, the stairwell contains a single, nine-over-nine, double-hung sash window. Original double doors (six light each with five light transom) lead from the stairwell to the second floor porch, which provides access to the second floor hall through another set of original paneled doors (six-lights each with five-light transom). The walls in the stair tower are plaster, which may have originally been exposed brick, like the upper and lower porches.

A second set of stairs is internal and rises up from the southern end of the building's north-south hallway. These are made from wood, and although carpeted, seem to have the original risers, treads, balusters, railing, and heavy newel post.²¹

Second Story Interior

The plan of the second story closely follows the layout of the first floor. A short east-west hall connects the north stair tower to the long north-south hallway that runs the length of the building. Three classrooms and the student restroom are located directly above their first-floor counterparts. The main difference is the location of the a large room (37'-11" X 25'-8"), possibly intended for use as the library, above the first floor conference room, ADA bathroom, and the principal's office. As on the first floor, numerous drywall partitions have been added to the classrooms to create offices for teachers within classrooms to adapt spaces for new uses.

The classroom with the most modification is located in the northwestern corner of the building. To convert this space into offices for the school's social worker and counselors, nine new walls and six new modern doorways divide the space into six small offices. The original door location is inside one of the offices and has been replaced by a solid wooden panel, through the frame and transom remain. Some of the original floor moldings are in place, though others appear to be modern replacements.

The girls' bathroom is located in the short hall just off the north stair tower porch. The original six-light door is still in place. There is no fanlight, indicating that

it may have been removed, and the door frame truncated. The plumbing features are quite old in this space and date from the construction of the building or from the World War Two era. The metal frames that divide the seven stalls from one another are capped with decorative elements and may be original to the building.²²

The central classroom on the eastern side of the building has some minor augmentations but retains a high level of integrity. Although two new walls have been added to create a small office for teachers in the northeast corner of the room, the original moldings, sills, radiators, cloakroom doors, hallway door, transom, two blackboard frames and chalk trays, are present. The room contains a built-in cabinet, with small double doors.

A somewhat larger room is located in the front central section of the building. Some of the plans in the CMS Facilities Department files label this room, "Library,"²³ which is consistent with the room's larger size and centralized location. Currently the room has been divided into two classrooms by an east-west drywall partition. However, the room is still relatively open and contains its original moldings and a small framed slate blackboard with wooden tray. A modern door opens into the hallway from an original frame. The original four-light transom and opening mechanism are still in place. A storage area has been created against the center of the west wall -- again indicating this was not originally a classroom, because the six classrooms were all designed with cloakrooms.

The southwest classroom is located near the southern stairway and is accessed by an original door that retains its four-light transom. New walls have been added in the southeast corner to create a lockable teacher's office. As in other rooms, the slate is gone; but original blackboard frames remain on the north south, and east walls. Original moldings are also present, as are the three radiators, window sills, and a built-in cabinet. The west side of the cloakroom has been partitioned off to create a small staff restroom in the northwestern corner of the room.

Two east-west partitions with modern double doors have been added to the north-south hallway, one near the center of the building and another near the southern stair landing. These doors do not seem to serve any functional purpose, except perhaps added security.

Basement

Only two rooms are located in the basement, below the rear projecting mass. Access is only from a steep concrete stairwell ²⁴ centrally located outside the east elevation.

The modern door at the base of the stairs leads to the boiler room, which is an area of about 25 square feet. The space is essentially empty and is characterized by brick walls, overhead pipes, and a large modern electrical boiler. In the southwestern corner is a single toilet and stall defined by the same metal frame and decorative caps found in the upstairs girls' bathroom.

A modern door in the boiler room's south wall leads to the slightly larger coal room (approximately 30' X 22'). The coal chute has been bricked up, and the room sits empty and useless. Like the boiler room this space has brick walls and a concrete floor.

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1. Woodard, Sarah A. and Sherry Joines Wyatt, "Industry, Transportation, and Education: The New South Development of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County (Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission, 2001).
 2. Harding, Harry P., *Charlotte City Schools*, (Charlotte: Public Library of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County, 1966), pp. 79-80.
 3. These included Wilmore School (Louis Asbury), Seversville School (Louis Asbury), Piedmont Junior High School (Louis Asbury), Parks Hutchison School (Louis Asbury), Morgan School (Louis Asbury), and additions to Elizabeth and Dilworth Schools. *Harding*, pp. 79-80.
 4. *Harding*, pp. 79-80.
 5. *Harding*, pp. 79-80.
 6. "Survey and Research Report on the Morgan School" (Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission). Hereinafter cited as "Morgan Report."
 7. According to the records of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools Facilities Department, Parks Hutchison Schools was designed by "Louis H. Asburn" (sic.); this is obviously a typographical error. Furthermore, Louis Asbury's Job Book (UNCC Special Collections, Louis H. Asbury Papers) indicates his taking on a school project shortly after the purchase date of the Parks Hutchison land; the job was designated "Eleventh Ward." Apparently "Eleventh Ward" was the original name for the school as Superintendent Harding indicated that Eleventh Ward was opened to relieve congestion in the First and Fourth Ward Elementary Schools (*Charlotte News*, September 5, 1926), and Parks Hutchison School was built in very close proximity to both of these schools. The 1927 Charlotte City Directory illumines the matter by indicating that Miss Fanny Eaton was the principal of "Hutchison Avenue School." This portion of Graham Street was named Hutchison Avenue at the time. Miss Eaton was also listed as principal of "Eleventh Ward School."
 8. See Endnote #7.
 9. Louis H. Asbury Collection, Job Book ("Eleventh Ward School" entry), UNCC Special Collections.
 10. *Charlotte News*, September 5, 1926.
 11. *Charlotte News*, September 10, 1926.

12. *Charlotte News*, September 10, 1926.
13. *Charlotte City Directory* (1927).
14. *Charlotte Observer*, November 26, 1992.
15. Mecklenburg County Map Books, No. 3., p. 146.
16. Plans located in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools Facilities Department File: Management School North. Hereinafter cited as "Files."
17. The American s With Disabilities Act.
18. Files
19. This wall appears to be a prefabricated wall that is easily removed.
20. There are eleven stairs from the ground to a middle landing, from which the stairs turn 180 degrees, before rising seven more steps to the upper landing.
21. There are thirteen steps to a middle landing, where the stairs turn 180 degrees, before rising seven more steps to the upper floor.
22. It seems that similar stall partitions are found at Morgan school, also design by Asbury. See Morgan Report.
23. Plans are in Files.
24. Sixteen steps with steel pipe railing.