

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *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 listed in 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 Lafayette School
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 79 Mill Road not for publication
city or town Roxbury Township vicinity
state New Jersey code NJ county Morris code 027 zip code 07852

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or 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 this property is: | Signature of the Keeper | Date of Action |
|---|-------------------------|----------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet. | _____ | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet. | _____ | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register. | _____ | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register. | _____ | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> other, (explain:) _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |

5. Classification

| Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply) | Category of Property (Check only one box) | Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.) | | |
|--|---|--|-----------------|------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> private | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s) | Contributing | Noncontributing | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local | <input type="checkbox"/> district | <u>1</u> | <u>0</u> | buildings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public-State | <input type="checkbox"/> site | _____ | _____ | sites |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal | <input type="checkbox"/> structure | _____ | _____ | structures |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> object | _____ | _____ | objects |
| | | <u>1</u> | <u>0</u> | Total |

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register
0

6. Function or Use

| Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions) | Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions) |
|---|--|
| <u>EDUCATION: School</u> | <u>VACANT/NOT IN USE</u> |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

7. Description

| Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions) | Materials (Enter categories from instructions) |
|---|--|
| <u>LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY</u> | foundation <u>CONCRETE</u> |
| <u>AMERICAN MOVEMENT: Craftsman</u> | walls <u>STONE: Fieldstone</u> |
| _____ | roof <u>ASPHALT</u> |
| _____ | other <u>WOOD</u> |
| | <u>METAL: Aluminum</u> |
| | <u>SYNTHETICS: Vinyl</u> |

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.

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 # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1921 - c,1970

Significant Dates

1921, 1964

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Rasmussen and Wayland, Architects

Gallo Bros., Builder

Primary location of additional data

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

Name of repository:

Lafayette School
Name of Property

Morris County, NJ
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 0.14

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)

Datum is other than WGS84: _____
(Enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 40.912584 Longitude: -74.608299

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 Margaret M. Hickey, AIA and Beth A. Bjorklund, Historic Preservation Specialists

organization Connolly & Hickey Historical Architects, LLC date 12 November 2019

street & number P.O. Box 1726 telephone 973-746-4911

city or town Cranford state NJ zip code 07016

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 the SHPO or FPO.)

name Roxbury Township

street & number 1715 Route 46 telephone 973-448-2000

city or town Roxbury Township state NJ zip code 07852

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 from 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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Summary Paragraph

The Lafayette School is a one-story, five-bay-wide-by-two-bay-deep rubble stone masonry and concrete two-room school building with exposed basement level. Constructed in 1921, the vernacular school building utilizes characteristics of the Craftsman style. The front elevation faces northeast toward Mill Road; for descriptive purposes, the front will be referred to as north. (Photograph 0001). The building has a hipped roof clad with late-twentieth-century asphalt shingles. The first-floor windows are typically original six-over-six hung wood sashes (Photograph 0002) while the basement windows are typically one-over-one late-twentieth-century replacement wood sashes; exceptions are otherwise noted. The window and door openings and the cornice at the roofline are clad with a combination of aluminum and vinyl trim over original molded wood.

Narrative Description

Setting

The building is located within Berkshire Valley Park, which features a baseball field, tennis courts, basketball courts, playground, and a walking path. The building sits on a relatively level site. The grade slopes up slightly towards the front elevation and front entrance and slopes away to the south/rear of the building. A concrete walk leads from the sidewalk to the front entrance; however, due to a late-twentieth-century wood ramp, the walk no longer connects to the front entrance. A concrete pad/walkway also extends across the east (side) and turns at the northeast corner to extend across the east half of the front elevation. An asphalt driveway from Mill Road runs along the east side of the building to a parking lot behind the building.

Exterior

Roof and Roof Drainage

The building has a hipped roof with its ridge running east/west. The roof is clad with asphalt shingles, which replaced the asbestos tile roof. The roof edge is finished with an aluminum fascia, vinyl soffit, and aluminum frieze board, which date to the late-twentieth century. The projected front entry has a cross-gable roof detailed with gable returns. There is no roof drainage system. An interior brick chimney pierces the roof ridge where the front gable intersects the main hip.

Elevations

North (Front) Elevation (Photograph 0001)

The one-story projected front entry features a tall door surround with architrave, which is clad with a mix of vinyl and aluminum elements. The entrance is a late-twentieth-century two-lite over four-panel metal door. The first-floor windows are all original six-over-six hung wood windows with aluminum cladding at the frame; several of the windows have a heavy-duty screen that is attached directly onto the wooden sashes. The window openings have a pre-cast concrete sill. The original front steps, which were concrete with stone side walls, have been partially removed and patched with concrete (Photograph 0003); a late-twentieth-century wood ramp wraps the west side elevation and across the front elevation to provide access to the concrete pad at the front entry vestibule. There is a basement-level window opening on both sides of the projected entry; these window openings are covered with vinyl siding.

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East and West Elevations (Photographs 0004 and 0005)

Both side elevations feature one original six-over-six hung wood window in the north bay at the first-floor level. Set below this is a basement-level window opening, and another window opening is centered at the basement level. At the east elevation, both basement window openings are covered with vinyl siding, while at the west elevation only the northern opening is covered and the central bay contains a one-over-one hung wood window from the mid-to-late-twentieth century.

South Elevation (Photograph 0006)

At the rear elevation, there are two groupings of five windows at the first-floor level, which are covered by vinyl siding; a metal fire door punctuates the west panel of siding and is accessed by an open-tread, straight-run metal stair. Below each sided grouping of windows are five basement-level window or door openings; to the west are five one-over-one wood sash windows, while to the east are four windows and one metal door, all dating to the mid-to-late-twentieth century. Concrete steps lead down to the door, and a concrete ramp extends across the four eastern-most windows to also access the basement-level door; a small gabled overhang covers the concrete steps and connects to a shed-roof overhang that covers the ramp.

Interior

Basement

The basement is only accessible from the exterior at the rear elevation, as both interior stairs have been removed. One main space (Room 001) (Photograph 0007) occupies much of the eastern half of the basement; several smaller rooms, including restrooms (Rooms 012 and 014) and a kitchenette (Room 015), are accessed from the main space. A short Hall (Room 002) also extends west off of the main space and accesses additional rooms (Rooms 003-009). Centered at the front (north) end of the basement is the Mechanical Room (Room 010) (Photograph 0008), to either side of which are small storage areas (Rooms 008 and 011) in place of the removed staircases. Basement finishes are mostly consistent throughout with a few exceptions. The flooring is mostly vinyl tile, except where there is an exposed sub-floor in three spaces and the concrete floor in the Mechanical Room. The majority of walls are gypsum board with a vinyl base, with the exception of three spaces, which have some painted concrete walls. The ceilings are all suspended acoustical tile grid with a wood or composite board ceiling above, some with coffer detailing.

First Floor

The front entrance leads into a small Vestibule (Room 101) (Photograph 0009) with angled corners where two small closets are located. Adjacent to the closets are narrow rooms set east and west, which were formerly the locations of the stairs to the basement. The small room to the west is the Women's Restroom (Room 106) and to the east is Storage (103). Two doors at the rear (south) wall of the vestibule and set to either side of the chimney access a large Main Space (Room 102) with high ceilings (Photograph 0010); this space occupies much of the main floor level and originally was two classrooms with a center moveable partition (Photograph 0011). The Men's Restroom (Room 107) is west and adjacent to the Women's Restroom and accessed directly from the Main Space. At the east end of the Main Space is a Kitchen (Room 105) (Photograph 0012) and an adjacent small Storage area (Room

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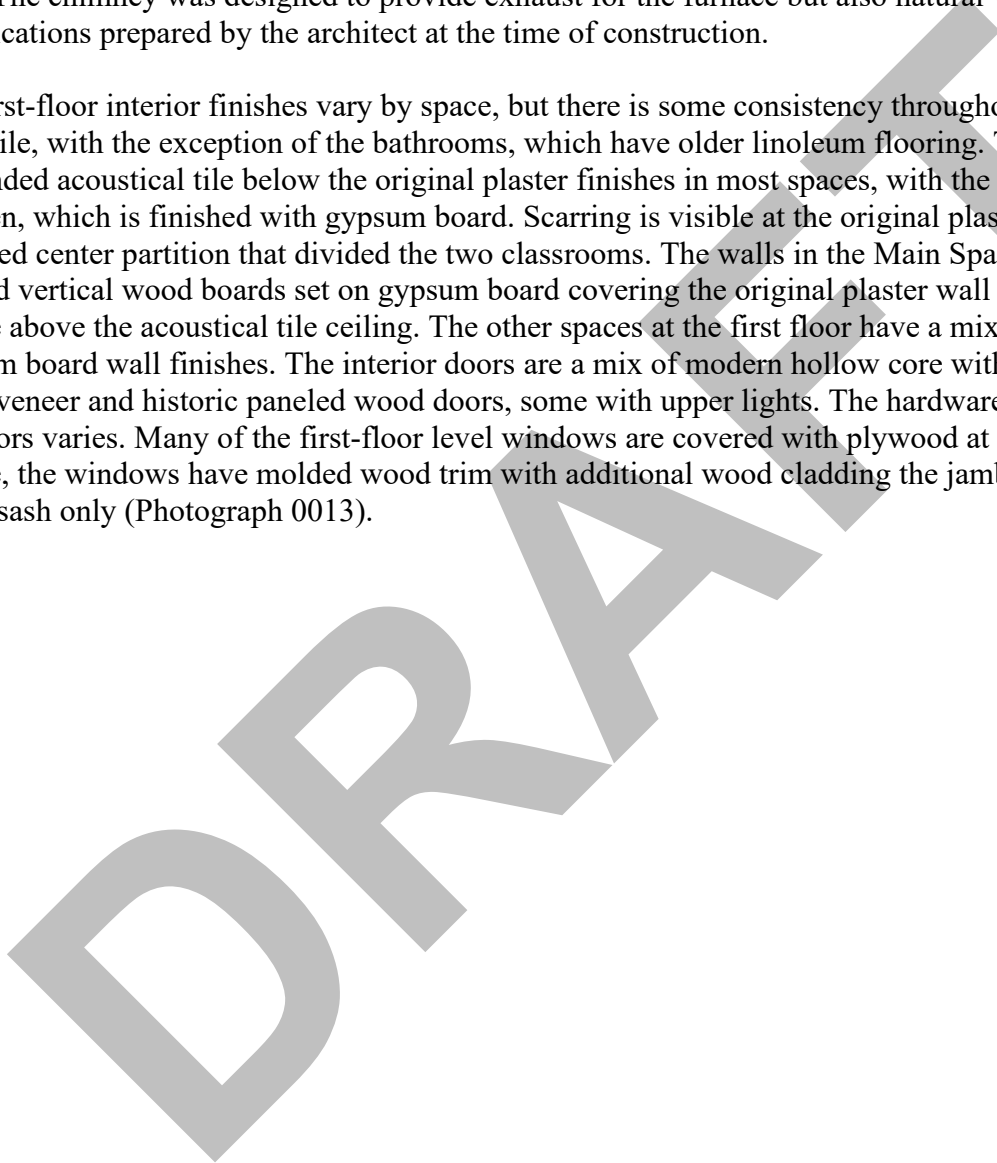
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104). The chimney was designed to provide exhaust for the furnace but also natural ventilation per the specifications prepared by the architect at the time of construction.

The first-floor interior finishes vary by space, but there is some consistency throughout. The flooring is vinyl tile, with the exception of the bathrooms, which have older linoleum flooring. The ceilings are suspended acoustical tile below the original plaster finishes in most spaces, with the exception of the Kitchen, which is finished with gypsum board. Scarring is visible at the original plaster ceiling from the removed center partition that divided the two classrooms. The walls in the Main Space are finished with painted vertical wood boards set on gypsum board covering the original plaster wall finishes, which are visible above the acoustical tile ceiling. The other spaces at the first floor have a mixture of plaster and gypsum board wall finishes. The interior doors are a mix of modern hollow core with an unfinished wood veneer and historic paneled wood doors, some with upper lights. The hardware and wood trim at the doors varies. Many of the first-floor level windows are covered with plywood at the interior. Where visible, the windows have molded wood trim with additional wood cladding the jambs and head at the lower sash only (Photograph 0013).



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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

The Lafayette School is a one-story with full basement two-room schoolhouse constructed in 1921 to educate the children of Lower Berkshire Valley in Roxbury, Morris County, New Jersey, and it is significant at the local level under Criterion C as a late surviving example of a two-room schoolhouse, a building type that was popular beginning in the 1880s until around the start of World War II, particularly in rural districts throughout the state and specifically in Morris County. The Lafayette School follows a pattern of two-room schoolhouses that was advanced through the 1874 State Superintendent report that published plans for one, two, and three-room schoolhouses aimed at rural districts that did not have ready access to architects.¹ It also takes on many of the layout and material choices advanced for school construction as adopted in the 1913 code requirements specified by the State Board of Education for new schools. This was followed by the state architect publishing standard plans for schools that boards of education could provide to their architects to follow. These publications of standardized plans in conjunction with an established building code appear to have influenced the extensive building of two-room schools around New Jersey and had become a proven successful model for school construction in rural areas until the mid-twentieth century.²

The two-room Lafayette School adopted Craftsman influences in its architectural articulation, a stylistic approach that was widely used in residential architecture in the early-twentieth century in the newly emerging suburbs. Its interior plan adheres to one of the standardized two-room schoolhouse designs with a central front entrance with foyer leading to two rooms set side-by-side and split in the center by a folding partition. Its simple rectangular plan easily could be adapted to a variety of stylistic influences, such as Craftsman. The period of significance for the Lafayette School is 1921, the year it was constructed, until c. 1970 when the building was converted for another use, the exterior stair, kitchen and first floor restrooms were added, and new interior finishes applied over the plaster finishes at the first floor.

Narrative Statement of Significance

Historical Overview of Roxbury Township

Lafayette School is located in the Lower Berkshire Valley (also referred to as simply Berkshire Valley) section of Roxbury Township in western Morris County. Settlement in Roxbury began in the early-to-mid eighteenth century, and in 1740 Roxbury was incorporated as one of the four original townships in Morris County.³ At that time its boundaries included what today are Chester Borough and Township, Mt. Arlington Borough, Mt. Olive Township, Netcong Borough, Washington Township, and parts of Hopatcong Borough and Stanhope Borough.

Schooley's Mountain range, which extends northeast-southwest across Roxbury, is rich in iron ore, and

¹ "Report of the State Board of Education and the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, for the Year Ending August 31, 1874."

² Robert W. Craig, "New Jersey's Public School Buildings: A Brief Field Guide," No date, 3. (Available from the internet: <https://www.nj.gov/dep/hpo/publicschools.pdf>, Accessed, March 2019).

³ Maxine N. Lurie and Marc Mappen, eds., *Encyclopedia of New Jersey* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University, 2004), 707.

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the Dickerson mine, located near the Succasunna section of Roxbury, was discovered in the mid-eighteenth century. Iron mining and manufacturing became the main industry in Roxbury, as was the case throughout iron-rich northwestern Morris County. Transportation and industry in the region in the eighteenth century focused on iron mining and production along with agriculture in the more fertile regions. After the American Revolution, the iron industry was threatened for the want of fuel and was also hindered by poor means of transportation, particularly in the rural areas. Beginning in 1801, charter companies established turnpikes typically along early Native American trails to help improve transportation for industry, and the discovery of anthracite coal in Pennsylvania helped to reinvigorate iron mining in the region. The Morris Canal, constructed across northern New Jersey, “grew out of the need to move iron ore from the mines to its consumers,”⁴ and passed through four Roxbury communities. Lake Hopatcong was turned into the Canal’s largest reservoir and its water level ultimately raised by about twelve feet.⁵

Even though much of the development and expansion in the region was centered on the iron industry, there were three areas within Roxbury that developed around agriculture; one of them was Berkshire Valley, where the Lafayette School is located, in the northeastern section of the Township. Settlement began in the Berkshire Valley during the mid-eighteenth century but similar to much of the region, growth was slow and did not accelerate until the mid-nineteenth century with an increase in population spurred by immigration and advances brought about by the Industrial Revolution. As such, it was by the 1870s that Lower Berkshire Valley became a flourishing agricultural community including twelve substantial farms, a school, and a Methodist congregation.⁶

As much as the Morris Canal transformed the region, the advent of the railroad played a significant role in the history and development of Roxbury as a whole. The railroads, beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, often worked in tandem with the canal to transport iron ore from the mines to the Canal, or they provided limited passenger service. As railroad traffic increased especially for passenger service in the late-nineteenth century, Roxbury was increasingly connected to points east and west spurring a resort community, particularly around Lake Hopatcong at Landing. The addition of a trolley line by 1910, further increased the options for those looking for an escape from more densely-populated eastern cities and suburbs in the summer and for weekends. However, in every instance of these advances in transportation, Lower Berkshire Valley was excluded and remained an enclave of farmland, and little developed well into the early-twentieth century.

The Lower Berkshire Valley’s sustained rural origins are reflected in the history of the Lower Berkshire Valley Methodist Church which was not established until sometime between 1865 and 1871 when a Methodist Circuit Rider first asked to preach at the local school house. By 1879 there were six classes at Sunday school and permanent pastors living nearby. However, it was not until the 1890s that a church

⁴ Barbara N. Kalata, *A Hundred Years, a Hundred Miles: New Jersey’s Morris Canal* (Morris County, NJ, Morris County Historical Society, 1983), 13.

⁵ Robert R. Goller, *Images of America: The Morris Canal, Across New Jersey by Water and Rail* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 1999) 56.

⁶ Acroterion, “New Jersey Historic Sites Survey for Roxbury Township,” Morris County Heritage Commission: 1987, 3.

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building was constructed and not until 1932 when it became officially affiliated with the Methodist Church.⁷ One reference notes that by 1925 the Church was serving 20 families and the original Church needed a new foundation and expansion to accommodate worship services and a school. In 1954, a parsonage was constructed in the hope of attracting a full-time pastor.⁸ The present sanctuary was constructed in 1962 as an addition to the original 1899 chapel.

In the 1930s as the Depression kept large numbers of people from weekending in the region, particularly at Lake Hopatcong, the hotels and accompanying tourist businesses began to close; however, the rise of the automobile brought new development to the region. In 1934, Route 10 was built to link Essex and Morris Counties; it ran parallel to what was once the Morris & Sussex Turnpike and was built through the old houses and much of the farmland of Roxbury.⁹ This was only the beginning, as the construction of interstate Route 80 in the 1960s ushered in a significant change: the conversion of summer and vacation homes to year-round residences impacted not only development around Lake Hopatcong but the other less-developed sections of Roxbury. The economics of farming in this region and others had been under pressure from western United States expansion beginning in the late-nineteenth century and most succumbed by the mid-twentieth century. A nearby U.S. Army installation at Picatinny Arsenal, the growth of natural resource extraction industries, and the expansion of the roadways and highways helped to bring increased residential development to Roxbury including those villages, such as Lower Berkshire Valley that had remained decidedly agricultural until the mid-twentieth century. Although Roxbury today is a thriving suburban community, it has maintained much of its rural character through vast quantities of open space including more than twenty-five percent of the municipality designated for public or semi-public use and an additional twenty-one percent set apart for farm and vacant land.

Public Schools in New Jersey Through the Early-20th Century

When discussing the history and development of a public school, it is best to have a general understanding of the history and development of the public school system in New Jersey. The earliest settlers each brought their own traditions in education, which were often tied to their families and their church. Even though education during the early settlement period helped to shape the public education system in New Jersey, the act of educating children outside of the home varied widely from community to community. For instance, in Bergen County the Dutch Reformed Church was the primary progenitor of education to its children, where in towns controlled primarily by Puritan or Congregationalists faith, education was seen as a civic responsibility and public school boards and funding was provided through levies. Quaker communities also established schools using revenues from properties they sold or rented to support operational expenses and would often charge tuition. The school buildings themselves were typically simple one-room buildings that reflected simple homes. Despite the presence of school buildings and educational funding, education was not a high priority for most, attendance tended to be sporadic, and the focus was on basic reading skills. Despite the presence of public schools, church-run

⁷ Annie Stelce Hosking and Harriet Meeker, Eds., *The History of Roxbury Township: History, Tales, Statistics, Pictures* (Netcong, NJ: Pyramid Press, 1965), 90-91.

⁸ Hosking and Meeker, 91.

⁹ Mottel Balston. "A Short History of Roxbury Township, Morris County, New Jersey." Available from the Internet: <http://www.roxburynewjersey.com/history.htm>. Accessed November 2019.

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schools were the most common type, but the religious denominations were also the ones that campaigned for public schools as a given rather than the exception after the American Revolution.¹⁰

Presbyterianism, the fastest growing denomination in New Jersey in the late-eighteenth century, established many schools, often called academies, grammar schools, or classical schools, in what would have been considered the urban centers of Newark, Elizabeth, and Trenton as well as other towns, prior to the American Revolution and that were then reinvigorated after the war. School growth was stimulated in part by both the local community and by legislative action in 1799; the “Act to Incorporate Societies for the Promotion of Learning” was passed to permit the creation of public schools. Despite an increase in the number of schools, the quality of the education, the availability of suitable teachers, and sufficient school buildings were lacking particularly in the more remote regions of the state. Furthermore, most schools were mostly unavailable to poor and black children, except in rare instances.¹¹

A solid foundation for public schooling was slow to develop in New Jersey compared with other states in the Early National Period because the majority of New Jersey residents lived and worked on farms and their livelihoods revolved primarily around agricultural pursuits and less around educational needs beyond religious literacy and the arithmetic needed to conduct business. Education remained primarily in the private sector and on a voluntary basis until the early 1800s; however, a movement, albeit a slow one, grew for publicly-funded schools in order to prepare the country’s next generation for citizenship and participation in an emerging industrial economy. In 1816, the New Jersey legislature established its first school fund and, slowly, local municipalities began to fund public schools primarily to reach the poor. This was the first step in establishing a state-wide public school system by the mid-nineteenth century. Initial educational goals were to promote “civic virtue” focusing on citizenship, thrift, industry and developing skills so that there was a broader participation in democratic institutions and the ability to participate in an economy that was changing from one of agriculture to one of industry. Disparity in the quality of education persisted through much of the nineteenth century so that middle-class families often sent their children to private academies while the poor were relegated to often under-funded public schools.¹²

As the quality (and even quantity) of public schools lagged behind neighboring states, New Jersey slowly improved. Key improvements included: the construction of better school buildings particularly in urban centers that had more resources and used local taxes or tuition fees as part of their funding mechanism; the establishment of a post-primary school to educate future teachers in 1855; a State Board of Education established in 1866 that had the power to regulate aspects of public education; and the abolishment of tuition fees in 1871 that made schools free of charge for all children ages 5 to 18 and

¹⁰ Howard Green, “Classrooms Struggle: A History of School Construction in New Jersey: Chapter 1 – Colonial and Early National Background c. 1665 – c. 1815”. (Trenton: Preservation New Jersey, 2011) [This is a draft report without page numbers. Use in the development of this National Register Nomination was to help provide context and establish the broad patterns of education and school construction in New Jersey in the context of the Lafayette School. Where needed, other resources were referred to confirm statements or firm updates provided in this report.]

¹¹ Howard Green, “Chapter 1 – Colonial and Early National Background c.1665-1815.”

¹² Howard Green, “Chapter 2 – The Common School Campaign 1816-1876.”

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affixed a school tax to all taxable property in the state. Howard Green notes in his draft report, "Classrooms Struggle: A History of School Construction in New Jersey", which focuses on the development of New Jersey's public school system, that many historians believe the 1871 legislation led to a building boom in 1871 and 1872; however, he suggests that more likely, an increase in school construction by the mid-1870s was a reflection of a rising popular support for public education. The building boom continued the construction of one- and two-room schoolhouses in the smaller towns and rural communities, while the larger urban areas with greater populations broke out of this mold to erect two-story buildings of greater consequence in construction and capacity that employed the popular architectural styles of the period.¹³

Construction of new school buildings reflects a period of dramatic social change in the last few decades of the nineteenth century through to the end of the second world war. The population increase, tenfold in many urban areas, brought forth by European immigrants spurred the need for more schools in urban and rural areas alike. After the 1870s, the number of students increased as did their time attending school. As education became a more important component of every family, school design also improved to incorporate dedicated space for certain functions of the school day. Urban schools tended to be large with multiple rooms and housing multiple functions where rural schools continued to be of the two-room variety but larger in scale and also incorporating more functionality, such as gymnasiums, coat rooms, and modern facilities such as electric lights, indoor restroom facilities, and mechanical heating systems. During this period, school districts were provided greater flexibility in how construction costs for new schools were financed and there was also greater accountability to provide education to all children. This did not mean all schools were created equal and that all children were provided the same level of education or appropriate facilities as there were significant racial disparities well into the twentieth century. However, in 1913, there were efforts to ensure quality school design and the state architect prepared plans for one, two, three, four, six, eight, and twelve room plans that school boards could utilize in their construction of new facilities. In 1912, the state also imposed a new building code, which took effect in 1913. The code set requirements for "proper lighting, ventilation, heating, seating accommodation, and adequate protection against fire both in the construction of buildings and in providing sufficient means of egress."¹⁴ Requirements for natural lighting were codified so that windows were located to the left of pupils, where previous codes dictate either the left or rear. Minimum ventilation was dictated, "forty cubic feet of air per pupil per minute",¹⁵ and heating was set at a minimum temperature of 70 degrees, notably without lessening the fresh air requirements. A 1912 article in the *Passaic Daily Herald* noted, without specificity, that toilet accommodations were to be regulated as well.¹⁶ Of particular note was the added fire code, which specified that the mechanical equipment must be located in a fireproof room; fire escapes, previously permitted, would be replaced with stairs that led directly to the ground; doors must easily open to the exterior and at corridors be

¹³ Howard Green, "Chapter 2."

¹⁴ "Has Announced Building Code: State Board of Education to Take Better Care of Health of Pupils," *Passaic Daily Herald*, (June 27, 1912), page 6.

¹⁵ "Has Announced Building Code: State Board of Education to Take Better Care of Health of Pupils."

¹⁶ "Has Announced Building Code: State Board of Education to Take Better Care of Health of Pupils."

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rated; and any building three or more stories must be of fireproof construction.¹⁷ An article in *The Morning Call*, a Paterson-based newspaper, from October 4, 1912, noted that a new school being constructed in the city of three stories was required by the state architect to include fire-proof construction, which added \$35,000 to the cost of construction.¹⁸ This requirement for three-story buildings may have made larger school buildings in rural areas cost prohibitive helping to drive the wide-spread model of modest two-room school buildings.

According to Howard Green, from 1911 to 1930 was possibly the greatest period of school expansion in New Jersey with 1,024 new school buildings and the renovation or enlargement of 1,002 existing school buildings. A review of newspaper articles from this time reinforces this prolific expansion of the state's educational system in response to growing populations, a greater emphasis on the importance of education, and increased regulation from the state and local school boards in urban and rural areas as well as the newly emerging suburbs.

Schools in Roxbury and the Berkshire Valley

The first known school in the Lower Berkshire Valley was built circa 1850. Little is known of this particular school, but looking at the broader history of education in New Jersey, the school would have been started and funded by the local citizens. Its establishment also predates the first permanent church in the area; the Lower Berkshire Valley Methodist Church was not established until circa 1865. This school building suffered a fire and was replaced by another school building on the same foundation in 1871.¹⁹

Aligning with the broad patterns of public education in New Jersey, from the onset of public school education, each neighborhood had its own schoolhouse; so by the 1890s, some Townships had multiple and often under-funded schools without an established curriculum and a varied level of competence in education fundamentals. As such, in 1894, the state legislature amended the law for each municipality to establish a single, central school district; this resulted in the number of school districts in the state going from 1408 to just under 400.²⁰ As such, by 1876, each of the six sections of Roxbury had their own "district school," most of which were one-room schoolhouses.²¹ In 1894, as a result of the new legislation, the Roxbury centralized school district was formed with a nine-member Board of Education that mandated uniform supplies, calendar, and hiring practices for all schools within the township.²²

¹⁷ "Has Announced Building Code: State Board of Education to Take Better Care of Health of Pupils."

¹⁸ "To Modify Plans for New School: Architect Fanning Will Seek to Cut Cost of New No. 9," *The Morning Call*, (October 4, 1912), page 1.

¹⁹ Annie Stelce Hosking, Harriet Meeker, Ruthann Seraly, Frances Lyman, Janis French, and Margaret Cushing, Eds., *The History of Roxbury Township: History, Tales, Statistics, Pictures, Vol. I* (Boonton, NJ: DIVERSI-COMM, 1994), 53.

²⁰ Howard Green, "Chapter 3 – The School System Emerges 1880 – 1945."

²¹ In 1890, the one-room c. 1876 schoolhouse Port Morris was abandoned and replaced by a larger four-room building as this area saw an increase in population spurred by increase immigration from local iron-related industries. (Hosking, Meeker, etc., 54)

²² Marge Cushing, "Roxbury's schools: A rich history of education," *Home for the Holidays: Supplement to Roxbury Register, Randolph Reporter, Mt. Olive Chronicle, and The Citizen* (New Jersey Hills Media Group, 2015), 3-4.

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Under the direction of the Roxbury Board of Education, school construction to replace the earlier one-room schoolhouses began. In 1904, the Succasunna and Kenvil schools were abandoned and a new school was constructed to serve both communities including adding high school classes in 1907; the high school was also open to students in neighboring towns (Randolph, Chester, Hopatcong, Jefferson and Mt. Arlington). In 1918, another school, Lincoln School, was constructed near the 1904 school to serve as the high school. This school included indoor and outdoor athletic facilities, a library, and an auditorium.²³

Lafayette School

At Lower Berkshire Valley, the circa 1871 school building remained until the Lafayette School was constructed in 1921 as a two-room schoolhouse. Based on the rate of school construction in Roxbury other than in Succasunna, the construction of a new school in 1921 may reflect more on the condition of the circa 1871 school rather than an increase in the school’s population; it was not until 1938, when rapid population growth in Roxbury spurred by construction of Route 10, did additional school construction occur once again.²⁴

The architect of the Lafayette School was Rasmussen & Wayland of New York City, a firm that designed several other New Jersey schools including Newton High School (1916), an addition at a school in Mountain Lakes (1920), a school in Westwood (1920), a grade school in Roselle (1921), a grade school in Morris Plains (1921), a high school in Rutherford (1921), a school in Chatham (1922), a grade school in Newton (1922), an addition at a school in Whippany (1922), an addition at Roxbury High School (1922), and a school in Florham Park (1933). The general contractor was Gallo Brothers of Netcong,²⁵ who also built the Palace Theatre in Netcong and several other public buildings including schools and churches. The mechanical/electrical/plumbing contractor was J. T. Kerr & Co of Dover, who worked at other public buildings including installation of the heating system in Wharton High School (1921). Building contracts and technical specifications for the school refer to it simply as “Grade School” in Berkshire Valley, NJ or “Roxbury Township Grammar School for Berkshire Valley.”²⁶

Lafayette School was built as a one-story rubble stone and concrete building with basement topped by a hipped roof with asbestos roofing shingles laid in a hexagonal pattern and flashed with copper. The interior had a moveable partition²⁷ to create two separate classrooms but allowed for a single assembly when the partition was in the fully open position. Although the drawings are no longer available, the surviving building contract or technical specifications provide a number of specific details: the bathrooms were located in the basement; Bangor slate was used for the chalkboards; the interior partition was specified as an allowance; the stair construction was specified; the finishes were a mix of

²³ Hosking, Meeker, etc., 57.

²⁴ Hosking, Meeker, etc., 57.

²⁵ Building contract for Grade School in Berkshire Valley, N.J. between Gallo Bros. and the Board of Education of Roxbury Township. On file in the archives of the Morris County Heritage Commission.

²⁶ Building contract for Grade School in Berkshire Valley, N.J.; and General specifications for Roxbury Township Grammar School for Berkshire Valley. On file in the archives of the Morris County Heritage Commission.

²⁷ General specifications for Roxbury Township Grammar School for Berkshire Valley.

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plaster on wood lath and plaster on metal lath depending on location; there is reference to fire-rated construction between the basement and first floor levels; each room could accommodate 40 students; and the roof was originally specified as slate, and the flashings and built-in gutter were originally specified as tin but changed to asbestos shingles and copper, respectively, as part of a contract amendment. Beyond locating the mechanical systems and the bathrooms at the basement level there was no specificity in how the basement was to be used; however, it is probable the basement was used as an indoor play area or gymnasium given this was often standard practice in school construction by 1921. During the first school year, only one classroom was used for all eight grades. For the second year, another teacher was hired who taught the youngest three grades.²⁸

The Lafayette School follows a pattern of two-room schoolhouses that was advanced through the 1874 State Superintendent report, and it takes on many of the layout and material choices advanced for school construction as adopted in the 1913 code requirements specified by the State Board of Education for new schools. The Superintendent's report published plans for one, two, and three-room schoolhouses aimed at rural districts that did not have ready access to architects.²⁹ This was followed in 1913 by the state architect publishing standard plans for one, two, three, four, six, eight, and twelve room plans that boards of education could provide to their architects to follow. These publications of standardized plans in conjunction with an established building code appear to have influenced the extensive building of two-room schools around New Jersey and become a proven successful model for school construction in rural areas until the mid-twentieth century.³⁰

Lafayette School was used until 1964 when the Jefferson Elementary School was constructed in Succasunna and all students from Lower Berkshire Valley were sent there. The Lafayette School was used for a few more years for special classes before ceasing use for educational purposes.³¹ In the 1970s it was used for the headquarters of the Roxbury Civil Defense. In 1987, an accessible ramp was installed to the first floor and the basement level was renovated with modern finishes. The two interior stairs that provided access between the basement and first floor levels were removed. All of these changes were made so the building could house a nutrition and community center. In 2009, the nutrition center was moved out and the Lafayette School has since been used for Township storage of primarily athletic equipment.

Significance under Criterion C – Architecture

The Lafayette School is a late surviving example of a two-room schoolhouse, a building type that was popular from the 1880s through the 1930s, particularly in New Jersey's rural school districts due to efforts by the State Superintendent to disseminate standardized plans for school buildings. The codification of schoolhouse construction began c. 1832 with writings by William A. Alcott in the *Annals*

²⁸ Hosking, Meeker, etc., 51.

²⁹ "Report of the State Board of Education and the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, for the Year Ending August 31, 1874."

³⁰ Craig, 3.

³¹ Hosking and Meeker, 51.

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of *Education* published in Boston.³² Alcott was a teacher and during his lifetime wrote on topics such as education reform, physical education, and schoolhouse design. This work coincided with other individuals advocating school reform. In 1850, Henry Barnard published *School Architecture; or Contributions to the Improvement of School-Houses*. The book outlines the author's ideas on school house design including common errors to avoid; general principles to observe; and provided sample plans and directions for constructing and finishing school buildings including those that are appropriate for the city versus the country.³³ New Jersey's first state school superintendent encouraged local school committees to adopt the school design recommendations (all the way down to the desk design and configuration) from Barnard and others in the designs for new school buildings. Such adoptions resulted in a standardized approach to school architecture beginning as early as the mid-nineteenth century that was carried into the twentieth century.³⁴

As previously noted, in 1874, soon after the 1871 school reform legislation, the annual State Superintendent report included suggested plans for one, two, and three-room schoolhouses, which subsequently were widely adopted in the rural areas and the two-room options continued to be constructed up to the start of World War II.³⁵ Earlier two-room schools that predated the State's standardized plans, more often took the form of a two-story building with one classroom on each floor, while the standardized plans featured two classrooms side-by-side. These standardized schools were typically one-story, symmetrical masonry or wood-frame buildings with a central projecting entrance and a low hipped or side-gable roof. Some featured a raised basement level and a central cupola or roof ventilator.

A search of early-twentieth-century newspapers and State Superintendent Reports reveal construction of two-room schools was prevalent during the first three decades of the twentieth century and continued, though less frequent, into the 1930s. A small sampling of two-room schools constructed during this time include schools in Clifton in 1905, Lincroft (Middletown) in 1907, Freehold in 1911, Hamilton in 1914, Green Township in 1921, Gloucester City in 1922, and Wall Township in 1931. In Morris County, where Lafayette School is located and a county of which parts remained rural into the mid-twentieth century, there were several known examples including in Denville Township, Montville Township, Rockaway Township, Washington Township, two in Parsippany-Troy Hills Township, and possibly two in Hanover Township. By the mid-to-late 1930s, even in rural areas, favor was shifting away from one- and two-room schools as they were considered outmoded. At a 1935 public meeting to discuss whether to close or adapt a two-room school in Piscataway, one parent stated "he would rather send his children some place else rather than put them in a two-room school."³⁶ A 1937 article in Paterson's *Morning Call* stated, "The rural school of today has developed far beyond the one and two room school of yesterday. ...we can feel proud that our State and communities have taken stpes (sic) to do away with the rural one

³² Craig, 3.

³³ Henry Barnard, *School Architecture; or Contributions to the Improvement of School-Houses* (New York: A.S. Barnes & Co., 1850), 39.

³⁴ Craig, 3.

³⁵ Craig, 4.

³⁶ "School and Country Life," *Morning Call* (November 14, 1935), 4.

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and two room school and have substituted the modern building with its modern methods of teaching.”³⁷ Despite these attitudes, one source stated in 1940 there were still 144,000 one and two room school houses in use across the United States³⁸.

The Lafayette School is a two-room schoolhouse that was designed by an architect who utilized Craftsman influences in its architectural articulation, a stylistic approach that was widely used in residential architecture in the early-twentieth century in the newly emerging suburbs. The plan very closely adheres to one of the two-room schoolhouse designs provided in 1874. Specifically, the design consisting of a central front entrance with foyer leading to two rooms set side-by-side and split in the center by a folding partition. (Figure 4) Other features included closets lining the front of the classroom and plenty of windows on the remaining three sides. The design also shows the first-floor level set several steps above grade and tall windows in the classrooms. Ventilating shaft were a recommended features creating the need for a belfry or cupola at the roof. The exterior design provided in the report shows a building articulated in the Carpenter Gothic style (Figure 5), but the simple rectangular plan was easily adapted to a variety of stylistic influences as seen in other two-room schoolhouses constructed in the region.

The Craftsman style employed at the Lafayette School by the architectural firm of Rasmussen & Wayland of New York City, as applied to architecture, began in the 1880s in England but carried over to the United States quickly. The style was based on a movement of designers away from the mass production and overly ornate architectural vocabulary of the Beaux-Arts, Queen Anne, and Gothic stylings popular beginning in the last half of the nineteenth century. The emphasis was on both the simple use of materials and on craftsmanship rather than mass production.³⁹ In the United States, the architectural style was attractive to both homeowners and the developers of the newly emerging suburbs because it catered to the demands of the emerging middle class; the houses were affordable, efficient, and attractive.⁴⁰ The importance of craftsman architecture is seen in the articulation of the materials through the simple use of stone, wood, tile (even concrete), stucco on the exterior, and there was a preference for open spaces and efficient layouts to eliminate waste. Rooflines were typically simple of low-pitched hips or gables with deep overhangs. The articulation of the materials and forms was also simple harkening to the simplicity of a farmhouse but adapted to modern requirements for housing.

Given the Craftsman style’s popularity in the emerging and growing suburbs in the 1920s when the Lafayette School was constructed and the historical precedent that schools often resembled residential forms, adoption of the style on a simple form shows the adaptability of the two-room school plan, and the reverse, of the Craftsman style to a simple institutional building. The architects’ intent, although not specifically written, was for the Lafayette School to blend with the neighborhood in what may have been showing signs of residential growth by 1921. Such features of the Craftsman style include the

³⁷ “Residents Debate Randolphville School Closing,” *Courier News* (April 28, 1937), 4.

³⁸ “Improved Educational Facilities,” *Keansburg News* (March 29, 1940), 10.

³⁹ James C. Massey and Shirley Maxwell, *Houses Styles in America* (New York, NY: The Penguin Group, 1996), 189.

⁴⁰ Robert P. Guter and Janet W. Foster, *Building by the Book: Pattern-Book Architecture in New Jersey* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992), 198.

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articulation of the fieldstone masonry on the exterior, the use of a shallow hip roof, and a simple interior plan. The design also employs, in the simplest manner, some Colonial-Revival features including the large multi-pane windows, a deep wood entablature, and a small pediment distinguishing the front entrance, which again speak to the popular residential design features. However, the Colonial-Revival influences are not ornate, enhancing the masonry of the building, and therefore continue to reflect the Craftsman ethos of economy, attractiveness, and simplicity.

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Verbal Boundary Description

The northern boundary is Mill Road, and the eastern, southern, and western boundaries each are a line ten feet beyond the respective elevation of Lafayette School.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries were chosen to include the Lafayette School and the land immediately surrounding the building, as the use of the site has changed from its historic use.

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Photo Log

Name of Property: Lafayette School
 City or Vicinity: Roxbury Township
 County: Morris State: New Jersey
 Photographer: Margaret M. Hickey, AIA
 Date Photographed: November 7, 2019

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

Photo 0001: Overall view of the front (north) elevation of Lafayette School; camera facing south.

Photo 0002: Close-up view of typical original wood windows at the first floor level.

Photo 0003: View of original stone steps that remain but are encapsulated under concrete; camera facing southwest.

Photo 0004: Overall view of the east side elevation; camera facing northwest.

Photo 0005: Overall view of the west and south elevations; camera facing northeast.

Photo 0006: Overall view of the rear (south) elevation; camera facing north.

Photo 0007: Overall view of the main basement-level space showing typical late-twentieth-century finishes, which hide some still intact earlier finishes; camera facing west.

Photo 0008: View of the mechanical roof showing cast-on-place concrete walls; camera facing north.

Photo 0009: Overall view of the entry vestibule; camera facing east.

Photo 0010: Overall view of the two classroom spaces with the dividing partition removed; camera facing east.

Photo 0011: Partial view of the original ceiling above the acoustical tiles at the first floor, showing scarring from the removed center partition that divided the two classrooms.

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Photo 0012: View of the existing kitchen, which was added in the late-twentieth century; camera facing north.

Photo 0013: View showing typical treatment of a first-floor original window where the suspended ceiling divides the upper and lower sashes.

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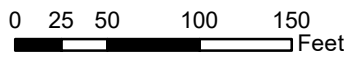
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New Jersey and National Registers Nomination
 79 Mill Road, Roxbury Township,
 Morris County,
 New Jersey

Boundary and tax map

Legend

-  NJ & NR boundary
-  Coordinates
-  Tax Parcels



Datum: NAD 1983 State Plane New Jersey

4.29 Acres



*NJDEP,
 Historic Preservation Office
 April 2021*

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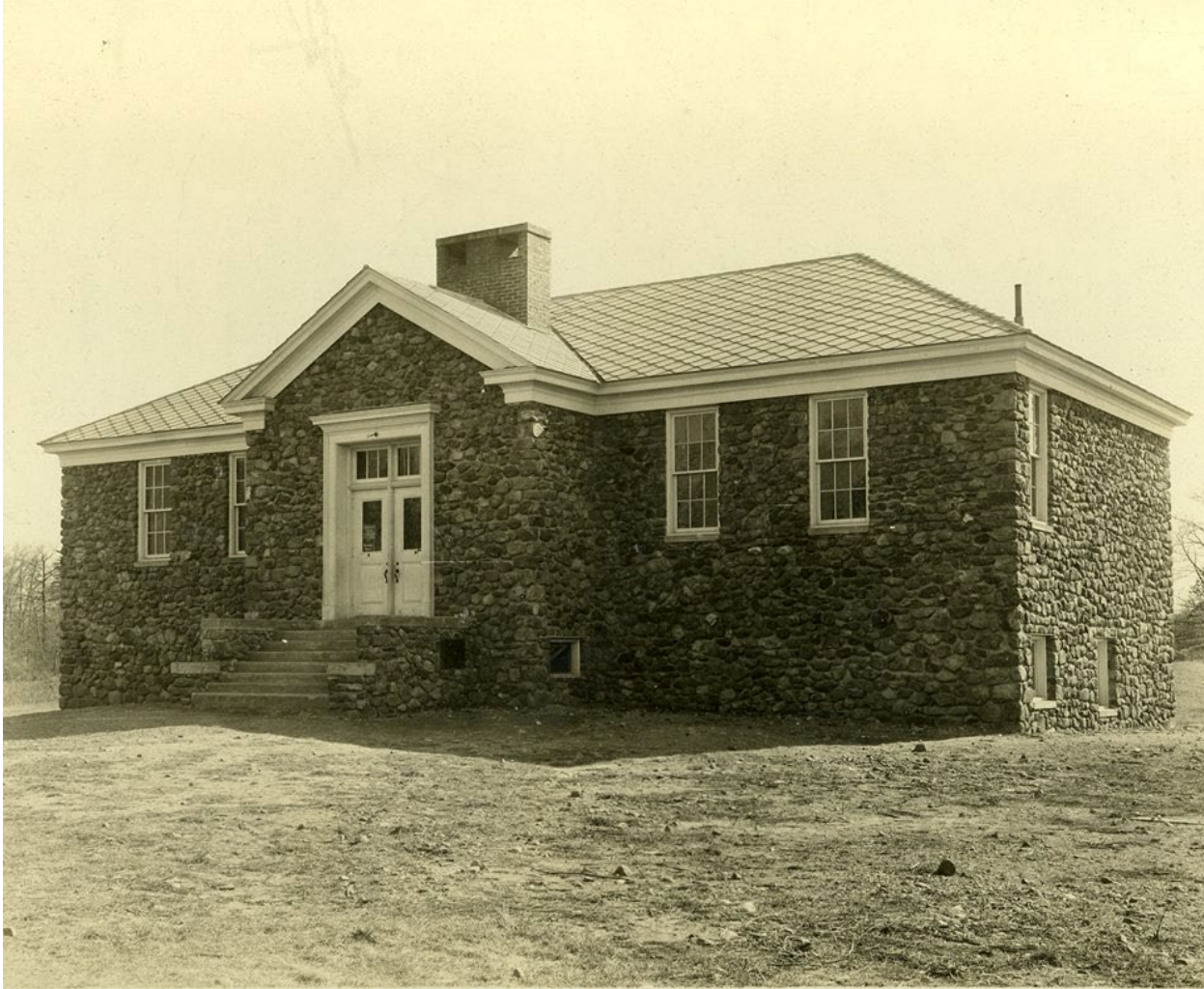


Figure 1. Circa 1922 view of the Lafayette School. Note the original entrance stairs, door surround, and cornice which are obscured today. Also note, the original roofing material was asbestos tile.¹

¹ Image courtesy of the Lower Berkshire Valley Historical Society.

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Figure 2. 1922 (partial) view of the Lafayette School showing school children on the front stairs.²

² Image courtesy of the Lower Berkshire Valley Historical Society.

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Figure 3. Early-to-mid-twentieth-century view showing the rear of Lafayette School. Note the second-floor bands of windows that are currently obscured by vinyl siding and the basement level before the current entrance was added.³

³ Image courtesy of Jaki Albrecht, Roxbury Township Councilwoman.

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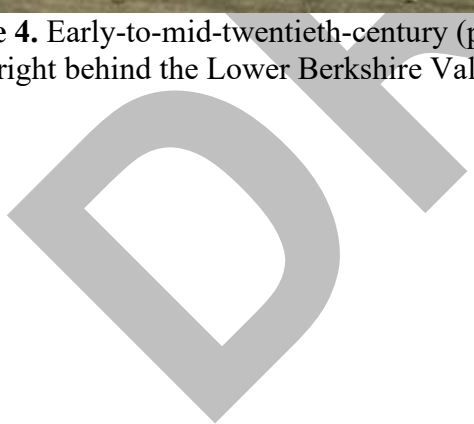
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Figure 4. Early-to-mid-twentieth-century (partial) view showing the rear of the Lafayette School visible to the right behind the Lower Berkshire Valley United Methodist Church.⁴



⁴ Image courtesy of the Lower Berkshire Valley Historical Society.

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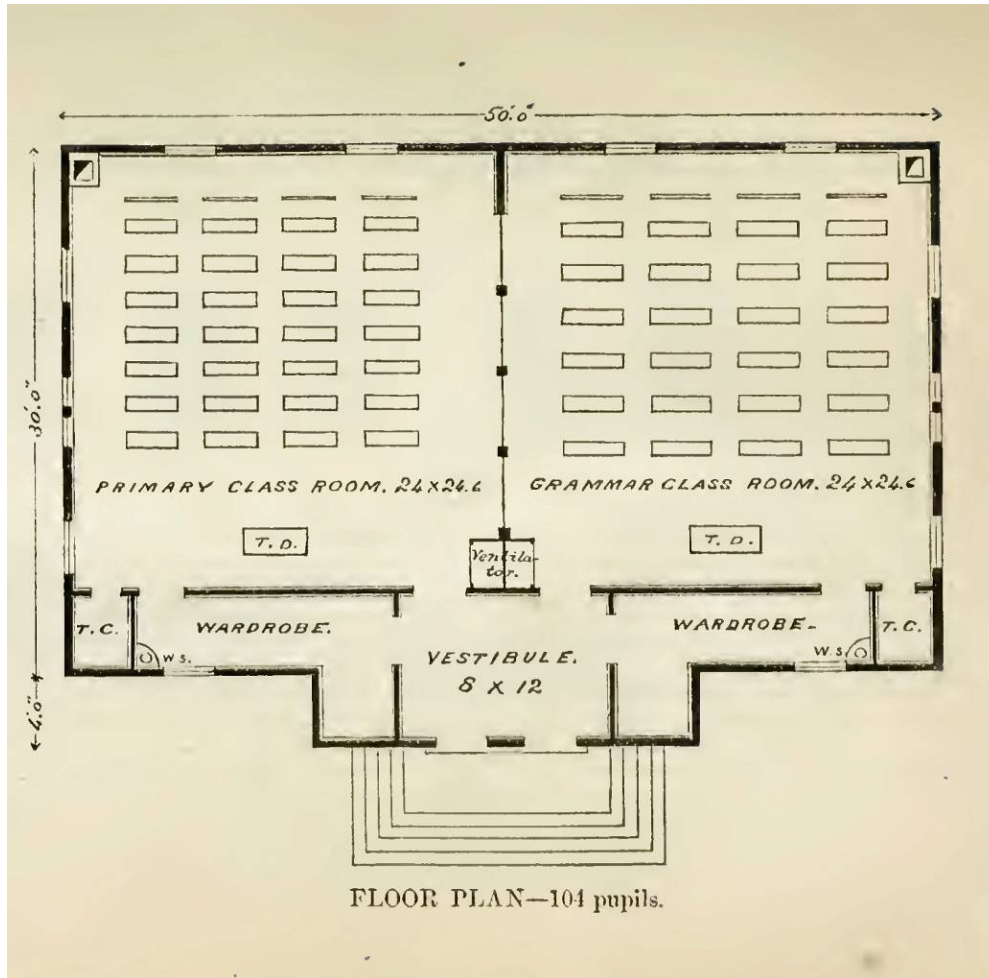


Figure 5. Floor plan of a two-room schoolhouse similar to Lafayette School.⁵

⁵ "Report of the State Board of Education and the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, for the Year Ending August 31, 1874," page 59.

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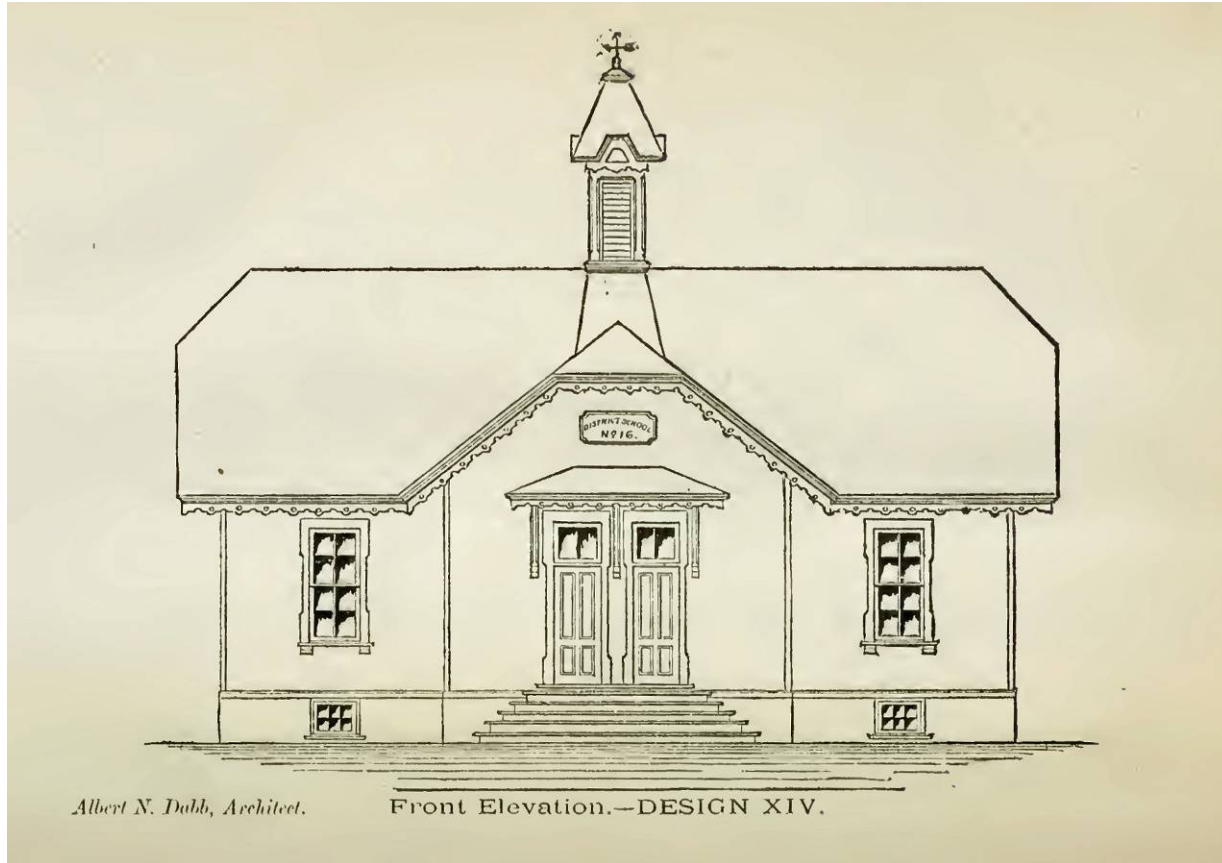


Figure 6. Elevation of a two-room schoolhouse similar to Lafayette School.⁶

⁶ "Report of the State Board of Education and the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, for the Year Ending August 31, 1874," page 58.

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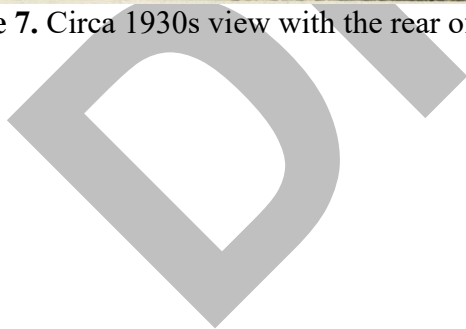
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Figure 7. Circa 1930s view with the rear of the Lafayette School visible in the background.⁷



⁷ Image courtesy of Jaki Albrecht, Roxbury Township Councilwoman.

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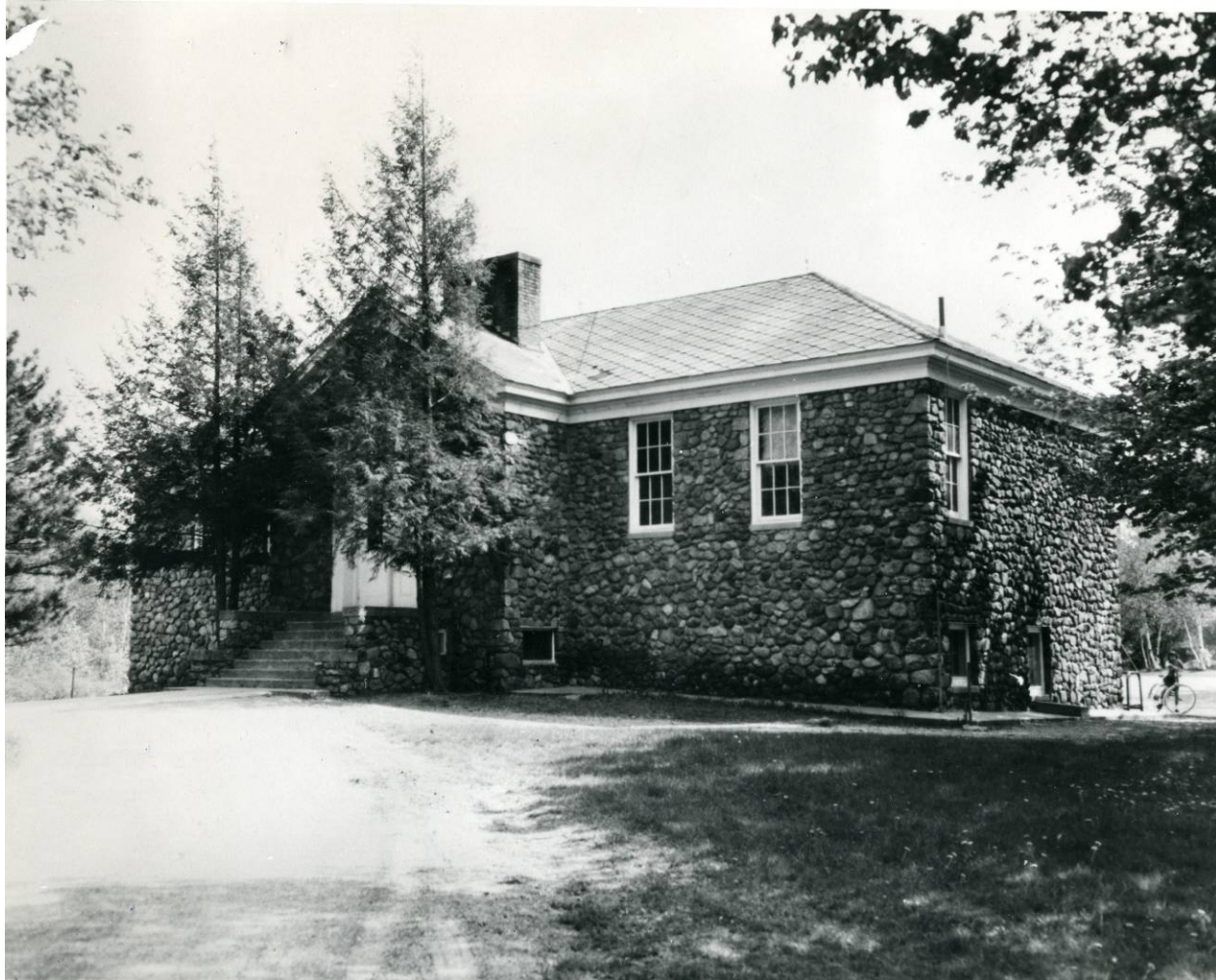


Figure 8. Circa 1960 image of the Lafayette School showing the building at that time had not been changed from its original appearance.

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Photo 0001: Overall view of the front (north) elevation of Lafayette School; camera facing south.



Photo 0002: Close-up view of typical original wood windows at the first floor level.

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Photo 0003: View of original stone steps that remain but are encapsulated under concrete; camera facing southwest.



Photo 0004: Overall view of the east side elevation; camera facing northwest.

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Photo 0005: Overall view of the west and south elevations; camera facing northeast.



Photo 0006: Overall view of the rear (south) elevation; camera facing north.

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Photo 0007: Overall view of the main basement-level space showing typical late-twentieth-century finishes, which hide some still intact earlier finishes; camera facing west.

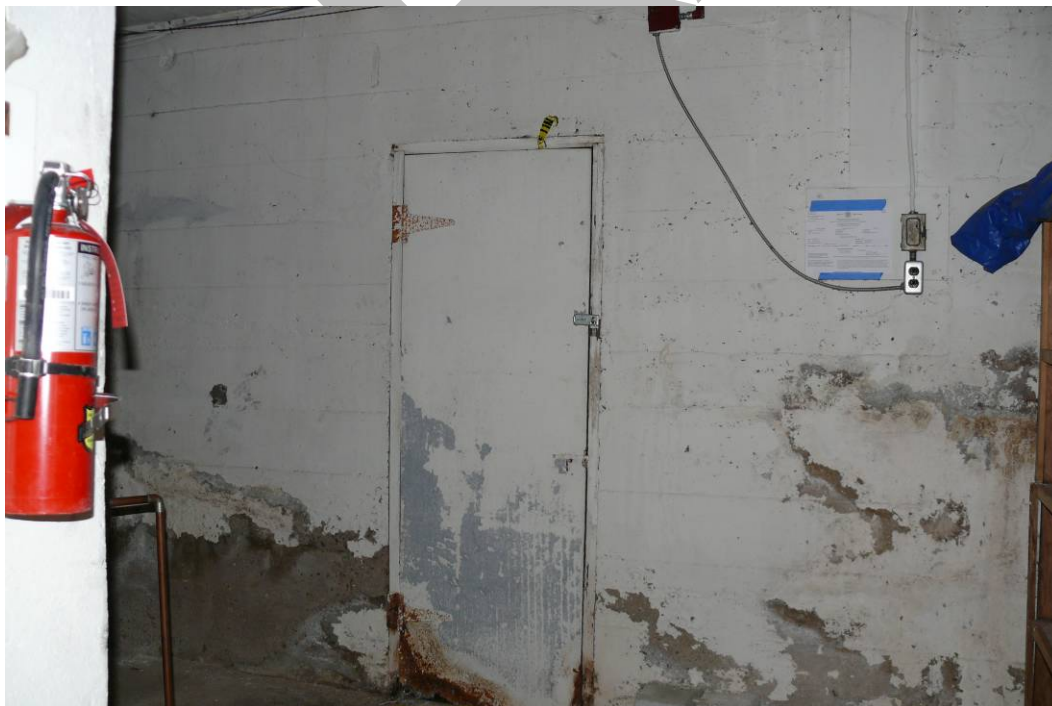


Photo 0008: View of the mechanical roof showing cast-on-place concrete walls; camera facing north.

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Photo 0009: Overall view of the entry vestibule; camera facing east.



Photo 0010: Overall view of the two classroom spaces with the dividing partition removed; camera facing east.

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Photo 0011: Partial view of the original ceiling above the acoustical tiles at the first floor, showing scarring from the removed center partition that divided the two classrooms.

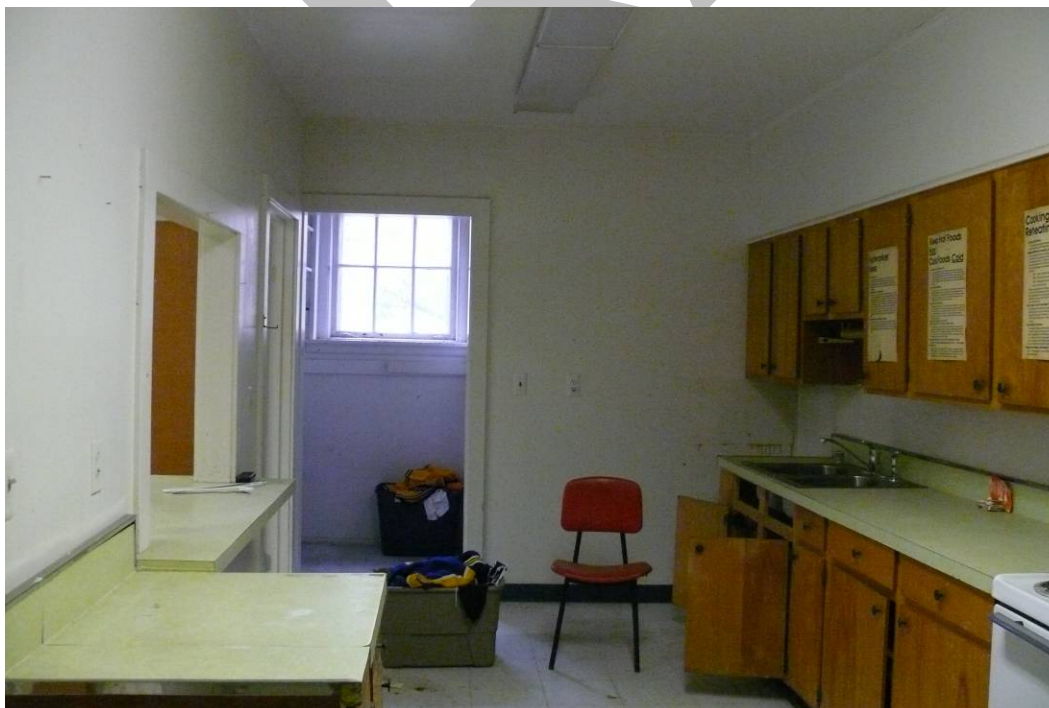


Photo 0012: View of the existing kitchen, which was added in the late-twentieth century; camera facing north.

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Photo 0013: View showing typical treatment of a first-floor original window where the suspended ceiling divides the upper and lower sashes.