United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NR Listed
10/1/2026

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name Weiser High School Gymnasium & Auditorium

other names/site number Weiser Middle School Gymnasium

Name of Multiple Property Listing Tourtellotte and Hummel Architecture TR

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

street & number 320 E. Galloway Avenue ☐ not for publication

city or town Weiser ☐ vicinity

state Idaho code ID county Washington code _____ zip code 83672

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this x 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 x meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance: ___ **national** ___ **statewide** x **local**

Applicable National Register Criteria: x **A** ___ **B** x **C** ___ **D**

Signature of certifying official/Title: Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer Date

Idaho State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ entered in the National Register ___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register ___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Weiser High School Gymnasium & Auditorium
Name of Property

Washington County, ID
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

	private
x	public - Local
	public - State
	public - Federal

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box.)

x	building(s)
	district
	site
	structure
	object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
		site
		structure
		object
1	0	**Total**

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION: education-related
RECREATION & CULTURE: auditorium
RECREATION & CULTURE: sports facility

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION: education-related
RECREATION & CULTURE: sports facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT: PWA Moderne

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: CONCRETE
walls: CONCRETE; BRICK
roof: ASPHALT (mineral-surface roll cover)
other: METAL: steel (windows)

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity).

Summary Paragraph

The Weiser High School (WHS) Gymnasium and Auditorium is in a residential neighborhood at 320 East Galloway Avenue in Weiser, Washington County, Idaho. Francis K. (Frank) Hummel of Tourtellotte and Hummel Architects designed the building, and contractor Harvey J. McNeel built it. Completed in 1937, it was a federal Public Works Administration (PWA) project. The combination gymnasium and auditorium is a monumental two-story brick and concrete building that reflects a restrained Moderne style with hints of classicism in the many brick string courses, pilasters, and subtle concrete embellishments. It has excellent integrity and clearly conveys its association with the Depression-era PWA program through its design, materials, and use. It has served as a gymnasium for the local school district since it opened and is currently affiliated with Weiser Middle School.

Narrative Description

LOCATION & SETTING

Weiser is in west-central Idaho along the border with Oregon and at the confluence of the Snake and Weiser rivers in southern Washington County (figures 1, 2, and 8). Weiser (2024 pop. 6,112) is the largest city and county seat of Washington County, which comprises approximately 1,474 square miles and a varied topography of mountains, canyons, and broad valleys with irrigated rolling plains ideal for ranching and agriculture. Today, Washington County includes three incorporated communities—Cambridge, Midvale, and Weiser.

Weiser is on the north side of a bend in the Snake River. The historic downtown is organized on a rectangular grid that is parallel to the river, while other parts of the city are situated on a north-south oriented street grid. The Union Pacific Railroad passes between the river and the commercial district and follows the path of the river both north and south of town. U.S. Highway 95 passes north-south through Weiser, connecting Oregon with British Columbia.

The WHS Gymnasium and Auditorium is in a residential neighborhood northeast of the downtown and anchors the southwest corner of the present-day Weiser Middle School campus (figures 3, 4, and 16). The neighborhood consists of wide paved streets with curbing and sidewalks and modest single-family residences built throughout the 20th century. The middle school campus occupies two city blocks and includes two non-historic school buildings that are connected by a hyphen, the free-standing gymnasium and auditorium, an athletic track, and parking areas (figure 4). The gymnasium faces south toward East Galloway Avenue. A sprawling grass lawn that is crisscrossed with concrete sidewalks occupies much of the southwest part of the property in front of the gymnasium. The middle school building is next to the gymnasium on its east side, with only a walkway between the two buildings. A parking lot is immediately behind the gymnasium on its north side. The building abuts the public sidewalk on its west side along East 3rd Street. The nominated property includes only the WHS Gymnasium and Auditorium and the land on which it sits.

BUILDING EXTERIOR

The WHS Gymnasium and Auditorium is a two-story brick and concrete building with subtle Moderne embellishments (photos 1 through 8). The building has a boxy massing with a rectangular plan that

measures approximately 127’2 x 90’8”.[1] It has a larger center massing with two slightly smaller side masses, and this is most evident when viewing the primary and rear facades. The building rests on a concrete foundation, with a full basement beneath the main center massing. The concrete foundation extends approximately 4’ above ground level, and above this the exterior walls are clad in reddish-brown bricks laid in a common bond with a Flemish header course every sixth row. Stylistic embellishments are found in the raised-brick string courses, or decorative bands, which accentuate the areas around the primary entrances and first- and second-story windows at each end bay. The end bays have horizontal string courses, while the center bays of the primary and side elevations emphasize verticality with their two-story brick string courses and brick pilasters. Smooth concrete is used in the coping, pilaster caps, and sills. The original multi-light steel windows are intact but covered on both the exterior and interior with particle board.

Weiser High School Gymnasium and Auditorium, 2025.
Photo by Sarah J. Martin. See additional photos in the appendix.

The brick walls extend above the roofline to form a shallow parapet which obscures much of the roof. Peaking above the parapet is a low-pitched roof with a mineral-surfaced roll covering, the shape of which has been slightly modified from its original shallow-arch shape. The north and south faces of the roof were originally finished in stucco but are now clad in standing-seam metal. The original barrel-vault roof trusses are intact and visible within the gymnasium.

South (Primary) Elevation
Photos 1 through 3, Figure 20

The building’s primary façade is symmetrical and composed of a larger center massing bookended by slightly recessed end bays. The center massing includes five bays that emphasize verticality in their two-story pilasters and the vertical raised-brick string courses. The three center bays, each with a double-door entrance on the first story and large rectangular window with a concrete sill on the second story, are together encircled by decorative bands of brick that include an inner stacked stretcher course, a middle header course, and an outer soldier course. Between each double-door and second-story window are four single soldier courses that further emphasize verticality. The outer bays each include a pair of brick pilasters with concrete caps with a single window on each story between the pilasters. A concrete staircase with concrete buttresses spans the width of the three center bays providing access to the entrances. Five non-historic metal railings are evenly spaced on the staircase. The east buttress has been truncated to accommodate the installation of a concrete accessibility ramp with metal railings.

The recessed end bays emphasize horizontality in the raised-brick string courses at the window levels. For example, each window opening is framed by a single header course on each side and a single continuous rowlock course on the top and bottom that wrap around the corners of the building. Between the continuous rowlock courses are two single header courses also wrapping around the corner of the building. These continuous courses integrate the south-facing end bays with the east- and west-facing end bays, which are identical in appearance.

[1] Building measurements noted throughout this report are from the architect’s original drawings (figures 17 through 21) and have not been field verified.

West (Side) Elevation
Photos 1, 6, and 7, Figures 20 and 21

The west façade faces East 3rd Street. The elevation is composed of five vertically oriented bays bookended by slightly recessed, horizontally oriented end bays. Six two-story pilasters define the five center bays, which mimic those of the primary façade. The five bays, each with a large rectangular window with a concrete sill on the first and second stories—except for the center bay which has two windows on the first story—are together encircled by a decorative band of stacked stretcher-course brick. Between each pair of first- and second-story windows are four single soldier courses that further emphasize verticality. The first-story windows rest on the concrete foundation which extends approximately 4' above ground level

The slightly recessed bay at the north end mimics the south-end bay except that it has a double-door entrance at the sidewalk level. Each non-original metal door has a vertical window. A steel transom window covered with particle board spans the double-door opening. Otherwise, these end bays mimic those of the primary elevation, with each first- and second-story opening framed by a single header course on the sides and a single continuous rowlock course above and below that wrap around the corners of the building. Between the continuous rowlock courses are two single header courses that also wrap around the building corners.

The north end bay is stepped back approximately 15'4". The unadorned brick wall atop the raised concrete foundation has no openings or embellishments and encloses the backstage fly space built to accommodate theatrical sets for productions and performances.

East (Side) Elevation
Photos 3 through 5, Figure 19

The opposite east facade has a mirrored appearance to that of the west side. However, observing the east façade is more challenging because the adjacent one-story school building sits just feet away, with only a concrete walkway between the two buildings. The elevation is composed of five vertically oriented bays bookended by slightly recessed, horizontally oriented end bays. It features the same vertical and horizontal raised-brick string courses around the window and door openings. Similarly, the slightly recessed bay at the north end has a double-door entrance at the sidewalk level. Additionally, the north end bay is stepped back approximately 15'4" and encloses the backstage fly space.

North (Rear) Elevation
Photo 8, Figure 19

The rear façade overlooks a parking lot. The elevation includes a large center massing bookended by end bays recessed approximately 8'4". The center bay, which houses the backstage fly space, is an expansive brick wall with no banding or embellishment. The roofline has concrete coping topped with metal flashing. A pair of wood-panel doors atop a concrete threshold is at the center of the elevation, approximately eight feet above grade, and opens to the backstage area. Two square vent openings with flush brick sills are in the upper wall near each corner. There are six grade-level basement windows covered with particle boards. The recessed end bays feature a continuation of the horizontal raised-brick banding, each with just one mid-story stairwell window, covered with particle board.

BUILDING INTERIOR

Today's building closely reflects architect Frank Hummel's original drawings The interior spaces are arranged like a typical 1930s combination gymnasium and auditorium designed to serve multiple purposes that include athletic, artistic, and educational functions. It has a lobby that leads to a voluminous two-story space that functions as the gymnasium and auditorium, with balcony-level bench seating, a stage with a fly space, and adjoining locker rooms, offices, restrooms, and storage spaces.

Many original wood-panel doors with original hardware are found throughout the building, as are many original finishes including wood, plaster, plywood, cement, and metal piping for railings.

The building's three double-door entrances open into a wide **lobby** that functions as a transitional space between the exterior and the gymnasium (photos 9 and 10). It also provides one of the three access points to the balcony level via a staircase at the east end. Upon entering the lobby, one finds an open, finished space with smooth-finished walls and ceilings, cased openings with a mix of historic and non-historic trim, non-historic light fixtures, and a newer tile floor with vinyl base trim. A small, enclosed **ticket booth** with a wood-panel door is tucked along the south wall at the base of the **east staircase**. The ticket window is intact but only visible from inside the booth. The opposite west end of the lobby once mirrored the east end, with another ticket booth and staircase. Both were removed and the space is now enclosed with two accessible restrooms. The north wall of the lobby has two wide openings that lead directly into the gymnasium.

The **gymnasium** is an impressive two-story space that is amplified by an exposed roof structure (photos 11 through 19, figure 18). The underside of the **barrel-vault roof** is finished in ceiling tiles, possibly Celotex or an equivalent that was noted on the architect's drawings. There are four exposed **steel-arch trusses**, noted as Archweld trusses on the architect's drawings, spaced approximately 18'6" apart. Each truss measures approximately 12' tall at its center and 91'2" in length. Two basketball goals hang from the roof structure at the north and south ends. The finished wood gymnasium floor occupies nearly the entire footprint of the space. An **elevated stage** with a plywood base occupies the north end of the gymnasium. A wood-frame particle-board wall covers the stage opening to create an enclosed backstage area for use as a wrestling practice area. The **backstage area** is highly intact and retains the typical tall fly space and side galleries that once accommodated performances (photos 21 and 22). Plywood walls on the east, west, and north sides of the gymnasium extend approximately 6'2" off the floor. Behind the sidewalls are **areas for chair storage** and the boys' and girls' locker rooms. Atop the sidewalls are metal pipe railings that frame the open, U-shaped **balcony level** overlooking the gymnasium (photos 10, 13, 20, and 21). Four basketball goals are affixed to the metal pipe railings, two each on the east and west sides of the gymnasium. Original wood **staircases** in the southeast, northeast, and northwest corners of the gymnasium provide access to the balcony level. (The southwest staircase is no longer extant.) Bench seating occupies the balcony level, although the seating on west side has been removed. The building's outer walls—behind and above the balcony seating—includes several covered steel windows.

Locker rooms to accommodate athletic competitions and physical education activities are concentrated on either side of the gymnasium (photos 23 through 25). The boys' locker room and showers are located on the east side and the girls' facilities are on the west side, just as they were drawn up by the architect. The spaces have changed little, with lockers and benches in areas north and south of the centrally positioned showers and toilets. Although most lockers and benches are newer, one area retains the original layout of rows of lockers and original wood benches with metal piping structure—the north part of the girls' locker room. Enclosed rooms that function as coach offices and storage spaces are concentrated at the north and south ends of the locker rooms.

The **basement** includes a mix of finished and unfinished spaces (photo 26, figure 17).[2] At the north end, below the stage, are minimally finished enclosed rooms that originally functioned as visiting team locker rooms and storage spaces. These areas generally have wood doors, cased openings, smooth concrete flooring, and painted plaster ceilings but also exposed piping, ducts, radiators, and minimal lighting. The area below the gymnasium is open and unfinished with concrete flooring, concrete walls, and a mix of finished and unfinished ceilings with minimal lighting. An opening in the east wall of the basement

[2] The surviving architect's drawings do not provide much basement-level detail. The basement was part of an alternate bid for which the drawings are not part of the archived collection.

accesses a utilities tunnel that once connected to the original high school. A shop is located at the south end of the space.

CHANGE OVER TIME & INTEGRITY

The WHS Gymnasium and Auditorium was built in 1937 to host athletic events, musical and theatrical performances, and related classes. The property has experienced changes typical of school-related buildings as the school district's needs evolved, as the participation of students in interscholastic sports increased, and as funding was available. A bond-funded renovation in 1992 led to several changes that are noted below.

No known changes were made within the period of significance (1937-1976). Below is a list of changes that were made after period of significance:[3]

- Approximately mid-1970s: a wood-frame particle-board wall was installed over the stage opening to create an enclosed stage area for use as a wrestling practice area (photos 11 and 22).
- Approximately 1975-1980: The exterior of the barrel-vault roof was modified to its current pitched appearance with metal covering the north and south ends that had previously been stucco finished (figure 13, photos 1 and 2). (The barrel-vault shape is retained on the interior.)
- Approximately 1980: The metal-frame windows were covered with a painted and caulked particle board on both the exterior and interior (photos 1 through 10, 12 through 14).
- Approximately 1981-1983: the balcony-level bench seating on the gym's west side was removed to make more space for increased participation in sports. School leadership hoped to salvage the lumber for reuse, but most of it splintered and was unusable except for some of the framing (photos 16 and 17).
- 1992: an accessibility ramp and railings were added to the southeast corner of the primary elevation. To accommodate the ramp, the east buttress wall of the concrete staircase was modified (photos 1 through 4). At about the same time, new metal entry doors were installed in the original openings, and two lights and a loudspeaker were attached to the exterior wall above the primary entry (photos 1 through 3)
- 1992: The west lobby staircase that led up to the balcony and down to the girls' locker room was removed to make room for two new restrooms added to the west side of the lobby (photo 9).
- Recent: In 2017, the lobby was impacted by water, and the wood flooring was eventually replaced with the existing tiling in 2022 or 2023. Parts of the original wood floor are still visible inside the ticket booth. The three original openings on the north wall of the lobby were reduced to two (photos 9 and 10).

The building has excellent integrity and reflects much of its historic character from the early 20th century Depression era. It remains associated with its original site, thus retaining excellent integrity of **location**. The **setting** retains its residential character, although the immediate surrounding school property has evolved and no longer includes the original high school. The building itself retains excellent integrity of **design** in its massing, form, fenestration, and interior plan. Many original features survive on the exterior and interior, including the brick exterior, concrete sills and coping, steel windows, gymnasium seating, wood doors, hardware, etc., resulting in excellent integrity of **materials** and **workmanship**. In sum, the building's qualities convey the property's strong sense of **feeling** and **association** with the Weiser community and its New Deal history.

[3] Information on changes to the building were provided by Kyla Dickerson, school district clerk, and Jim Reed, district superintendent from 1980 to 1992.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- [x] A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- [ ] B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- [x] C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- [ ] D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- [ ] A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- [ ] B removed from its original location.
- [ ] C a birthplace or grave.
- [ ] D a cemetery.
- [ ] E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- [ ] F a commemorative property.
- [ ] G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Social History
Education
Architecture

Period of Significance

1937-1976

Significant Dates

1937 – Building completed

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation (if applicable)

N/A

Architect/Builder

Architect: Frank Hummel, Tourtellotte & Hummel Architects
Builder: Harvey J. (H. J.) McNeel

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance begins in 1937, when the building was completed and placed into service, and ends in 1976, the 50-year cut-off date recommended by National Register guidelines for properties with continued importance where no more specific date can be defined. This period encompasses the years the building operated as a gymnasium and auditorium, first for Weiser High School and then Weiser Middle School.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

N/A

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations).

The Weiser High School (WHS) Gymnasium and Auditorium, located at 320 E. Galloway Avenue in Weiser, Washington County, Idaho, is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places for its local significance under Criterion A in the areas of SOCIAL HISTORY and EDUCATION and Criterion C in the area of ARCHITECTURE. It is nominated in association with the Thematic Resources (TR) cover document *Tourtellotte and Hummel Architecture.* Designed by Francis (Frank) Hummel of Tourtellotte and Hummel Architects, it was built by contractor Harvey J. McNeel in 1937 as a combination gymnasium and auditorium that hosted sporting events, musical and theatrical performances, physical education classes, and other school-related activities. Constructed under the auspices of the federal Public Works Administration, the building reflects a restrained Moderne style that clearly conveys its association with this Depression-era program. It served as the primary gymnasium and auditorium space for Weiser High School until 1967 when a new high school was built on the northwest edge of town. It has since been affiliated with Weiser Middle School.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

The TR cover document, *Tourtellotte and Hummel Architecture*, provides the context and history of John E. Tourtellotte and Company, and its successor firm Tourtellotte and Hummel Architects, in Idaho from 1896 to 1941. The context identifies buildings representing a variety of functional types, including residential, commercial, and institutional. They represent a broad range of styles, from eclecticism and classicism at the turn of the 20th century to picturesque, revival, and modernist movements of the early and middle 20th century. To be eligible for the National Register as part of this thematic group, a building's design must be attributed to the Tourtellotte and Hummel firm and have strong integrity of design that demonstrates its architectural character in both physical and associative ways. The WHS Gymnasium and Auditorium meets this eligibility threshold and thus uses the brief historic context provided in the TR cover document.[4]

Weiser High School Gymnasium and Auditorium, 1939. Source: Living New Deal website. Photo from National Archives Record Group 135. See also figure 13.

The WHS Gymnasium and Auditorium is locally significant under **Criterion A** in the area of SOCIAL HISTORY for its association with the Public Works Administration (PWA) program of President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal legislative agenda. New Deal construction programs like the PWA prioritized civic, educational, and infrastructure projects that addressed community needs. New Deal programs had a significant and unprecedented impact on public school infrastructure across the country. This project, to construct a new gymnasium/auditorium in Weiser, not only delivered much-needed recreational space for a growing student population, but it also provided work relief for local unemployed and underemployed workers as part of a nationwide effort to stimulate a devastated economy.

[4] Patricia Wright. National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form, "Tourtellotte and Hummel Architecture TR." Boise: Idaho State Historical Society, 1982. Accessed Dec. 1, 2025. https://history.idaho.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Tourtellotte_and_Hummel_Architecture_in_Idaho_Thematic_Resource_64000170.pdf

The building is also locally significant under **Criterion A** in the area of EDUCATION. The Weiser school district recognized the need for modern recreational and performance spaces for its growing student population—a need that aligned with one of the stated purposes of the PWA's school building program—"to provide additional accommodations for the constantly increasing number of school children."[5] The PWA enabled a modern facility for the Weiser school district, providing a gymnasium with bleachers and locker rooms, a stage for theatrical and musical performances, ample multi-purpose rooms, and storage. The building served the high school until 1967 and has since served the Weiser Middle School.

Lastly, the building is locally significant under **Criterion C** in the area of ARCHITECTURE because it embodies distinctive characteristics of a type and period of construction. It clearly reflects its association with the 1930s Depression era in its restrained, classically inspired Moderne architecture, a hallmark of the architect Frank Hummel, Tourtellotte and Hummel, during this period. Further, its strong integrity makes it an excellent example of a purpose-built combination gymnasium and auditorium that has served public school students and the Weiser community for nearly a century.

WEISER COMMUNITY CONTEXT

The Weiser community is situated at the confluence of the Snake and Weiser rivers in west-central Idaho. It occupies the ancestral lands of the Nez Perce, Northern Paiute, and Northern Shoshone people, who have called this region home for more than 11,000 years. These Indigenous groups relied on the rich resources of the Snake River plain and the greater Weiser River watershed for survival and shelter. Beginning in 1855, a series of treaties between the Nez Perce Tribe and the U.S. government brought steady encroachment, reduction of tribal lands, and forced removal, trends that continued into the 20th century. Discoveries of gold by trespassing miners at Pierce, in present-day Clearwater County, jumpstarted prospecting, and soon mining districts popped up in Idaho County to the north. This brought an influx of people to the region, as did the Homestead Act of 1862, which encouraged settlement in the American West. All this activity prompted the formation of Idaho Territory in 1863.[6]

A community grew up around a stage station or roadhouse established in 1863 and operated by William and Nancy Logan that was near Reuben Olds' ferry that crossed the Snake River. Among the early homesteads was that of Thomas Galloway, whose later canal projects promoted agricultural settlement. Galloway and others built a bridge across the Weiser River, and by the 1870s the settlement was known as Weiser Bridge, later shortened to Weiser.[7] Voters chose Weiser as the county seat when Washington County was created in 1879. The Oregon Short Line Railroad pushed through area in the 1880s, jumpstarting community development and linking Weiser with regional agricultural markets.[8]

Table 1. Population (US Census)

Year	Idaho	Washington County	Weiser
1890	88,548	3,836	901
1900	161,772	6,882	1,364
1910	325,594	11,101	2,600
1920	431,866	9,424	3,154
1930	445,032	7,962	2,724
1940	524,873	8,853	3,663
1950	588,637	8,576	3,961
1960	667,191	8,378	4,208
1970	712,567	7,633	4,108

U.S. Census: Decennial Census Official Publications.

[5] United States, Public Works Administration, *Public Works Administration Aids to Education.* Washington: U. S. Govt. Print. Off., 1937. Accessed Dec. 1, 2025. https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/009669575

[6] City of Weiser, *City of Weiser Historic Preservation Plan* (2025), 10.

[7] The Weiser Bridge business district developed on the east side of present-day Weiser, along East Main Street between 10th and 13th streets. An early commercial building still stands at 1016 East Main Street.

[8] City of Weiser, *City of Weiser Historic Preservation Plan* (2025), 10. Florence K. Blanchard, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, "Weiser Oregon Short Line Railroad Depot, (Boise: Idaho State Historical Society, 2006), sec. 8, 1-3.

Weiser suffered a devastating fire in the business district in 1890. With other competing town sites already in development, a new business district took shape to the west oriented to the railroad near the foot of today's State Street. The community rebounded with nearby mining and agricultural activities, aided by Galloway's system of canals. Farming and ranching were cornerstones of the local economy by the early 20th century. Area farmers and ranchers prospered during World War I with increased wartime demand and higher prices, but those trends were short lived following a significant drop in the worldwide markets during the 1920s. The swings in county and city population, noted in Table 1, reflect these broader economic shifts. The nationwide economic depression of the 1930s only added to the hardships, severely impacting agricultural regions in Idaho, including Washington County. Weiser officials sought relief assistance from federal New Deal programs, resulting in part in the construction of the post office, courthouse, high school gymnasium, and community swimming pool.

A CLOSER LOOK: DEPRESSION & THE NEW DEAL

The Depression hit Idaho hard. As historian Leonard J. Arrington put it, "Idaho's economy was in desperate straits during the 1930s."[9] Many Idahoans had been reliant on agriculture, mining, and timber—industries that saw great expansion during World War I followed by retraction in the early 1920s, with significant drops in demand and prices. Income of workers in states with heavily agricultural economies, like those of the Great Plains and West, were hit especially hard compared to those with industrial economies, like those of New England. In Idaho, where agriculture thrived in the early 20th century with irrigation infrastructure, the income of average Idahoans dropped an astonishing 49.3 percent between 1929 and 1932.[10]

As Elizabeth Egleston observes, the depressed economy strained an underdeveloped public school system across the country. This was especially true in Idaho, which experienced a high rate of emigration during the 1920s, only to have those leaving replaced by newcomers fleeing the Dust Bowl in the 1930s, creating "a mounting relief load which further strained the budgets of schools."[11] Local districts quickly faced challenges in providing adequate facilities, instructional materials, and teachers.

Following his election in 1932, President Franklin D. Roosevelt set about establishing his New Deal— a series of federal programs aimed at relief and reform. In Idaho, Roosevelt's New Deal provided unemployment relief, agricultural loans, lending assistance, work programs, social welfare assistance, and programs for youth. Between 1933 and 1939, Idaho received $321 million in grant and loan assistance. Per capita, this ranked Idaho eighth among the 48 states in New Deal federal expenditures.[12] This investment resulted in the construction of more than 200 public buildings—including 78 educational buildings in Idaho—largely through the Public Works Administration (PWA) and the Works Progress Administration (WPA).[13]

Nationwide, nearly one-half of all New Deal-constructed school buildings were funded by the PWA. Created by Congress in 1933 and led by Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes, the PWA focused on large construction projects that employed skilled workers. It funded more than 34,000 projects nationwide, including municipal water and sewage systems, airports, libraries, courthouses, post offices, hospitals, housing, and roads.[14] In general, projects at the local and state levels received grants covering 45 percent of project costs.[15] Although Idaho used a large portion of its PWA grants for improving irrigation facilities and constructing and renovating local water and sewage systems, there were 78 school buildings constructed with PWA funds, with allotments totaling $2.7 million by July 1, 1939.[16]

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[9] Leonard J. Arrington, "Idaho and the Great Depression," *Idaho Yesterdays* 13 (Summer 1969): 3.
[10] Arrington, "Idaho and the Great Depression," 3-4.
[11] Elizabeth Egleston, National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form *Public School Buildings in Idaho* (Boise: Idaho State Historical Society, 1991), E7.
[12] Arrington, *History of Idaho, vol. 2*, 55 and 68.
[13] Arrington, "Idaho and the Great Depression," 8. Egleston, E2.
[14] James S. Olson, ed., *Historical Dictionary of the New Deal* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1985), 399.
[15] Arrington, *History of Idaho, vol. 2*, 64.
[16] Arrington, *History of Idaho, vol. 2*, 64-65. For more on the PWA's impact on public education infrastructure nationwide, see

Among those 78 school buildings were several public high school gymnasiums, including those at Boise (extant; NR Refs. 82000180 and 82000199), Lava Hot Springs (extant; NR Ref. 97000764), Pocatello (extant; NR Ref. 82002505), and Weiser. These buildings supported the educational activities of the local districts by providing specialized spaces to meet expanding curriculum that previously had been absent or lacking. They reflect Progressive-era reforms of the early 20th century as districts sought to standardize educational opportunities for students in rural and urban districts.[17]

In addition to Weiser's new high school gymnasium, New Deal programs supported the construction of a post office (extant; NR Ref. 82000383), courthouse (extant; NR Ref. 87001602), and public swimming pool (demolished) in Weiser. These projects provided work for architects, builders, and area laborers while generating immediate local and regional economic activity. The longer-term impact of these investments is still being realized through the continued use of the gymnasium, post office, and courthouse.

EDUCATION IN WEISER

Although Weiser-area children had been educated in homes and small groups since the mid-1860s, the local public school system began to take shape in the late 1890s, with the construction of the East Side School in the early 1890s and the first high school in 1904-05. During this same period, Reverend Edward Paddock, who had come to Weiser in 1894 to organize a Congregational church, opened the Idaho Industrial Institute, later called the Intermountain Institute (extant; NR Ref. 79000811), located northwest of the city center at the north end of 7th Street.[18] The Institute was a boarding school that provided children who lived too far in the country to attend high school an opportunity to receive an equivalent education, drawing students from at least eight states during its 34-year existence.[19]

Weiser's first purpose-built high school was located at 320 East Galloway Avenue on land donated by early-day resident Thomas Galloway (figures 9 and 10). The impressive 2-1/2-story stone building was designed by J. E. Tourtellotte and Company of Boise in 1904 and built by D. W. Bryan of Boise in 1905 (figures 9).[20] It was enlarged with additions in 1919, including a rear wing with a gymnasium, and by the late 1920s the upper floor and bell tower had been removed (figures 5 through 8 and 11).

By the early 1930s, the school district began planning for the construction of a new multi-functional gymnasium to replace an older one behind the high school. The district needed to accommodate a growing—or at least fluctuating—student population, and to provide space for school sports and musical and theatrical productions as well as physical education classes. Indeed, on the eve of its planning and construction, *The Idaho Statesman* announced, "Weiser Graduates Largest Class in School's History."[21]

The school district commissioned Tourtellotte and Hummel Architects, the successor firm to J. E. Tourtellotte and Company, to design a free-standing gymnasium and auditorium for its high school (figures 12 and 17 through 21). The effort began as a federal Works Progress Administration (WPA) project but was plagued with delays due to worker shortages. Construction was scheduled to begin early

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Alice Barrows's chapter "Schools," in *Public Buildings: A Survey of Architecture of Projects Constructed by Federal and Other Governmental Bodies Between the Years 1933 and 1939 with the Assistance of the Public Works Administration*, eds. C. W. Short and R. Stanley Brown (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1939).

[17] Brenda Spencer, National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form *Historic Public Schools of Kansas* (Topeka: Kansas State Historical Society, 2005), E4.

[18] "First graduation exercises to take place at Opera House Friday," *Weiser Semi-Weekly Signal*, May 18,1899, p. 1. Patricia Wright and Don Hibbard, National Register of Historic Places Inventory - Nomination Form "Intermountain Institute," (Boise: Idaho State Historical Society, 1979), sec. 8, 1-2.

[19] Ibid.

[20] "Given to Boise Contractor," *The Idaho Statesman*, Nov. 19, 1904, p. 8. "Brief Local News," *The Idaho Statesman,* Mar. 16, 1905, p. 5.

[21] "Weiser Graduates Largest Class in School's History," *The Idaho Statesman*, May 14, 1933, p. 5.

in the summer of 1936 but was delayed "due to the fact that available labor at the time was transferred to the emergency project of weed control."[22] It was pushed to late 1936 when more workers would be available. However, in December 1936, the project was transferred to the Public Works Administration (PWA) so the "work of construction could be hurried along more rapidly."[23] Almost immediately, bids were sought for construction.

The school district received four construction bids to complete the gymnasium. The school board held a special meeting on January 25, 1937, to open the bids. In consultation with architect Frank Hummel, representing the firm Tourtellotte and Hummel, the board selected contractor Harvey J. McNeel of Caldwell, who submitted the "lowest and best" bid of $44,760.[24] However, the board deferred action because word had not been received on its application for PWA funding. The matter was clarified quickly, and the board met again on January 29 to pass a resolution adopting McNeel's bid in addition to several alternatives that brought the bid total to $50,732.[25] The parties signed a contract, and construction was scheduled to begin on February 4.[26]

Cold weather delayed the start of the project, but once underway the Weiser community newspapers followed the construction project closely. By early May, the concrete foundation and basement had been completed, and workers were laying the brick walls."[27] The project grabbed headlines in early June when four workers were seriously injured during construction. A scaffold collapsed sending workers James Powell, Russell Maxfield, Couper Mandress, and William Bennett tumbling nearly 30 feet. Mandrell and Bennett were treated at Little Flower hospital, and Powell and Mandrell were treated at Weiser hospital.[28] Contractor McNeel soon requested a 30-day extension to complete the building "because of cold and snow and generally adverse weather conditions during February and March, 1937."[29] The school board granted the extension.

Final work, PWA approvals, and other factors pushed the completion date still later into 1937. The new building was finally completed in the fall of 1937, just in time for the upcoming basketball season. The school district hosted a community-wide open house for the new combination gymnasium-auditorium on November 5, 1937. The local newspapers promoted the event as follows:

> The fine new gymnasium of the Weiser high school will be given a royal opening for the basketball season on Friday, when a big 'Basketball Jamboree' will be staged…To add to the pleasure of the spectators, the W. H. S. student body has purchased an electric scoreboard. This board will indicate the exact score of each team and the amount of playing time left…The Tri Sigma girls will have their new uniforms and will add to the celebration. The entire proceeds of the jamboree will be turned over to the W. H. S. band to buy new uniforms.[30]
>
> The four class 'A' teams of the Snake River Valley will be represented. These are Emmett, Payette, Ontario and Weiser. Before the games start, a drawing for opponents will be made. Then two full games will be played. Special entertainment has been planned for between the halves of the games."[31]

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[22] "Work to Begin in Ten Days on New H. S. Gym," *The Weiser Signal,* Nov. 19, 1936, p. 1.
[23] "Will Soon Begin Work on HI. Gym-Auditorium," *Weiser American*, Dec. 10, 1936, p. 1.
[24] Board Minutes, Jan. 25, 1937. Independent School District No. 1, Weiser, Idaho. Also, "Successful Bidder," *The Idaho Statesman*, Jan. 30, 1937, p. 9.
[25] Board Minutes, Jan. 29, 1937. Independent School District No. 1, Weiser, Idaho.
[26] "School Buildings Being Constructed," *The Idaho Statesman*, Feb. 9, 1937, p. 9.
[27] "Walls Being Built at New Gymnasium," *The Weiser Signal*, May 6, 1937, p. 1.
[28] "Four Workmen Hurt When Scaffold Falls," *The Weiser Signal*, Jun. 10, 1937, p. 1.
[29] Board Minutes, Jun. 22, 1937. Independent School District No. 1, Weiser, Idaho.
[30] "Basketball Jamboree Will Supply New Gym with Royal Opening," *Weiser American,* Dec. 9, 1937, p. 1.
[31] "Basket Ball Jamboree Slated for Friday Night," *The Weiser Signal*, Dec. 9, 1937, p. 1.

Investment in the new building totaled approximately $56,000, supplied jointly by a local bond issue and a grant from the federal government."[32] The new building replaced an older gymnasium located behind the high school that was remodeled for use as a study hall and library (figure 7).[33] A decade later, following World War II, the high school relocated to the campus of the former Intermountain Institute on the northwest edge of town. Despite the move, the gymnasium/auditorium continued to serve the needs of high school students, athletes, and performers, until a new high school building opened in 1967.[34] The old high school building next to the gymnasium/auditorium became the East Side Elementary School throughout the mid-1950s (figures 7 and 16), which is perhaps why some community members recalled the gymnasium as the East Side Gym.[35] Junior high students moved into the old high school in the mid-1950s. The old high school building was torn down in about 1980 and replaced with the current structure.

The new high school gymnasium was a focal point of the Weiser community when it hosted games, especially when rival community teams visited. For example, when rival boys' teams came to town, such as Payette or Meridian, the packed gym was reportedly so loud that players could hardly hear their coach in the huddle.[36] Weiser fielded athletic teams as early as the 1910s and has always competed in the Snake River Valley League, which over time has included teams from Payette, Nyssa, Meridian, Emmett, Ontario, and Vale.

As the original architectural drawings illustrate, the gymnasium was constructed with both boys' and girls' locker rooms, suggesting there was an active athletic program for both boys and girls (figure 18). The girls' basketball program also has roots in the early 1900s and gained momentum in the 1930s with the formation of the Weiser Girls' Athletic Association, a high school group organized to generate interest in athletics and sportsmanship.[37] These early girls' teams played six-on-six, half-court style basketball in interschool competitions. It was not until the 1970s, with the passage of Title IX prohibiting sex discrimination in education programs and activities, that a more fully realized girls' sports program was developed with league competition, including both five-person basketball and volleyball.

In addition to athletic competitions and school performances, the gymnasium has hosted a variety of student-sponsored and community events over the years, including amateur boxing matches organized by the high school lettermen club, square dancing festivals, City-sponsored community "couples nights," and even rehearsals for the once-popular Miss Washington County competition hosted by the Weiser Lions Club.[38] Even the popular Globe Trotters included the Weiser gymnasium on at least two barnstorming tours in 1947-48 and 1954-55.[39]

THE MODERN MOVEMENT & PWA MODERNE ARCHITECTURE

The WHS Gymnasium and Auditorium clearly conveys its association with the Depression era and Tourtellotte and Hummel Architects through its restrained, classically inspired architecture and design. Simplified, functional examples of Modern Movement styles, such as Art Deco and Moderne, were used

[32] "'Official' Opening of New High School Gym," *Weiser American,* Oct. 10, 1937, p. 1.
[33] "Weiser To View New Gymnasium When Completed," *The Idaho Statesman*, Jul. 2, 1937, p. 21.
[34] Wright and Hibbard, National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form, "Intermountain Institute," sec. 8, 1-2.
[35] Snake River Heritage Museum, via Facebook post, Apr. 11, 2024.
[36] Hunter Funk, "Weiser's 'Echo Pavilion' gym joins National Register of Historic Places," KTVB7, Jan. 5, 2026. Accessed Jan. 6, 2026. https://www.ktvb.com/article/news/local/208/weisers-historic-echo-pavilion/277-d873a72e-adf6-46ce-95b6-705d7a38f84e
[37] Snake River Heritage Museum's Yearbook Collection, 1932 WHS Yearbook.
[38] "Amateur Boxing Set Tonight in Weiser Gym," *The Idaho Statesman,* Nov. 16, 1948, p. 18. "Spring Square Dance Festival Set at Weiser," *The Idaho Statesman,* Apr. 12, 1949, p. 19. "Weiser Gym Echoes With Adult Fun Program," *The Idaho Statesman,* Mar. 12, 1960, p. 19. "Miss Washington Rehearsals Set at Weiser Gym," *The Idaho Statesman*, Aug. 25, 1960, p. 17.
[39] [No title], *The Nyssa Gate City Journal*, Apr. 1, 1954, p. 4. Also, Kyla Dickerson, email correspondence with Sarah Martin, Jan. 12, 2026.

extensively in public architecture nationwide throughout the 1930s.[40] Idaho was no different. Leading firms like Tourtellotte and Hummel Architects embraced this movement in many of their Depression-era public projects.

The Depression era fits squarely within the Modern Movement in American architecture which encompasses a period from about the mid-1920s to 1975. The broader movement includes a range of architectural styles and forms, including Art Deco, Moderne, International, Miesian, Contemporary, and others. It was a reaction to Eclecticism and a rejection of historical styles and forms, instead favoring simplicity, functionality, flexibility in plan, regularity and structural order, and avoidance of applied ornamentation.[41] A central tenant of Modern Movement design was innovation—in design, materials, and technology.

The related Art Deco and Moderne styles of the interwar period have roots in Europe as artists, designers, and architects pivoted away from historical trends toward new aesthetics inspired by modernity and the machine age. This artistic and architectural movement was introduced to an international audience at the 1925 Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes in Paris and quickly made its way to the United States. Hallmarks of the Art Deco style include smooth exterior wall surfaces, towers and other vertical projections, and geometric and stylized motifs. The related Moderne style emerged in the 1930s as a less decorative variety of Art Deco that took cues from industrial design and emphasized horizontality, while often employing elements of the traditional Neoclassical and Beaux-Arts movements.

The Modernistic styles blossomed in American cities with iconic buildings and structures like New York's Chrysler Building, Cincinnati's Union Terminal, Oregon's State Capitol, Los Angeles' Eastern Columbia Building, and the Hoover Dam on the Colorado River. Idaho examples include Boise's Idaho National Guard Armory and Hotel Boise, courthouses in Ada, Boundary, Cassia, Gem, Jerome, and Washington counties, and the Idaho State University Administration Building in Pocatello. Although much less common than traditional revival styles, Moderne styling can be found on commercial, civic, educational, and residential buildings in towns and cities across Idaho. Most examples, especially those found in small and mid-size towns like Weiser, are simplified versions of the style. The austerity of the Depression era further influenced Modernistic designs resulting in simplified and stripped-down versions that became known as WPA Deco or PWA Moderne, as exhibited by the WHS Gymnasium and Auditorium.[42]

Boise High School Gymnasium, NR Photo, 1982.

PWA Moderne designs most often were executed on government and public buildings nationwide, and many public works projects in Idaho reflect the style as well. Character-defining elements typically include monumental massing, symmetrical and balanced facades, subtle references to both classicism and modernity, flat and smooth wall surfaces with coursing or

[40] Sara A. Butler, "New Deal architecture," in *The Grove Encyclopedia of American Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011). Accessed Dec. 10, 2025. https://www-oxfordreference-com.offcampus.lib.washington.edu/view/10.1093/acref/9780195335798.001.0001/acref-9780195335798-e-1460

[41] Virginia Savage McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2017), 548-549.

[42] Patricia Wright and Lisa B. Reitzes, *Tourtellotte & Hummel of Idaho: The Standard Practice of Architecture* (Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press with Idaho State Historical Society, 1987), 11.

scored lines in the walls, decorative elements that emphasize horizontality, and metal or glass block windows. The WHS Gymnasium and Auditorium, a PWA project completed in 1937, reflects all the hallmarks of PWA Moderne and speaks to the optimism in Weiser during the Depression.

Comparison with other New Deal-era high school gymnasiums reveals similar Modern Movement trends. Boise, Pocatello, and Lava Hot Springs, for example, have extant high school gymnasiums built in the 1930s with PWA support that reflect this stylistic tradition. Perhaps the best comparison to Weiser's gymnasium is that of Boise High School completed just one year earlier in 1936 as a PWA project (see photo above).[43] It was designed jointly by Tourtellotte and Hummel and Wayland and Fennell architectural firms and exhibits a subdued or muted Art Deco—or PWA Deco—style. Its smooth-faced brick exterior with stone and concrete accents is quite similar to that of the Weiser gymnasium in its order and symmetry. However, the Boise gym's Art Deco attributes, including the projecting vertical brick pilasters with stone caps that pierce the roofline, stylized stone panels, and geometric stone accents, account for more embellishment than what is on the much more austere Weiser gymnasium. Nevertheless, both buildings exhibit a streamlined and functional aesthetic with hints of classicism that is reflective of both the time and place in which they were built.

ARCHITECT: FRANCIS K. (FRANK) HUMMEL, TOURTELLOTTE AND HUMMEL[44]

Early in the 20th century, Tourtellotte and Hummel secured its reputation as "a leading, perhaps *the* leading, architectural firm in southwest Idaho."[45] The firm's decades of success designing many of the state's most significant architectural and institutional began with the work of John Tourtellotte, who first came to Boise in 1890 and formed Tourtellotte & Company. Described as "the self-made, informally trained, late-nineteenth-century builder-architect," he was an especially talented salesperson who partnered Charles Hummel, a formally trained architect from Europe. Hummel became Tourtellotte's "indispensable" partner in 1900 and a named partner in 1910. Tourtellotte relocated to Portland, Oregon, and opened a second office in 1913, leaving Hummel to lead the Boise office. Hummel's sons Frederick and Francis (Frank) joined the firm in 1909 and 1916, respectively, following their architecture education at the University of Pennsylvania.

Frederick Charles Hummel (1884-1978) worked with his father out of the firm's Boise office, and **Francis Konrad Hummel** (1892-1961) entered partnership with Tourtellotte in Portland about 1922. Both brothers developed their own stylistic preferences, especially Frank, who employed a more "modernistic" approach than his brother and father.[46] For example, the Art Deco design of the 1929 Hotel Boise is attributed to Frank who was working out of the Portland office. In 1935, Frederick took a leave of absence to work for the Federal Housing Administration, a move that "may have helped direct the firm to its many projects done under the Public Works Administration…"[47] Frank returned to Boise where he directed many of the firm's Public Works Administration-funded projects, which extended throughout Idaho. Several of these were educational and governmental buildings employing his modernistic preferences. Authors Patricia Wright and Lisa B. Reitzes call attention to these commissions from the New Deal-era as an especially "engaging group:"

> Typically, they are reinforced concrete construction in a geometrically massed, simply embellished form so minimalized, so innocent of the surface sophistications of the Art Deco style, that we have used the term 'decoid' for them instead. In fact, when we began to encounter these buildings, we thought of them as 'thick-wristed deco' or 'WPA deco,' evoking an image of structures pragmatically designed to meet the financial exigencies of local bonds and federal matching funds, and executed by local contractors for whom

[43] The Boise High School Gymnasium was listed in the National Register of Historic Places as part of the campus designation in 1982. See IHSI No. 01-7865.

[44] This section is informed by Patricia Wright and Lisa B. Reitzes excellent research presented in *Tourtellotte & Hummel of Idaho: The Standard Practice of Architecture* (Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press with Idaho State Historical Society, 1987.

[45] Wright and Reitzes, *Tourtellotte & Hummel of Idaho*, 2.

[46] Wright and Reitzes, *Tourtellotte & Hummel of Idaho*, 11.

[47] Wright and Reitzes, *Tourtellotte & Hummel of Idaho*, 6.

> urban Art Deco might be almost foreign. These buildings are poignant, provincial expressions of a government's need to manifest power and confidence at a time when those qualities were in unusually short supply.[48]

In other words, Tourtellotte and Hummel adapted their modernistic, Art Deco-influenced designs of these publicly funded buildings to fit often tight budgets. Art Deco and Moderne were favored Modern Movement styles during the Depression years. The many examples of their Modern Movement work during this period include the nominated Weiser High School Gymnasium and Auditorium; the aforementioned Boise High School gymnasium; Boise Junior High School; Marsing High School; New Plymouth High School; Homedale High School; Parma Grade School; Owyhee County Courthouse; Gem County Courthouse; Washington County Courthouse.

John Tourtellotte and Charles Hummel both died in 1939, not long after these New Deal-era projects finished. The Boise office closed in 1942 for the duration of World War II. In 1945, the firm reorganized as Hummel, Hummel, & Jones, with Jedd Jones, III, as a partner.

BUILDER: HARVEY JAMES (H. J.) MCNEEL

Harvey James McNeel (1876-1951) was a long-tenured building contractor throughout the Boise Valley. Born and raised in Madison, Indiana, he attended nearby Hanover College for three years before taking business administration courses in Louisville, Kentucky. McNeel started in the building and contracting business at Loveland, Colorado, in 1901, and continued in the business after he moved to Kennewick, Washington, in 1905. He moved to Weiser, Idaho, in 1909 and then Caldwell in 1919, where he lived for the rest of his life.[49]

McNeel completed many commissions in Caldwell, including a theater, the First National Bank, the Elks Lodge (IHSI 27-2600), the high school and college gymnasia, the College of Idaho library (IHSI 27-1031, NRHP 1982), the Idaho Meat Packers, and many other businesses, institutions, and homes.[50] Beyond Caldwell, his work spanned from Twin Falls to Baker. Several of his clients included school districts. In addition to his construction of Weiser High School Gymnasium and Auditorium, he built the Washington Elementary School in Jerome (53-10197), designed by Tourtellotte and Hummel, and an addition to Washington School in Twin Falls.[51] Another Weiser-area commission attributed to McNeel is the O.W. Baker Residence.[52] His 1951 obituary said he "constructed half the buildings at Gowen field, Boise."[53] McNeel retired in 1947 and sold his business, which kept his name.

SUMMARY

The Weiser High School Gymnasium and Auditorium was completed in 1937 under the auspices of the federal Public Works Administration. Designed by Francis (Frank) Hummel of Tourtellotte and Hummel Architects, the building reflects a restrained Moderne style that clearly conveys its association with this Depression-era program. It was built by contractor Harvey J. McNeel and served as the primary gymnasium and auditorium space for Weiser High School until 1967. It has since been affiliated with Weiser Middle School.

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[48] Wright and Reitzes, *Tourtellotte & Hummel of Idaho*, 11.
[49] "Builder Dies at Caldwell," *The Idaho Statesman*, Sep. 15, 1951, p. 6.
[50] "Meat Producers Award Contract for New Plant," *The Idaho Statesman*, Aug. 26, 1937, p. 6.
[51] "Building Boom Continues Rise," *Twin Falls News*, Aug. 31, 1937, p. 2. "Work Starts on New East Jerome School," *The Post-Register* (Idaho Falls), Mar. 5, 1937, p. 6.
[52] "Weiser Sheep King Erects Fine Home," *Evening Capital News* (Boise), Jan. 23, 1919, p. 2.
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Wright, Patricia, and Don Hibbard. National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form, "Intermountain Institute." Boise: Idaho State Historical Society, 1979. Accessed Oct. 16, 2025. https://history.idaho.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Intermountain_Institute_79000811.pdf

Wright, Patricia, and Lisa B. Reitzes. *Tourtellotte & Hummel of Idaho: The Standard Practice of Architecture*. Logan: Utah State University Press with Idaho State Historical Society, 1987.

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 # _____
____recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

__x__State Historic Preservation Office
____Other State agency
____Federal agency
____Local government
____University
____Other
Name of repository: Idaho SHPO; ISHS Archives

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage; enter "Less than one" if the acreage is .99 or less)

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates
Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

	Latitude	Longitude		Latitude	Longitude
1	44.250792	-116.965204	3		
2			4		

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The nominated property is limited to the free-standing gymnasium and the land on which it sits. The building straddles two parcels that make up the larger Weiser Middle School campus. The two parcels are noted as follows, according to the Washington County parcel database:

Parcel 1: RPW0500004001A. LOTS 1-20; BLK 4; GALLOWAY SUB #2 & VACATED E BUTTERFIELD ST TO S OF BLK 4 BETWEEN E 3RD & E 4RH; JR HI TRACK (3.11 acres)

Parcel 2: RPW0450005001A. BLKS 5-6 GALLOWAY ADD JR HI SCHOOL (1.5 acres)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The nomination boundary is limited to the free-standing gymnasium and the land on which it sits because it is the only extant structure on the campus with significant associations to Tourtellotte and Hummel architects and the Public Works Administration (PWA) New Deal assistance program.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Sarah J. Martin, historian; research assistance from Kyla Dickerson (Weiser School Dist.) & Sarah Borda (Snake River Heritage Center) date January 2026
organization SJM Cultural Resource Services, LLC telephone
street & number 3901 2nd Ave NE #202 email sarahmartincrs@gmail.com
city or town Seattle state WA zip code 98105

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Regional Location Map (Figure 1)**
- **USGS Map (Figure 2)**
- **Tax Lot Map (Figure 3)**
- **Sketch Site Plan (Figure 4)**
- **Historical Maps and Images (Figures 5-16)**
- **Original Architectural Drawings (Figures 17-21)**
- **Recent Photographs (Figures 22-25 & Photos 1-26)**

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 3000x2000 pixels, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Weiser High School Gymnasium & Auditorium

City or Vicinity: Weiser

County: Washington County **State:** Idaho

Photographer: Sarah J. Martin

Date Photographed: Nov. 14, 2025

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

Photo #1	**ID_Washington_WeiserHighSchoolGymnasium-Auditorium_0001** View of primary south elevation, camera facing northeast
Photo #2	**ID_Washington_WeiserHighSchoolGymnasium-Auditorium_0002** View of primary south elevation, camera facing north
Photo #3	**ID_Washington_WeiserHighSchoolGymnasium-Auditorium_0003** View of primary south and east elevations, camera facing northwest
Photo #4	**ID_Washington_WeiserHighSchoolGymnasium-Auditorium_0004** View of east side elevation with adjacent middle school building at left, camera facing north
Photo #5	**ID_Washington_WeiserHighSchoolGymnasium-Auditorium_0005** View of covered window at southeast corner, camera facing west
Photo #6	**ID_Washington_WeiserHighSchoolGymnasium-Auditorium_0006** View of west elevation, camera facing southeast
Photo #7	**ID_Washington_WeiserHighSchoolGymnasium-Auditorium_0007** View of brick detail on west elevation, camera facing east
Photo #8	**ID_Washington_WeiserHighSchoolGymnasium-Auditorium_0008** View of rear north elevation, camera facing south
Photo #9	**ID_Washington_WeiserHighSchoolGymnasium-Auditorium_0009** View of lobby, camera facing west
Photo #10	**ID_Washington_WeiserHighSchoolGymnasium-Auditorium_0010** View of east lobby staircase and door to ticket booth, camera facing east
Photo #11	**ID_Washington_WeiserHighSchoolGymnasium-Auditorium_0011** View of gymnasium and enclosed stage at far end, camera facing north
Photo #12	**ID_Washington_WeiserHighSchoolGymnasium-Auditorium_0012** View of gymnasium and balcony seating, camera facing south
Photo #13	**ID_Washington_WeiserHighSchoolGymnasium-Auditorium_0013** View of southeast corner of gymnasium, camera facing southeast
Photo #14	**ID_Washington_WeiserHighSchoolGymnasium-Auditorium_0014** View of balcony seating above the lobby, camera facing southwest
Photo #15	**ID_Washington_WeiserHighSchoolGymnasium-Auditorium_0015** View of gymnasium and roof structure from balcony, camera facing southwest
Photo #16	**ID_Washington_WeiserHighSchoolGymnasium-Auditorium_0016** View of gymnasium showing removed balcony seating on west side, camera facing northwest

Photo #17	**ID_Washington_WeiserHighSchoolGymnasium-Auditorium_0017** View of west balcony where seating has been removed, camera facing north
Photo #18	**ID_Washington_WeiserHighSchoolGymnasium-Auditorium_0018** View of steel arch trusses supporting the roof, camera facing southwest
Photo #19	**ID_Washington_WeiserHighSchoolGymnasium-Auditorium_0019** View of northeast corner of gymnasium showing door to stairs, camera facing northeast
Photo #20	**ID_Washington_WeiserHighSchoolGymnasium-Auditorium_0020** View of door to gymnasium at the northeast corner, camera facing west
Photo #21	**ID_Washington_WeiserHighSchoolGymnasium-Auditorium_0021** View of staircase and doorway to the enclosed stage, camera facing west
Photo #22	**ID_Washington_WeiserHighSchoolGymnasium-Auditorium_0022** View of enclosed stage area and fly space, with auditorium at left, camera facing west
Photo #23	**ID_Washington_WeiserHighSchoolGymnasium-Auditorium_0023** View from coach's office toward boys' locker room, camera facing northwest
Photo #24	**ID_Washington_WeiserHighSchoolGymnasium-Auditorium_0024** View inside girls' locker room, camera facing north
Photo #25	**ID_Washington_WeiserHighSchoolGymnasium-Auditorium_0025** View inside girls' locker room showing an original bench, camera facing south
Photo #26	**ID_Washington_WeiserHighSchoolGymnasium-Auditorium_0026** View of basement shop area, camera facing south

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC

Figure 1. Regional Location Map
Map of State of Idaho showing counties and the location of Weiser in Washington County.

Figure 2. USGS Quadrangle Map (Close-in)
Weiser North Quadrangle, 2024, 7.5-minute series, Scale: 1:24,000 (North is at the top of the image.)

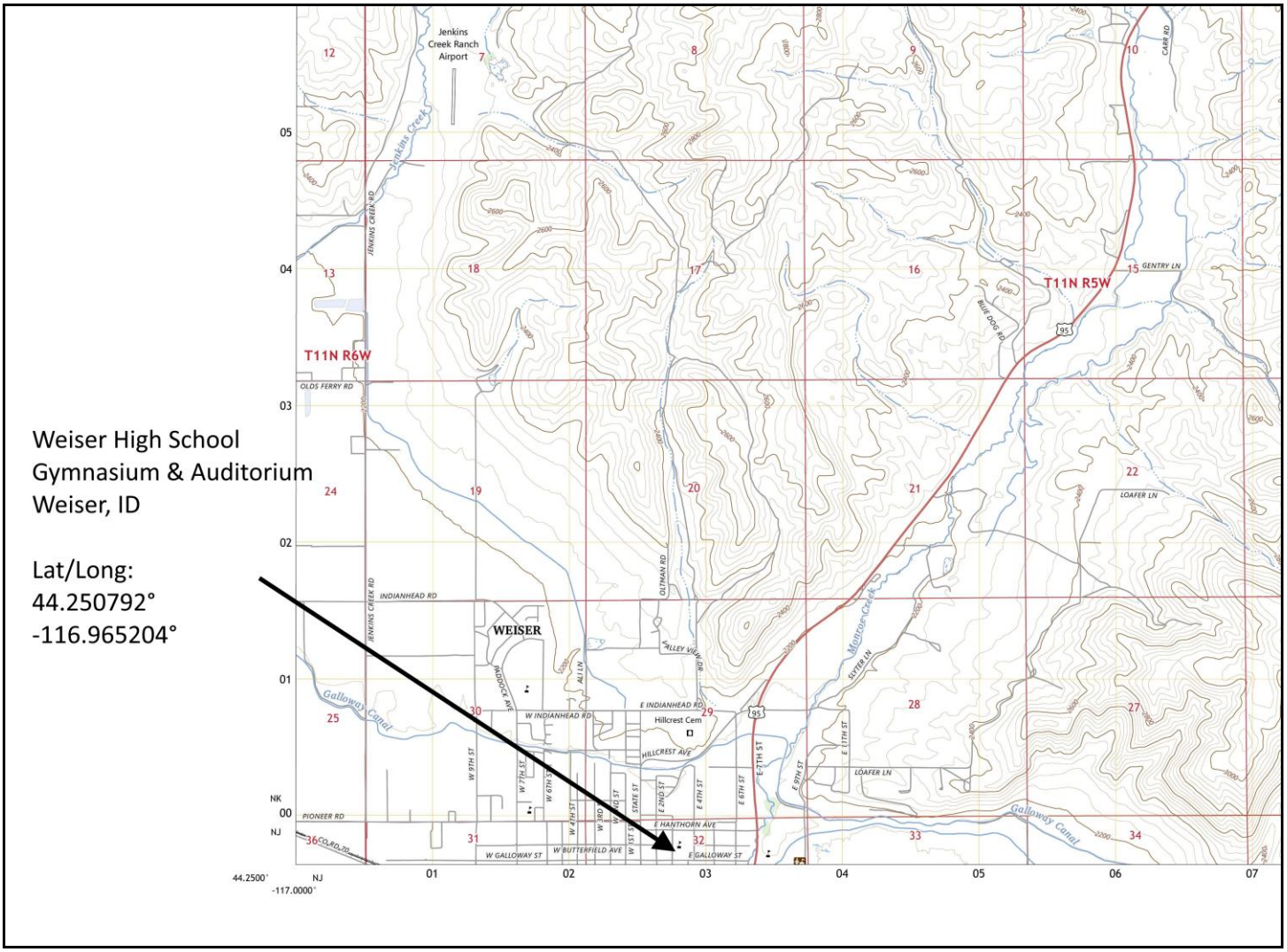
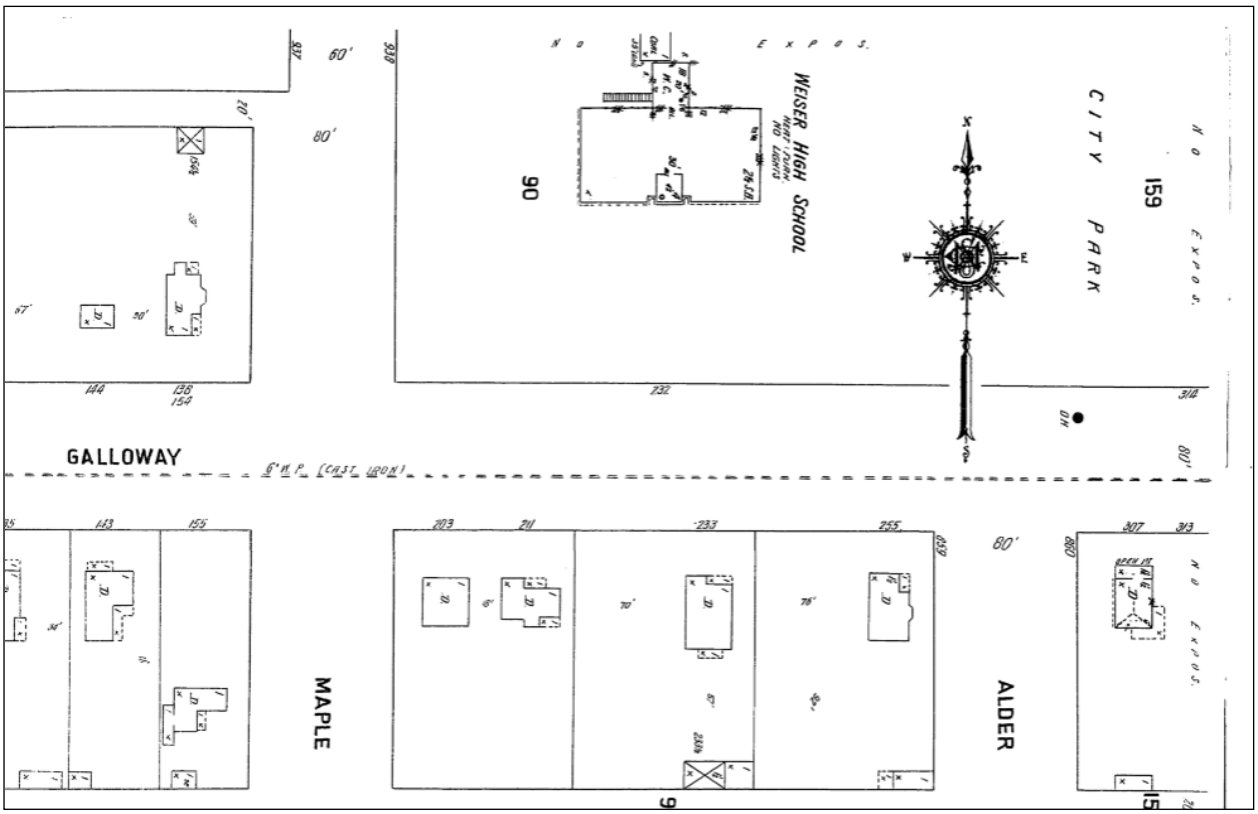


Figure 3. Washington County Parcel Map
The red star denotes the location of the nominated building, which straddles two adjoined parcels: RPW0500004001A and RPW0450005001A. The nomination boundary is limited to the building footprint. North is at the top of the image. Source: Interactive County Parcel Map, Washington County, Idaho.

Lat/Long: 44.250792° / -116.965204°

Figure 4. Aerial Image of Site (Google Earth base map, 2023)

Figure 5. Sanborn Company Fire Insurance Map, Weiser, Idaho, Dec. 1914, p. 2.
This map shows Weiser High School (built 1905) at the northeast corner of Maple and Galloway streets and a close-in image below.



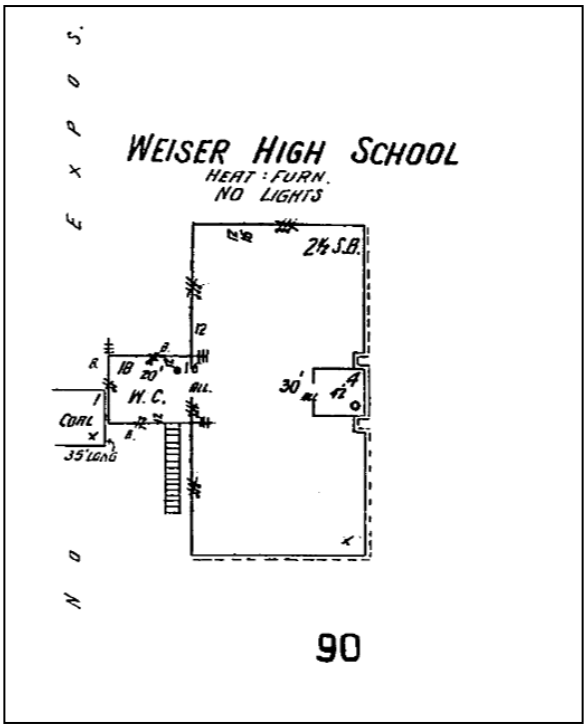


Figure 6. Sanborn Company Fire Insurance Map, Weiser, Idaho, Jul. 1928, p. 7.
This map shows Weiser High School (built 1905; additions 1919) at the northeast corner of 3rd (formerly Maple) and Galloway streets.

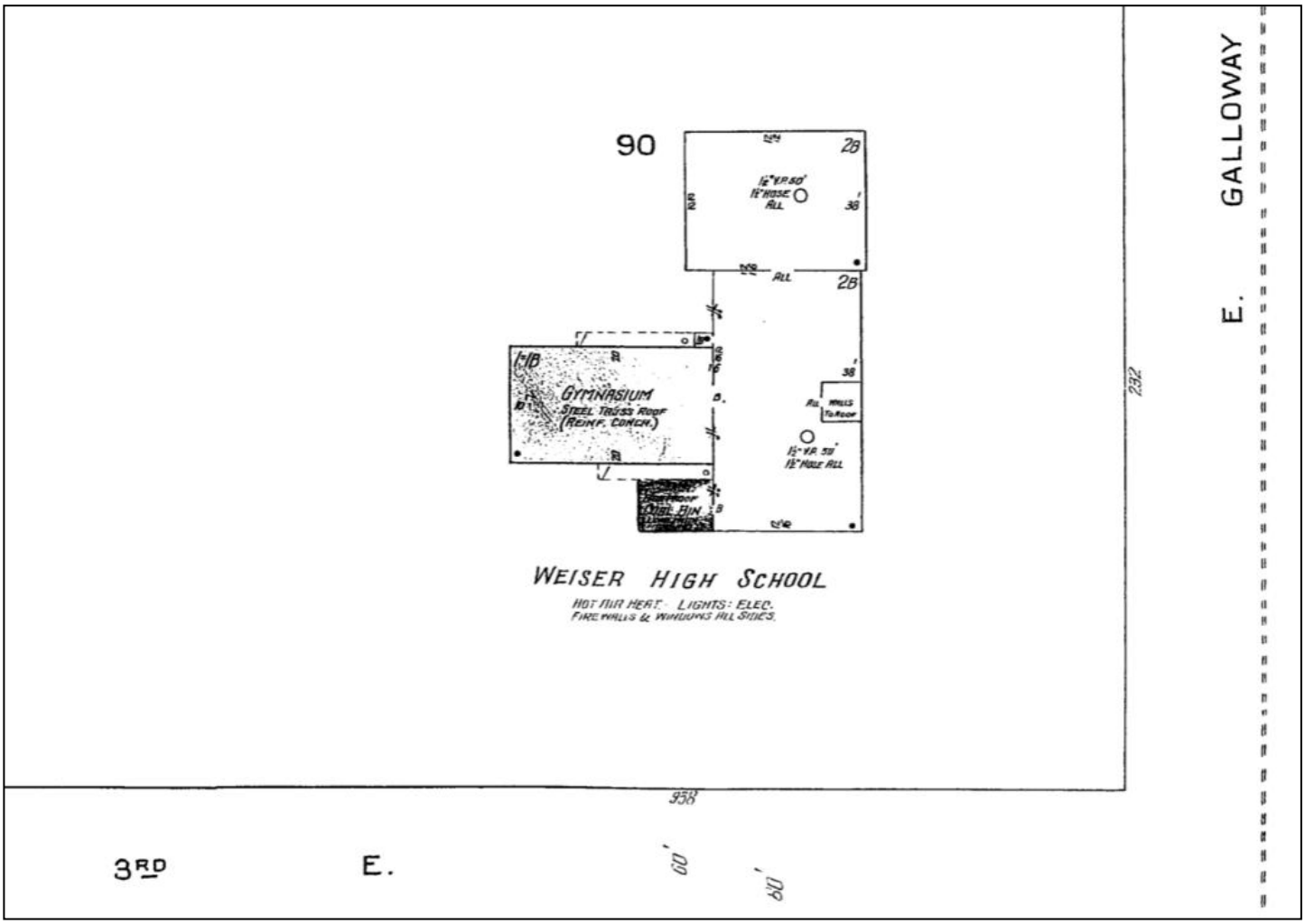


Figure 7. Sanborn Company Fire Insurance Map, Weiser, Idaho, Jul. 1928, updated Sep. 1949, p. 7. This map shows the former Weiser High School (built 1905; additions 1919; gymnasium added 1937) at the northeast corner of 3rd (formerly Maple) and Galloway streets.

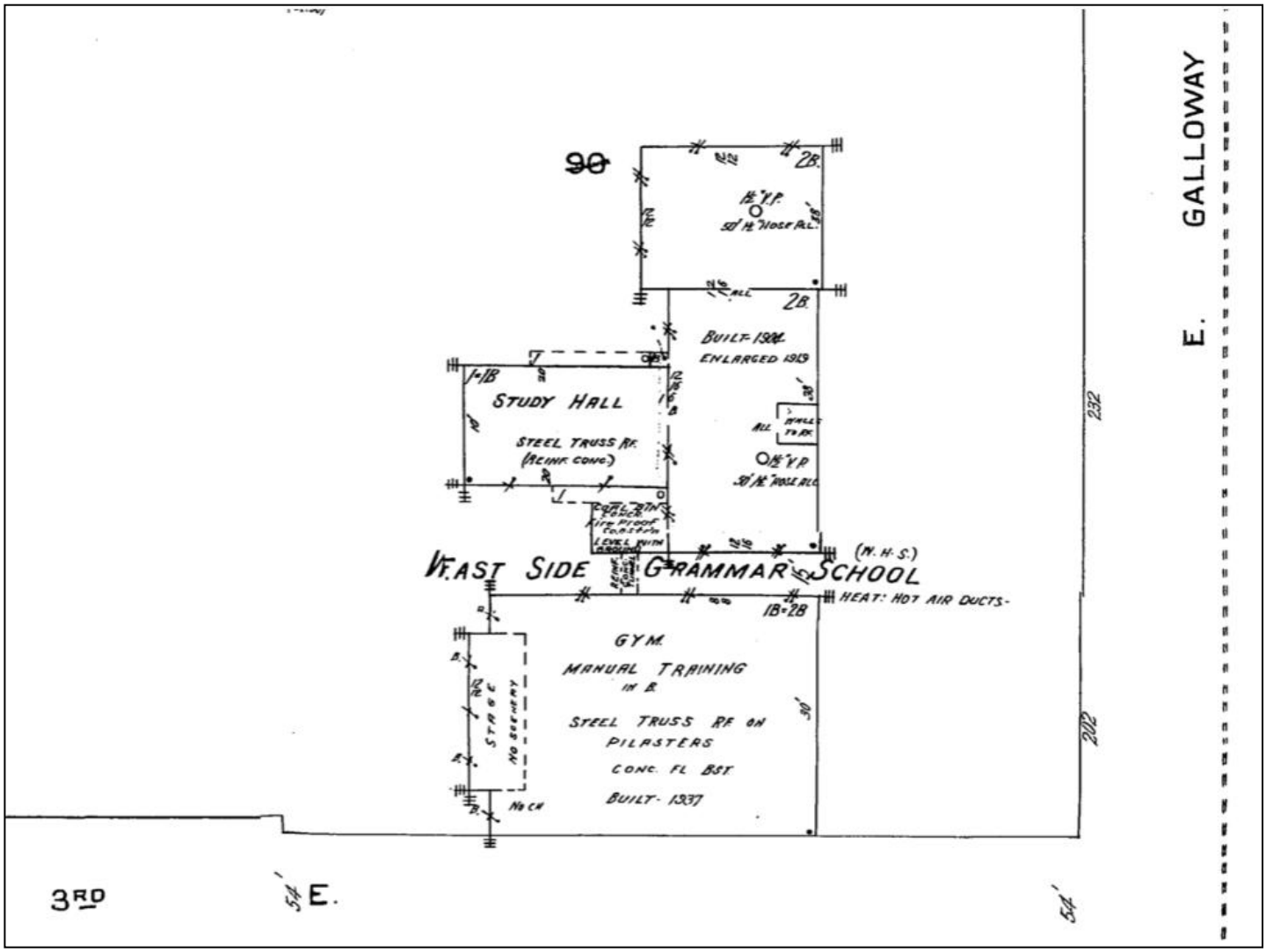


Figure 8. Historical Image
Partial image of Township 11N, Range 5W. *Metsker's Atlas of Washington County, Idaho*. Charles Metsker, 1939. The star notes the approximate location of the Weiser High School Gymnasium & Auditorium.

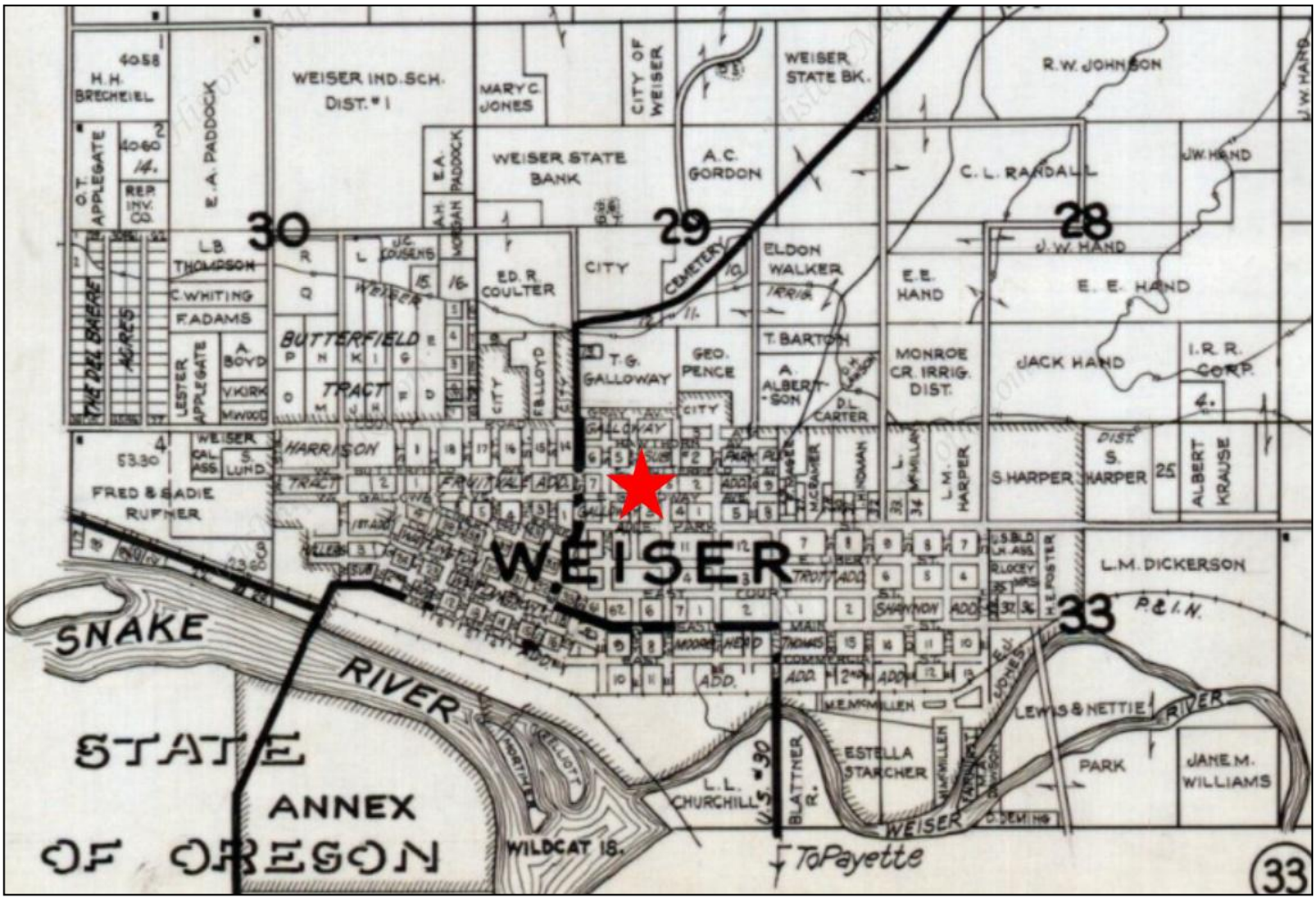


Figure 9. Historical Image

Original Weiser High School, Drawing by J. E. Tourtellotte and Company, 1904.
Source: ISHS Archives.

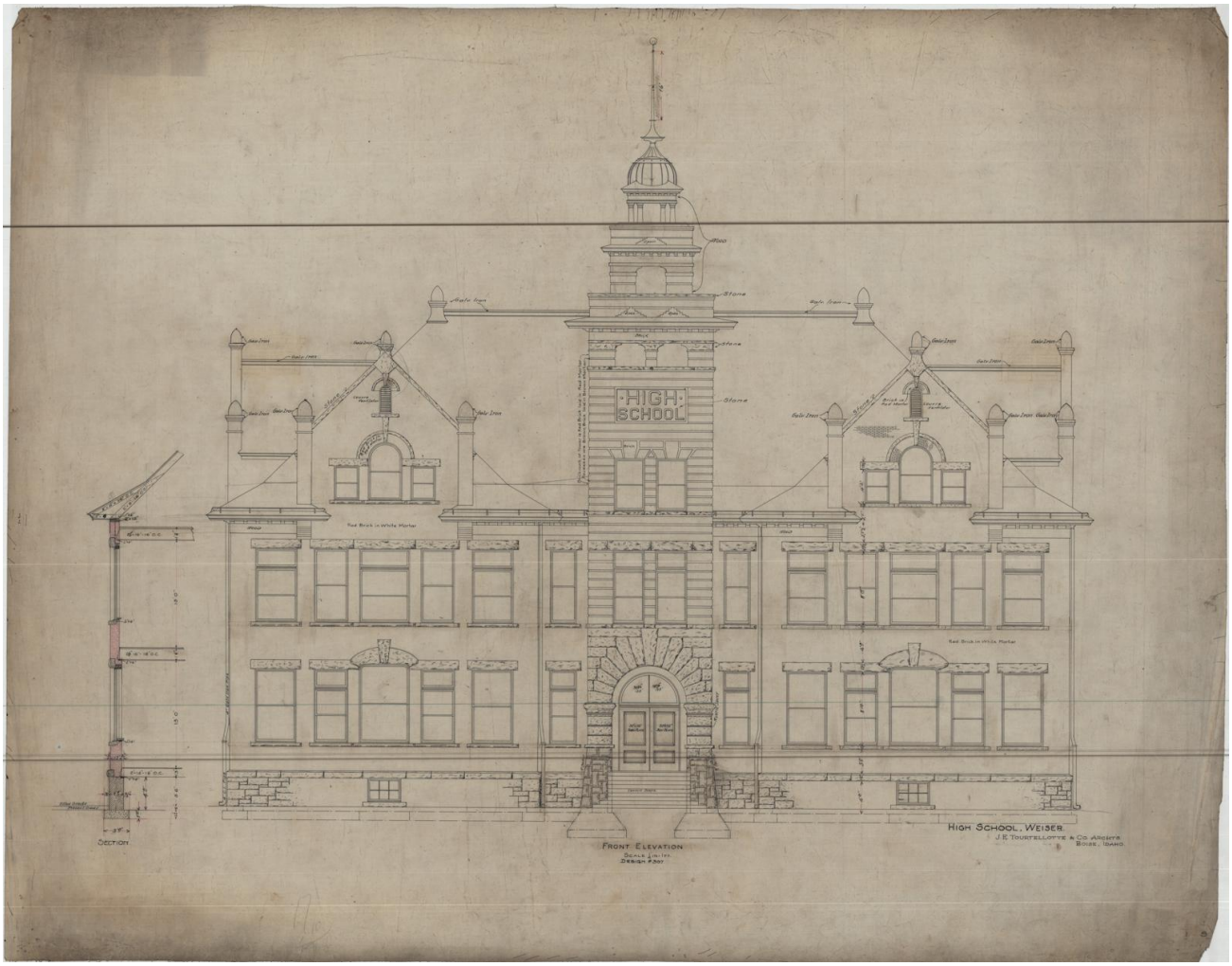


Figure 10. Historical Image
The student body standing in front of Weiser High School, ca. 1906-1908.
Source: Snake River Heritage Museum, via Facebook post dated Oct. 9, 2024.

Figure 11. Historical Image
Weiser High School, after the removal of the third story and tower, undated.
Source: Snake River Heritage Museum, via Facebook post dated May 16, 2025.

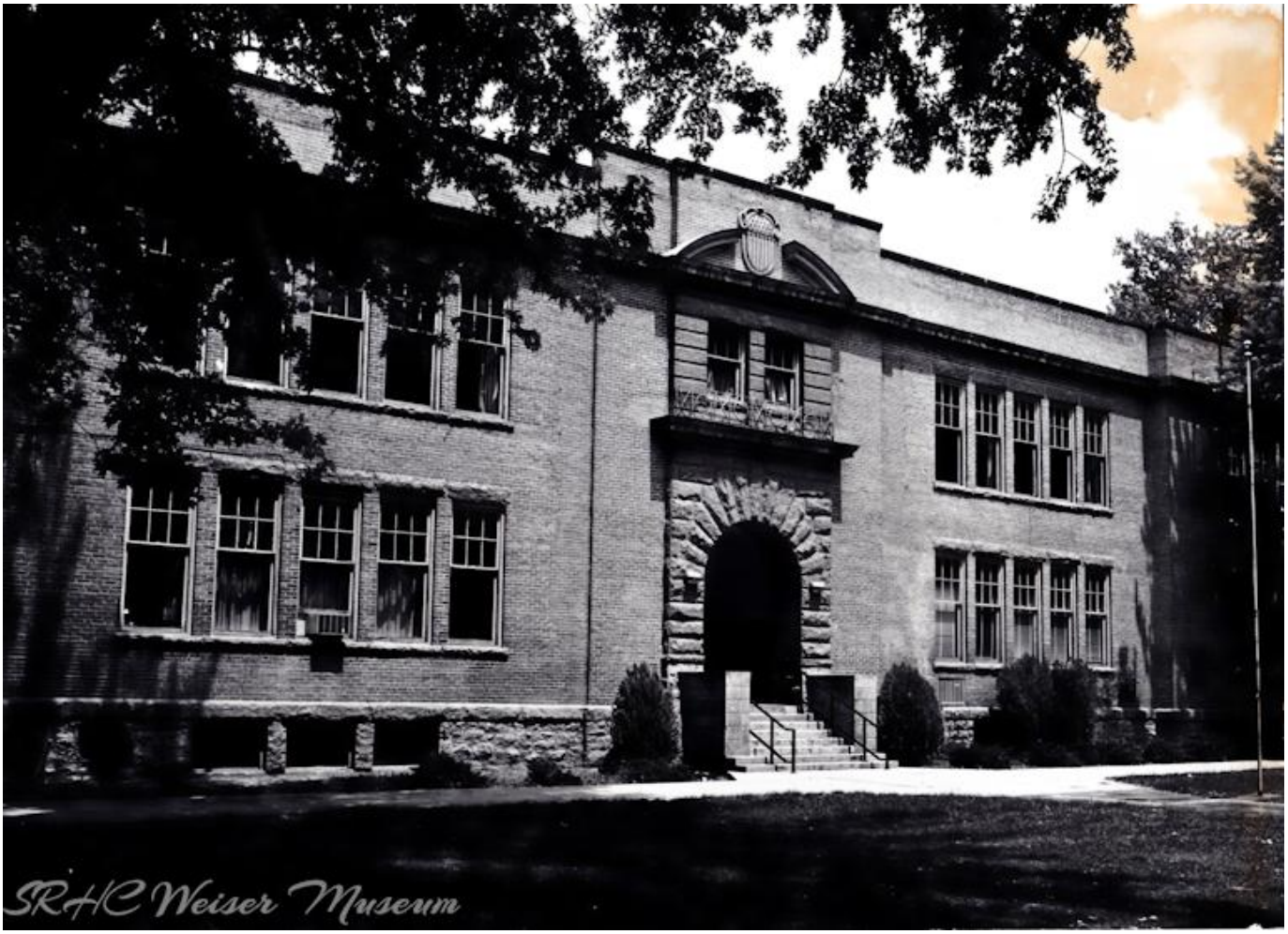


Figure 12. Historical Image
Tourtellotte and Hummel Architects rendering of Weiser High School Gymnasium & Auditorium, ca. 1936.
Source: ISHS Archives

Figure 13. Historical Image
Photograph, Weiser High School Gymnasium & Auditorium, 1939.
Source: Living New Deal website; photo source: National Archives Record Group 135

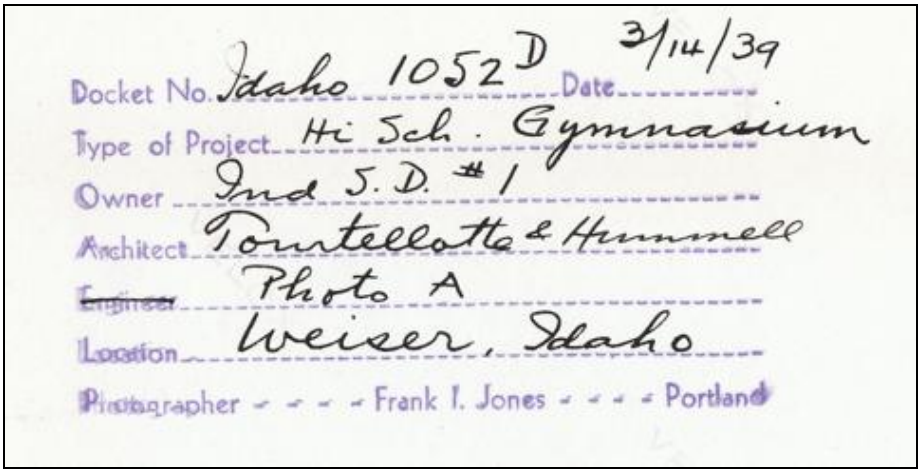

Docket No. Idaho 1052 D Date 3/14/39
Type of Project Hi Sch. Gymnasium
Owner Ind S.D. #1
Architect Tourtellotte & Hummell
~~Engineer~~ Photo A
Location Weiser, Idaho
Photographer - - - - Frank I. Jones - - - - Portland

Figure 14. Historical Image
Photograph, Weiser High School Gymnasium & Auditorium, undated.
Source: Snake River Heritage Museum, 2013.00.256.

Figure 15. Historical Image
Photograph, Students standing in front of Weiser High School Gymnasium & Auditorium, 1947.
Source: Snake River Heritage Museum, 2023.507.33.

Figure 16. Historical Image
Aerial photograph of Weiser, view south, ca. 1970.
Source: Snake River Heritage Museum, via Facebook post dated Jan. 26, 2024.

Figure 17. Foundation & Basement Plan, Tourtellotte and Hummel Architects, undated. Source: ISHS Archives.

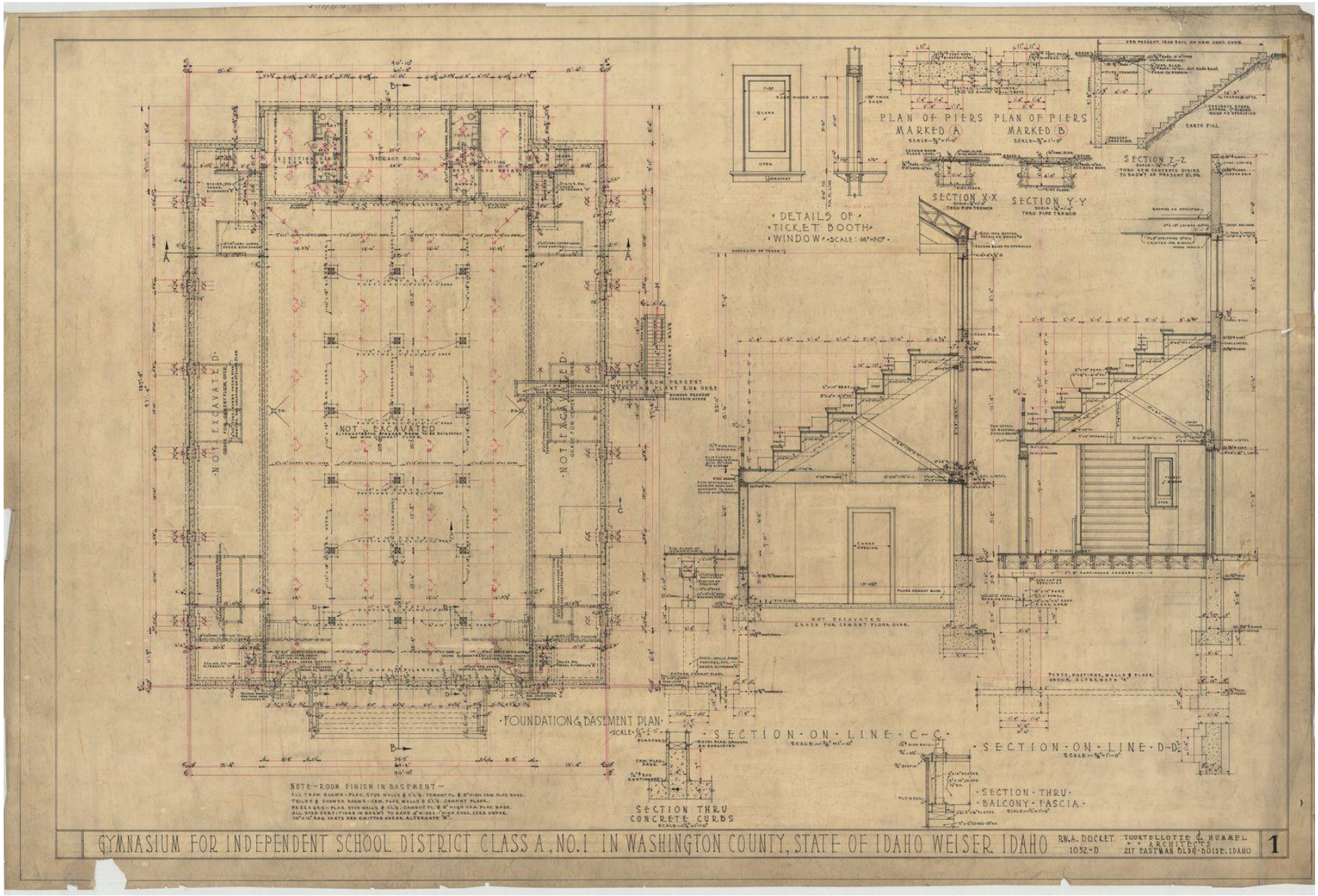


Figure 18. First Floor & Balcony Floor Plans, Tourtellotte and Hummel Architects, undated. Source: ISHS Archives.

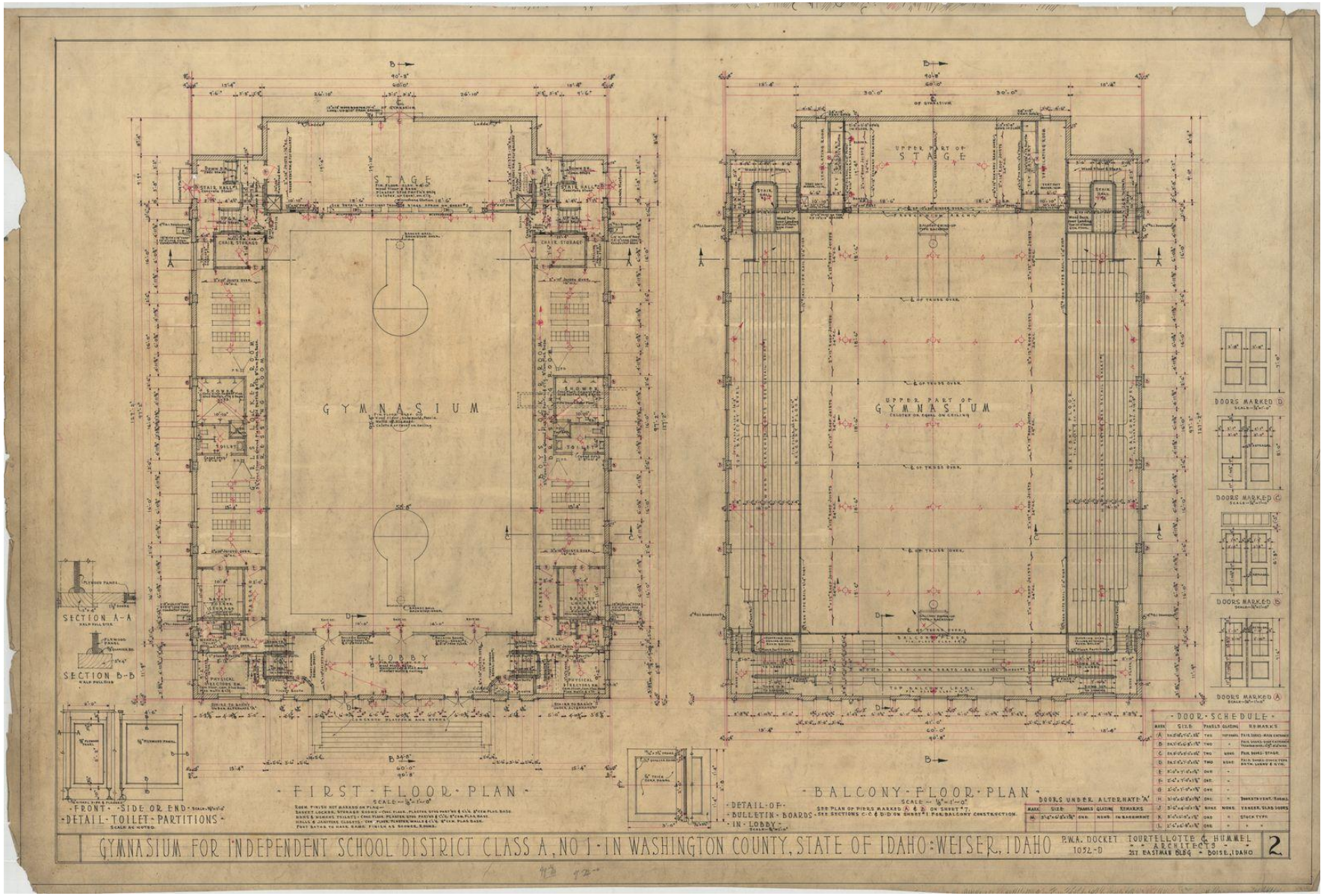


Figure 19. Rear/North & Right/East Elevations, Tourtellotte and Hummel Architects, undated. Source: ISHS Archives.

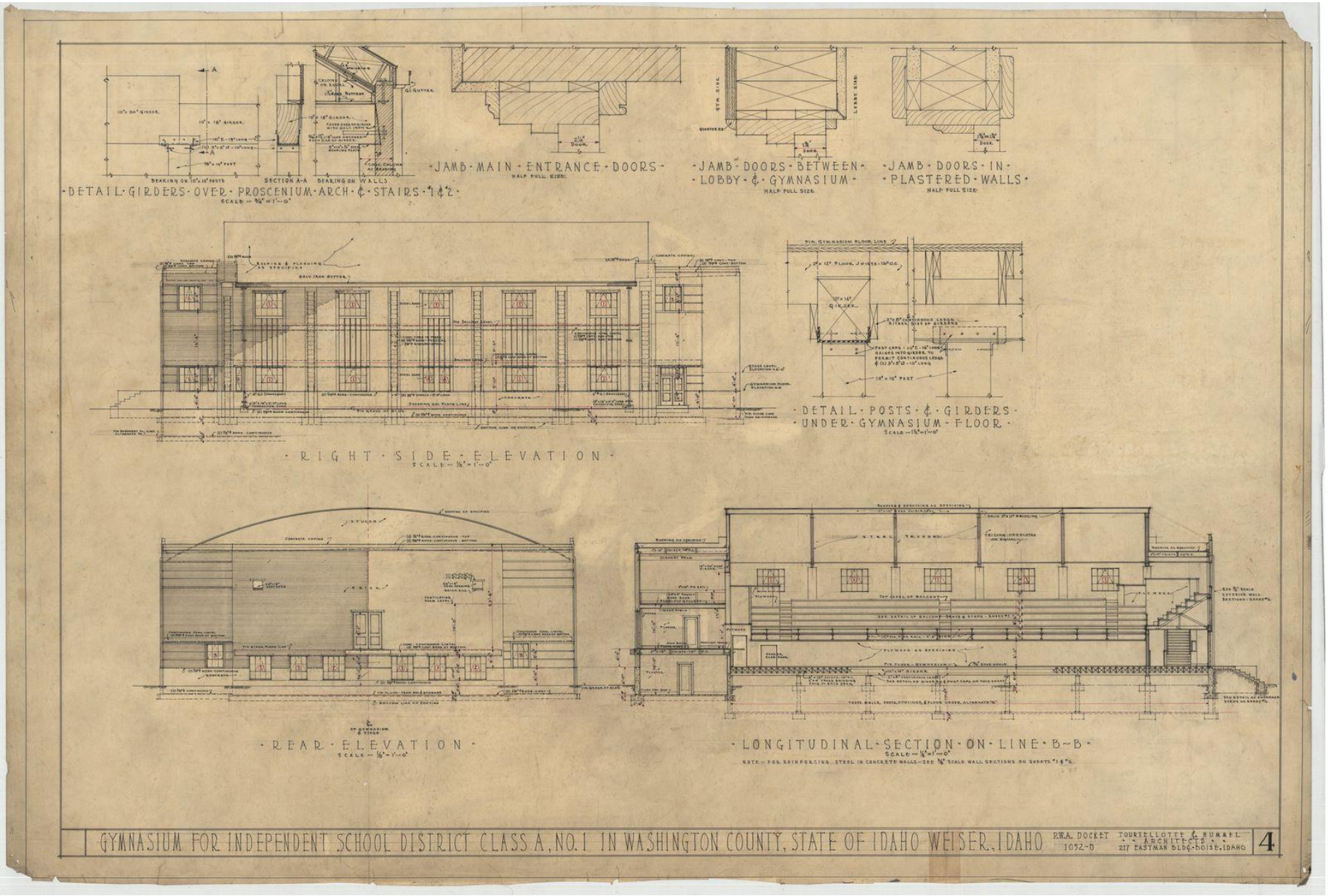


Figure 20. Front/South & Left/West Elevations, Tourtellotte and Hummel Architects, undated. Source: ISHS Archives.

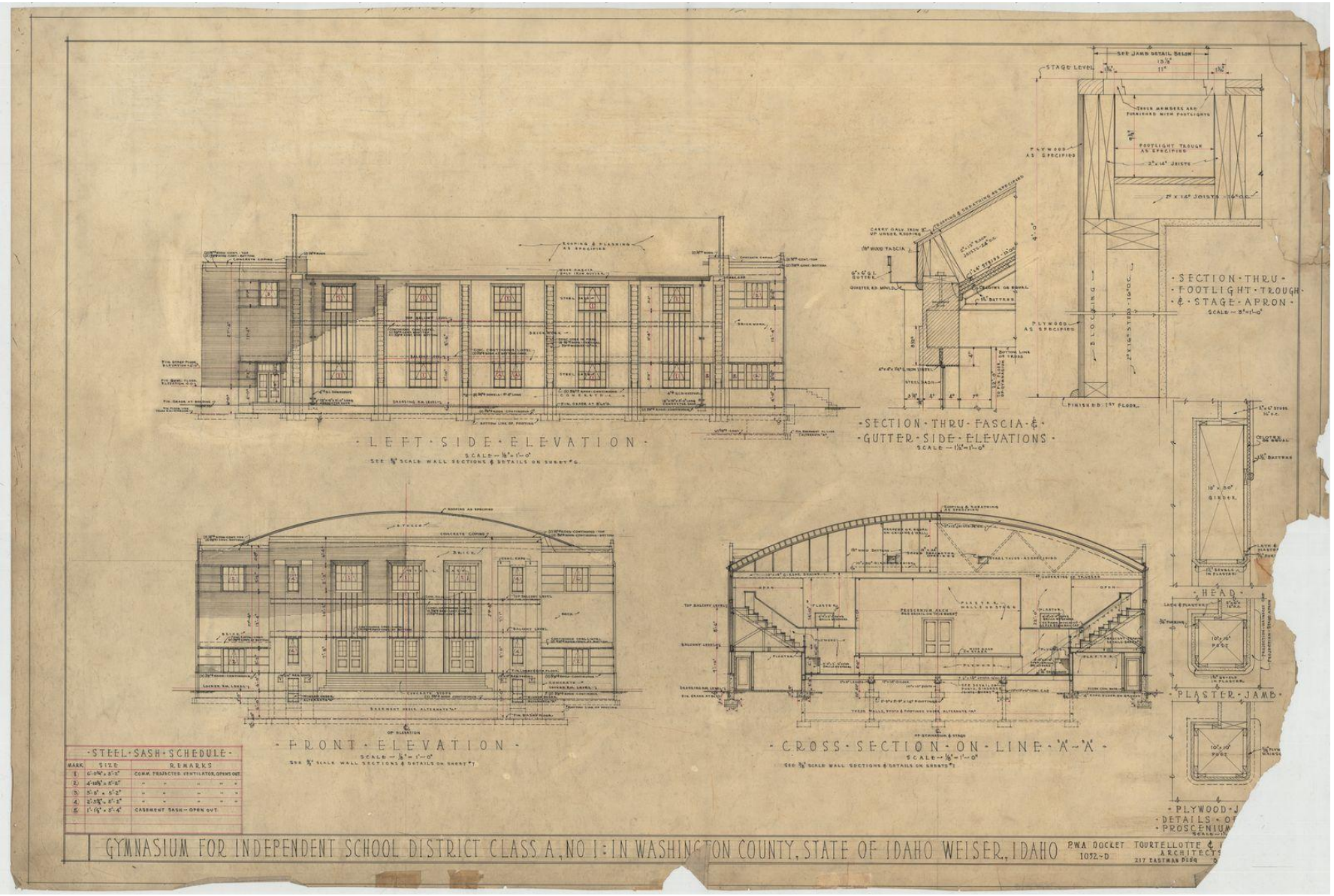
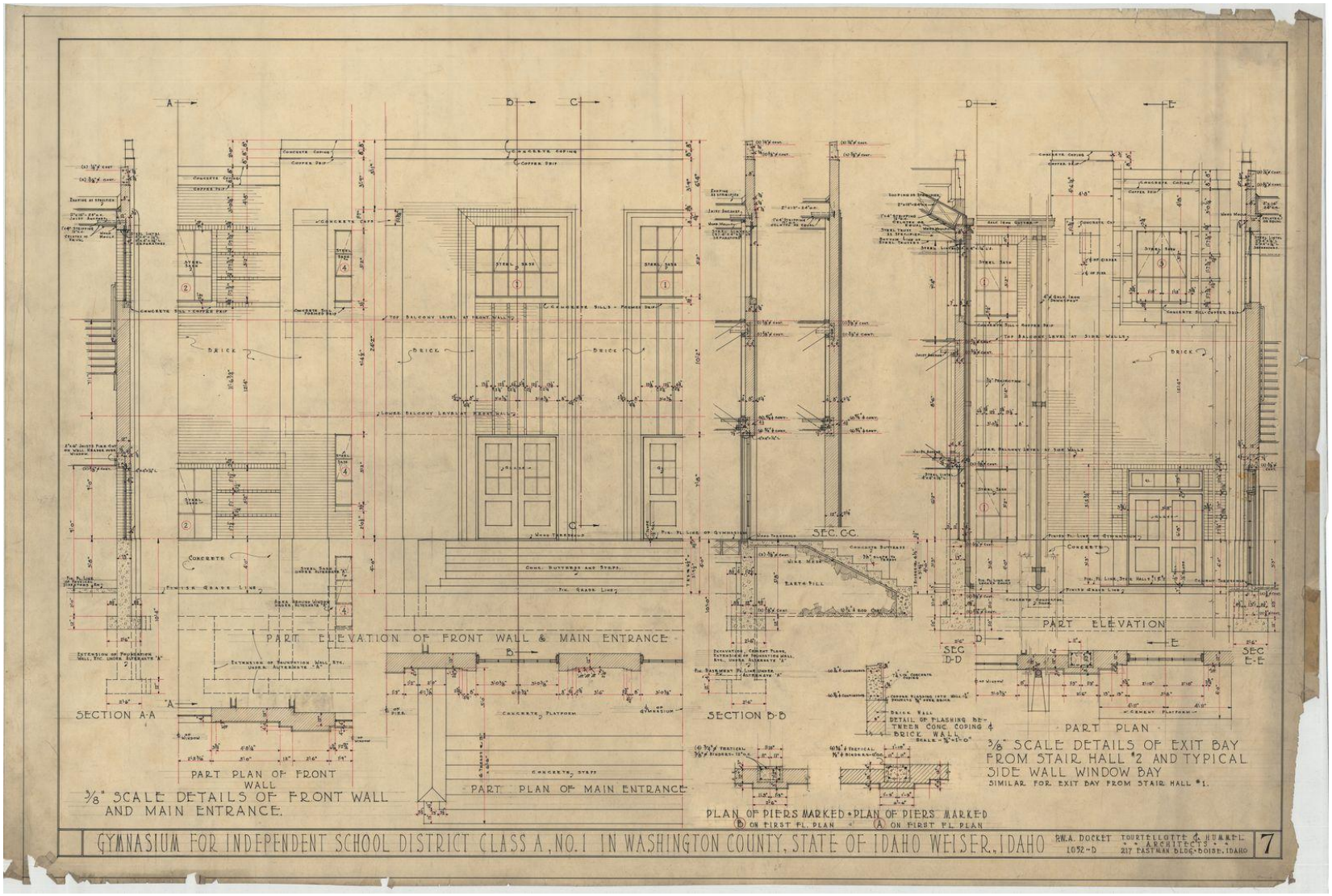


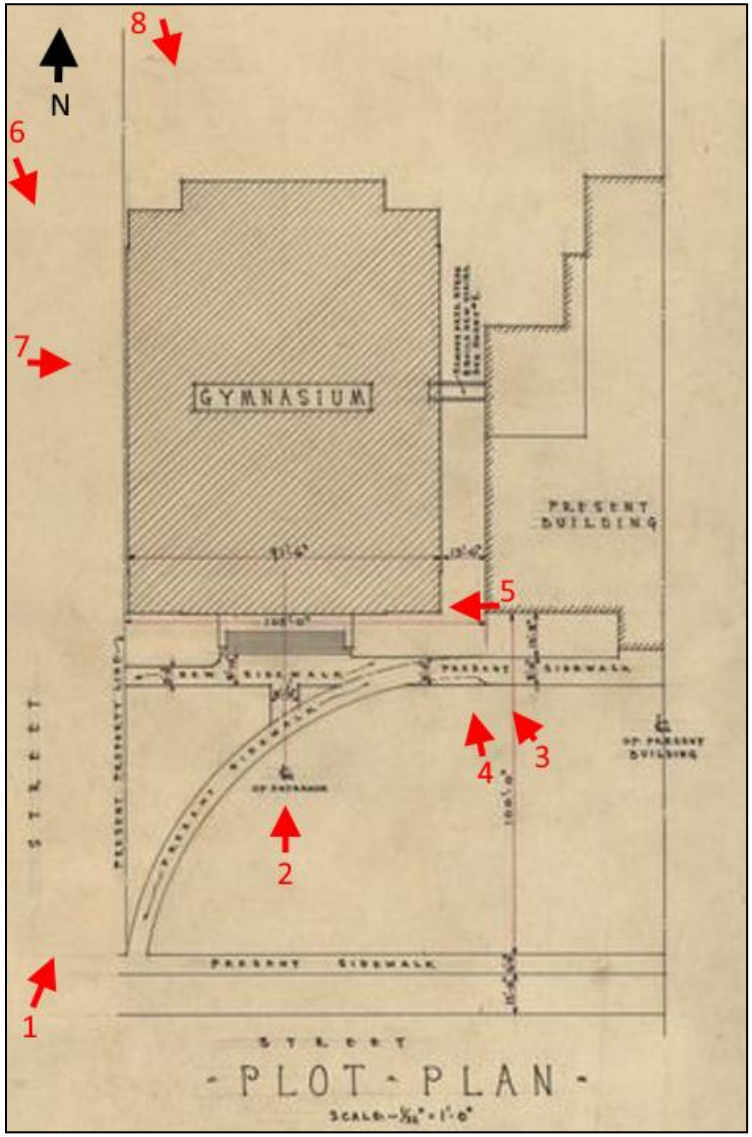
Figure 21. Front/South Wall & Main Entrance Details, Tourtellotte and Hummel Architects, undated. Source: ISHS Archives.



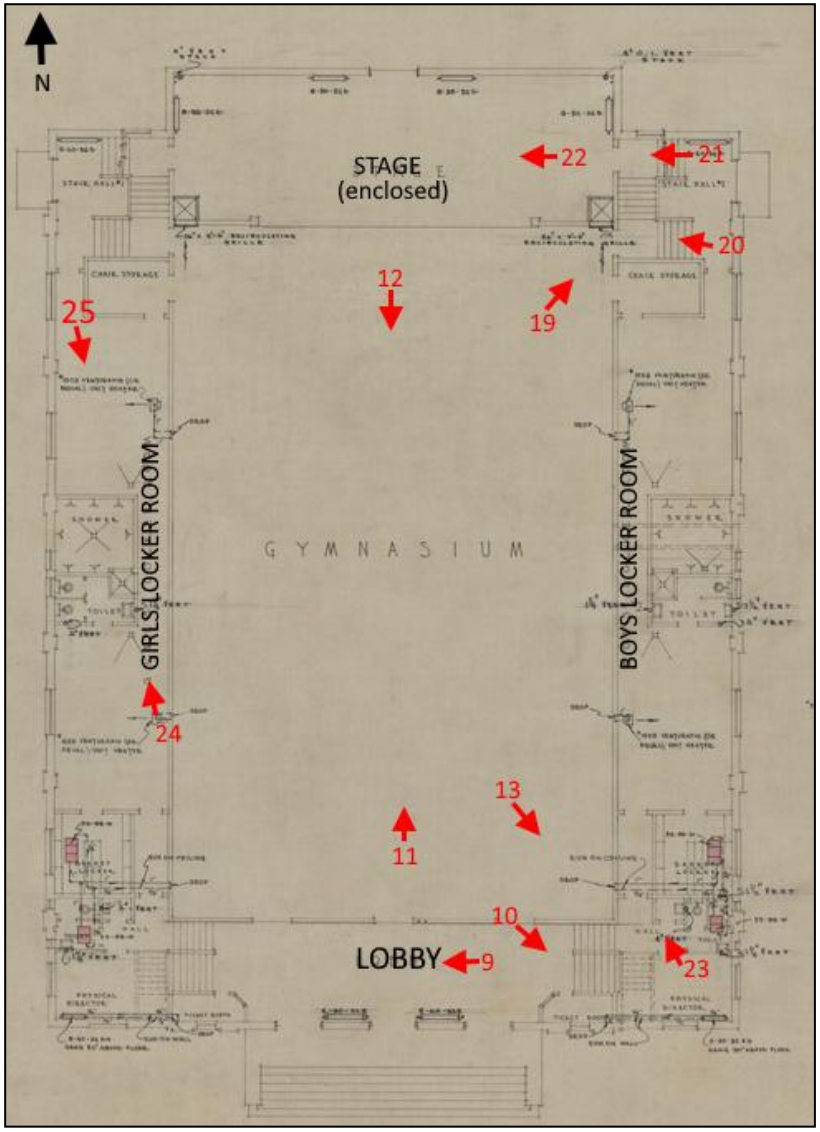
CURRENT PHOTOGRAPH DIRECTIONS

Figures 22-23. Current Photograph Directions

Exterior photos

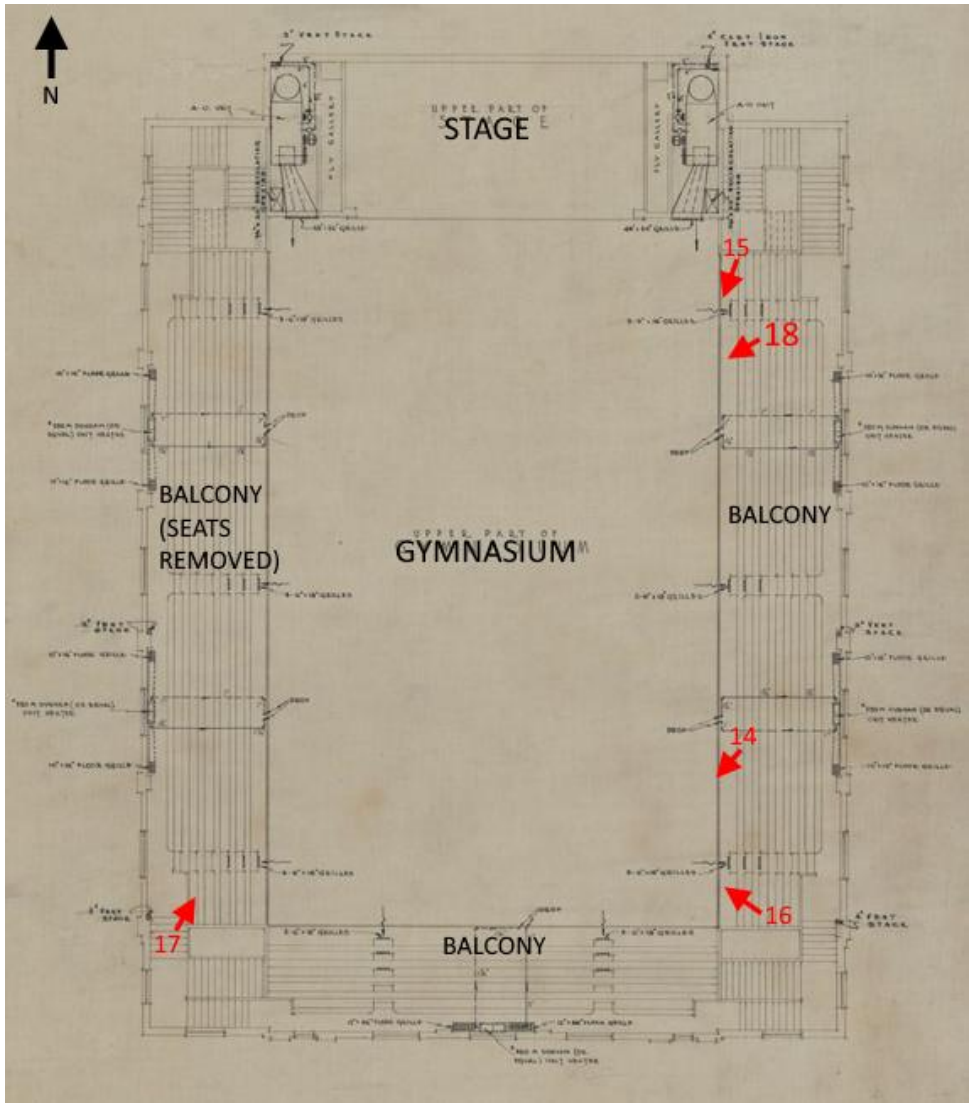


Main-level photos



Figures 24-25 Current Photograph Directions

Balcony level photos



Basement-level photos

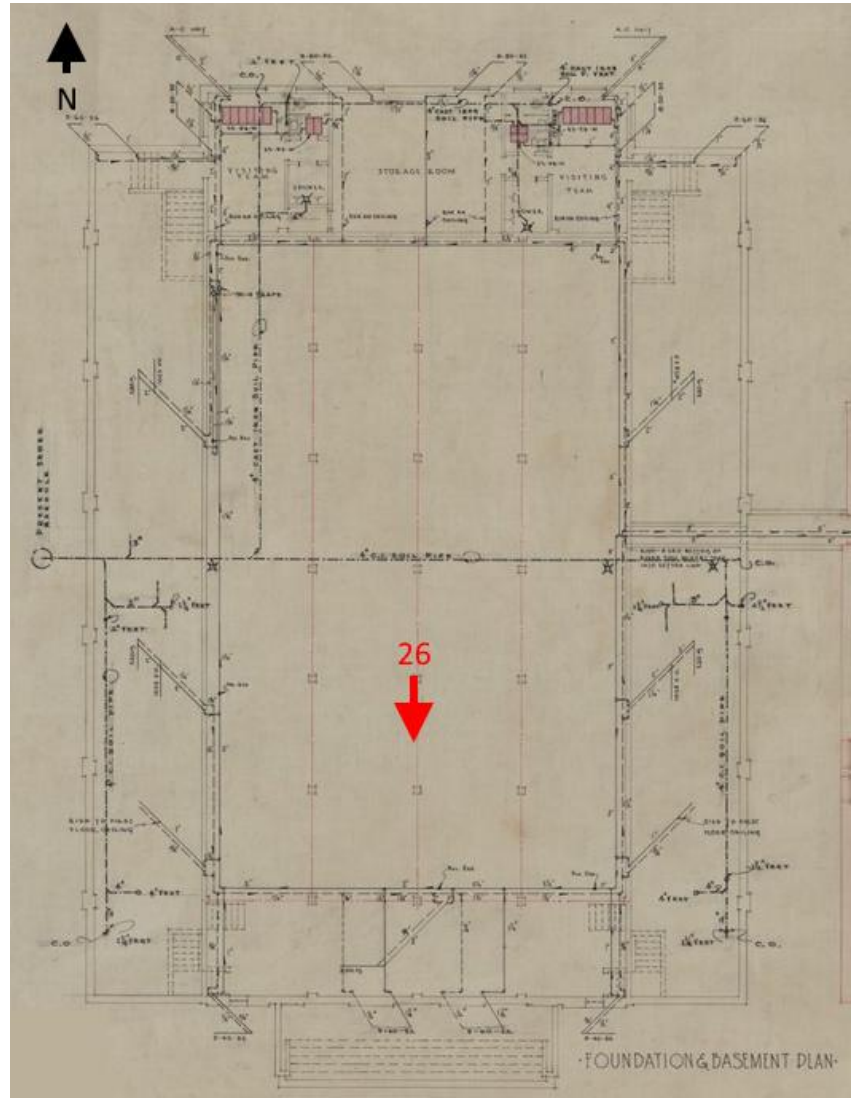


Photo 1 of 26. ID_Washington_WeiserHighSchoolGymnasium-Auditorium_0001
View of primary south elevation, camera facing northeast

Photo 2 of 26. ID_Washington_WeiserHighSchoolGymnasium-Auditorium_0002
View of primary south elevation, camera facing north

Photo 3 of 26. ID_Washington_WeiserHighSchoolGymnasium-Auditorium_0003
View of primary south and east elevations, camera facing northwest

Photo 4 of 26. ID_Washington_WeiserHighSchoolGymnasium-Auditorium_0004
View of east side elevation with adjacent middle school building at left, camera facing north

Photo 5 of 26. ID_Washington_WeiserHighSchoolGymnasium-Auditorium_0005
View of covered window at southeast corner, camera facing west

Photo 6 of 26. ID_Washington_WeiserHighSchoolGymnasium-Auditorium_0006
View of west elevation, camera facing southeast

Photo 7 of 26. ID_Washington_WeiserHighSchoolGymnasium-Auditorium_0007
View of brick detail on west elevation, camera facing east

Photo 8 of 26. ID_Washington_WeiserHighSchoolGymnasium-Auditorium_0008
View of rear north elevation, camera facing south

Photo 9 of 26. ID_Washington_WeiserHighSchoolGymnasium-Auditorium_0009
View of lobby, camera facing west

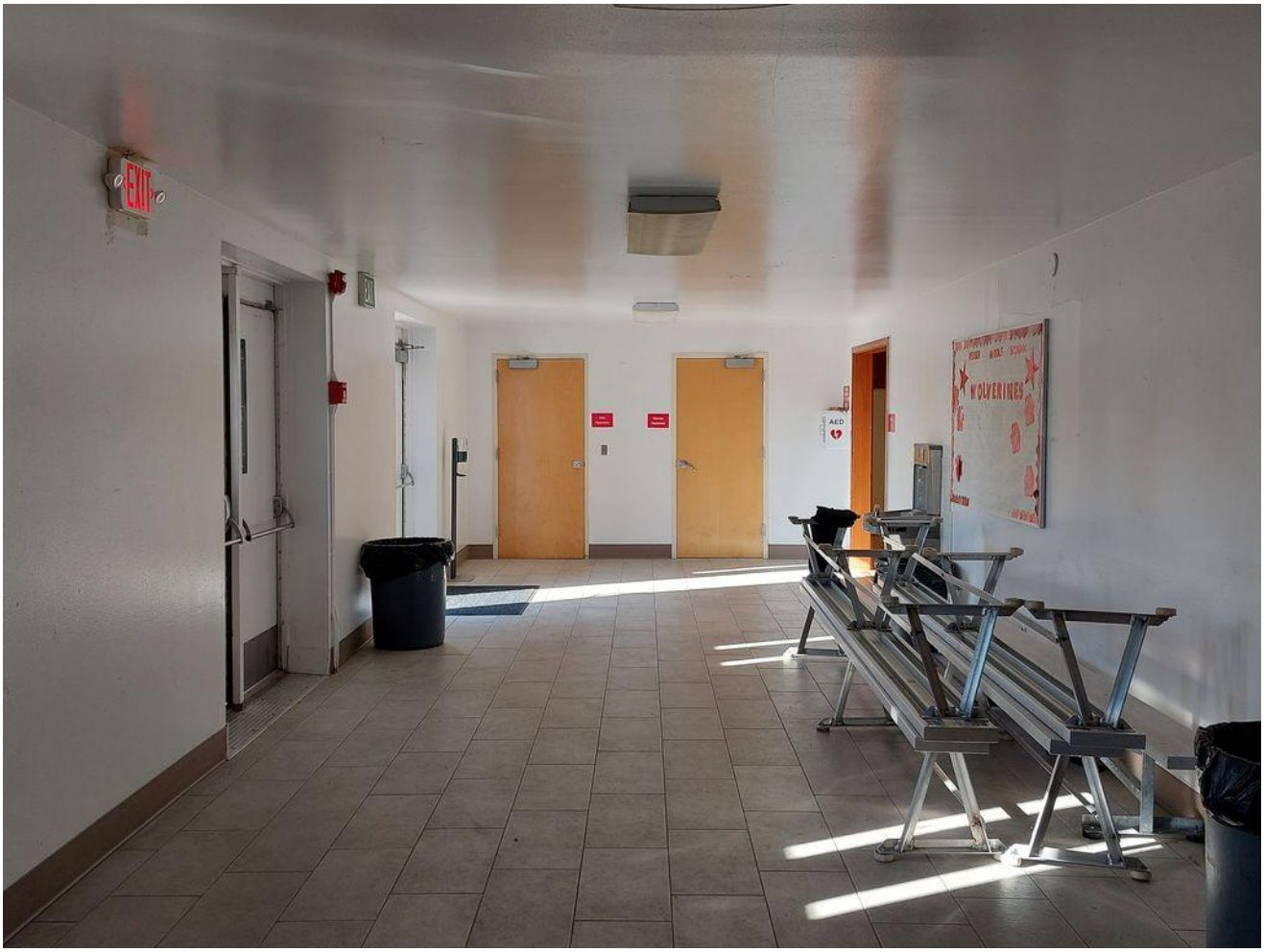


Photo 10 of 26. ID_Washington_WeiserHighSchoolGymnasium-Auditorium_0010
View of east lobby staircase and door to ticket booth, camera facing east

Photo 11 of 26. ID_Washington_WeiserHighSchoolGymnasium-Auditorium_0011
View of gymnasium and enclosed stage at far end, camera facing north

Photo 12 of 26. ID_Washington_WeiserHighSchoolGymnasium-Auditorium_0012
View of gymnasium and balcony seating, camera facing south

Photo 13 of 26. ID_Washington_WeiserHighSchoolGymnasium-Auditorium_0013
View of southeast corner of gymnasium, camera facing southeast

Photo 14 of 26. ID_Washington_WeiserHighSchoolGymnasium-Auditorium_0014
View of balcony seating above the lobby, camera facing southwest

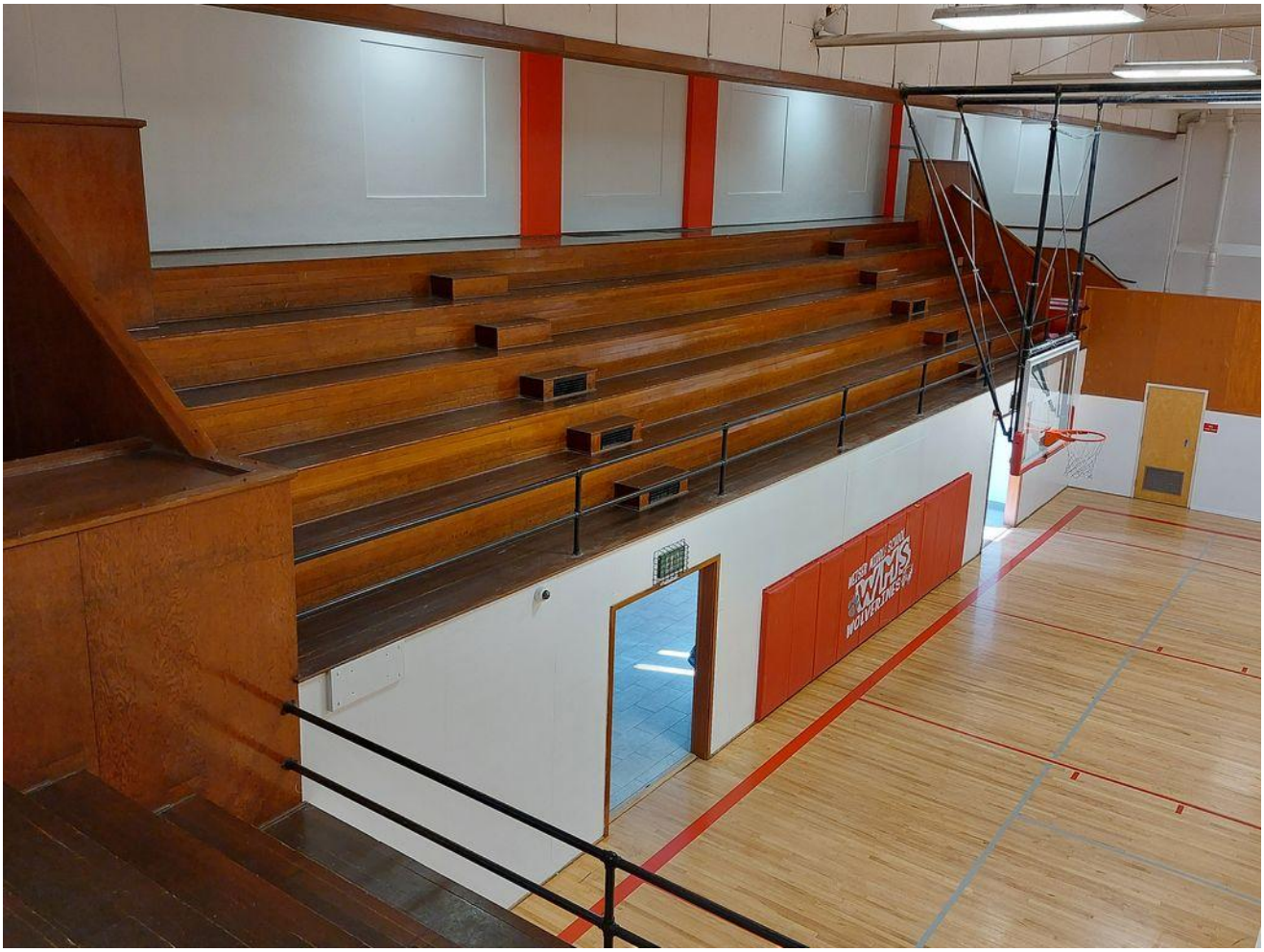


Photo 15 of 26. ID_Washington_WeiserHighSchoolGymnasium-Auditorium_0015
View of gymnasium and roof structure from balcony, camera facing southwest

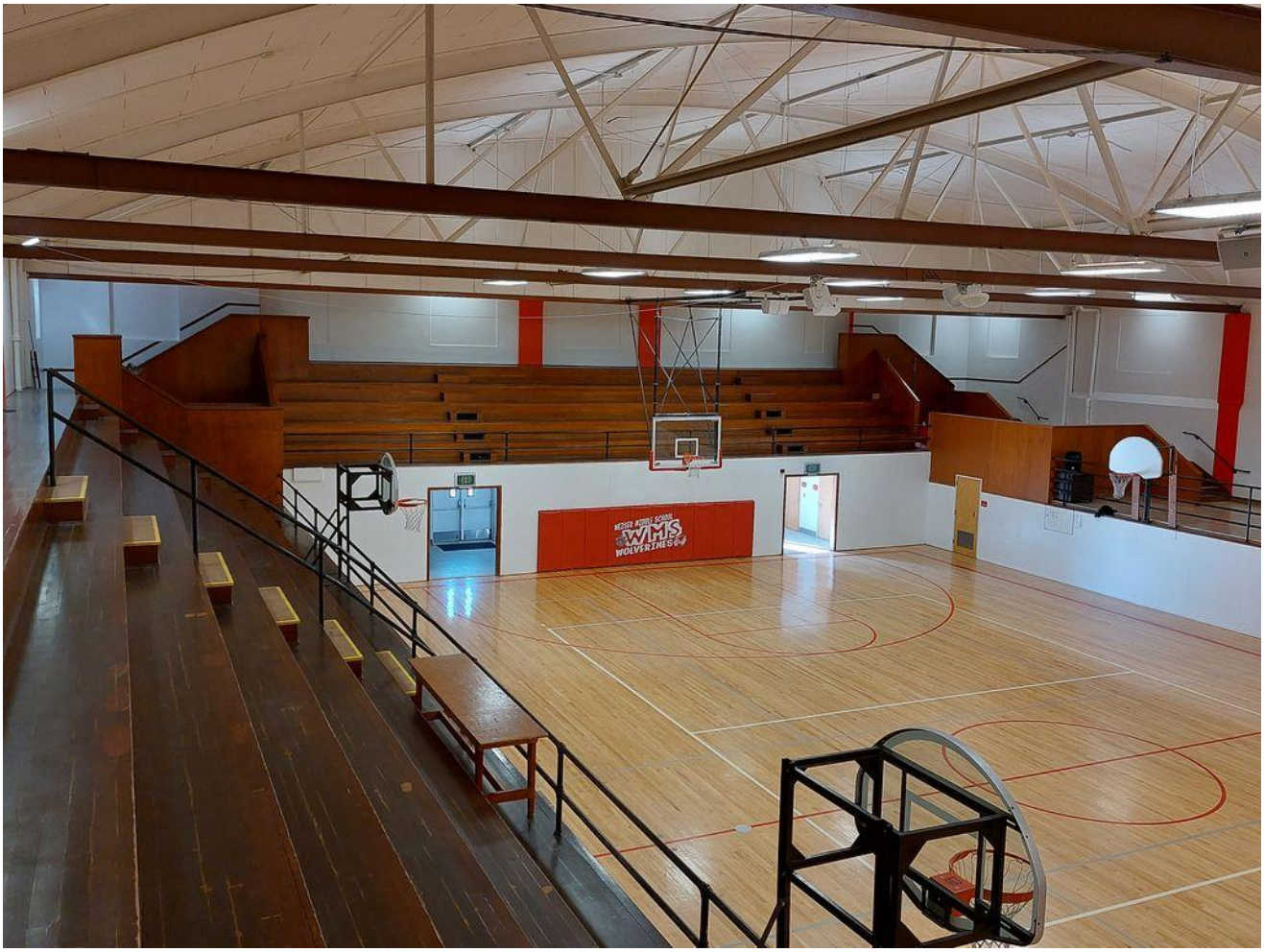


Photo 16 of 26. ID_Washington_WeiserHighSchoolGymnasium-Auditorium_0016
View of gymnasium showing removed balcony seating on west side, camera facing northwest

Photo 17 of 26. ID_Washington_WeiserHighSchoolGymnasium-Auditorium_0017
View of west balcony where seating has been removed, camera facing north

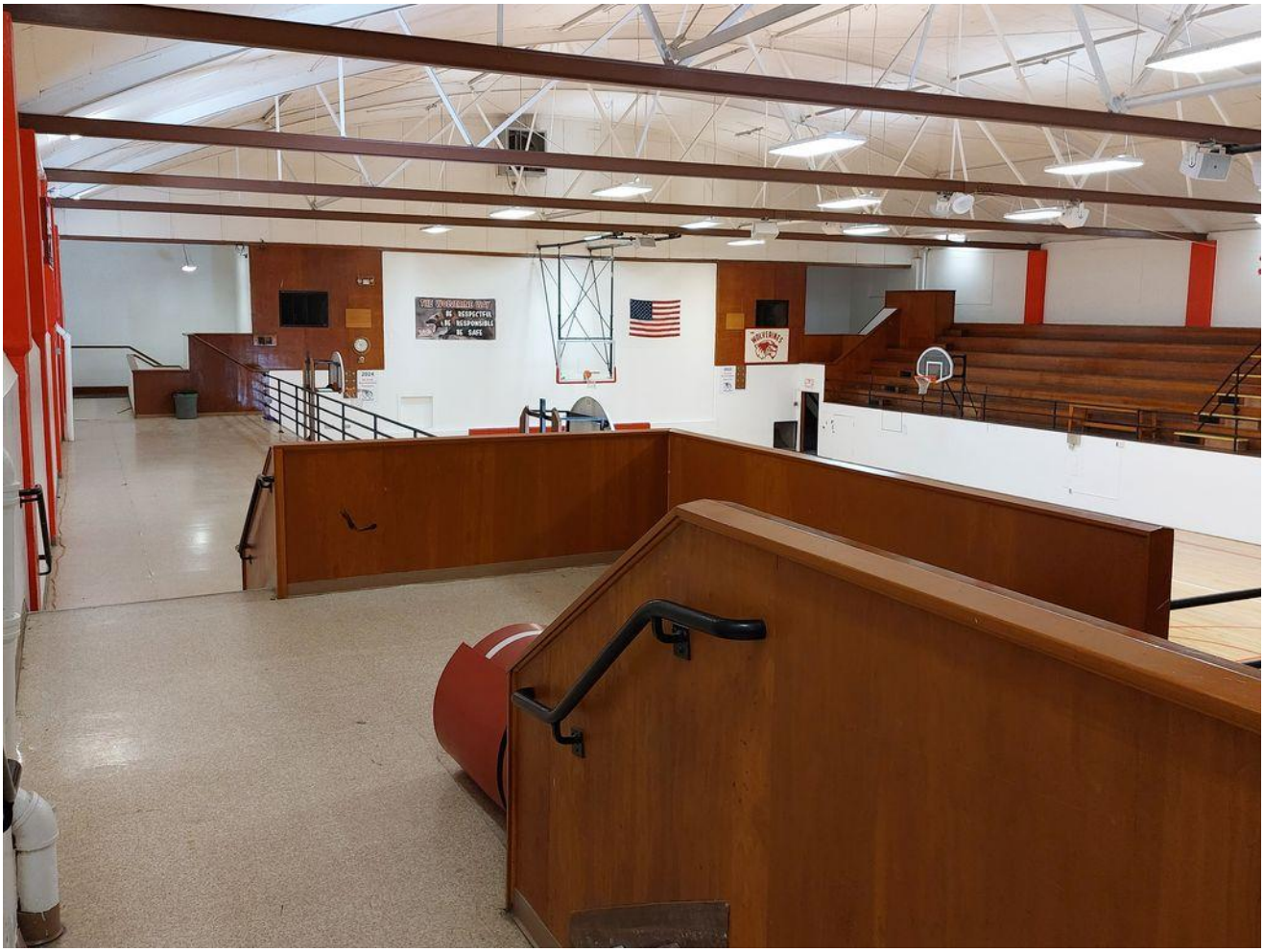


Photo 18 of 26. ID_Washington_WeiserHighSchoolGymnasium-Auditorium_0018
View of steel arch trusses supporting the roof, camera facing southwest

Photo 19 of 26. ID_Washington_WeiserHighSchoolGymnasium-Auditorium_0019
View of northeast corner of gymnasium showing door to stairs, camera facing northeast

Photo 20 of 26. ID_Washington_WeiserHighSchoolGymnasium-Auditorium_0020
View of door to gymnasium at the northeast corner, camera facing west

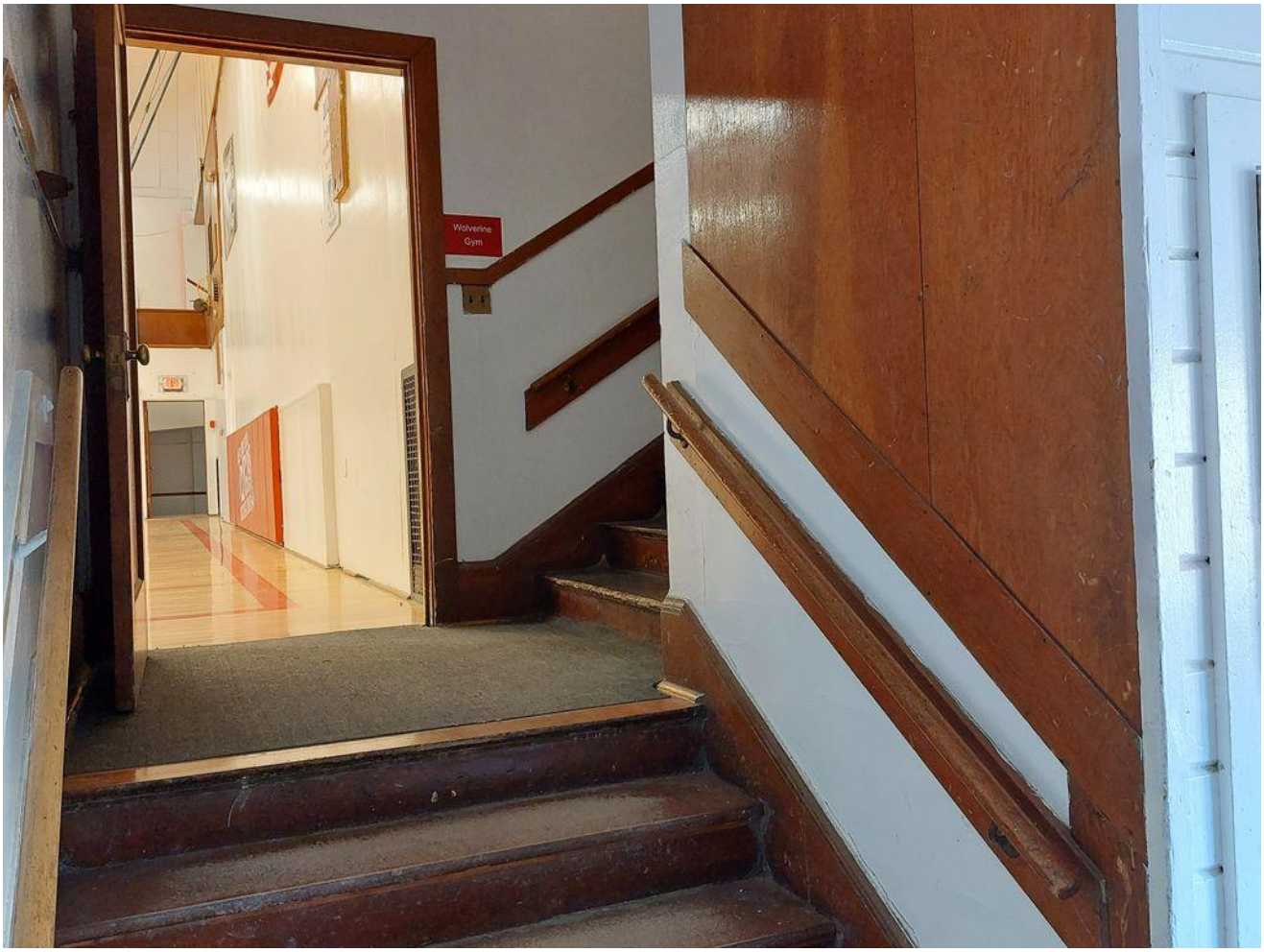


Photo 21 of 26. ID_Washington_WeiserHighSchoolGymnasium-Auditorium_0021
View of staircase and doorway to the enclosed stage, camera facing west

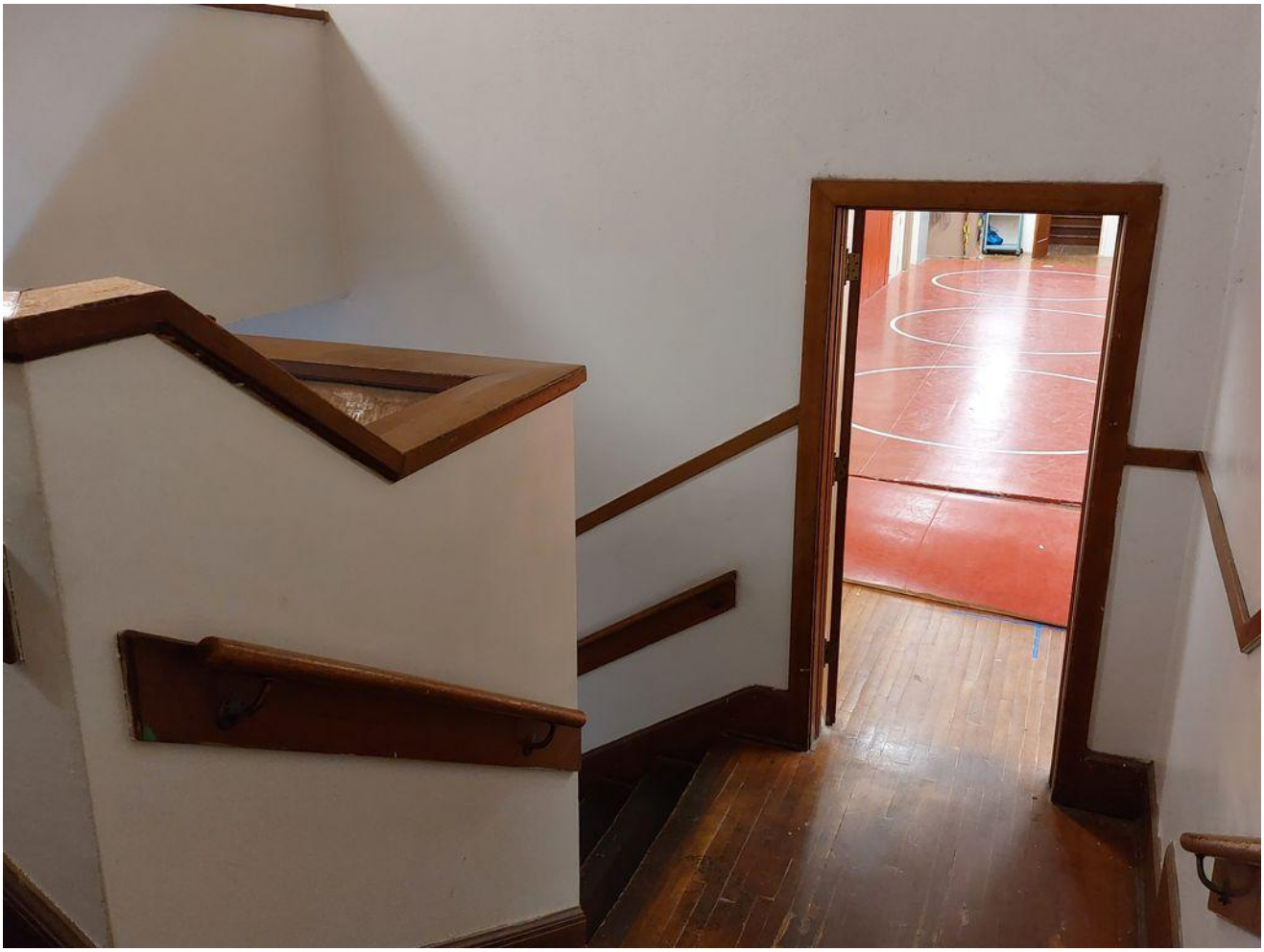


Photo 22 of 26. ID_Washington_WeiserHighSchoolGymnasium-Auditorium_0022
View of enclosed stage area and fly space, with auditorium at left, camera facing west

Photo 23 of 26. ID_Washington_WeiserHighSchoolGymnasium-Auditorium_0023
View from coach's office toward boys' locker room, camera facing northwest

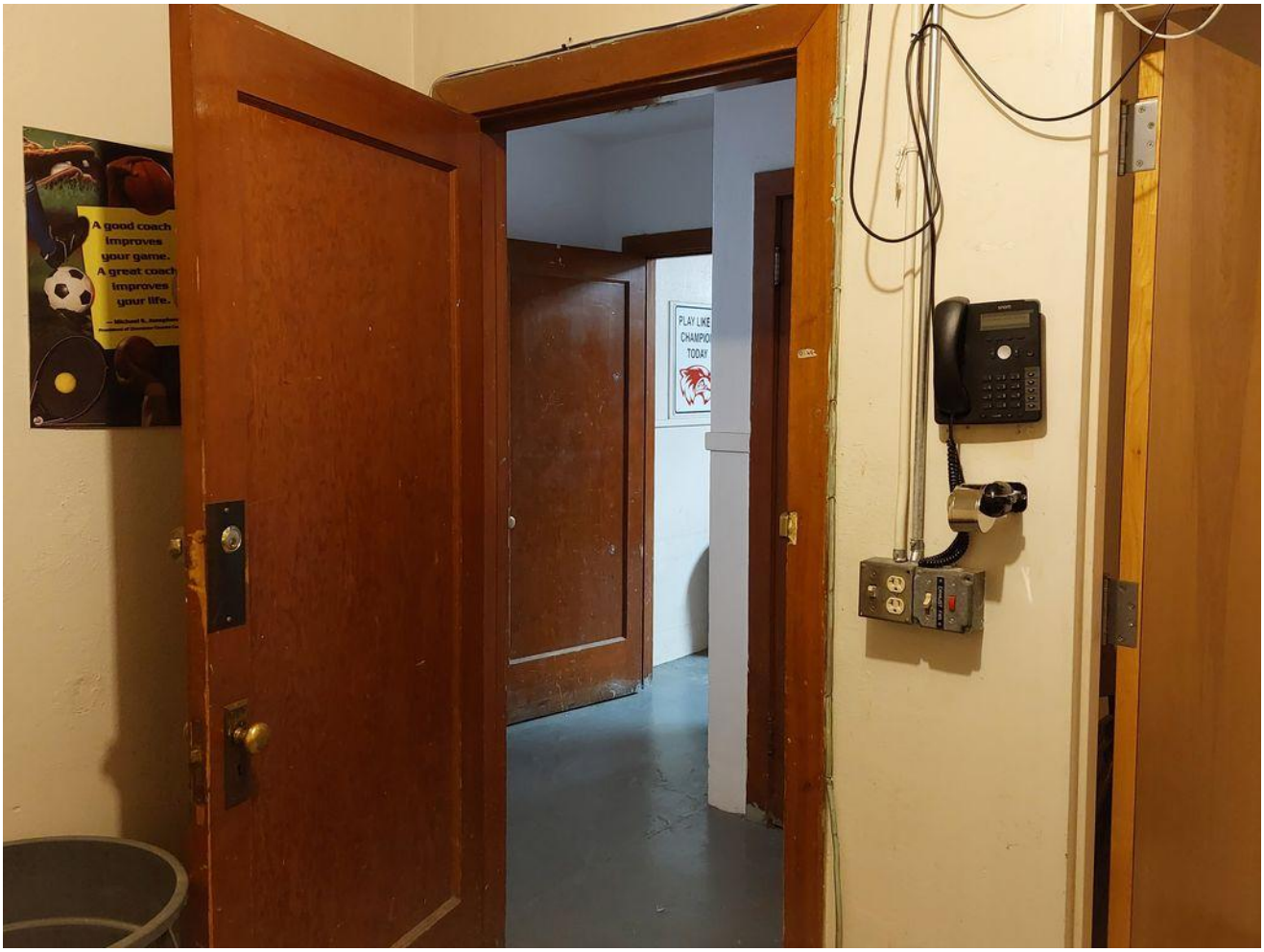


Photo 24 of 26. ID_Washington_WeiserHighSchoolGymnasium-Auditorium_0024
View inside girls' locker room, camera facing north

Photo 25 of 26. ID_Washington_WeiserHighSchoolGymnasium-Auditorium_0025
View inside girls' locker room showing an original bench, camera facing south

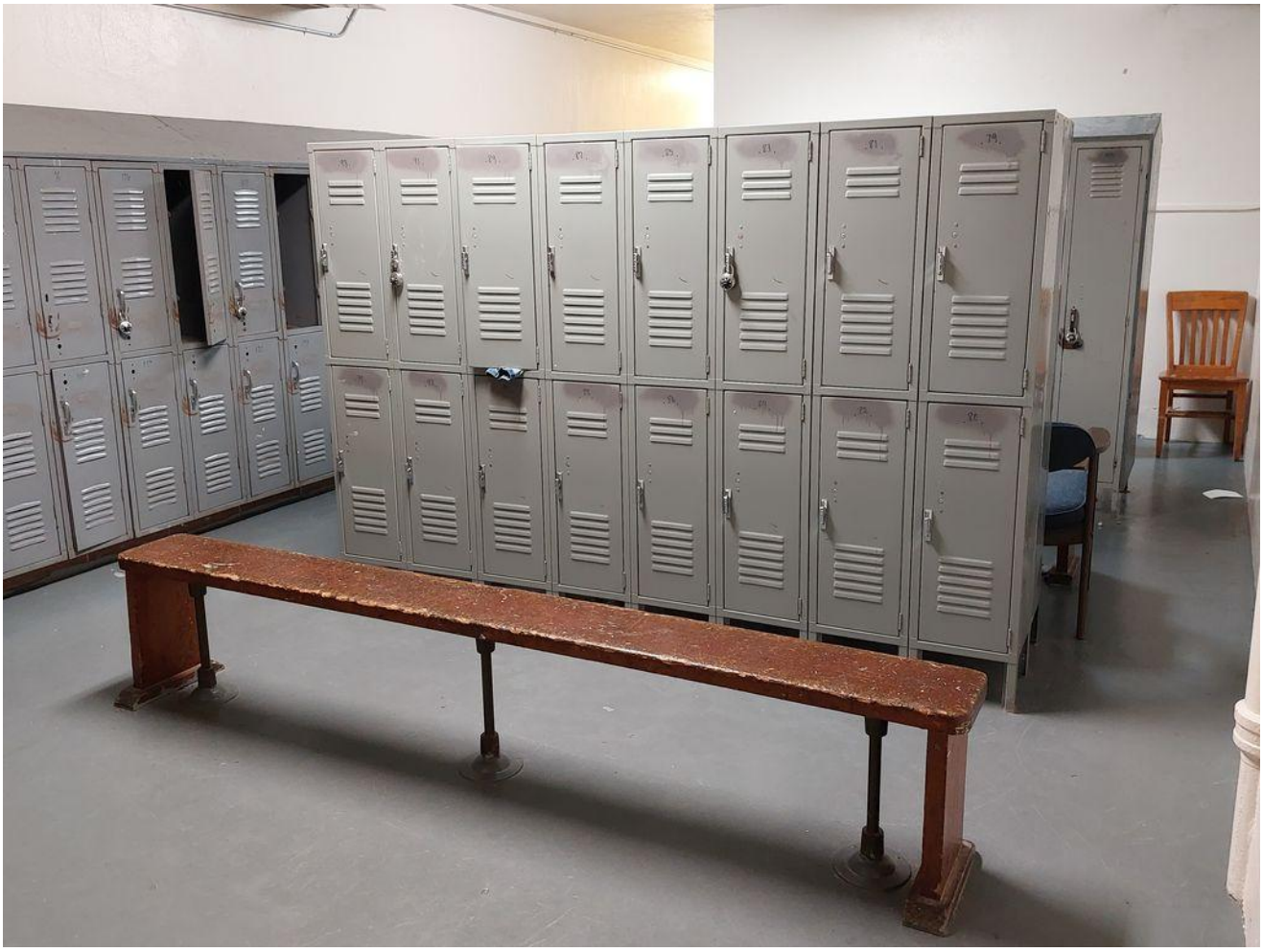
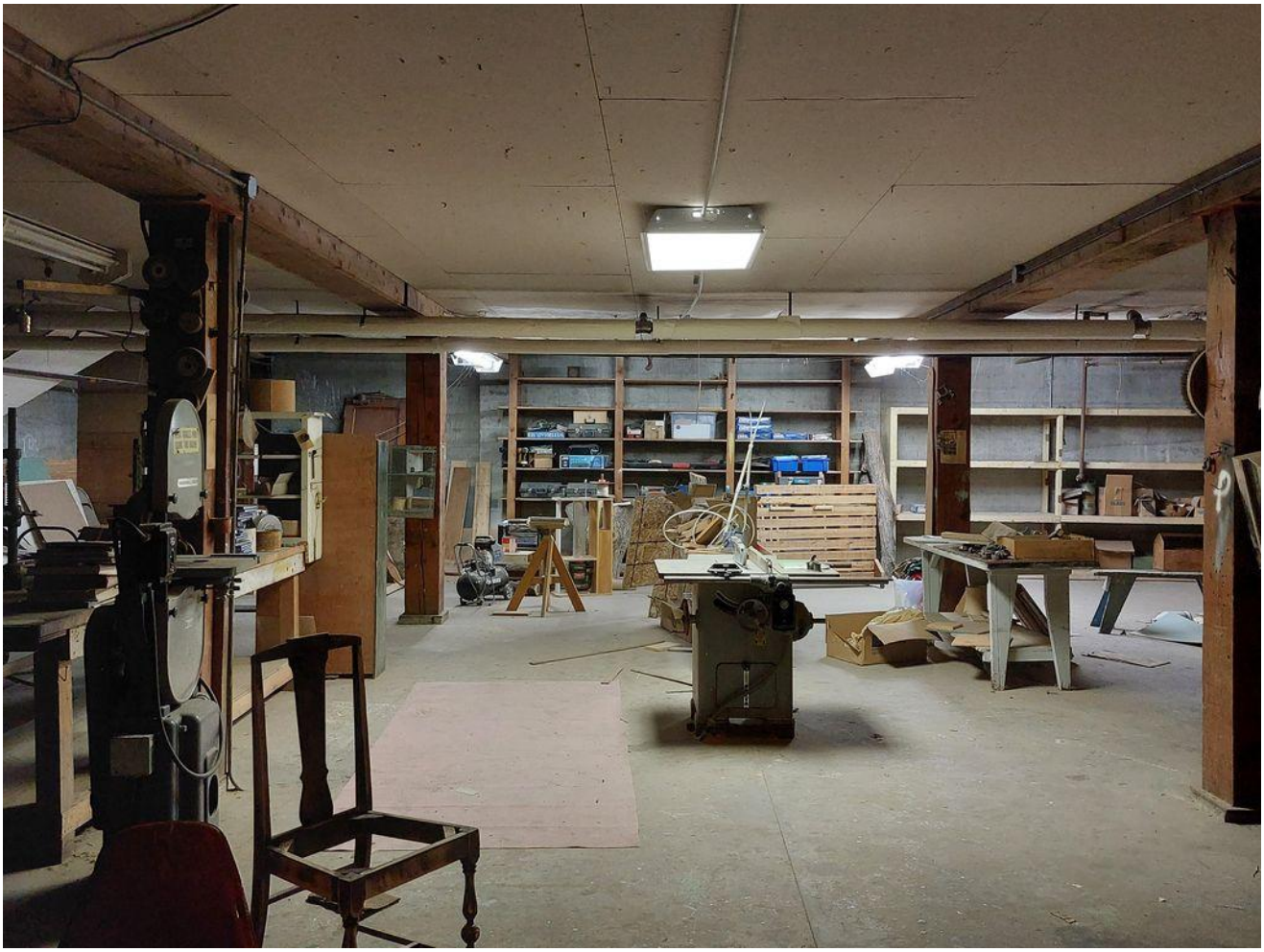



Photo 26 of 26. ID_Washington_WeiserHighSchoolGymnasium-Auditorium_0026
View of basement shop area, camera facing south