

U.K. - 6/17/98
NHP - 8/14/95

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an 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 entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name JOHN HANDLEY HIGH SCHOOL

other names/site number VDHR File No. 138-5001

2. Location

street & number 425 Handley Boulevard not for publication N/A

city or town Winchester vicinity N/A

state Virginia code VA county Winchester code 840 zip code 22601
(Independent City)

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 38 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

William E. Kuser July 1, 1998
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Virginia Department of Historic Resources
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

John Handley High School
Name of Property

City of Winchester, Virginia
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- 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
1	0	sites
0	2	structures
0	1	objects
2	3	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "NA" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Education: School

Recreation: Sports facility

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Education: School

Recreation: Sports facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Neoclassical Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Brick

roof Asphalt

other Wood

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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.)

- 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.
- 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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture
Education
Landscape Architecture

Period of Significance

1916 - 1923

Significant Dates

1921-1923

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

McCornack, W.R. - Architect

Olmsted Brothers - Landscape Architects

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Virginia Department of Historic Resources
2801 Kensington Avenue, Richmond, VA 23221

John Handley High School
Name of Property

City of Winchester, Virginia
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 40

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	17	743980	4340240
Zone	Easting	Northing	
2	17	744440	4340010
Zone	Easting	Northing	

3	17	744320	4339800
Zone	Easting	Northing	
4	17	743680	4340080
Zone	Easting	Northing	

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title 11th Grade Students of John Handley High School/DHR Staff (see continuation sheet #19)
organization John Handley High School date 4/15/98
street & number 425 Handley Boulevard telephone 540-662-3471
city or town Winchester state VA zip code 22601

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Handley Board of Trustees, The Handley Library
street & number 100 E. Piccadilly Street telephone 540-722-4888
city or town Winchester state VA zip code 22601

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. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Section number 7 Page 1

John Handley High School
City of Winchester, Virginia

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

John Handley High School is situated on a hill overlooking a broad park-like campus in a residential area southwest of the central business district of the city of Winchester, Virginia. Built 1921-1923, it is an impressive Neoclassical Revival brick building designed by Cleveland, Ohio, architect Walter R. McCornack. The large rectangular school features a two-story, hip-roofed central block topped by a balustraded deck from which rises a three-stage wooden cupola. The front is dominated by a hexastyle pedimented portico with Corinthian columns. Flanking the central portico are long one-story brick wings fronted by Ionic-columned loggias. A wide brick-paved terrace, supported by brick arcades below, extends beyond the portico and classroom wings. More recent additions have been confined to the rear of the original school building. The school grounds, a contributing site, were designed by the nationally known landscape architecture firm of Olmsted Brothers of Brookline, Massachusetts in 1916. An athletic field, located in front of the school, is situated in a bowl-like area with an oval track and two noncontributing stadiums; the south stadium was built in 1973 and the north stadium in 1981. Beyond the athletic field is an extensive grassy lawn flanked by double rows of oak trees. Facing Valley Avenue at the eastern extent of the lawn is a granite monument erected in 1968 to the memory of Judge John Handley, the school's benefactor.

ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

Located on a 40-acre tract of land bounded by Valley Avenue to the east, Jefferson Street to the south, Tennyson Avenue to the west, and Handley Boulevard to the north, John Handley High School is perched on a hill near the western limits of the property. The imposing Neoclassical Revival building overlooks a park-like campus that extends several hundred yards east to Valley Avenue. Mostly a grassy lawn, the campus is shaded by double rows of oak trees that frame an impressive vista terminating in the west with the school building. The grounds were designed by Olmsted Brothers, a nationally known landscape architecture firm in Brookline, Massachusetts. The firm was hired by the Handley Board of Trustees to develop a landscape plan for the school in 1916.

John Handley High School has little changed since it was completed in 1923. Except for interior modifications and modern rear additions, the school building retains much of its original integrity. Architect Walter R. McCornack's original renderings of the school currently hang in the principal's office (Photo 3). A comparison of the renderings and the school's appearance today (Photo 4) reveals that both are nearly identical.

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John Handley High School
City of Winchester, Virginia

The school is a combination of architectural elements from the Neoclassical Revival and the Colonial Revival; both were popular styles for public buildings in the 1920s. The building's two-story, hip-roofed, stretcher-bond brick, central block has Colonial Revival details such as a deck-on-hip roof topped by a Chippendale-inspired balustrade and a three-stage wooden cupola. The cupola consists of a square base displaying quoins, an open belfry adorned with Corinthian pilasters and round-arched openings, and a small octagonal pavilion crowned by a dome and weathervane. The central block is adorned with a classical cornice featuring bracketed modillions.

The Neoclassical character of the school is most apparent in the monumental pedimented portico that dominates the front of the building (Photo 7). Positioned at the east end of a two-story, gable-roofed, brick wing that projects from the central block, the hexastyle portico consists of unfluted Corinthian columns and piers, a plain frieze, and a molded cornice with dentils and bracketed modillions. A wheel window is seen in the tympanum of the triangular pediment.

The front entrance consists of a set of four-panel wooden doors surmounted by a rectangular transom with curvilinear tracery (Photo 8). The composition is framed by an elegant classical frontispiece consisting of fluted pilasters with Composite capitals, a cushion frieze, a molded cornice with dentils and bracketed modillions, and a swan's neck broken pediment.

Flanking the portico are long one-story, flat-roofed, stretcher-bond brick wings topped with classical wooden balustrades. These wings are fronted by Ionic-columned loggias behind which are large double-hung windows with nine-over-nine sashes, flared brick jack arches, and concrete sills. The loggias are terminated by slightly projecting end pavilions adorned with engaged Ionic columns, pilasters, and a cast-concrete panel embellished with a floral swag.

One-story brick wings with flat roofs and no balustrades flank the loggia end pavilions and feature large double-hung windows. Recessed from the loggia wings and extending nearly to the northern and southern limits of the school property, these wings complete the lengthy front elevation of the school.

A flight of concrete steps descends from the front portico to a terrace paved with brick arranged in a herringbone pattern. Another flight of steps continues to descend from the terrace to ground level. The terrace, called the esplanade on the original floor plan of the school, is supported by brick arcaded loggias topped by brick and cast-concrete balustrades. This terrace is terminated at its north and south ends by flights of brick steps that descend to the school grounds below.

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John Handley High School
City of Winchester, Virginia

Entering the school from the main entrance, a long hall, called the marble hallway, extends west to a pair of doors leading into a transverse hall (Photo 9). Doors on the east-west axis are framed with architrave trim and topped by a cushion frieze and a broken pediment. The marble hallway is noted for its checkerboard pattern of black and white marble floor tiles. Its walls are plastered and adorned with plain pilasters and a simple wooden chair rail. A plaster frieze, consisting of floral and fruit swags, encircle the hallway (Photo 10). Eight-panel wooden doors framed by architrave trim and topped by cushion friezes and molded cornices lead into offices on the north and south sides of the hallway.

The transverse hallway, originally called the gallery of history and art, is a long and wide corridor extending north-south to doors leading into narrower corridors that serve the classroom areas of the school. Currently called the wooden hallway because of its polished wooden floors, it has a segmental-arched ceiling punctured by two large rectangular wood and glass skylights that were later blocked. The hall is outlined by a molded ceiling cornice. Its walls are divided by wide pilasters on which marble consoles are attached displaying marble busts of famous Virginians--Thomas Jefferson, Stonewall Jackson (Photo 11), Robert E. Lee, and George Washington. Portraits of Washington and James Madison are also displayed on the walls.

The central core of the school originally consisted of a large auditorium and lobby, a recreational space called the play court, and the school gymnasium. A second floor was inserted into the volume of the gymnasium and divided into classrooms after a new gymnasium was built in 1967 to the rear of the original school building. The play court also had a second floor inserted and was further decreased in size with the addition of more classrooms in the renovations of 1976.

From the play court pairs of double doors lead into a lobby that provides access to the spacious school auditorium (Photo 12). The lobby's groin-vaulted ceiling is especially noteworthy. Staircases at both the northern and southern ends rise to an upper lobby from which the auditorium balcony is accessed. The upper lobby walls feature recessed arches, some of which include lunettes.

The auditorium, still the largest assembly space in the city, can hold 1,347 persons. The stage has a proscenium arch that is accented at the top by a plaster cartouche displaying an open book and a lamp of learning (Photo 13). A U-shaped balcony is supported by slender posts and is lighted by large round-arched multi-pane windows. A paneled parapet topped by a brass railing extends around the balcony.

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John Handley High School
City of Winchester, Virginia

The original school building also features corridors with adjoining classrooms extending north and south of the central core. These corridors and classrooms have carpet laid over original wooden floors and plastered and painted walls. All corridor and classroom ceilings were lowered during the renovation of 1976.

Located in the basement of the school is an unusual room known as the vault. Its walls are lined with concrete blocks and a large steel vault door with combination lock allows access to the interior. This room was constructed in 1941 to hold valuable artwork that was transferred from the Corcoran Art Gallery in Washington, D.C. during World War II. Apparently Winchester was an ideal location to hide the artwork in case Washington was bombed.

Attached to the southwest corner of the original building is the school's boiler room, a one-story brick structure with a tall octagonal brick smokestack. In 1962 a brick two-story addition, mostly consisting of classrooms and a cafeteria, was built to the rear of the original school building. In 1967 a new brick gymnasium was built northwest of the school and was later connected to it.

Immediately below the concrete steps that descend from the front portico is the school's athletic field. Consisting of a grassy field surrounded by an oval track and flanked by brick and concrete stadiums, the entire complex is set within a natural bowl with steep slopes. The home stadium, built in 1973 (Photo 6), consists of tiers of benches and aisles and a brick announcer's box at the top. The opposing visitors stadium is a similar, but smaller structure that was constructed in 1981. Both stadiums are noncontributing structures.

Facing Valley Avenue at the eastern end of the school campus is a granite monument commemorating the school's benefactor, Judge John Handley (Photo 1). Erected in 1968, it is a noncontributing object only because of its age. A central shaft features a bas-relief sculpture of Judge John Handley below which is a pedestal inscribed, "Erected in Memory of/Judge John Handley/Benefactor of Handley School/by the Grateful Children and Citizens of Winchester, Virginia". Below the inscription is a bas-relief sculpture of a lamp of learning and an open book framed by foliage and berries. A side panel to the south features a carved classical figure holding a flame and kneeling beside a standing girl, while a side panel to the north features a boy dreaming of castles in the sky. In front of the monument is a raised brick planter flanked by boxwood hedges.

The building and grounds of John Handley High School are well preserved and well maintained. The complex has changed little since the school and landscaped grounds were completed in 1923. It remains a well known landmark in the city of Winchester and the Shenandoah Valley.

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John Handley High School
City of Winchester, Virginia

Statement of Significance

Situated on a hill overlooking the City of Winchester, Virginia, John Handley High School is one of the most impressive Neoclassical Revival schools in Virginia. Designed by Cleveland, Ohio, architect Walter R. McCornack, the school was completed in 1923. Its elegant proportions, monumental portico, columned loggias, and brick arcades, make Handley High School an outstanding example of the Neoclassical Revival style. Beginning in 1916 the nationally known landscape architectural firm of Olmsted Brothers of Brookline, Massachusetts, designed the school's original 72-acre grounds, a suitable setting for such a landmark. Handley High School is also significant in the history of education in Virginia. Believed to be the first and only privately endowed public school in the Commonwealth, the school was constructed with proceeds from a private trust bequeathed to the City of Winchester by Judge John Handley of Scranton, Pennsylvania. Funds from the Handley Trust also substantially contributed to the school's operation until about 1933 when the City of Winchester began to contribute the majority of funds. Because of the generosity of Judge Handley, John Handley High School still ranks among the finest educational institutions in Virginia.

John Handley High School is very unusual because it is a privately endowed public school; it is believed to be the only one to exist in the Commonwealth of Virginia and only one of a few in the nation. Proceeds from the Handley Trust, bequeathed to the City of Winchester by Judge John Handley in 1895, originally built the school. Research done by Kenneth Rose, Handley graduate and assistant to the director of the Rockefeller Archive Center in New York, indicates that this endowment, when given, was the largest to be granted to a public school district in the nation, but was not the first. Funds from private endowments had been granted to three other public school districts which were located in Louisiana, Maryland and Delaware.¹ From 1919 until 1925, fifty to sixty percent of the school budget was funded from the trust. It was not until 1932 that the City of Winchester appropriated an amount equal to that of the Handley Trust.² Today funds from the trust are still provided each year to aid in giving a superior education to the young men and women of the city. Through the ongoing Handley Trust, speakers and educational events are provided for the enrichment of the students and faculty of the city schools, as well as for the community. Partly because of the benefits from this gift, Handley High School has ranked among the finest educational institutions in the state.

John Handley was born in Enniscorthy, County Wexford, Ireland, on January 27, 1835, the son of a carpenter. His father died when he was twelve years old, and young Handley immigrated to America around 1850. He became a citizen and established residency in Rochester, New York,

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John Handley High School
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where he took up the carpenter's trade and began to study law. Around 1856 Handley moved to Washington, D.C., and worked for the federal government. While in Washington, he met Catherine Thayer, a widow with a twelve-year-old son; they were married in 1857. After much private study and a session at the Law School of Columbia University, Handley was admitted to the bar in 1860. The couple then moved to Scranton, Pennsylvania. There Handley established his law practice and later served as a judge of Luzerne County and as President Judge of Lackawanna County. A portion of his income was carefully invested in bank stock, rental properties, and real estate (some of which contained deposits of anthracite coal) in and around Scranton. These investments contributed to his princely fortune.³

Away from professional demands, the judge enjoyed visiting his good friend, James Jifkins, who had moved from Scranton, Pennsylvania, to Winchester, Virginia, around 1870. As a result of his frequent visits, Handley became good friends with many of the town's residents and purchased several large tracts of land in the area. Through legal business he became associated with Major Holmes Conrad, who later became his close friend and a major architect of his bequest to Winchester. In 1888, to show his affection for the people of Winchester, Judge Handley proposed a park for the city, but his friend Major Conrad persuaded him instead to help finance a large modern hotel that could serve as a summer resort. Handley chose to make the hotel only one of eleven enterprises of the Equity Improvement Company of Winchester, which he enthusiastically founded in 1889. A charter was granted to the company in 1890, with Handley as its president, and Major Conrad as vice-president. Stock was sold and predictions were made that the company would increase the material prosperity of the area and even boost the population of the city. The company purchased land in the suburbs of Winchester to lay off streets and lots for the eleven planned enterprises. A certain tract of seventy-two acres was purchased on the edge of the city, later known as "The Equity," to provide space for the erection of a new school. The hotel was completed in 1891, but because of non-payment of assessments by stockholders, a general financial depression in the economy, and Handley's ailing health, it had to be sold and none of the other enterprises were begun. Judge Handley's death in 1895 brought an end to the Equity Improvement Company.⁴

Judge Handley was never a resident of Winchester or Frederick County, but his love for the people of the area was shown in many ways. He died in Scranton, Pennsylvania, on February 15, 1895 after a long period of illness. The Winchester Times of February 20, 1895 stated that he died "from the prevailing grip." Judge Handley had prearranged to be buried in the Mt. Hebron Cemetery in Winchester. Being a great admirer of Generals Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson, he tried to purchase a plot in the Stonewall Cemetery at Mt. Hebron to be buried among

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John Handley High School
City of Winchester, Virginia

the Confederates, but because he had not fought with the Confederacy this was not possible. However, he was able to purchase a plot across the lane and facing the Stonewall Cemetery. His funeral was held at Christ Episcopal Church in Winchester and is said to have been one of the largest in Winchester's history.⁵

At the reading of Judge Handley's will, the lives of the citizens of Winchester were changed forever. The document stated that the judge had bequeathed \$250,000 to Winchester to be invested by its leaders. When this investment reached a value of \$500,000, it was to be used to construct a library, to be called The Handley Library, for the citizens of Winchester. In addition, the twenty-eighth item in his will stated,

All the rest and residue of my estate I give, devise, and bequeath to the City of Winchester to be accumulated for the period of twenty years. The income arising from said residue estate to be expended and laid out in said city the erection of school houses for the education of the poor.⁶

This trust, at the request of the mayor and Winchester City Council, was to be governed by the Handley Board of Trustees, created in 1896 by an act of the Virginia legislature as a fiduciary body to administer the gift. The board would invest the funds and carry out the requirements of the will of Judge Handley.⁷ Major Holmes Conrad was the first president.

The public school system in Winchester was established in 1871. Before that time, small private schools operated throughout the city and county. For the first few years after the public school system was created, classes were conducted in two separate buildings, with girls in a house at the corner of Braddock and Amherst streets and boys in the basement of the Braddock Street M.E. Church, South. Attendance was low in the beginning, but within a few years these schools were overcrowded. The two schools were then consolidated, under the supervision of Captain Van Fossen as principal, and moved to Fort Loudoun Seminary on North Loudoun Street. The attendance continued to increase and more space was needed. In 1883, \$10,000 from a bequest of John Kerr, a local cabinetmaker who had died in 1874, and additional funds amounting to \$6,000 from the Common Council, made possible the erection of a school building to be used for the education of the white children of Winchester. The new building was completed in 1884. Black students were educated in the old stone church on Piccadilly Street which was rented by the city from 1876 until 1925. As attendance grew, the basement of the new John Kerr School was made into additional classrooms and, in 1908, a six-room annex created additional space. When the session of 1908 and 1909 opened, the first three-year high school was offered.

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John Handley High School
City of Winchester, Virginia

There was some opposition, as can be seen in decreased enrollment, but this was the beginning of a new era in the history of the public schools in Winchester. In 1910 the high school course was extended another year, making it a full four-year course. Four different programs were provided: the classical course, the modern language course, the general course, and the business course. The graduates of the academic programs were recognized by the leading colleges and universities of the South. Out of a class of eight boys in 1912 and 1913, seven entered colleges. Soon overcrowding again became a problem, and in 1912 additional rooms were secured in the building adjoining The Handley Library on Piccadilly Street. Judge Handley's bequest, reaching its twenty-year period of maximum interest growth in 1916, would help provide an answer to the educational needs of the city. At that time plans began to be developed for the future of Winchester public schools. Part of this plan was to use "The Equity" property on the southern edge of Winchester as the land for the new school. With Judge Handley's death, this tract of land had become the property of the Handley Board of Trustees. Until plans for a new building could be developed, temporary buildings were erected on the northeast corner of the grounds to alleviate the overcrowded situation at John Kerr School. Because of their barnlike appearance, these buildings were called the "chicken coops" by students who attended classes in them until the new school was built.⁸

One of the first steps the Handley Board of Trustees took was to send three of its members to visit and study schools around the country, receive the advice of experts, and create a plan for the school system to be established in Winchester. R. Gray Williams, Chairman of the Handley Board of Trustees, visited schools in Gary, Indiana, where William Wirt was attracting much public attention for his reform work. Wirt was considered an expert educational advisor by New York City's school board. Also plans were being made for the new school grounds. Williams stated in his annual report in 1916 that "Public play-grounds are now conceded by all educators to be a part of the essential equipment of the public school system of any community." The Board moved quickly on the design of the new school grounds, hiring John C. Olmsted, "perhaps the leading landscape architect in the country," to plan the development of "The Equity" as both a play ground for children and a school site.⁹

John C. Olmsted of Brookline, Massachusetts, was the nephew and adopted son of Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr., nationally noted landscape architect and designer of New York's Central Park, the United States Capitol Grounds, and Biltmore Estate in Asheville, North Carolina. John became a partner with his father in 1884, and managed the business after his father's death in 1903. Olmsted, Sr.'s son, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., who was half-brother to John, joined the partnership when he became an adult, and the practice became known as

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John Handley High School
City of Winchester, Virginia

Olmsted Brothers.¹⁰ One of John's most noted projects was the Boston Park System which he helped to design in 1898.

In 1917, the Handley Board of Trustees invited the General Education Board of New York to study the educational needs of the City of Winchester and to recommend a plan for carrying out the intentions of Judge Handley's will. The General Education Board accepted this invitation, and concluded that such a plan had national implications. It would be the largest experiment in supplementing tax-supported public education with funds from a private endowment. The GEB felt that the Winchester experiment would be watched by the entire country and might interest other philanthropists in bringing endowment funds to the aid of public education. The GEB sent to Winchester a team of experts who gave tests to the students, consulted with the Handley Board of Trustees and the School Board, and studied the economic and social aspects of the community. In December 1919, it filed its published report and recommendations. The report stated,

To us it seems that the wisest use the Handley Trustees can make of the funds at their disposal is to cooperate with the people of Winchester in establishing a system of superior public schools.¹¹

Progressive education was beginning to take root in some larger cities and other parts of the country. The General Education Board of New York stated in its report to the Handley Board of Trustees,

Progressive schools are extending and diversifying their programs, thus seeking to provide for the development of the body as well as the development of the mind. The formal and bookish studies, like spelling, arithmetic, and grammar, are of course as important as ever; but attention is also given to play, recreation, and physical training, because health, bodily development, and physical vigor were of importance both to the individual and to the community. Nature study, school gardens, science, music and the fine arts, manual and industrial shop for boys, and the household arts for girls provide useful experience and training. Finally, special classes in lower grades and optional courses in the upper grades would enable the schools to recognize individual differences in physical endowment, mental ability, interest, and vocational outlook.¹²

Progressive schools were developing a new plan of organization that called for a new grouping of different school grades and a further division of work among teachers. The plan would permit

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John Handley High School
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teachers, particularly in the upper grades, to confine their attention to one or two studies, thus favoring the development of teaching efficiency. It would also allow a maximum use of teachers, buildings, and education equipment. The General Education Board recommended having all children under one roof and suggested that the new school be set up on a six-three-three plan; besides having a kindergarten of one year, there would be an elementary school of six years, a junior high school of three years (7-9), and a senior high school of three years (10-12). Another year would be added to the school course, bringing Winchester in line with other progressive American cities.¹³

The report specifically recommended that a legal agreement between the Handley Board of Trustees, The Winchester School Board, and the Winchester City Council be enacted to make Winchester a separate school division. Prior to that time Winchester and Frederick County constituted a single school division. The GEB recommended the appointment of a "high class" superintendent of schools elected by the school board with the approval of the Handley Board of Trustees to carry out these plans.¹⁴

The search began for a superintendent. Dr. Inglis of Harvard University, who had helped with the testing of the students in the public schools, recommended Mr. Frederick E. Clerk. Clerk was Assistant Superintendent of Schools in Cleveland, Ohio, before applying for the Winchester job. He had attended Yale University and Lincoln-Jefferson University Law School as well as having done work at Harvard University and served as principal of a high school in Seattle, Washington. Clerk was offered the job and accepted, greatly pleasing the Handley Board of Trustees and the school board. He began his tenure on September 1, 1919. He was charged with overseeing the educational plan for the school and finding an architect to develop the plans for the new building.¹⁵

Clerk recommended that the Handley Board of Trustees hire of Walter R. McCornack, Cleveland's school architect, to devise the plans for the new building. Cleveland was moving in the direction of progressive education, and Mr. McCornack was familiar with contemporary buildings fitting this new approach. The board agreed to hire Mr. McCornack.

Walter R. McCornack was born in Illinois in 1895 and was educated at Knox College in Galesburg, Illinois, and in the School of Architecture, Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Boston. Early in his career he was associated with Guy Lowell in the development of plans for the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. In the early 1920s he was appointed by the Board of Education of Cleveland to direct its \$40,000,000 school building program. He would become one of five

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architects selected to help plan the improvement of the New York City school system in the 1930s. His school and college designs would reach across a wide area, including Illinois, Ohio, Virginia, Kentucky, Massachusetts, New York, and Connecticut. After 1930, McCornack's focus would be on housing developments for the City of Cleveland and the U.S. government during the Hoover administration. He went on to become a noted lecturer on school building concerns held at many colleges and universities. Mr. McCornack was later to become Dean of the School of Architecture at MIT in 1939, and retired from that position in 1944.¹⁶

The school building plans developed by McCornack were inspected by the General Education Board of the Rockefeller Foundation; the Department of Education at Columbia University, New York; the Department of Education at Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts; the National Committee on the Standardization of School House Construction; the State Superintendent of Public Instruction of Virginia; the Department of Education at the University of Virginia; and the experts of the various departments of the United States Bureau of Education. "Every detail of the building was thoroughly studied with a view of giving the people of Winchester the safest, the cleanest, the simplest, and the most complete building for educational and recreational purposes that it is possible to build within the money available."¹⁷

In 1921, construction of the new school began, and the contractor selected to excavate and lay the foundation was Betts and Boyce, Inc., of Harrisonburg, Virginia. The cornerstone was laid on June 13, 1921 at a special ceremony. The construction took two years. The school's doors opened to students on September 12, 1923, and Principal Hugh S. Duffey led the students up to the new building. Originally the school included grades 4-12. The impressive Neoclassical Revival building was designed as a one-story building, 535 feet long and 180 feet deep. The building was completed at a cost of \$800,000 and originally contained thirty-six classrooms.¹⁸ The remainder of the money remained in trust and provided funds to build an African American school, Frederick Douglass School, in 1927, as well as to purchase land in years to come for two elementary school buildings. A third elementary school was built behind the high school on part of the 72-acre plot.

The Neoclassical Revival facade of Handley High School is modeled after the buildings at the University of Virginia, designed by Thomas Jefferson.¹⁹ The long extension of arches and columns on the front facade, coupled with the monumental portico and cupola, create simplicity and harmony representative of the Neoclassical style. The building's largest interior spaces are the auditorium, which seats over 1,300 people, and the Gallery of Art and History, which measures 20 x 150 feet. The concert auditorium is the largest in Winchester, and has provided

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adequate space for many concerts and lectures, as well as for graduation ceremonies for community schools and colleges. Noted persons have spoken at the high school or have been involved in programs there, including George Washington Carver, Admiral Richard Byrd, President Gerald Ford, the Reverend Billy Graham, and Lieutenant Colonel Alan Sheppard.

The grounds of the school are large, stately, and carefully tended. Many trees and shrubs -- flowering ornamentals, evergreens, and deciduous plantings -- enhance a natural setting that includes a sports bowl and picnic areas that are well used by students and community members. The stadium provides seating for football fans in the fall and soccer and track fans in the spring. Graduation is held in the stadium each June, with the facade of the school providing an elegant backdrop for this ceremony. The beauty of the school and grounds makes Handley a main point of interest for visitors to the area.

At the front of the campus on Valley Avenue a monument in honor of Judge Handley was erected by Grove Monument, Inc. in 1968. In 1927 members of the senior class had decided to start a fund for erecting a memorial to Judge Handley to be placed at the front of the campus facing Valley Avenue. They felt that the memorial should be paid for not by funds from the Winchester School Board, the Handley Board of Trustees, or the city, but by personal contributions from students who had profited from Judge Handley's generosity. The students made voluntary contributions to the memorial each year on Judge Handley's birthday. After 1953 a campaign was launched to expedite completion of the fund. The memorial was dedicated on October 16, 1968.²⁰

Two additions and one renovation have been made to Handley since it was built. The first addition was erected in 1962 on the southwest corner of the building and included a new cafeteria, music suite, language lab, and additional classrooms. The second addition in 1967 added a gymnasium with offices and two additional classrooms. In 1976 a major renovation took place; \$5,800,000 was spent to replace the aging mechanical systems, install air conditioning, refurbish the auditorium, and establish a modern media center for library research. This renovation also created a publications office on the first floor as well as a TV studio and additional classrooms on the second floor. A greenhouse was added to the roof of the cafeteria and two elevators were installed to provide access for the handicapped. The basement was converted into modern woodworking and graphic arts laboratories, a renovated electricity/electronics lab, power mechanics classes, and equipment maintenance shop, as well as space for varsity and junior varsity dressing and locker rooms, shower facilities, and coaches' offices.²¹

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As well as being important to the community, the facilities of Handley High School have been important to the nation as well. The construction of a vault in the basement of the building was funded by the Corcoran Art Gallery and built to its specifications in 1941. It was used during World War II to house many art treasures worth over a million dollars. The Corcoran sought a place away from Washington, but one in relative close proximity, where the art work could be checked on a weekly basis. The art was housed in the vault for four years and guarded twenty-four hours a day by an armed guard. The project was kept secret and very few people knew about it. Also, during the Cold War, the omnipresent threat of nuclear attack led to the construction of a bomb shelter in the basement near the vault. Handley's location and structure made it an ideal site to shelter both treasures and people.

Since its opening, Handley has provided excellence in education. The early curriculum included an academic course, a commercial course, and an agricultural-industrial course. Required courses were English, physical education, music, art, and civics. An endowment by S. Lucien Lupton, owner of Stonewall Orchards in Frederick County, provided for the creation of a Horticulture Department at the school. In the early years of the school, teachers came to Handley to observe the curriculum being taught. A report by Superintendent Frederick E. Clerk to the Handley Board of Trustees in 1920 noted that the University of Virginia had recognized the importance of the Winchester Plan of Education and had invited Handley to co-operate with the educational department of the university in the preparation of a model junior high school plan to be used by the Virginia State Board of Education in the re-organization of education in Virginia.²² Today Handley High School offers a rigorous curriculum. Twenty-four credits are required for graduation which is more than any other school in the area. Four years of physical education are required, while most schools require only two years. Out of 160 graduates in the Class of 1997, 86 percent attended two- or four-year colleges. The mean score of students taking the SAT tests in 1997 were higher than the state and national averages.

Handley's heritage extends through many generations. Families in Winchester often have third or fourth generation members who graduate from the school, and many graduates return to teach where they were once students. Some of the alumni have been teaching at Handley for over twenty years.

For many years, Handley was the central location for the Shenandoah Apple Blossom Festival. This celebration of the area's agricultural abundance, which captivates the town for one weekend every spring in May, was once held almost entirely on the Handley grounds. Dr. Garland Quarles, teacher, principal, and superintendent of John Handley High School from 1927-1965, produced,

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choreographed, and conducted a pageant each year on the steps and esplanade of the school. Every student of the school had a part in the program. The coronation of the queen still takes place in the school auditorium and is the height of the festivities.

Students and faculty pay homage to Judge Handley every May in a pilgrimage to the cemetery where he is buried. For years all students, dressed in their Sunday best, brought flowers the last day of school and participated in a march to the gravesite to adorn their benefactor's grave. In recent years, and with additional schools involved and located at further distances, selected students from each grade carry on this tradition.

For seventy-five years the John Handley High School has continuously served the city and the people of Winchester. The school is a well-preserved monument significant to the city and state in the areas of education, architecture, and landscape architecture.

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NOTES

1. Kenneth W. Rose, "Handley School: R. Gray Williams, The General Education Board, and the Problematic legacy of Judge John Handley" (North Tarrytown, NY: Rockefeller Archive Center, 1994), 18. Mr. Rose prepared this paper for the Shenandoah Valley Regional Studies Seminar presented at Shenandoah University on March 18, 1994. He also delivered an address of the same top to the 100th Anniversary of Handley's Board of Trustees at a dinner held at Handley High School on February 1, 1895.

2. Garland R. Quarles, Judge Handley and The Handley Bequests to Winchester, Virginia (Winchester, VA: The Farmers and Merchants National Bank, 1969), 104.

3. Quarles, 1-33. Dr. Quarles was an educator in the Winchester Public Schools from 1927-1965, first as a teacher, then as Principal and Superintendent. After his retirement in 1965, he went to Scranton, Pennsylvania and Ireland to research the records of the school's benefactor, John Handley.

4. Ibid., 40-56.

5. Ibid., 56.

6. Ibid., 66.

7. Ibid., 74.

8. [Author unknown], "Winchester Public Schools" [brochure] (Winchester, VA: [Winchester Public Schools]), 1914, unpaginated.

9. R. Gray Williams, "Annual Report of R. Gray Williams, President of the Handley Board of Trustees, Submitted to the Annual Meeting Held Monday, January 10, 1916," Annual Report of the Handley Board of Trustees for the Year Ending December 31, 1915 (Winchester, VA: [Handley Board of Trustees], 8. Rose, 17.

10. Editorial Advisory Board, The Dictionary of Art (New York: Grove Dictionaries, Inc.) 1996, 323.

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11. General Education Board, The Handley Fund - Winchester, VA (New York: General Board of Education, 1918), 59.

12. General Education Board, 36.

13. Ibid., 37.

14. Ibid., 60.

15. [Author unknown], Inauguration of the Superintendent of the Winchester Public Schools (Winchester, VA: [Handley Board of Trustees], 1920), 29-31.

16. John J. Rowlands, News Service (Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology) 1938.

17. Frederick E. Clerk, Report of the John Handley Public Schools to the Honorable Mayor and the City Council of the City of Winchester, VA (Winchester, VA: School Board, 1920-21), 35-36.

18. [Author unknown], A Handbook of The Winchester Public Schools (Winchester, VA: [publisher unknown], [ca. 1928]), 5.

19. A Handbook of The Winchester Public Schools, 5.

20. Gertrude Perry, "Notes on the Handley Monument" (Winchester, VA: Gertrude Perry, 1958).

21. Doug O'Connell, The Winchester Star (August 27, 1980).

22. School Board, School Board Minutes (Winchester, VA: School Board, August 13, 1920.)

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10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

UTM REFERENCES - continued

5. 17/743710/4340170
6. 17/743770/4340200

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundaries of the nominated property are shown as the solid black line on the accompanying map entitled "John Handley High School" which has a scale of 1"= 200'. A map of the 40-acre tract of land is noted in Deed Book 250, page 840 found in the City of Winchester's office of the Clerk of Circuit Court.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundaries enclose the grounds, school, and stadiums historically associated with John Handley High School. A map of the 40-acre tract of land is noted in Deed Book 250, page 840 found in the City of Winchester's office of the Clerk of Circuit Court.

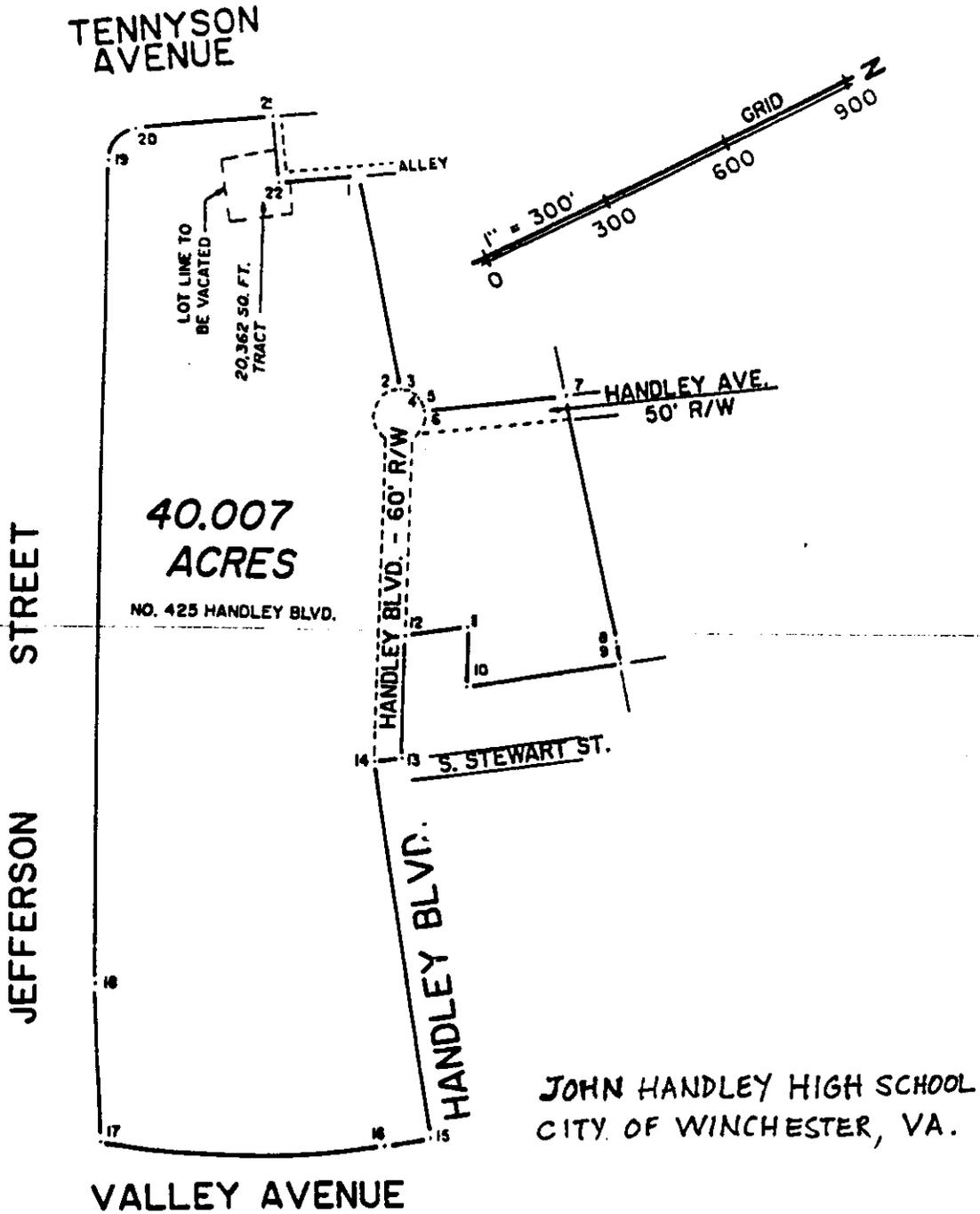
11. FORM PREPARED BY -continued

John Handley High School Students:

Elizabeth Bush
Chace Clay
Elizabeth Connors
Andrew Crosby
Katie Jennis
Chad McDaniel
Cassey Moulton
Abby Starliper

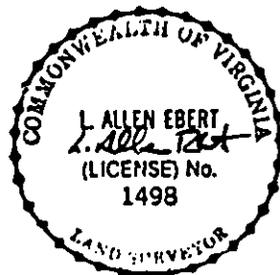
Virginia Department of Historic Resources Staff:

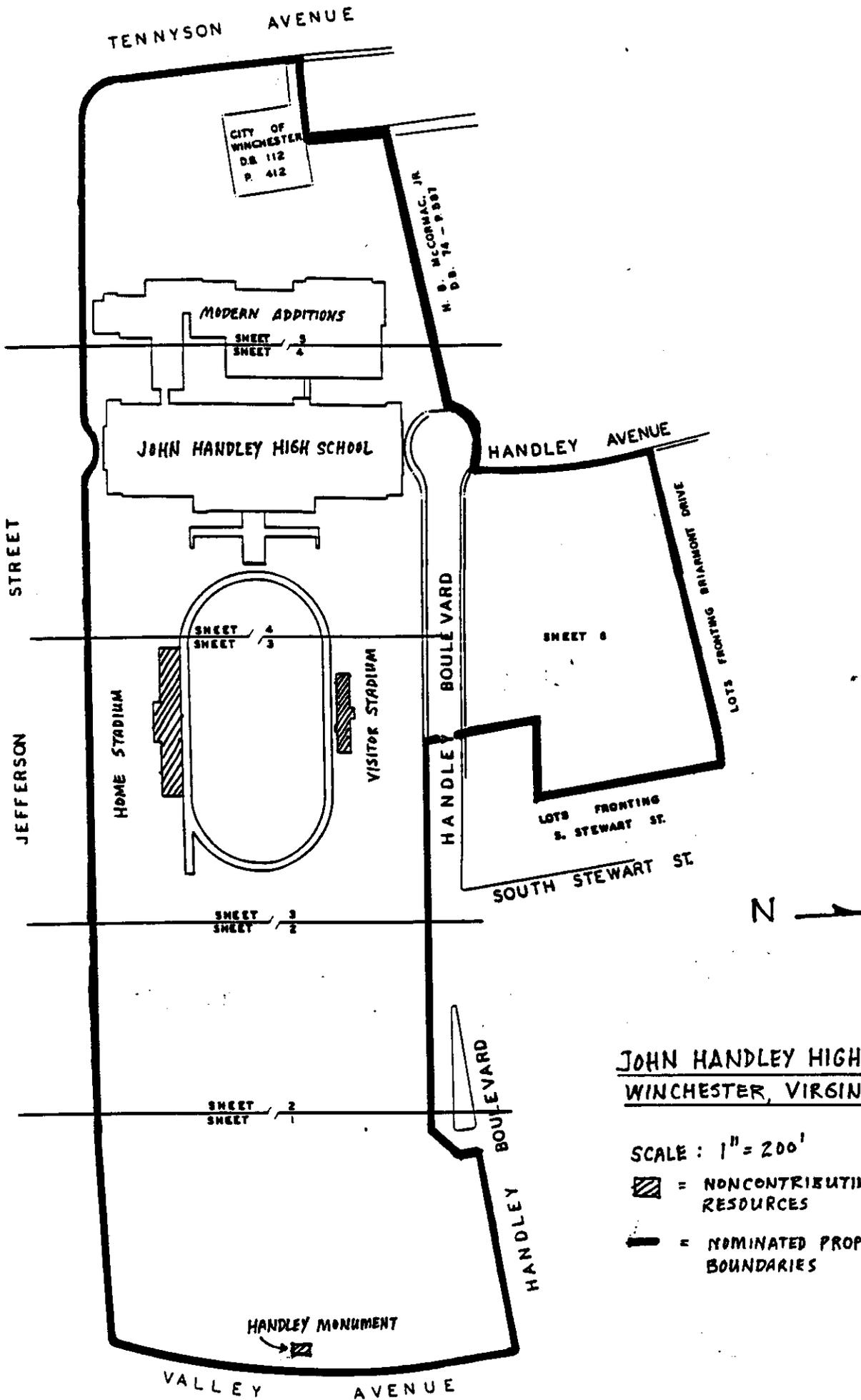
David Edwards
Joanie Evans



JOHN HANDLEY HIGH SCHOOL
CITY OF WINCHESTER, VA.

NOTE: THE BOUNDARY AND AREA INFORMATION SHOWN HEREON IS TAKEN EXCLUSIVELY FROM AN UNRECORDED SURVEY MADE BY RICHARD U. GOODE, DATED 18 NOVEMBER 1968. NO SURVEY OF THIS LAND WAS MADE BY ME ON THE GROUND, AND NO REPRESENTATION IS MADE AS TO THE ACCURACY OF THE INFORMATION SHOWN HEREON.



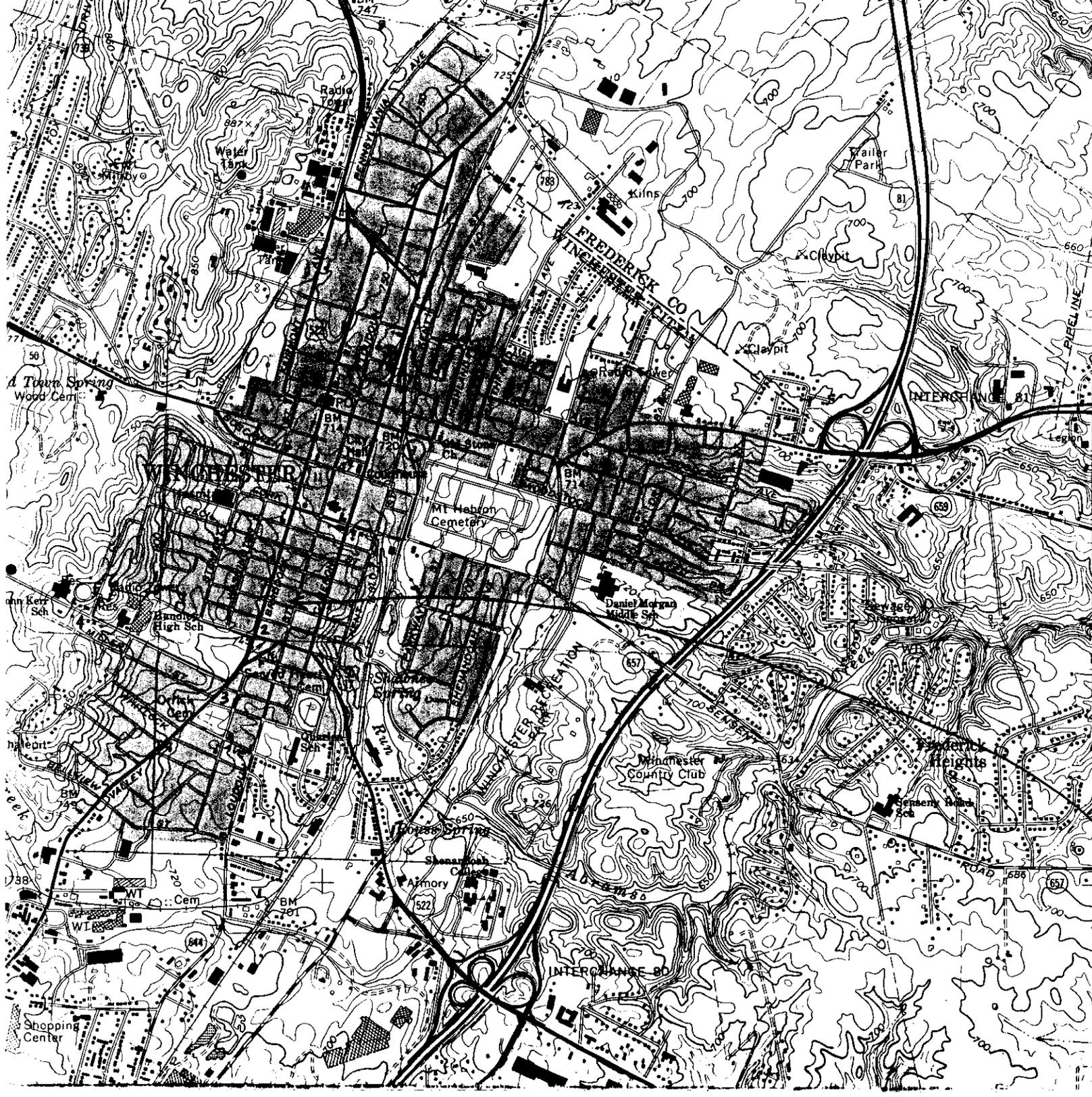


JOHN HANDLEY HIGH SCHOOL
WINCHESTER, VIRGINIA

SCALE: 1" = 200'

▨ = NONCONTRIBUTING RESOURCES

— = NOMINATED PROPERTY BOUNDARIES



4343
4342
4340
STEPHENSON
5362 11 NE
7
BERRYVILLE 8 MI.

JOHN HANDLEY HIGH SCHOOL, CITY OF WINCHESTER

- UTM REFERENCES :
1. 17/743980/4340240
 2. 17/744440/4340010
 3. 17/744320/4339800
 4. 17/743680/4340080
 5. 17/743710/4340170
 6. 17/743770/4340200