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Creating Home: Reuse of Vacant Philadelphia Schools for Permanent Supportive Housing

Peter Hiller
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Creating Home: Reuse of Vacant Philadelphia Schools for Permanent Supportive Housing

Abstract
Since 2000, many of Philadelphia’s failing, mid-century, public housing towers have been demolished and replaced with low-rise, mixed-income developments that successfully integrate low-income—and potentially homeless—families and individuals into the community. Many Philadelphians, however, are still without a home, are in need, and are out of place. Furthermore, in the last decade, over thirty of Philadelphia’s historic schools have been shut down and vacated due to cuts to the school district budget, declining enrollment, and district politics; some of these entities, however, have consolidated or moved to new state-of-the-art buildings that serve them better, leaving the old structures vacant, obsolete, and also ‘out of place’: displaced from their original contexts by the passage of time, without a home in the present.

There is a need for more public housing, and there are resources in these vacant buildings. Abandoning the public housing typology of the 1950s and applying a New Urbanist plan, vacant schools can be transformed into mixed income housing. Through an investigation of the concept of home, an examination of permanent supportive housing, along with case studies of adapted school buildings and a proposal for the former George W. Childs Elementary, this thesis seeks to answer whether an obsolete historic Philadelphia school can provide successful permanent supportive housing for the homeless—two entities that are ‘out of place,’ but are two urban issues that can potentially solve each other.

Keywords
adaptive reuse, vacancy, SDP, affordance, obsolescence

Disciplines
Historic Preservation and Conservation

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CREATING HOME:
REUSE OF VACANT PHILADELPHIA SCHOOL BUILDINGS
FOR PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

Peter Caleb Hiller

A THESIS

in

Historic Preservation

Presented to the Faculties of the University of Pennsylvania in
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN HISTORIC PRESERVATION

2017

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Creating Home:
Reuse of Vacant Philadelphia Schools for Permanent Supportive Housing

Peter Caleb Hiller
Most people spend their lives in search of home, at the gap between the natural home and the particular ideal home where they would be fully fulfilled.

Aviezer Tucker
This work is dedicated to those who have ever struggled with homelessness and to those who have devoted their lives to solve it.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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and to the wild 2017 Historic Preservation thesis cohort,

I extend my gratitude.
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**INTRODUCTION**

Since 2000, many of Philadelphia’s failing, mid-century, public housing towers have been demolished and replaced with low-rise, mixed-income developments that successfully integrate low-income—and potentially homeless—families and individuals into the community. Many Philadelphians, however, are still without a home, are in need, and are out of place. Furthermore, in the last decade, over thirty of Philadelphia’s historic schools have been shut down and vacated due to cuts to the school district budget, declining enrollment, and district politics; some of these entities, however, have consolidated or moved to new state-of-the-art buildings that serve them better, leaving the old structures vacant, obsolete, and also ‘out of place’: displaced from their original contexts by the passage of time, without a home in the present.

There is a need for more public housing, and there are resources in these vacant buildings. Abandoning the public housing typology of the 1950s and applying a New Urbanist plan, vacant schools can be transformed into mixed income housing. Through an investigation of the concept of home, an examination of permanent supportive housing, along with case studies of adapted school buildings and a proposal for the former George W. Childs Elementary, this thesis seeks to answer whether an obsolete historic Philadelphia school can provide successful permanent supportive housing for the homeless—two entities that are ‘out of place,’ but are two urban issues that can potentially solve each other.
In the quest for the creation of a home, a proper investigation into the meaning of that concept is necessary. ‘Home’ has been the subject of much research and academic writing in psychology, anthropology, architecture, archaeology, and philosophy, but its relationship to homelessness sways toward literature in the field of sociology. This investigation begins with defining terms in order to discuss the theories of home and dwelling and homelessness.

While the term is used in both academic literature and everyday speech, the concept of ‘home’ is not as universal or timeless as one might assume. Indeed, “not all languages and cultures seem to have a word for home.” The absence of a word in a given language or culture, however, does not entail the absence of the concept or meaning of that thing. Furthermore, the modern conception of comfort—a word almost synonymous with ‘home,’ according to Witold Rybczynski—domestic or otherwise, did not exist in Western culture until the 18th Century. Nevertheless, its use over the past two hundred years and the attempt here to create it merits an attempt to define ‘home.’ Henry Coolen and Janine Meesters analyzed the meaning of three terms—house, home, and dwelling—and their relationships both to each other and to humans, in their aptly named essay, “House, Home and Dwelling.” From their analysis, we can draw conclusions about the best term, or terms, to use. ‘House’ and ‘dwelling’ often refer to physical things, while ‘home’ is often a term used to refer to a less concrete system of concepts or a system of concepts that include both the physical and conceptual.

The word “house” most often describes the physical structures in which people live.

In Western culture, it is essentially synonymous with a single-family house, which could be explained by the fact that research on housing is predominantly Western oriented. However, 90% of the world’s population does not live in this type of dwelling. The word, then, is not an appropriate term for the purposes of this investigation because of its ambiguity and Western-centric implications and the necessity to distinguish between physical and conceptual properties. As Amos Rapoport argues, the term “dwelling” is more appropriate, as it covers different types of physical structures built and used for living.

Rapoport defines a dwelling “as the system of settings, being a subsystem of the environment, that affords certain systems of functions which make it for the inhabitants the primary anchor in the environment.” This definition contains several terms that require further explanation: ‘system of functions,’ ‘primary anchor,’ ‘environment,’ and ‘setting.’ A “system of functions” refers to a system of activity, or possible actions, which equate with its function. These actions comprise things like sleeping, eating, relaxing, entertaining other people, etc.; they can also include “socio-psychological functions,” like “family life, safety, privacy.” These are not activities but conditions or states of being that a physical thing offers or provides for a person. When speaking of a dwelling, it always refers to the physical structure or objects, and these are the things that have functions for the inhabitants.

The term “primary anchor” refers to a place, or “operating base,” of “shelter and concealment, and the place from which most people undertake activities, explore and experience the world and where they return.” The home, however, is more than the ‘place

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5 Ibid, 2.
9 Coolen and Meesters, 2011, 2.
10 Ibid.
of retreat’ that Coolen and Meesters make it out to be. It is an enabling system of functions not only within the home, but also beyond. ‘Dwellers’ maintain the sense of security that a home affords outside of the walls of the dwelling. The knowledge (or assumption) that the individual’s belongings are secure, that they have a safe place to which to return, a place where they belong, may be the enabling force that allows them to go out into the world and undertake other activities. While homes manifest themselves differently across cultures, “a dwelling can be considered a cultural artefact, which implies the existence of more or less shared conceptions of dwellings...”11 within a culture.

“Environment” refers to a combination of “subsystems” which include the dwelling itself and the “dwelling environment.” This latter term comprises of “settings that afford functions which the inhabitants want to be realized in the immediate vicinity,”12 i.e. shops, schools, parks, churches, playgrounds, theaters, food sources, and other dwellings.

“Setting” in general could refer to the room-program combination, or the combination of the furniture, as well as machines and tools in the case of a kitchen, for example, where the combination of a stove and a table in a space or room create a system that is the kitchen. The combination of things is the setting, which enables or “affords” functions to be realized, like cooking and eating, in the kitchen example. The system of settings, or combination of combinations, as it were, produces the dwelling.

The verb “dwelling” means something “more than activities; it encompasses the performance and experience of all the affordances that make it a dwelling for the individual.”13 In other words, “to dwell” refers not only to doing, but also being; it refers to executing the functions that the dwelling enables, as well as the consciousness or subconsciousness that the systems exist and that the individual is therefore afforded certain

12 Coolen and Meesters, 2011. 3.
13 Ibid.
functions. This is perhaps partly from where Rybczynski’s comfort
comes as well, i.e. from a sense of security, but it is certainly more than “experience”. The security and comfort that a home affords extends beyond the walls: the feelings of security and comfort remain with the individual when outside the dwelling, during the day while at work, for example, or when traveling, even for an extended period of time.

The term ‘home,’ as understood by several authors in the 1990s and 2000s, has at least five “facets” with regard to the concept to which the word refers. It is also worth noting that Rapaport, and Blunt and Dowling, make the point that ‘home’ is almost always referred to in positive way, “embedded in positive feelings and affective bonds.”

First, there is the object and the relationship people have with it. In other words, ‘home’—the concept and the word itself—can refer to the physical as well as the meaning that people attach to this physical thing. Després calls this facet (of the concept of home) the “material structure,” Moore, the “physical aspects,” and Blunt and Dowling simply the “place or site” in which we live. ‘Place,’ in some definitions of the word, encapsulates the idea of both the physical and meaningful. A home is also the meaning which individuals attach

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14 Rybczynski.
20 Coolen and Meesters, 2011. 3.
21 Ibid.
to the material fabric.\textsuperscript{25, 26} For the purposes of this investigation, ‘dwelling’ will refer to the physical structure, and ‘home’ will refer to the meaning attached to the physical structure. “Meaning of a home” is tautological, therefore, since home is essentially the meaning of a dwelling. Rybczynski touches on the connection between dwelling and meaning when he speaks of domesticity, which “has to do with family, intimacy, and a devotion to the home, as well as with a sense of the house as embodying—not only harboring—these sentiments.”\textsuperscript{27}

Of course, that meaning cannot exist without the physicality of the fabric or a person who attaches meaning to it. The objective of this thesis is to answer the question as to whether a home can be created from a vacant school building. At its essence, this is a question of whether meaning can be created; and if it can, eventually it is a question of how it can be done.

A second facet of the concept of home is the \textit{spatial dimension}. This is different from the object or the physical aspects of the dwelling. It is a facet that arises due to the use of the word in everyday speech to mean a range of physical spaces: house, neighborhood, town, state, and country,\textsuperscript{28, 29} or even planet, particularly in words like hometown and homeland.\textsuperscript{30} In phrases like “going back home,” for example, the word ‘home’ could refer to any of the spatial, dimensional loci listed above, and oftentimes the meaning is discernible relative to the context or the current location of the person who is using the phrase.

There is an element of time in the meaning of the word ‘home,’ and thus a third facet is the \textit{temporal}. The existence of this particular meaning is partly found in the word’s everyday use, where ‘home’ can mean where one was “born and raised” or where one once lived happily.

\textsuperscript{25} Rapoport, 1995.
\textsuperscript{26} Moore, 2000.
\textsuperscript{27} Rybczynski, 75.
\textsuperscript{28} Mallet, 2004.
\textsuperscript{29} Blunt and Dowling, 2006.
\textsuperscript{30} Coolen and Meesters, 2011.
(note the positive association), or a person’s real home and birthplace, as opposed to a present
day situation of displacement of that person. The term can also refer to a future home, when
individuals who have never had one, hope someday to have a home for themselves. This
facet of the meaning also comes into play in the sense of nostalgia, which refers to the ache
of affection for the past and would not exist without a temporal separation from the past. It is
a feeling often associated with childhood and home, though it may be, as Rybczynski argues
(below), merely imagined.

The fourth is the facet of social relations. This refers to the concept of family or
household or a community of some kind. This could range from a group of friends, to
partners, to monks or nuns, soldiers, or people with a similar background, either ethnically,
e.g. “home to my people,” or experientially, e.g. veterans or perhaps homeless people who
live near each other within a city. A sense of community contributes to the meaning of a
place and fosters a sense of belonging. Sharing a living space is arguably the most intimate
thing an individual can do with another person, because they share with each other the most
unguarded self, since home is place that affords a person the ability to be unguarded, secure,
etc. “Domestic intimacy was a human invention as much as any technical device. Indeed, it
may have been more important, for it affected not only our physical surroundings, but our
consciousness as well.” Sharing private space with someone around whom an individual is
not comfortable to be unguarded prevents that person from “feeling at home,” because home
does not afford that person comfort or security or peace of mind. If a person is not allowed a
place of complete retreat, e.g. a shared bedroom versus a private bedroom, that person is less

31 S Brink. “Home: The term and the concept from a linguistic and settlement-historical viewpoint.” In
32 Coolen and Meesters, 2011. 4.
33 Rybczynski, 13.
34 Blunt and Dowling, 2006.
35 Coolen and Meesters, 2011. 4.
36 Rybczynski, 49.
likely to spend time willingly in more highly public or shared spaces like a living room or shared kitchen or community room.

The fifth facet refers to the difference between ‘product’ and ‘process.’ ‘Product’ is the home as a place (or thing) and people’s relationship to it, while ‘process’ is the action and procedure of “homemaking” as well as “establishing one’s identity in society.” In other words, the term implies an action—the creation of a home—and is perhaps the facet most relevant to this thesis.

We have established that ‘home’ refers to a meaning, and this meaning comes from a relationship between a physical thing and an individual. To create this meaning, then, we must create this relationship. A person gives meaning to a place, but can a place give meaning to a person or a person’s life? It is safe to say that a person has meaning in any circumstances, given that they are human, but can a place grant further meaning to a person? Perhaps it is the meaning that a person attaches to a place like their home that gives that person further meaning, either to themselves or to other people, i.e., the meaning that that person attaches to themselves due to the place where they live or, rather, the meaning of the place where they live. Perhaps it is a symbiotic, or reflexive, relationship of meaning.

Home is connected to memory—perhaps a collective memory. This is partly why the Chinatowns and Italian neighborhoods appear in ‘foreign’ cities, recreating that which is familiar, or why fashions and styles reference romantic periods of history and “evok[e] the atmosphere of traditional hominess and solid domesticity that is associated with the past.” This could be a reason for the continued establishment of suburban-like developments, which reference the idealized 1960s American home. Indeed, Rybczynski argues that “reverence

37 Rapoport, 1995.
38 Blunt and Dowling, 2006.
39 Rybczynski, 2.
40 Ibid, 9-10.
for the past has become so strong that when traditions do not exist, they are frequently invented,” and goes on to list examples, including the Colonial style, which exists more than any other reason because of the Centennial celebrations of 1876.41 “But whether the way of life is remembered, or simply imagined, it nevertheless signifies a widely held nostalgia,”42 or, in other words, a collective memory.

**Home: Affordances**

The environment, in relation to a human, is made of things that fit into five categories: other humans, animals, physical objects, social objects, and abstract objects.43 These form the setting for a dwelling. The types of objects listed above have meaning that comes from the “affordances” they offer.44

Affordances refer to “relations between features of objects and abilities of human beings”44 based on “intrinsic features that objects possess by virtue of their make up and are specified in relation to the individual” (e.g. A flat surface affords walking, a doorway affords opening and passage, a roof affords shelter from weather, and “a certain form of tenure affords independence.”46) Affordances are mutual relationships between environmental features and human beings,47 and environmental features are understood by their affordances. They do not have affordances without their relation to humans; they have no meaning without humans, since the meaning comes from their affordance, which is defined by the relationship between the object’s features and the human’s ability to use those features.

Furthermore, as argued above, there still exists this relationship whether the human is using

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41 Ibid.
42 Ibid, 13.
43 Coolen and Meesters, 2011. 4.
46 Coolen and Meesters, 2011. 4.
the object or not: it is not a relationship between the features and the use of those features, but the ability to use those features. However, this excludes sentimental objects that have no practical use, yet still seem to contribute meaning to the dwelling. The ability, perhaps, that a non-useful object affords is to remind the individual of a memory, while the individual has the ability to remember.

These features are only relevant through *intentional actions*. This relates to the act of homemaking mentioned above, for it refers to engaging with objects in the environment, by the “selection, the discovery, and the creation” of features. 48 Oftentimes this is limited by socially—or culturally—sanctioned choices, but these are outside of the individual’s control. Intentional actions are also needed for discovery of new affordances and features of objects. The creation of new affordances occurs “when the range of possibilities available are insufficient to meet certain goals.”49 “Individuals do not merely take the world as they find it; the environment is continually being modified. Many of these activities are efforts to create new affordances in order to address specific individual and socio-cultural needs.” This relates to the topic of this thesis within the creation of home for the homeless from a vacant school building, as well as the creation of affordances within the home by its inhabitants, who modify it to make it their own and suit their needs as they see fit. This can apply both to individuals in a dwelling and people creating homes for others or affecting the dwelling environment. The concept works at a range of scales.

“Every object has meaning that distinguishes it from other objects.”50 As mentioned above, “this meaning constitutes the nature of the object for the individual for whom the object exists;”51 the meaning itself is not inherent, but requires a human for the meaning to

49 Coolen and Meesters, 2011. 4.
50 Ibid, 5.
51 Ibid.
An affordance is a relationship. This is a relationship between an individual and a feature (or environmental object); or it is a relationship between the function (assigned by an individual) and the object. In other words, the affordance can only exist in the latter case because the individual is bridging the function and the object. The dwelling, for instance, can be understood holistically as an environmental object that affords shelter, sleeping, eating, entertaining guests, security, and concealment, etc.\textsuperscript{52} It is also possible to understand the setting of a dwelling as an environmental object, such as a park (or stoop), which affords the state of being outside and meeting people; while the holistic dwelling environment, or neighborhood, could afford safety.\textsuperscript{53} Rapoport distinguishes between two types of affordances, essentially the tangible and intangible, which he calls manifest and latent. Manifest affordances are things such as eating, sleeping, shopping, being outside, leisure activities, shelter, etc., while latent affordances, are things such as well-being, sense of community, privacy, peace and quiet, and sense of security.\textsuperscript{54}

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid, 7.
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{54} Rapoport, 1988.
Home & Homelessness

Understanding what is characteristic of home helps create successful housing for the homeless; understanding homelessness helps us define what is needed to create a home. In the literary discussion on home and homelessness, there is a polarity between the two that oversimplifies both concepts.\(^{55}\) Oftentimes, homelessness is understood as the absence of home, whereas Moore argues that it is more accurate and helpful to think of it as a presence in and of itself, that is, the presence of homelessness. It seems illogical to do the opposite and understand home as the absence of homelessness, though some scholars say that homelessness is the only way we can understand home, and, in fact, that without homelessness we would not be concerned with what home means.\(^{56}\) However, in comparative anthropology, differences in homes—even within a community or a city—could spark interest in the study of the concept of home in order to understand the differences and formulate a definition. Home and homelessness are not opposites, but comparing the two can certainly shed light on the definition of each.

However, the construction of the English word, ‘homeless,’ implies that the meaning is simply ‘lack of home.’ Nonetheless, the concept is not that simple. It seems as though a more appropriate word is perhaps ‘dwellinglessness;’ this implies, however, the person is merely without a dwelling, without shelter, but does not encapsulate the aspect of being without inclusion or association, or without a sense of belonging. A better way to define this aspect of homelessness is ‘a presence of exclusion.’

Homelessness, like home, has no universal definition.\(^{57}\) However, there is a general


\(^{56}\) Dovey. 1985.

\(^{57}\) Moore, 146.
consensus among some scholars that homelessness exists on a spectrum of housing, “ranging from living on the street to inadequate, insecure housing.” This is what Moore calls a “place-based perspective,” since it only takes into account the location and physicality of a dwelling. Other scholars argue that homelessness is a “series of deprivations of varying degrees,” going beyond the mere physicality of shelter. The United Nations Centre for Human Settlements asserts that “homelessness can be seen as a condition of detachment from society characterized by the lack of the affiliative bonds that link people into their social structures. Homelessness carries implications of belonging nowhere rather than having nowhere to sleep.” Moore states that “for some, homelessness may be mostly a chronic lack of permanent affordable accommodation,” or the physical shelter. “For others, it may be a result of some deeper societal disconnection through ‘an inability to be at home, to feel some connectivity through house, neighbourhood and wider community’ As opposed to the place-based perspective or physical context of homelessness, this perspective is founded on detachment from society. This detachment is where supportive services can come into play in permanent supportive housing, which addresses the underlying factors that lead to lack of permanence and chronic homelessness.

Homelessness has also been defined as the absence of home by contrasting it with the “ideal home” and “a past experienced home.” Watson and Austerberry researched what homeless women believed were the “core features of an ideal home: ...decent material

62 Moore, 146.
63 Ibid.
conditions, emotional and physical wellbeing, loving and caring social relations, control and privacy, and a sleeping/living place.” Smith adds a “lack of personal freedom and privacy and a lack of permanence are part of the absence of home.” Some scholars suggest that homelessness goes even further than this: “a loss of social and cultural belonging and a form of social exclusion.” Others argue that a home is the entity that “joins the identity of the person, the place, and the social context together.” This explains how homelessness impacts individuals socially, symbolically, and culturally, not to mention physically, and how they are excluded and ultimately “out of place.”

While there is something to be gained from exploring the absence of something to understand its presence, putting home and homelessness at opposite ends of a spectrum inhibits an understanding of how they overlap.

Home is a place; homelessness is a state of being. Aviezer Tucker argues that “most people spend their lives in search of home, at the gap between the natural home and the particular ideal home where they would be fully fulfilled.” (By “natural home,” Tucker simply means a physical environment suitable for human existence, like dry land.) The ideal home is an individual’s—perhaps abstract—conception of the home that that person desires. At any given time, the place where the person lives, or “actual home” “might be

70 Moore, 147.
71 Moore, 147.
73 Ibid.
[the individual’s] best approximation of [the] ideal home, under a given set of constraining circumstances.” This ‘best approximation’ theory is applicable to people on any point of the housing continuum.

74 Moore, 149.
Permanent Supportive Housing

Homelessness is an issue that plagues urban areas across the country, and there are multiple ways to combat it, from temporary shelters to subsidized affordable housing and voucher programs for permanent supportive housing. The goal of temporary housing is to offer a more or less transitional shelter or dwelling space to homeless individuals before obtaining permanent housing. People in this situation are still considered homeless, since they do not have a “home.” While they accommodate immediate needs, there is no permanence associated with homeless shelters, and they are therefore not homes. Permanent supportive housing addresses this issue head-on: nonprofit organizations offer chronically homeless people residences that combine with supportive services to help them lead stable lives and re-enter mainstream society. These organizations take people who are out of place in an urban setting and provide a place in which and to which they can belong—a place of pride and dignity.

New Urbanist-style public housing and permanent supportive housing began as reactions to the ‘islands of isolation’ that failing housing towers had become. They were plagued with crime, violence, and drug-use, isolated from the community by the form and placement on the site. Since 2000, many of Philadelphia’s failing mid-century public housing towers have been demolished and replaced with low-rise, mixed income developments, successfully integrating low-income and homeless individuals and families into the community. Affordable housing has been moving away from the tower typology and toward the style of New Urbanism, led by the HOPE VI program, a national program in the Department of Housing and Urban Development. As part of this, Philadelphia demolished five failing sites and built townhouses and garden-style apartments for renters, homeowners, and families of all incomes. These designs were of lower density and also provided nearby education, job training, and other support to the residents of these rebuilt communities to
enable them to become independent citizens. Some examples include Schuylkill Falls, which was replaced with a suburban-like development and Martin Luther King Plaza Towers, which were demolished to make way for new row houses around a public square.


In addition to these, Louis Kahn’s Mill Creek towers were demolished and replaced with mixed-income, affordable suburban style housing, while Cambridge Plaza faced a similar alteration.

Permanent supportive housing organizations address the issue of housing affordability and stable living in another way. People who have been chronically homeless (on and off the streets for at least four years), often suffer from mental illness or substance abuse, or both. The homeless individuals become residents of the housing projects, signing a lease requiring them to pay thirty percent of their income on rent. Of course, thirty percent of zero is zero, and that is perfectly acceptable to the nonprofits. The purpose of these organizations, such as the Bethesda Project in Philadelphia, is not to make money, but to end homelessness, and the best way to do this is to provide homes for homeless people—permanent homes.

Besides becoming permanent residents of a building, they have access to supportive services, which are “voluntary but assertive,”75 as Victoria Bourret, Outreach Coordinator of the Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania describes. The purpose is to enable residents first and

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75 Victoria Bourret. February 9, 2017. Telephone Interview.
foremost to maintain stable housing, by means of support. The belief is that having stable housing leads to living stable lives, which can eventually lead to integration into mainstream society.

The buildings are staffed every hour of the day with a program coordinator, case managers, or others. They offer comprehensive case management services that foster independent living, such as life skills training, job preparedness, adult education, language skills, drug and alcohol counseling, behavioral health, financial literacy, and housing counseling. Each resident has a specialized care plan with individual goals, recovery objectives, medical treatment, budgeting, intentions to reconnect with the family, connecting to psychiatric services, job training, interview training, and self-care skills. Residents willingly surrender their medications, which the staff regulate and track. The services require offices, meeting rooms, and perhaps treatment rooms. Other programs within the buildings include community rooms for group events, recreation space, fitness rooms, and space for childcare.

One of the challenges that these nonprofits face, using Philadelphia’s Bethesda Project as a case study, is the lack of resources. Supportive housing is not profitable for developers, and homelessness support from government or other sources is underfunded. Furthermore, another challenge is resistance to having these sites in a community, despite the fact the nonprofits usually select sites to promote blight removal and home repair (which poses its own issues). “Not in my backyard” syndrome,” or “NIMBY-ism” as it is called colloquially,” is an issue that affects supportive housing sites and the residents themselves, where other residents of the community resist having neighbors who they do not want to be part of their established community.

However, oftentimes these housing programs, in fact, improve neighborhoods by

the changes they make to existing buildings and the supportive services they offer, according to research performed by the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH). They increase safety and increase or stabilize property values, not to mention the beautification of sites; they improve lives with positive effects on housing stability, employment, mental and physical health, school attendance, all of which ultimately lead to more stable and productive lives. They induce cost savings for other public systems: permanent supportive housing decreases the use of homeless shelters, decreases the number of costly hospital and emergency room visits, and occupation of jails and prisons. For example, people with disabilities are able to live stably in the community and more independently, reducing their use of emergency health care and correctional facilities, and are able to receive more appropriate health care and often improve their health on their own because of their permanent home.

People in other sectors of the population also benefit from supportive housing. Seniors desiring to stay in their community as they age can remain there, and families trying to keep their children out of foster care are able to keep the family together. A recent victory in the New Jersey Supreme Court ruling in favor of affordable housing development confirmed that municipalities “must have affordable housing,” preventing them from avoiding up to sixty percent of their affordable housing obligations, which would lead to more racially and economically segregated communities.

A further understanding of the permanent supportive housing typology is provided in the following section on case studies.
The Philadelphia School Building

The Philadelphia school building in Nathaniel Hammitt’s 2015 masters thesis, *Radical Preservation: The Transformation of a Vacant Philadelphia School to Address Contextual Urban Opportunities* covers the recent history of school closings by the School District of Philadelphia, the negative effect a vacant school has on a community, as well as the Philadelphia school typology itself. Hammitt’s findings are summarized below.

The School District of Philadelphia’s (SDP) partnership with the state-run School Reform Commission (SRC) is essential for understanding the widespread closure of schools. After a series of investigations performed by Superintendent David Hornbeck (1994-2000) and his team in the 1990s, they concluded that the public schools of Philadelphia were both underfunded and overspending school district funds, essentially accumulating debt while the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania refused to pay what Hornbeck’s team had concluded was necessary. After the city and school district co-sued the state for improper funding in 1997, Pennsylvania agreed to fund Philadelphia’s school district, provided they agreed, in turn, to certain parameters:

Under a state-sponsored reform plan, the SRC would have the power to reconstitute troubled schools by reassigning or firing staff, hiring for-profit education management firms to run some schools, converting other schools to charter schools, all while hiring non-certified staff and reallocating and redistributing school district resources as it saw fit. In addition to its state-appointed CEO, the SRC would be composed of three members named by the governor of Pennsylvania and two

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83 Ibid, 7.


85 Hammitt, 8.
appointed by the mayor of Philadelphia.86 87

The state now had veto power over any SDP decisions.

The SRC went on to re-envision Philadelphia’s schools, with the resignation of Hornbeck and the appointment of a “financially-minded” Paul Vallas the SRC, along with increase in privately run charter schools and changes to the demographics of school-age children.88 Arlene Ackerman became superintendent in 2008 and constructed several new charter schools. However, debt continued to accumulate and she resigned in 2012, leading to the closure of twenty-three district schools in 2013 under Superintendent William Hite (2012-present).89 90 The intention behind the closures was to remedy the debt of the school district, but Hammitt argues “the ensuing vacant schools present a current crisis to the city.”91 Many of these buildings are still vacant and for sale at the time of the writing of this thesis, though several have been sold and, as of spring 2017, are under construction for adaptive reuse as artist space such as Edward W. Bok Technical High School and for housing, such as old West Philadelphia High School, Spring Garden School No. 1, and the former George W. Childs Elementary School.

An understanding of the public school building typology begins with American public education in the beginning of the 1800s.92 The SDP was organized in 1818, whose first buildings were comprised of timber-frame and early masonry construction that could not

87 Hammitt, 8.
88 Ibid, 9.
90 Ibid.
91 Ibid.
92 Ibid, 11.
handle the rapid urbanization that would continue for the next two hundred years. By 1850, the organization of the district was still decentralized, with the decisions of building size and location left to the leaders of the forty-two wards. However, after the Civil War, the city created the position of Superintendent of Buildings, in order to systematize a school district that could cope with an explosive increase in population, from 121,376 in 1850 to 556,529 just ten years later.\footnote{U.S. Bureau of the Census. Table 8. Population of 100 Largest Urban Places: 1850. Published June 1998. http://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0027/tab08.txt} \footnote{U.S. Bureau of the Census. Table 9. Population of 100 Largest Urban Places: 1860. Published June 1998. http://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0027/tab09.txt}

In the early 1900s, Irwin T. Catharine, Superintendent of Buildings, followed a succession of architects who “advocated for specialized interior spaces such as gymnasiums, auditoriums, and pools either as consultants (such as in the case of Samuel Sloan’s 1851 Philadelphia Plan) or Chief Architects (Joseph W. Anschutz, James Gaw, Andrew Sauer, and Lloyd Titus’s late 1800’s schools, as well as William Wirt’s Gary Plan)”\footnote{United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service. National Register of Historic Places Inventory. Philadelphia Public Schools Thematic Resources #64.000730, p 31-33.} Wirt, who succeeded Catharine, believed that every “school should also serve as a community center not just a learning place for children.”\footnote{Hammitt, 11.} This can continue to be the case even with a reuse project, which can bring the community center portion of the school building back to life, while other parts of the building transform for other use.

Not only did Catharine integrate cafeterias into the design of schools, he also standardized the layout of schools to fit in any city lot, while the architect could be more expressive with style and details.\footnote{Hammitt, 12.} Catharine served the SDP for seventeen years, during which time he created designs for 104 public schools. He broke away from the timber and masonry
construction tradition and instead used a steel and concrete structural grid, “but with unique
ornamentation based on the neighborhood and architectural styles deemed appropriate for
the time and place of implementation.”99 100

Figure 5. Aerial view of Spring Garden School No. 1, 2017 Google Earth.

Figure 6. Aerial view of Spring Garden School No. 2, 2017 Google Earth.

99 United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service. National Register of Historic
Places Inventory. Philadelphia Public Schools Thematic Resources #64000730, p 36.

100 Hammitt, 12.
Case Studies

The following four case studies—Bethesda Broad, Bethesda Spruce, Clendenin Middle School, and Spring Garden School No. 1—offer an in-depth description and analysis of permanent supportive housing examples and school conversions. While many other case studies were researched for this thesis and are featured in Appendix 1, only four are presented fully. Of the following four case studies, two are permanent supportive housing projects and two are school buildings. The first case is an office building and the second, a row house, both of which are now used as housing by the Bethesda Project, a nonprofit in Philadelphia for shelter and housing for chronically homeless people, “utilizing a housing first approach that minimizes barriers to access and allows each individual to take his or her own journey of healing at one’s own pace.” The latter two cases are previously abandoned school buildings that were converted, or are being converted at the time of this writing, into market-rate apartments.

After studying them, it was apparent that schools are ideal candidates for housing—and permanent supportive housing in particular. The regularity and size of classrooms and ample fenestration suit replicable adaptation into modular apartments or other housing units, and the layout of rooms along wide corridors matches that of the supportive housing projects for both residents’ rooms and the supportive services. In general, the schools were able to reuse the most of the existing ‘bones’ and retained many of the original architectural details. While the row house case conveys greatest feeling of a cohesive home, the school examples show the challenges and benefits of their type of conversion to housing. However, it was impossible to find any examples of school buildings adapted into permanent supportive housing. Nonprofits that support the homeless are not preservationist organizations, yet they interact with buildings in a low impact way since they cannot afford to do anything else and are, in effect, accidental preservationists.

Bethesda Broad Street is a relevant case study due to its similarity in scale to Philadelphia school buildings, in terms of height, window size and placement, as well as floor plate proportion and scale. Any school conversion would face similar challenges in reformatting the layout, as this was an actual conversion project into permanent supportive housing.
Now home to fifty formerly homeless men and women, the Bethesda North Broad site was originally built as the Heymann Loft Building in 1932, a four-story, brick and concrete, office building at 720–722 North Broad Street in the Fairmount neighborhood of Philadelphia. R.A. Heymann commissioned the building, with John P. Hallahan being awarded the contract on July 6, 1932. In the 1980s, it was converted into a permanent supportive housing site as part of the Bethesda Project. The building sits on the corner of Broad and Brown Streets, with exposed facades to the east, north, and west, while the southern side of the buildings abuts the neighboring structure to the south. This neighboring building only reaches halfway along the southern side, exposing the eastern half of the wall.

![Figure 8. 720—722 North Broad Street, c. 1986. Philadelphia Historic Commission. Broad Street—700 Block North, Philadelphia Historical Commission Files.](image)

In general, the requirements for a supportive housing building include living space, a kitchen, group dining rooms, laundry rooms, offices, full bathrooms (including toilets, showers, and bathtubs), tenant storage space, and single occupancy rooms, which are the only

102  https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/pj_display.cfm/164104

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spaces that are not shared. At Bethesda Broad, each of the top three floors contains between eleven and fifteen single occupancy rooms, a kitchen, and a combined dining and living space, along with a laundry room, three bathrooms, and varying sizes for tenant storage. Throughout the building, priority for windows has been given to the shared living spaces and bedrooms. See Appendix 2 for plan drawings.

The first floor contains a large, double height great room at the front entrance, taking advantage of the large windows on the east facade, facing Broad Street. This connects to the dining and kitchen area. Also in the front half of the building are three offices for use by staff, as well as an elevator. In the rear are two full bathrooms, one half bathroom, and a laundry room all clustered together, with six single occupancy bedrooms on the periphery in order to maximize use of the windows on the exterior and, of course, to fulfill code requirements for the presence of windows in bedrooms. Rooms that do not require windows are pushed to the center of the building, or along the southern wall. On the first floor, the offices with the kitchen, and the bathrooms with the laundry form two respective clusters in the middle of the floor plan, while one of the two stairwells and the least occupied rooms, i.e. the two storage rooms, border the windowless southern wall. The expansive great room occupies the northeast corner, affording the most natural light, while the dining room sits directly to the west, connected to the great room by two pairs of French doors.

The next level up is a mezzanine in the rear of the building, with the double height of the great room, as well as a mechanical equipment room, occupying the front of the building at this level. The perimeter of the U-shaped rear half of the building is bordered by an additional office, the second stairwell in the northwest corner, and five bedrooms, with a kitchen and dining-living room along the south wall with windows. The combination of the kitchen and dining into a single programmatic feature repeats on every level above the mezzanine floor. However, on this floor, the kitchen is separate, and the dining and living
rooms are combined. Again, the two bathrooms and laundry room are clustered in the center; this frees up the peripheral floor space to maximize the number of bedrooms, and, in turn, the number of residents. The single occupancy rooms are, however, not consistent in size—in linear dimension or in terms of square footage. Some are narrow, some are wide, some deep, some shallow, as dictated by the existing walls and corridor. The only consistency in terms of bedrooms is their placement on the edge of the slab.

The second floor is organized with single occupancy rooms along the east and north, facades. Along the west facade, a single bedroom sits next to the living room, which connects to the kitchen-dining room that also runs along the exposed southern wall. A ‘core’ emerges on this level, consisting of the elevator, two bathrooms and a storage room; circulation circumscribes these spaces. Essentially there is the center, or the core, with a ring of circulation around it, and a second ring of program around the circulation. This second ring is made up of the bedrooms and the living room and the kitchen-dining room mentioned above, as well as two staircases, a laundry room, a linen closet, and a third—somewhat central—bathroom. This general layout of a central core nested within a loop of circulation and a second loop of program surrounding that is repeated on the third and fourth floors.

However, there are some slight differences. On the third floor, while the outermost ring remains the same with twelve single occupancy rooms, the core essentially expands to join the southern wall, interrupting the circulation ring. A storage space extends from the original core to the southern wall, occupying part of the original circulation loop. This move also creates an enclosed elevator entry area. The core, furthermore, has a minor change: a laundry room has taken over half of the larger storage room between the elevator and the two bathrooms, creating a maintenance closet of equal size in the other half. The kitchen and dining room combine and open into the living room, essentially creating one large room for all three programs.
The fourth floor maintains the general configuration of bedrooms on the outer edge, but takes the concept to an extreme, with single occupancy rooms on the east, north, and west edges. Two bedrooms take over the space that was occupied by the living room on the floors below. This creates a floor with fourteen bedrooms and the smallest shared living space, squeezing the kitchen, dining room, and living room all into one space, equal to the size of two bedrooms. It is surprising that the floor with the most bedrooms has the least living space and is farthest from the great room on the first floor. It also has the least circulation square footage (though this is not necessarily a priority), as the laundry room and a large bathroom that are both arguably part of the core take over the circulation space and extend all the way to the southern wall or to the stair, essentially eliminating any hint of the loop that could exist there, and forming a layout that is bisected by a singular hallway down the center of the floor, with bedrooms on one side and bathrooms and laundry on the other.

There is a consistency of placement of toilets and laundry in the center of the floor plan, with circulation around the cluster (completely around or merely circumventing) and on the inside the perimeter of single occupancy rooms that populate the outer edge of the floor plate. Again, this maximizes the number of bedrooms, maximizing the total number of residents.

While neither original drawings nor adaptation drawings are available, it can be assumed that the original plan of the floors took into account the layout of the windows. Instead of placing walls with the intention of trying to fit as many bedrooms into the space, limited by the parameters of minimum square footage and distance between window frames, the office building likely had interior walls or partitions that aligned with the bays of the façades, unlike the current walls of the bedrooms, that split up sets of windows with walls landing just at the frame between panes. Furthermore, it is unlikely that 720-22 Broad Street had full bathrooms on any floor, not to mention three on each, or a full kitchen on every
floor as well. There would have been no need for this kind of infrastructure, but more likely the typical shared toilets, separated by gender. Therefore, it is safe to say that the renovations that occurred in the 1980s did not maintain much of the original interior fabric. However they did respond to the exterior, ultimately resulting in what is likely a similar layout to the original office floor plan i.e. offices around the outside with circulation around bathrooms in the center or near the south wall, and perhaps an open area in the middle. Instead of offices around the outside, there are bedrooms. These bedrooms, however, are designed only to fit as many as possible, while keeping within code requirements. They were not designed to create the most home-like spaces while remaining within financial constraints.

The goal of this project is to create a place for these human beings a life above mere survival, above the bare minimum. Of course this calls into question, or brings to mind, rather, Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. But that kind of place is the difference between offering a shelter and creating a home. Indeed, it is more than a step above mere survival that we are seeking, even beyond “just getting by”. The goal is to create a place that inspires dignity for each person, and this is not just because, as human beings, they deserve a decent home such as this, but because with this type of home—a home that they are proud of, find comfort in, etc.—they are better equipped to succeed within society, and are more likely to do so, just as any advantaged person is, when they have stability in the place they call home.

Bethesda Broad is an example of what permanent supportive housing at this scale requires and conversions necessary to suit this program. This project offers private bedrooms for fifty people; there is a certain level of privacy. Roughly speaking, twelve people on each floor share three bathrooms and one kitchen-dining-living space, while all fifty of them share the great room on the first floor. This last feature is somewhat comparable to a

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community room in a contemporary apartment building, although it also acts a sort of entry or lobby space. The challenge is to create a sense of community and belonging while offering privacy and ownership. The bedroom-to-living room ratio is too high: the peace of mind that is afforded by knowing there is a usable living space does not exist when twelve people share a single two-hundred square-foot living room. This does not occur because residents must compete with eleven other people for use of the kitchen or leisure space and cannot be sure they have access to it because of the large number. This problem is exacerbated on the fourth floor, where there are even more bedrooms and consequently a smaller shared space of this kind. It induces the feeling that a resident in the living room is always using someone else’s space; it prevents independence. Increasing the size of the living/cooking space to suit the number of people does not help because it loses the feeling of intimacy achieved by a smaller space and still does not attain independence, because one must always rely on others to allow them a place in the living room. This is why the proposal later on suggests a lower ratio of bedrooms to living rooms, simply by increasing the number of living spaces, each of which correlates to a set of bedrooms, or individuals. By decreasing this number, the level of intimacy and feeling of ownership of living space increases. In other words, the living space affords the sense of comfort and privacy and intimacy that a home requires to be indeed a home, simply by means of the small number of single occupancy rooms that form the clustered group which correspond to the living room. This creates a gradient of privacy from the bedroom to the living room to an even more public space.

While Bethesda Broad successfully houses fifty people, it does not give its residents the type of home they deserve; it does not meet the standards that home should in order to afford its inhabitants with the affordances enumerated in the section on home. Furthermore, with the large number of people there, Bethesda Broad Street would benefit from on-site supportive services, such as physical healthcare, mental healthcare, a job training and placement office, to
serve the issues that often caused homelessness for the residents, in order to help them attain the stable home and lifestyle that they seek.

**Bethesda Spruce**

Bethesda Spruce is a four-story row house and corresponding carriage house at 1110 Spruce Street in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. It was built for Edward Robins, circa 1832 in the Greek Revival style along with the rest of the homes along the street from 1104 to 1112 Spruce.104 In 1958, the house was added to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.105

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104 PHMC Cultural Resources Database. “1104-1112 Spruce St.” [https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/phmc_display.cfm?KeyNo=054229](https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/phmc_display.cfm?KeyNo=054229)

105 Ibid.
The row house was first converted into apartments, and later, in 1983, it was converted again by the Bethesda Project into fourteen single room occupancy units, with individual apartments for two caretakers above the carriage house. The current layout is similar to the Bethesda Broad site, although it is significantly smaller. It sits on a quiet portion of Spruce Street among a strip of row houses in the residential neighborhood of Washington Square West. The red brick facade, walk-up entrance and light blue shutters give no hint that it plays any special role in the community or city; indeed, it is very much a home in every sense of the word, and most certainly does not falsely represent itself by looking like one. It is naturally a Philadelphia row house.

Today, Bethesda Spruce is home to fourteen previously homeless women and the two caretakers who live in the apartments above the carriage house. This overall plan for

Figure 10. 1100 Block of Spruce Street. 1110 with light blue shutters. 2000. The Library Company.
the site, with its separation of staff and tenants, provides the residents privacy and a feeling of independence. While the caretakers are on site, they live in their own building with a completely separate entrance from Cypress Street on the south end of the site.

The first floor has a large, double-height shared living room on the first floor that is partly used for dining, with substantial original sliding doors that separate it from the contemporary kitchen, which also has room for dining. The detailing of the Greek Revival molding is intact around the doorways, windows and built-in bookcases, as well as the decorative plaster medallion rosettes that punctuate the light fixtures on the ceiling of the hall and foyer with egg and dart crown molding. The railing on the main stair appears to be original. There are no bedrooms on the main floor—only the living and dining room and the kitchen, as well as two half bathrooms. An exit in the rear opens to the courtyard.

Figure 11. Living Room at Bethesda Spruce. Photograph by Peter Hiller. February 24, 2017.
between the house and the carriage house, bounded by the lots on either side. The courtyard has a planted garden and patio furniture on the paved portion. An exterior staircase leads up to the balcony of the caretaker apartments above the carriage house, making the courtyard a communal space for both residents and the staff.

![Figure 12. Ground Floor Corridor at Bethesda Spruce. Photograph by Peter Hiller. February 24, 2017.](image)

The second floor of the house is more like a mezzanine level on the rear half of the building, since each level is offset by half a floor between the rear and front. This level contains three bedrooms along the western side, one full bathroom and an office for the
program coordinator and residential aid in the rear, where a recent vinyl-sided intervention
encloses what appears to have been a south-facing, second-story balcony. The front half of
this floor is taken up by the upper half of the large living room space, analogous to the layout
of Bethesda Broad. The second floor on the front of the house has rooms with either north or
south windows, since the east and west facades are shared by adjacent row houses. Two of the
rooms face south, into the courtyard, and two face the street. These four rooms have a shared
bathroom. The rear third floor consists of three bedrooms along the west side of the house
that are accessible from the hallway that runs along the eastern parti-wall, with a bathroom
in the center of the floor plan. The front of the third floor contains an additional four
bedrooms, similar to the front second floor directly below. The fourth floor is an attic that is
used as storage, with a dormer on the north and on the south sides of the roof.

This site feels like a home. Beyond the obvious reasons for this, i.e. being originally
built as a house, sitting in a residential neighborhood, having the scale and proportion of a
typical Western style house, etc., 1110 Spruce is separated into clusters of rooms of three or four;
this creates miniature communities within the larger community of the house as a whole. In
addition to being clustered by the offset floors, thinking architecturally sectionally, the rooms
within each “pod” share a hallway and bathroom, furthering the feeling of neighborliness.
These pods successfully create the intimacy and privacy that a home should afford its residents,
as well as ownership of the space, which fosters the feeling of independence. This occurs when
the shared space is limited to just a few people. One weakness of Bethesda Spruce is the fact
that fourteen people must share a singular living space, though this is mitigated in the warmer
months, when the courtyard becomes a secondary, outdoor living room.

The site could benefit from more spaces for offices to house the supportive services that
these women require. While stable, many of the women suffer from mental illness, so an on-
site mental health care office would benefit them. However, research shows that the best thing
for homeless people to lead a stable life is a permanent, stable home.106 107 108 109 110 111 112

Riverview at Clendenin School

Successfully adapting the school for affordable homes for seniors with easy access to medical care, the intervention respects the original fabric, by responding to the existing layout. Essentially, each classroom was transformed into a singular apartment, the interior design of which responded to the fenestration. However, the finishes created a clinical atmosphere within.

Clendenin Middle School is a school building in the town of Clendenin, West Virginia. Built in 1912, the neoclassical revival113 structure was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1996 as part of the Clendenin Historic District.114 Originally Big Sandy District High School, “[b]elieved to be the second high school built- in Kanawha County, this three-story building features pedimented pavilions, a central Classical portico, and a centrally placed cupola.”115 The school shut down in 2002 and sat vacant until 2004, when it

113 Preservation Alliance of West Virginia http://www.pawv.org/endgrd05/clendenin.htm
114 Clendenin Historic District Nomination.
115 Ibid, p. 11.
was donated to the New Clendenin Economic Development Group. In 2011, the building reopened as “Riverview at Clendenin School” after being worked on in the intermediate years, having been transformed into an affordable senior housing facility and health care clinic. The building sits on the river to the north with the main entrance on the south facade and wings of the building extending to either side.

The requirements for this adaptive reuse project included a handicap-accessible entrance, elevator with elevator lobby, tenant storage, a laundry room, mechanical rooms, maintenance closets, a recreation room, and both one-bedroom and two-bedroom apartments, complete with kitchens, living/dining rooms, full bathrooms, and closets.


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116 “Clendenin Middle School.” Preservation Alliance of West Virginia http://www.pawv.org/endgrd05/clendenin.htm
118 Omni Associates. Riverview at Clendenin School Drawing Set. 9 July 2010. Drawn by DES, KMT. Sheet
These exist on the first and third floors. The building features a secure entry, as well as help/call buttons in bathrooms and bedrooms, and wiring for cable, telephone, and Internet.

The second floor, houses the 8,000 square-foot health care clinic, \(^{119}\) which has divergent requirements, including various offices, examination rooms, check-in desks, reception, check-out, behavioral health meeting rooms, procedure rooms, business work areas, men’s and women’s bathrooms (both staff and patient), pharmacy, pharmacy waiting, pharmacy storage, dental examination rooms, and dental laboratory. \(^{120}\) A day care center and community recreation facility use the space that was once the gymnasium. \(^{121}\)

The first floor, as mentioned above, contains apartments for seniors: eight apartments in total with three two-bedrooms and five one-bedrooms. A central corridor runs the length of the building east to west, accessed by and entrance on the west or east facades by stairs or the front entrance to the south, which has both stairs and an elevator inside the entrance to descend the five feet down to the first floor slab. It appears the elevator was added. In the construction drawings (in Appendix 3), the lighter gray lines represent existing, original fabric, while the black lines show new work. In this case, the elevator lobby branches off the main entrance to the right, which has stairs straight ahead. A similar condition exists in the original entrances of the George W. Childs Elementary building in Philadelphia, with the entry at or near ground level and stairs going up half of a flight just inside. While required by ADA, it is also important to provide easily accessible elevators in housing types like this due to some elderly residents who are likely to have difficulty with mobility and may be restricted to wheelchairs, or veterans or homeless people who often have similar physical difficulties. \(^{122}\)


\(^{120}\) Ibid, A-1.2. See Appendix 3.


\(^{122}\) “Homelessness: A Medical Viewpoint,” (Vicic and Doherty, 1987) by William Vicic, M.D., and Patricia
The apartments run along either side of the length of the hallway. A one-bedroom sits in the southeast corner next to the elevator and main entrance. Moving west, a small recreation room, roughly one hundred seventy square feet is just to the left of the front stair. Another one bedroom apartment follows, with a two bedroom west of that, and a one-bedroom apartment in the southwest corner, mirroring the opposite corner. Across the hall, sits the fourth one-bedroom, followed by a room for tenant storage. A corridor extends to the rear, perpendicular to the main hallway, toward the river at the north and leads to two more apartments: one one-bedroom and one two-bedroom apartment. Each of these has also has a private entrance directly from outside that leads down a short five-step staircase to ground level. A second tenant storage room sits across from the first. What appears to be an original wall separates this from the laundry room, which also contains a common toilet. It is worth
noting that the laundry sits alongside the facade and has windows. Another short corridor extending north extends off of the main hallway, allowing access to the manager’s office and the mechanical, electric, and building maintenance room, which has two bays of windows. Finally, a two-bedroom apartment completes the floor plan in the northwest corner.\textsuperscript{123}

The second floor is more complex, as it houses the healthcare clinic. This program is relevant to the thesis because healthcare is one of the services that some permanent supportive housing provide on-site.\textsuperscript{124} \textsuperscript{125} The clinic is organized into pod-like areas that sit on either side of the main hallway; indeed, they are labeled as pods in the construction drawing and each appears to take up one of the original classrooms. The main hallway is responsible for initial reception, waiting areas, and checkout; it is dubbed the ‘revised corridor.’\textsuperscript{126} In the southeast corner is the dental pod, with a check-in desk, two examination rooms, an office, and a laboratory. Past the elevator and main stair is the behavior health room and a small storage receiving room. West of this is the second pod with a check-in desk, three windowless exam rooms, and a narrow provider or student office along the facade, occupying two bays of windows. The next ‘classroom’ over is the third pod, again with a clinical check-in desk. However, this pod is organized in a linear fashion with a hallway along the south facade, providing access to three exam rooms on the north side of the corridor, and provider/student office at the end of the hall. The next pod is in the southwest corner, arranges similarly to the second pod. The only difference is that two of the exam rooms have windows, along the west facade. Across the main corridor is the X-Ray room and x-ray waiting room, as well as the

\textsuperscript{123} Omni Associates. Riverview at Clendenin School Drawing Set. 9 July 2010. Drawn by DES, KMT. Sheet A-1.1. \textit{See Appendix 3.}


\textsuperscript{125} Burt, M., Wilkins, C., and Locke, G. (July 2014). \textit{A Primer on Using Medicaid for People Experiencing Chronic Homelessness and Tenants in Permanent Supportive Housing.} \url{http://aspe.hhs.gov/daltcp/reports/2014/PSHPrimer.cfm}

\textsuperscript{126} Omni Associates. Riverview at Clendenin School Drawing Set. 9 July 2010. Drawn by DES, KMT. Sheet A-1.2. \textit{See Appendix 3.}
clinical support staff; these are all accessible from a narrow corridor that runs perpendicular from the main corridor with three restroom on the opposite side. At the end of this corridor is a large conference room that sits in an extension of the building behind and adjacent to the laboratory and the fifth pod. The lunchroom is contained within the conference room. The laboratory area, just east of the three bathrooms, contains a blood draw space, the laboratory itself, and a medical supply room. The fifth pod is simply four exam rooms organized around

an L-shaped corridor on the west side and a clinical check-in desk and provider/student office with a bay of windows to the east. Adjacent to this is an isolated procedure room. The next ‘classroom’ contains a comparatively large office with a financial planning office attached. To the east is a restroom, a site coordinator’s office, a second restroom, and in the northeast corner is the pharmacy, with a waiting area, and storage room.
The third floor is only accessible by the staircases on the west and east ends of the main hallway, or by the elevator. The main staircase from the front entrance does not continue up to this level. This allows the floor plan to be more or less symmetrical, with five apartment units on either side of the main corridor. There appear to be two alternating sizes of five original classrooms on the south side, each of which makes a complete apartment, and a third size on the north side of the corridor, with seven original classrooms. The smallest, of which there were four, combine into large, singular apartments. The southeast corner starts with a square one-bedroom apartment next to the elevator. A wide one-bedroom apartment follows, complete with a separate study or dining room. A second, small, square apartment sits adjacent with another wide, apartment to the west that has a two-bedroom and two-bathroom layout. A square, one-bedroom apartment occupies the southwest corner, mirroring the layout of the apartment in the southeast corner. Across the hall, the northwest corner continues the trend of mirroring with the layout of the southwest corner perfectly.
reflected. The next two-bedroom apartment to the east combines two classrooms each of which had a bay of four windows. Two of the bedrooms split up one bay evenly, while the living room takes up an entire bay. The apartment in the center of the north half of the building once again mirrors the small, square, one-bedroom across the hall. The apartment to the east is another two-bedroom apartment that combines two original classrooms, but is ultimately narrower overall with narrower windows, though still having four per bay. This results in an uneven split of windows between the two bedrooms, with one having three and the other only bearing one. This can be an awkward result when a room has a single window in the corner, up against the adjacent wall. Finally, the last apartment occupying the northeast corner of the building mirrors the one-bedroom, square apartment across the hall and at the opposite corner. While it occurs on all three floors, the undulation of the front facade is
most obvious on this floor, since the rear facade is completely straight. The area that houses
the northernmost apartments on the first floor and the conference room on the second
floor is roofed over on the third. This push and pull could be reflected on the interior as well,
particularly in the corridor, though the designers chose to have it remain a linear space.

The financing of this project could not have occurred without an extensive, wide-
ranging campaign for funding through tax credits, federal grants, as well as traditional real
estate investors. The total cost for the project was about $5.3 million, with $1.2 million from
the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development, $2.7 million from the West Virginia
Neighborhood Stabilization program, $400,000 from the U.S. Department of Health and
Human Services, $1 million in state and federal historic tax credits, $300,000 from the
Kanawha County Commission. Furthermore, the building was donated by the Kanawha
County Board of Education.

The adaptation successfully reuses the school to make affordable homes for seniors
with easy access to medical care. The redesign respects the original layout by taking cues from
the existing fabric. For the most part, each classroom is converted into a singular apartment,
and usually responds to the placement of windows by placing divisions between the bays.
However on occasion, walls split up the bays by being placed within them, between windows,
particularly on the second floor, where smaller spaces, like exam rooms are required, and
on the third floor, where not doing so would result in an unusually large bedroom (around
280 square feet, in unit 3H or 3D) instead of two average-sized bedrooms shown in the final
design. Some of the finishes, however, give the interior of the apartment areas a somewhat

127 Paul Fallon. Charleston Gazette-Mail. “Clendenin Middle School set to reopen with new offerings.”
128 Ibid.
129 Omni Associates. Riverview at Clendenin School Drawing Set. 9 July 2010. Drawn by DES, KMT. Sheet
A-1.2. See Appendix 3.
130 Ibid, A-1.3. See Appendix 3.
clinical feel, particularly the short pile carpet (Figure 17) and extensive use of drywall over historic finishes. On the other hand, the original hardwood floors appear to be restored and polished and used in the apartments some of the offices (while maintaining some of the past discoloration), as well as the large conference room on the second floor, which boasts large windows and a view of the river, living up to the complex’s new name.

The exterior appears mostly untouched, save for the ramp that winds its way back and forth through the front garden up to the main entrance, making the building handicap-accessible. The private entrances on the special rear, first floor apartments afford the residents maximum independence; however, they may be merely required by code, as fire exits, since these two apartments are farthest away from the other entrances/exits. Nonetheless, the private entrances permit the residents to enter their homes without passing through the

shared circulation spaces of the shared entrances, main corridor, or the narrower corridor that provides access to the tenant storage rooms and the alternate entrances to the two apartments in question. Exclusive entrances provide feeling of independence as well as privacy and ownership, and, ultimately, comfort. There are, of course, benefits to using a shared entrance and circulation space, such as fostering a feeling of community, neighborliness, etc, while still maintaining the boundaries of one’s own private space.

Nevertheless, the concept of the stoop, something associated with the home in Philadelphia, is difficult to replicate inside, within the wide corridor, for example, where the corridor is the sidewalk of sorts, and stoop is perhaps merely the space adjacent to the apartment entrance. The stoop is a spatial negotiator between the private home and the public pavement of the sidewalk, and it does this not only by means of its buffering capacity of horizontal shift between building and street as well as vertical shift from door to ground level, but also by its potential to offer a static separation from the pavement by a few vertical feet and inherently creates a semi private space, where the occupiers—as stoop-sitters, or standers—is out of the way of foot traffic but can participate in the streetscape and feel the movement of pedestrians and cars and can engage with passersby and neighbors. This integration into the streetscape extends into the larger urban fabric of the surrounding area. If a simulated stoop is created inside of the hallway, this larger scale integration is impossible, as the bounds of the ‘corridor-scape’ are clearly defined by the enclosure of the building. This prevents the feeling of urban connection that is essential to the nature of the stoop. The stoop is, more or less, a front porch that sits on the edge of the sidewalk. However its informality is what makes them so approachable; the steps are essentially built-in benches and the low walls are side-tables to lean on or perhaps to hold a drink. Neighbors do not feel as though

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they are invading a private space when they come to chat. In a more closed off community, like permanent supportive housing, a stoop could potentially be simulated with a significantly wider corridor or multipurpose space outside the front of the door to the private rooms to help blur the line between public and private and ultimately imitate the stoop space.

**Spring Garden School No. 1**

Spring Garden School No. 1, not to be confused with Spring Garden School No. 2 a few blocks to the south, sits on the southwest corner of the intersection of 12th Street and Ogden Street in the West Poplar neighborhood of northwest Philadelphia. Built from 1927

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133 Ibid.
to 1928, the ten-bay, brick, limestone, and tile school was designed in the Moderne Art Deco style by architect Irwin Thornton Catharine; Lewis H. Esler, who was listed as carpenter, was incidentally also employed by the City of Philadelphia as Superintendent of Public School Buildings and Repairs.

Within the surrounding two blocks, several publicly serving buildings exist. There is the John F. Street Community Center across the street from the school to the north, and a daycare center and supermarket northeast of the community center, as well as a Drexel University Family Health Services center on the southeast corner of the same block on which Spring Garden School sits. A 1970s church occupies the block diagonally to the northwest.

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134 November 1986 National Register of Historic Places Nomination. Spring Garden School
of the school. The area is very much a town-center type space, in the sense that there is a concentration of public buildings.

The surrounding area, however, has been almost entirely redeveloped with public housing neighborhoods, run by the Philadelphia Housing Authority. The homes around here are examples of the new typology mentioned in the section on affordable housing. They are almost like suburban subdivisions, with blocks of identical, gabled houses radiating out around the long-vacant school and the John F. Street Community Center to the north. Some of the developments even have cul-de-sacs in the centers of blocks. Two full blocks in every direction contain these evenly spaced duplexes, fairly un-Philadelphia-like in character with miniature McMansion-style facades and staggered gabled roofs. There are five distinct developments, each with its own house type repeated five or six times per block, punctuating the perimeter of conjoined, treeless backyards.

Figure 21. Aerial view of Spring Garden School No. 1, Richard Allen Homes, and surrounding area, 2017 Google Earth.
One of these developments, however, has wide, shallow buildings that stretch for half a block, somewhat like row houses, but not quite. They are pulled away from the curb, but for some, the entrance is at ground level. From a distance, across the street, for instance, the strip-building looks as though it is just that—singular, continuous building set up the block, without reaching the corner, arbitrarily stopping some ten feet from the end, leaving space that is filled with grass, and a fence that runs through it midway from the building, creating an unusable lawn—a sort of no-man’s-land. (Figure 22.) The buildings do not feel like part of the block; they did not occur organically as most of Philadelphia’s rowhomes have.

![Figure 22. Richard Allen Homes at Parrish and 10th Streets, 2017 Google Streetview.](image)

Perhaps the Philadelphia Housing Authority had the intention of developing ‘homes’ for low-income families but did not think beyond the concept of the gabled house (Rybczynski mentions this idea) and looked to American suburbs for inspiration. Some even have white picket fences. Partial “driveways” insert themselves between the duplexes making
the development seem designed for cars, as suburbs are, while some of the developments incorporate footpath connections running along the fenced-in backyards of the houses. However, they abruptly stop halfway, interrupted by the fence of a yard that is slightly deeper than the rest. This pathway is partly an alleyway in the urban sense of the word as it runs between the backsides of parallel rows of houses. It could potentially be the private pedestrian circulation among the development, if it were not for the fact that it is discontinuous.

There is an abrupt, disconcerting shift from what appears to be authentic to what appears to be inauthentic. The redevelopment feels artificial, forced, and out of place. It is a planning typology that does not mesh with the surrounding fabric. Indeed, other critics are concerned by “the aesthetic implications of placing incongruous suburban-style homes in a brick row-house environment.”

The irony is that the school is now even more out of place, at the center of a ring of displacement, being squeezed in at all sides by the Philadelphia Housing Authority’s miniature subdivisions of town houses—an island of isolation of its own. In this odd case, the school is actually more out of place than most vacant schools in the city; it is not naturally part of the neighborhood anymore, because the neighborhood it served was cleared out and replaced with a less dense version of the preceding housing. Not all is lost, however. Since it still sits in the center of a residential community, it does relate in some of the same respects. It has a prominent place in the housing neighborhood and maintains its monumental status. The relative scale is not far from what it had been, and may even be more prominent now, because of the demolition of the sixteen-story public housing tower that was removed alongside the clearance of the original Richard Allen Homes project of the 1940s: 3-story
modernist public housing projects from the New Deal era of “slum renewal.” This area was redeveloped again in 2003 with projects like Cambridge Plaza and Richard Allen Homes II,\textsuperscript{137} while the school was shut down in the 1970s and remained vacant during the decline of the original Richard Allen Homes. Many of these apartments were empty by the 1980s and were “left unsealed by the housing authorities” becoming “a convenient haven for drug users.”\textsuperscript{138} In the early 2000s, the area was cleared once again and replaced with yet another ‘new face’ of public housing.

\textbf{Figure 25.} \textit{Aerial view of the Allen homes Spring Garden School No. 1 just visible, top right, No. 2 bottom left.} 1971. Temple University Urban Archives: George D. McDowell Philadelphia Evening Bulletin Newsclipping Collection (p287081). http://www.philaplace.org/media/476/

\textsuperscript{137} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{138} Ibid.
The school, however, survived both rounds of demolition, and was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1986, after sitting vacant for at least ten years. As of spring 2017, construction plans were underway for the rehabilitation of Spring Garden School by the Philadelphia Housing Authority, in collaboration with Kramer Marks Architects and HELP USA, “a nonprofit organization whose mission is to help those who are homeless and others in need become and remain self-reliant.”\textsuperscript{139} The designs call for thirty-seven apartments for low-income seniors, with twelve of the units set aside specifically for homeless veterans. It does not appear, however, that these units differ in any way from the others or are in a specific location within the building.

The building’s lowest floor, like that of Clendenin Middle School, sits partially below grade but mostly above grade. Three stories rise above this, with a rooftop playground and garden on top of the fourth floor. The building is symmetrical, with ten bays of three windows on each longitudinal facade. Architectural tile decorate the Art Deco cornice, while a mesh barrel vault encloses the rooftop play area at sixty feet above grade.\textsuperscript{140} On the west, shorter facade, the grand, main entrance occupies the center, with Art Deco limestone surrounds. A more understated entrance sits on the opposite facade.

The drawing set (in Appendix 4) includes plans for exterior cleaning and remediation, interior demolition of certain walls, historical features and trims to maintain, and finally new work.

The first floor, which is essentially at grade on the rear entrance, requires a descent of five and half feet from the main entrance.\textsuperscript{141} The ground floor was originally divided into

\textsuperscript{139} HELP USA. Homepage. www.helpusa.org March 21, 2017.
several rooms of varying size, from occupying one bay to occupying five bays.142 A central corridor bisects the plan, with these rooms on either side, the largest of which are nearest the main entrance, with the five-bay room in the southwest corner, a three-bay room following, and a single bay room at the end. A three-bay room marks the northwest corner, with a second three-bay room occupying the center of the northern side, followed by a two-bay room, and finally a single bay room in the northeast corner. Stairwells and two additional rooms cap the building in the easternmost two bays, one on the north and one on the south, however. These rooms essentially create a three-bay facade on the eastern side of the building. Demolition of the walls and floors make way for a new elevator in the north bay. Furthermore, the plans show demolition of essentially all the walls perpendicular to the longitudinal facades and the corridor. In other words, the only walls that remain are those forming the corridor, leaving the entire run of the building along the windows open.


The second floor has less demolition, as the division of space better suits the future use as apartments. However, according to recent photos of the vacant space, many of the classroom division walls were collapsible. (Figure 26.) For some reason, only some of the second floor drawings show these partition features while other floors, such as the fourth are consistent in showing them. Along the south, once up the main stair at the west entrance, there are three two-bay classrooms, each with a coat room or storage room (This layout is also visible in the rough drawings from George W. Childs Elementary, Appendix 5.) These classroom wall divisions are to remain, while parts of the coat room walls are to be removed. There is a three-bay room on the end, before the cap of the stairwell in the southwest corner. This room has three closets along the eastern wall which will be removed. Along the north, a cluster of small spaces occupies the northeast corner of the building in the first three bays, all

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of whose walls are to be demolished. The rest of the remaining six bays have no dividing walls, but it is safe to say that there were originally dividing walls here. It is worth noting that there are windows along the corridor that look into the coat rooms and classrooms, like a clerestory or a transom window, with deep reveals of almost three feet. (Figure 28.) Some of the coat room walls are being removed, usually where they align with these interior windows. The rooms along the east are accessible by a corridor that runs north and south, perpendicular to the main corridor. It meets the smaller corridor in the center, forming a T shape. Two of the rooms at this end are divided into single bay spaces, while the last bay is split into two spaces. All of these walls, however, are to be removed, with the only remaining wall being the one running parallel to the facade, creating open space for the new design. Furthermore, the egress stair in the northeast corner is to be removed completely to make way for a trash chute and trash rooms on each floor.
The third floor has eight large classrooms along the main corridor, and two small classrooms at the end on the east. Along the south facade, a three-bay room occupies the corner with large storage space within. Three two-bay classrooms follow, each with the typical coat room spaces as well as the clerestory-like windows into the corridor. The dividing walls are to remain, while the walls of the large storage space and roughly half of the walls of each coat room are to be demolished. The northwest bay of the building has three small spaces, while the rest of the eight bays are split evenly into four classrooms with two bays each. These also bear the coat rooms with interior clerestory windows into the hallway. Only the wall dividing the first bay in the northwest corner from the first two-bay classroom is to be demolished, along with some of the walls creating the coat rooms. Most often these demolitions align with the interior clerestory windows. The eastern wing of the building has the two stairwells in the north and south corners and the three bays between contain two classrooms, which occupy the south and middle bays, while the northernmost bay contains a storage space with access to only half of a window. The wall oddly intersect the center of the southernmost window in the three-window bay. The two and a half remaining windows provide light to what is essentially a vestibule for the stairwell. Again, a trash chute is replacing these stairs, while the floor and walls here are being removed to make way for the elevator.

The fourth floor is quite similar to the third floor. However, the southeastern corner has no storage space, whereas the large, three-bay room on the floor below did. This floor again, is split into eight classrooms along the main hallway with four on the north and four on the south. Three two-bay classrooms complete the south facade, while the north facade as an identical layout as the third floor. The only difference is the type of wall. While it is not indicated what type of walls they are, the divisions between the four two-bay classrooms on

145 Ibid. D1.4
the north facade are relatively thin, and each appears to divided themselves, into six parts. This indicates that they may be the collapsible walls shown in the photograph (reference image number). The only walls to be removed are the partial walls of the coat rooms. The east wing conditions and demolition on the fourth floor are the same as those on the third floor.

The rooftop is entirely paved over, except for a pilot house running the depth of the building on the west end and east end. A metal framed barrel vault covered in mesh encloses the rooftop space. This level is to be essentially unchanged, besides the northeast stairs being removed and a few partition walls in one of the pilot houses as well as the existing chimney in the middle.

![Image](image.jpg)

**Figure 29.** Rooftop playground of Spring Garden School No. 1, c. 2016. Photograph by Jessie Fox. “Here’s My Chance” Philly.com.

There are a number of interior historical features and trims that the designs maintain. These include glazed brick, doors, marble wainscoting, the operable wall partitions,
blackboards, picture rails, window trim, and built-ins. Most of these features are in the main corridor. The first floor has glazed brick that runs the entire length of the hallway, and four windows in the hallway whose trim will remain.\(^\text{146}\) The second floor’s marble wainscoting and picture rails are to remain in the main hallway and the secondary hallway in the east wing; the marble in the main stair and the southwest stair will be kept as well, and window trim on all the windows on the north and south interiors. There is built-in casework that will see itself through construction as well. Two of the operable partitions are to be kept, but fixed in place, and three blackboards will be restored. The base trim of the wall will be replicated in all rooms.\(^\text{147}\) Similarly, on the third floor the marble wainscoting will remain in all the public circulation areas, seven blackboards will be restored in the south rooms, one in the north room, and the three operable partitions in the north rooms will be retained and fixed in place. Built-in shelving will also be kept, and the glazed brick in the northeast corner near the new elevator will remain as well, in addition to all of the original window trim in the windows of the north and south facades. The window trim in the east wing is not marked. Most doors will be removed and replaced with new doors in a replicated frame, though a few of the doors to closets and storage spaces will be saved. Again, the base trim of the wall will be replicated in all rooms.\(^\text{148}\) The fourth floor has nearly identical plans for historical feature and trim retention, except for the restoration of another blackboard\(^\text{149}\) on a wall that is marked for demolition in the northwest corner.\(^\text{150}\) In the later drawings it is unclear where this is to go, since the wall it originally belonged to no longer exists.\(^\text{151}\)

The new construction drawings show how the units fit into the retained fabric of the building, and the additional construction required for this space to become thirty seven

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\(^\text{146}\) Ibid. H1.1.  
\(^\text{147}\) Ibid. H1.2.  
\(^\text{148}\) Ibid. H1.3.  
\(^\text{149}\) Ibid. H1.4.  
\(^\text{150}\) Ibid. D1.4.  
\(^\text{151}\) Ibid. At.4.
homes. The first floor has nine units: six one-bedroom apartments and three-two bedroom apartments, with five different layouts in total. The southeast corner begins with three one-bedroom units occupying five bays of windows. The layout seems completely to ignore the organization of space that the bays imply, with one unit, for example, occupying a full bay plus a single window from the edge of the bays on either side. The rooms within the units themselves also ignore the fenestration layout. It is as though the designers did not allow the building to influence the floor plan, except by jogging the walls slightly over to one side or the other a few feet from the windows so as to land between them instead of in the middle of one. The objective here was likely to fit as many units into the floor as possible, compromising the integrity of the floor plan. A two-bedroom follows these three one-bedroom apartments with a fourth one-bedroom next to this. The north side of the buildings begins with a mechanical room taking up the northwest bay, two one-bedrooms next to it occupying almost four bays, a two-bedroom apartment taking up just over two bays and another two-bedroom apartment inhabiting two full bays. The east wing houses the trash room where the northeast stair once stood, an elevator to the south with two toilets tucked in behind it, a new entrance vestibule, two offices in the south east corner, with the stair in the southeast corner.

The second floor overall seems to respect the fenestration much more, with many of the partition walls aligning with the spaces between bays and existing partition walls remaining, as mentioned above. The units that follow the spacing of the bays are generally larger than those that do not. The floor has seven one-bedroom apartments, four of which occupy exactly two bays, and, for the most part, have walls between bays, and not between windows within bays. The two units in the southeast corner, however, fit into just three bays between the two of them. The northwest corner is a two-bedroom apartment and occupies two bays plus a window from the bay next to it. The next apartment to the east is another two-bedroom unit, and takes up almost three bays: one for the living space, one for the first

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152 Ibid. A1.1
bedroom, and then two windows for the second bedroom. It seems as if the living room next
door in the first unit would be too small if this bedroom were to take the full bay, and the
bedroom would be too large. The two units to the east are more of the same evenly split up
bays, each occupying two: one bay for the living space, one bay for the bedroom. The unit in
the northeast corner is handicap accessible, but is not noticeably different from other units
with the same layout. The east wing again holds the trash room, a small space for building
services, the elevator, with the laundry room tucked behind, and another shallow one-
bedroom unit occupying the southern bay and the center bay. The plan is more logical and
more easily understood when the units are organized by bay. It also avoids the awkward look
and feel of a window seemingly shoved in the corner when adjacent to a perpendicular wall.
This is sometimes unavoidable however, if the parameters require a certain number of rooms
in a given floor.

The third floor successfully integrates the apartment units into the floor plan while
responding to the fenestration organization. 153 This floor kept most of the division walls intact
and adapted the apartments to fit the space given perhaps pushing back on strict parameters
for the sake of design, resulting in a plan that looks natural and intentional. The southwest
corner of the floor starts with a one-bedroom apartment occupying two full bays, with a two-
bedroom apartment next to it to the east, which occupies three full bays. The next two one-
bedrooms mirror each other, each taking up two bays each. The northwest corner has a two-
bedroom unit with a large bedroom in the corner; this apartment occupies three full bays. The
three apartments to the east are both one-bedroom units occupying the remaining six bays,
with the last apartment designated as handicap accessible, due to its proximity to the elevator.
The east wing mimics the floor below, with the trash room, elevator with a maintenance
room tucked behind it (not a laundry room) a one bedroom unit, and the southeast stair
tower.

153 Ibid. A1.3.
The fourth floor is the same as the third floor, with the only exception being the laundry room behind the elevator.\textsuperscript{154} This floor also responds to the layout of the bays and fenestration in order to create a layout and spaces that look and feel intentional and not like corners have been cut, as it were.

It seems as though the floors become more logical from ground floor to the top floor. The building’s general floor plan organization has the apartment units on either side of the main hallway, with another unit at the end with a maintenance or laundry room nearby. All of these units offer direct window access to each bedroom, as is required by code, as well as the living room and kitchen space. The bathrooms exist adjacent to the corridor, furthest from the windows, utilizing the remaining walls of the coat rooms. However, some of the

\textsuperscript{154} Ibid. A1.4
bathrooms have the clerestory-like windows connecting them to the corridor, though many of these windows, despite being kept, appear to be completely sealed over with a new wall on the interiors of the units.

The design successfully provides a home, by affording privacy and independence. The health care facility on the opposite corner of the block provides further services for self-sufficiency. However, the building might not create much of a sense of community since there are no public spaces. Besides the circulation and laundry rooms, the only shared space in this building is the rooftop garden. There are to be minor repairs to the existing metal screen, but plans for the space are not identified. This space has remarkable views of the Philadelphia skyline to the south, but with this as the only shared space, dependent on weather, it is unlikely that it will foster a sense of community. Some of the units are set aside for homeless veterans, but there appears to be no difference between them and the other apartments. Although there are some supportive services in the building (served by the offices on the first floor), the health center is also in close proximity on the opposite corner of the same block, allowing the residents in need to visit easily. While the apartments are complete, with a living space, kitchen, bathroom, and bedroom, they isolate residents from others. It is important for homeless people who are offered homes to be given spaces that foster neighborliness, friendship, and community. It could be argued that the community center across the street is this type of place, but that is separate from the home, in the strict definition of the word. It is a completely public space, accessible by anyone in the neighborhood, not a (semi-)private living space that exists as part of a home, only accessible to the few people who live there.

That being said, however, the new design, which broke ground in September of 2016,\textsuperscript{155} serves its purpose well. It offers independence to its residents, and, for the most, adapts the spaces well, preserving much of the original fabric on the interior and exterior. The design

responds to the original building’s exterior in terms of fenestration and bay organization, and maintains the original use of the circulation space and many of the thresholds to and from this pathway. The layout could include a community or recreation room for residents to use together or for building-wide events or perhaps as a shared, secondary living space.

The project was funded as a collaboration between the Philadelphia Housing Authority and HELP USA, as a continuation of Philadelphia’s momentum toward ending homelessness: between 2013 and 2016, the city and nonprofit organizations have given homes to nearly 1,400 homeless veterans. The school would have been too expensive to tear down, as David Cleghorn, the Senior Vice President of Real Estate Development at HELP USA declared. Furthermore, there has been no pushback from the neighborhood, despite the ‘not in my backyard’ reaction to be common when homeless housing projects are proposed in a neighborhood. The budget for the project was $14.5 million, with HELP USA contributing $13.7 million in private and public funding including historic and low-income housing tax credits from the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency, $500,000 in a first mortgage, and $300,000 from HELP USA board members. The Philadelphia Housing Authority footed the rest of the amount, and dedicated a $9.5 million investment to the project over the next twenty years, with a ninety-nine-year lease between the two organizations.

Cleghorn also described the success of their past projects and the community that veterans create among themselves when they are in the apartments together: “All of these projects are immensely successful, once these vets are in our apartments, they have support services right there on site. What keeps them there is that they really form a community of shared military experience. They look out for one another. They’re happy and proud of where

156 Ibid.
157 “Philly Vets Home.” https://phillyvetshome.org/about/
159 Ibid.
they live, and that makes us happy and proud.” One of the most supportive ‘services’ then may be the community that is formed.

This case study shows that due to the standard classroom size and regularity of bays, the general layout of schools is suitable to housing, particularly apartments of one or two bedrooms. However, with a few adjustments, the layout could shift to create spaces that are more fostering of community, with an increase in shared living space. This could be as simple as creating three-bedroom or four-bedroom apartments that share a single living room, which would increase the number of bedrooms in the building and cause the living space to be a communal gathering space that three or four residents make their own. To take this a step further, spaces could offer a number of shared living spaces for the previously homeless residents, maximizing the number of inhabitants that the building can house, and ultimately bringing the most people together.

Figure 31. *Apartments at Spring Garden Rendering, 2016.* HELP Philadelphia V. Kramer + Marks Architects.
CHOOSING A SITE

The decision to utilize a school building as the site for this project stemmed from their multitude of offerings in relation to the program of permanent supportive housing and the quest to create homes. School buildings suit permanent supportive housing because of their context, spatiality, and detail. In general, schools reside within residential neighborhoods and are by default part of the communities in which they were built. They are often centrally located, and essentially are community centers in both definitions of the phrase: they are at once physically central, and shared public spaces. Many school buildings include recreational spaces such as gymnasium and theaters, which both the full time occupants of the building can use, as well as the residents of the surrounding area, as intended by Irwin T. Catharine, the architect of many of Philadelphia’s schools.160

Philadelphia has many vacant schools; these buildings, viewed as assets, are excellent resources to the city. They are beautiful, historic buildings with a narrative and a story to tell, and many are well kept. Reusing existing buildings is a cost-effective way to create new places and can be more efficient than the process of completely new design and construction. These historic buildings are often listed on the national and local registers and are eligible for tax credits because of their historic status; affordable housing developments also qualify for similar tax credit incentives. Adaptive reuse is also environmentally friendly. New construction utilizes vast amounts of energy and resources, while demolition also uses a considerable amount of energy while destroying vast amounts of resources.

Furthermore, the schools are part of Philadelphia’s rich architectural history as well as that of many of the residents whose memories belong to these buildings. As places where many children spend significant time away from their homes, schools essentially function a

second home and, therefore, bear a quality of familiarity. As argued at the beginning of this thesis, ‘home’ refers to a meaning—a meaning which comes from a relationship between a physical thing (the dwelling) and an individual. To create this meaning, we must create this relationship, and in the case of school buildings, this fundamental relationship with the physical place already exists.
Figure 32. Aerial view of Central Philadelphia, location of George W. Childs School marked in white, 2016. Google Earth.

Figure 33. Aerial view of George W. Childs School and surrounding area, 2016. Google Earth.
George W. Childs Elementary School

George W. Childs Elementary School sits in South Philadelphia on Tasker Street between South 17th and South Chadwick Streets. The original building was constructed in 1894, and two wings extend to the north, both of which were added in 1928. In its entirety, the structure contains nearly 65,000 square feet of thirty-nine classrooms, a gymnasium, an auditorium, offices, a library, dining facilities, and various mechanical and maintenance rooms, making it ideal for a mixed-use project that incorporates community spaces into the reuse of the school. It is located in a residential neighborhood of dense row houses, with a church nearby, a block to the south. Many of the corners of the blocks have small commercial occupants, and a quarter mile to the southeast is the South Philadelphia Community Health and Literacy Center. Childs Elementary also fits into a larger network of sites run by the Bethesda Project throughout the city and would extend their reach to the south.

Joseph W. Anschutz designed the 1894 original building, with Johnson and Byrens as the contractor. Irwin F. Catharine, mentioned in the section on the Philadelphia school, designed the 1928 addition. The description from the National Register nomination (Appendix 6) is reproduced below:

A 3-story, 3-register, brick school building with a stone watertable, three openings in the left and right registers with brownstone sills and lintels on the first and third floors and brownstone sills and arches on the second floor. The central register contains a street level stone arched door opening with a transom, a rectangular opening on the second level, an arched opening on the third level and a Palladian window within the gable. A copper cornice tops the building. The south elevation stretches five registers with the openings within the respective registers 2-3-4-3-2. The left, center and right registers contain the same details as the outside registers of the west elevation. The left center and right center registers are both gable-topped and contain rectangular openings on all three floors and a row of five small arched windows within the gables. A 3-story, 9-register yellow brick with limestone trim addition was built onto the north side of the original building in 1928.

Figure 34. *Bird’s-eye view of George W. Childs Elementary School, 2016. Google Earth.*

Figure 35. *Program Massing Diagram: Proposed Reuse*
**History/Sign:** The George W. Childs School exists as one of the transitional designs of Anschutz’s from his early Queen Anne buildings, i.e. Landreth School, into the Colonial Revival of his later buildings, i.e. Sheridan School. The original building, School Board Type Number 84, contained 15 classrooms. Anschutz designed a 6-classroom addition in 1894. In 1928, a large rear addition, designed by Irwin T. Catharine, brought the total number of classrooms at the Childs School to 39. This rear addition, although not in keeping with Anschutz’s design, is representative of Catharine’s work during the late 1920s.162

The west wing addition included the gymnasium and the auditorium in the basement and first two floors, respectively. Besides these programs, the building generally operates as a homogeneous whole, with classrooms on the outer edge of the U-shaped plan and circulation on the inner edge. The only slight exception to this is on the third floor above the auditorium, where classrooms are on either side of a central corridor. The general layout of program is illustrated in the program diagrams below (Figures 36-37).

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162 Ibid.
The proposed reuse of George W. Childs School consists of three programs: community space, affordable housing, and permanent supportive housing. (Figure 35. Program Massing and Figures 38–39 Proposed Reuse Zones). The complexity and history of the building lends itself to these three programs. The design takes advantage of the generous spaces of the gymnasium and auditorium in the northwest wing for public use and proposes minor remediation without change to the program. The northeast wing shifts its use into two-story townhouses, while the entire third floor of the addition becomes ten apartments. Lastly, the original mass of the building, separated from the addition by new walls, converts to a permanent supportive housing complex with the potential to become the new headquarters of the Bethesda Project in Philadelphia. These three programs come together to form a mixed-use entity that serves its own residents, the surrounding neighborhood, and the city. (See Figures 51–54, Site Plan and Floor Plans)

The community space consists of an auditorium on the first and second floors with a gymnasium/multipurpose room underneath. As seen in the circulation diagram (Figure 40) and on the ground floor plan (Figure 52), the entrance is on 17th St, on the west side of the building. The classroom to the right houses a new lobby and ramp up to the ground floor and the auditorium. A second entrance on the opposite side allows for access through the courtyard from the parking lot to the north. The auditorium as well as the gymnasium below are to be open for occasional public use, shared by the residents of the building as one of their contributions to the community. This is meant to enable residents to offer something to the neighborhood in which they live, to be, in a way, productive members of their society. The western entrance is shared by residents of the affordable housing apartments on the third floor.
Childs Elementary School First & Second Floor Program
with proposed Reuse Zones

Figure 38. Childs Elementary School First and Second Floor Program with Proposed Reuse Zones
Figure 39. Childs Elementary School Third Floor Program with Proposed Reuse Zones.
Supportive Housing
Affordable Housing: Apartments
Affordable Housing: Townhomes
Community Space
Childs Elementary School
Adaptive Reuse Circulation

Figure 40. Proposal Circulation
The third floor apartments are accessible by the elevators near the entrance. New walls separate the added wings and the 1894 building on the third floor. (Figure 54.) Nearly each of the classrooms converts into identical or mirrored one-bedroom apartments. There are eight one-bedroom apartments, one two-bedroom apartment, and one three-bedroom apartment. The two larger apartments take advantage of unused space at the north end of the two corridors. Utilizing the original divisions between classrooms, each apartment takes up two bays. The arrangement of windows and bays determines the internal organization of the apartments, essentially splitting each classroom into a bay for the living room and a bay for the bedroom. The large height of the windows, at least nine feet, allows daylight to penetrate deep into the building. The school is also significantly taller than the surrounding structures, which enhances this effect. A converted classroom, analogous to the lobby conversion two floors below, serves as a community room for the residents of the affordable housing apartments. The three apartments on the west side of the courtyard have views down into it; this is a covered space primarily for the children who live in the townhouses in the northeast wing of the addition.

These nine townhouses (Figure 56, Rendering) offer single mothers the opportunity to have their own independent house each with its own entrance stoop on Chadwick Street. These stoops relate to those of the row houses across the street and help integrate the homes into the existing fabric of the neighborhood. (Figure 51, Site Plan.) The ground floor plan (Figure 52) shows how these stoops continue inside the house. A door replaces one of the three windows in each bay, allowing entry into each dwelling. The first floor consists of a living/dining area with a kitchen partially tucked beneath the staircase. The rear of the house takes over the original corridor of the school to serve as a bathroom and a den which contains a back door leading to the glazed courtyard. This door also serves as an at-grade entrance to the house, to benefit mothers with strollers. The courtyard is a secure ‘backyard’ for the children, who can play with their neighbors in a protected space. The whole courtyard is enclosed curtain wall, with a glazed roof at the top of the second level. (Figure 57 Rendering.) The
second floor of each townhouse (Figure 53, Second Floor Plan) has a bedroom at the front, facing Chadwick Street, and a bedroom in the rear that looks into the courtyard. A large space at the top of the stairs can serve as play area, home office, etc. A shared bathroom sits here as well. Each of the bedrooms is roughly ten feet by fifteen feet. This size allows for the possibility of multiple children to share a room if necessary. (However, an existing fire stair prevents the second townhouse from having a rear bedroom.) An added cornice on the front facade of these townhouses above the second story (See Figure 56) helps distinguish them from the third floor apartments, making their individuality and independence from the building apparent, while simultaneously helping to negotiate a scale shift between the surrounding row houses, since the height difference is so great. The added cornice visually lowers that datum line.

The original 1894 structure houses the permanent supportive housing program for the site. With a single entrance, the complex offers supportive services on the first floor, with two floors of housing above. There is abundant space on the basement level for additional offices and shared multipurpose areas, providing the opportunity for the George W. Childs Elementary School building to become the new headquarters for the Bethesda Project. The west entrance allows access to the organization’s offices to the left and right (Figure 52 Ground Floor Plan) as well as con spaces for health care, mental health care, job placement and training, a shared kitchen and dining area, as well as a space for child care. These services, as explained earlier in this thesis, provide support to the residents to live stable lives in stable homes. Having them on site eases the ability to support the residents without the added task of leaving the building and making a trip to a second location. The office maintains all of the original fabric, making use of the operable division walls between classrooms and the reversible installation of temporary cubicle dividers.

The upper two floors contain the housing units. Residents enter the building at the same entrance on the west and are greeted on the second and third floors by a staff person who grants them access. The proposed program distribution and layout (Figures 47-
48) is inspired by the layouts of several of the Bethesda Project’s sites (Figures 41-42). The classroom, understood as a repeated unit, bears the potential for multiple arrangements of rooms, including dual efficiencies (Figure 43), double suites with a shared bathroom (Figure 44), three-SRO cluster with private living rooms (Figure 45), and the three-SRO cluster with open living spaces (Figure 46), each on a spectrum of privacy and independence. The efficiencies and double suites offer twenty-four rooms in total, while the triple SRO clusters offer thirty-six rooms in total. The triple SRO cluster design allows the maximum number of people to be housed, while still offering a sense of privacy. The original operable panel walls dividing the classrooms split the pods. (See Figure 26) The construction of each pod—and the relationship of old and new—is illustrated in an axonometric drawing (Figure 49). While the three panels of the wall nearest the windows are fixed in place, the remaining three remain operable, allowing residents to determine the amount of privacy between the living spaces. The area that was originally a coat room becomes the bathroom for those three rooms. The original corridor remains a corridor, but is also wide enough to become a community space, while the operable walls can all be opened for circulation. Even when open, however, the arrangement of new walls that form the SROs implies a separate living room. Inspired by the transom windows over the classroom doors into the original corridor (See Figure 28), transom windows above the walls of the SROs allow natural light from the exaggerated fenestration on the facade of the building to pass through to the living spaces. (Figure 58, Rendering.) As many original details of the original fabric as possible are retained and restored, including the operable walls with chalkboards, window sills, sashes and trim, as well as hardware and hardwood floors, all of which help to maintain the character of the historic school. As mentioned above, schools are, for many people, places of familiarity, which is an essential aspect of home. Most children grew up attending these Philadelphia institutions, which hold a presence in the collective memory, essentially as second homes, and the schools’ architectural details enforce this element of familiarity.
Supportive Housing Case Studies: Program Distribution

**Figure 41. Program Distribution at Bethesda Project Permanent Supportive Housing Sites.**
Supportive Housing Case Studies: Program Layout

Broad St

Bainbridge St

Sanctuary

Figure 42. Program Layouts at Bethesda Project Permanent Supportive Housing Sites.
Figure 43. (Above) Unit Iterations: Dual Efficiencies.
Figure 44. Unit Iterations: Double Suite.
Figure 45. (Above) Unit Iterations: 3 SROs with Private Living.
Figure 46. Unit Iterations: 3 SROs with Open Living
Childs Elementary Program Distribution

Figure 47. Proposed Program Distribution
Figure 48. Proposed Program layout and circulation.
Classroom Modification

Figure 49. Proposed Classroom Modification.
Projection

Over the seventeen years as chief architect of the School District of Philadelphia, Irwin T. Catharine designed over twenty additions and one hundred school buildings in Philadelphia163, most of which have an identical layout (Figure 50, Diagram of Catharine’s School Typology Layout): a regularized classroom size on either side of a central corridor. This means that the unit design proposed for Childs Elementary School can, in fact, be implemented in any number of Catharine-designed public school buildings (Figure 49) because of the modularity of the classroom and the SRO/living room layout, broadening the potential for this project to expand across the city.

![Typical School Plan of Classrooms](image.png)

Figure 50. Typical School Plan of Classrooms, adapted from Spring Garden School No. 1.

Schools are inherently public service buildings. Although many in Philadelphia are unable to continue to serve as public schools, they have the capacity to continue to serve society. The program of permanent supportive housing grants these vacant buildings a home in their community and enables them to continue to serve the neighborhoods in which they exist. In turn, the converted school buildings offer a home to the chronically homeless—dwellings that afford them with familiarity, privacy, independence, belonging, stability, community, and comfort. Through the designed, interdependent union of vacancy and homelessness, these two urban issues at once both merge and dissolve as each other’s symbiotic solution, that is, the creation of home.

Figure 51. Proposal Site Plan
Second Floor Plan

Figure 55. Proposal Second Floor Plan
Third Floor Plan

Figure 54. Proposal Third Floor Plan
Figure 55. Exterior Rendering.
Figure 56. Exterior Rendering of Townhouses.
Figure 58. Interior Rendering: Permanent Supportive Housing Shared Living Space.
A Reflection

This thesis is only the beginning of a response to the questions it set out to answer, and the research presented herein can serve as a starting point for further investigations into the concepts of home, vacancy and homelessness in Philadelphia, and their respective solutions. The proposed design is not intended to serve as a definitive resolution but the instigation of commentary, discussion, critique, and review.

In the field of historic preservation, physical heritage is of utmost importance. Finding a use for obsolete buildings that stand within our collective memory is one of the most instrumental, fruitful and valuable techniques that preservationists bear in order to achieve their objective, and in many cases may be the sole recourse for saving an historic structure. But finding any use is not the end goal. The use itself must be useful, in order to imbue the building with its own sense of belonging into the greater fabric of the community. By doing so, a new reciprocal relationship develops between the building and its context, bridging the past to the present and, for some time, the future.
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Appendix I: List of Supplementary Case Studies

The projects listed below comprise case studies investigated for this thesis in addition to the four discussed above, presented with brief descriptions to aid potential further research on the topic of this thesis. The projects were located across the country and represent a number of different original programs, while the research primarily focused on schools.

1. The Lawsonia Building in Spring Garden, Philadelphia was once a two-story furniture factory. It was adapted with designs for mixed-use residential by Harman Deutsch, in the Colonial Revival style, with three additional floors added above. As of this writing, the project was not constructed.

2. West Philadelphia High School at 47th and Walnut Streets in West Philadelphia was adapted in 2017. Originally a public high school built in 1912, the massive structure was vacated in 2011 as students moved to a smaller school. Harman Deutsch converted into 298 apartment units in 2017, with the potential to include mixed use program, such as retail and/or a small school, as well as retention of the theater and gymnasium.

3. Bok High School in South Philadelphia is a vocational school designed by Irwin Catharine and built in 1938. In 2013, the school closed, but the following year, the building was purchased and soon reopened as spaces for artists, makers, designers, and small-business owners, as well as a seasonal rooftop beer garden.

4. Bigham Leatherberry Wise Place in West Philadelphia was not an adaptive reuse project, but a newly built housing project completed in 2015. Architecture firm DIGSAU designed the project for seven formerly homeless families of single mothers.

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and their young children. The design includes a case management office, a rain
garden, and private outdoor play area.

5. Hodgkins Middle School in Augusta, Maine was built in 1958, closed in 2009, and was
listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2015 as an example of the mid-
century Modern Movement in school buildings. In 2016, it was converted into forty-
seven units for low-income seniors and homeless veterans.

6. St. Kevin’s Parish in Dorchester, Massachusetts, was originally a two story parish built
in and, with the addition of three floors, was converted into eighty affordable housing
units, a quarter of which are designated for formerly homeless families.166

7. South Junior High School in Niagara Falls, New York was a Neoclassical Revival
school built in 1922–23,167 vacated in 1987, after which time it briefly housed the
Community Education Center and has been vacant since 2000. It was added to the
National Register of Historic Places in 2016. At the time of this writing, it was in the
process of being adapted into apartments.

8. El Barrios Artspace PS109, similar to the Bok approach, is a artist workspace
conversion that was originally a school. However, it incorporates living units into the
design, creating affordable live-work space for artists. The Collegiate Gothic building,
originally built in 1895, is located in East Harlem, New York and was adapted in 2015.

166 Thomas Grillo. “Former St. Kevin’s property to become apartments.” *Boston Business Journal*. January 2,

167 National Park Service. National Register of Historic Places Program. Reference Number
THE BROAD STREET RESIDENCE
722 N. BROAD ST.
MEZZANINE PLAN
Appendix 4. Spring Garden Apartments Drawings
Appendix 4. Spring Garden Apartments Drawings
Appendix 4. Spring Garden Apartments Drawings
Appendix 4. Spring Garden Apartments Drawings
Appendix 4: Spring Garden Apartments Drawings
Appendix 4: Spring Garden Apartments Drawings
APPENDIX 4. SPRING GARDEN APARTMENTS DRAWINGS

FOURTH FLOOR PLAN
Appendix 4. Spring Garden Apartments Drawings
Appendix C: George W. Childs Elementary 1974 Site Information Report

George W. Childs School

Scale of Feet

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226-3 (Elements 1-2)

Spa-K
## Appendix C: George W. Childs Elementary 1974 Site Information Report

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<td>768</td>
<td>32 x 00 x 24 x 00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>REG CLASS RM</td>
<td>768</td>
<td>32 x 00 x 24 x 00</td>
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<td>REG CLASS RM</td>
<td>667</td>
<td>29 x 06 x 23 x 00</td>
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<td>212A</td>
<td>STAFF TOILET</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>15 x 00 x 9 x 06</td>
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---

**GEORGE W. CHILDS SCHOOL**  
**SPA-K**
### Appendix 6: National Register Nomination for George W. Childs Elementary

**Table:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Value</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>7. Local survey organization</strong></td>
<td>Philadelphia Historical Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>8. Property owner name and address</strong></td>
<td>School District of Philadelphia, 21st &amp; Winter Streets, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>10. U.T.M. coordinate</strong></td>
<td>1891-1894</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>11. Status (other surveys, lists, etc.)</strong></td>
<td>School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>12. Classification</strong></td>
<td>Classical Revival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>13. Period</strong></td>
<td>1893-1894</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>14. Architect or engineer</strong></td>
<td>Joseph W. Anschutz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>15. Style, design or folk type</strong></td>
<td>Brick with brownstone trimmings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>16. Contractor or builder</strong></td>
<td>Johnson &amp; Byrens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>17. Original use</strong></td>
<td>School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>18. Present use</strong></td>
<td>School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>19. Condition</strong></td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>20. Integrity</strong></td>
<td>Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>21. Site plan with north arrow</strong></td>
<td>![Site Plan]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>22. Brief description (note unusual features, integrity, environment, threats, and associated buildings)</strong></td>
<td>See reverse side</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>23. History, significance and/or background</strong></td>
<td>See reverse side</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>24. Sources of information</strong></td>
<td>See reverse side</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Note:**

- Black and white print(s): 3½" x 5" enlargement or medium format contact
- Blank location of negative in block 24.
- Sources of information: See reverse side.

---

**= Courier Philadelphia**

**101 S. 17th Street**

**George W. Childs School**

**Prepared by:**

Jefferson M. Moak

**Date:**

5-27-87
ADDITIONAL DATA/PHOTOS
number all continuations from front

4. survey code

1. ADDRESS: 11th Street, 1501 S.
2. NAME: Childs, George W., School
3. FORMER NAME:

13. DATES: 1893-1894
ADDITIONS:

DESCRIPTION: A 3-story, 3-register, brick school building with a stone
water table, three openings in the left and right registers with brownstone sills
and lintels on the first and third floors and brownstone sills and arches on the
second floor. The central register contains a street level stone arched door
opening with a transom, a rectangular opening on the second level, an arched
opening on the third level and a Palladian window within the gable. A copper
cornice tops the building. The south elevation stretches five registers with
the openings within the respective registers 2-3-4-5-2. The left, center and
right registers contain the same details as the outside registers of the west
elevation. The left center and right center registers are both gable-topped and
contain rectangular openings on all three floors and a row of five small arched
windows within the gables. A 3-story, 9-register yellow brick with limestone
trim addition was built onto the north side of the original building in 1928.

HISTORY/SIGN.: The George W. Childs School exists as one of the transitional
designs of Anschutz’s from his early Queen Anne buildings, i.e. Landreth School,
into the Colonial Revival of his later buildings, i.e. Sheridan School. The
original building, School Board Type Number 84, contained 15 classrooms.
Anschutz designed a 6-classroom addition in 1894. In 1928, a large rear
addition, designed by Irwin F. Catharine, brought the total number of classrooms
at the Childs School to 39. This rear addition, although not in keeping with
Anschutz’s design, is representative of Catharine’s work during the late 1920s.

National Register Criteria: C, Architecture

Boundary Justification: The nominated property contains the
contributing building and all historically associated land.

23. SOURCES: Edmunds, Public School Buildings of Philadelphia, 1890-1899

EVALUATION: Despite the intrusive effect of the 1928 addition, the original
appearance of the formal exterior facades has survived. Therefore, it is
recommended that it be included as part of the Phila. Public Schools District.

There is one contributing building on the nominated property.

Verbal boundary: the nominated property is tax parcel #886226500.

EVALUATION

November 1979
## Appendix 6: National Register Nomination for George W. Childs Elementary

### National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section number</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Name**: Philadelphia Public Schools TR  
**State**: Philadelphia County, PA

**Nomination/Type of Review**  
**Date/Signature**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Substantive Review</th>
<th>Keeper</th>
<th>Attest</th>
<th>Attest</th>
<th>Keeper</th>
<th>Attest</th>
<th>Keeper</th>
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<tr>
<td>11. Bregy, F. Amadee, School</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Bridesburg School</td>
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<td>13. Brown, Joseph H., School</td>
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<td>14. Carnell, Laura H., School</td>
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<td>15. Cassidy, Lewis C., School</td>
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<td>16. Catharine, Joseph W., School</td>
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<td>17. Chandler, George, School</td>
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<td>18. Childs, George W., School</td>
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<td>19. Comly, Watson, School</td>
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<td>20. Conwell, Russell H., School</td>
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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Childs, George W., School
NAME:

MULTIPLE Philadelphia Public Schools TR
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: PENNSYLVANIA, Philadelphia

DATE RECEIVED: 10/04/88 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 10/18/88
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 11/03/88 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 11/18/88
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 88002257

NOMINATOR: STATE

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 11/18/88 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOMM./CRITERIA
REVIEWER
DISCIPLINE
DATE

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N
APPENDIX 6: NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATION FOR GEORGE W. CHILDS ELEMENTARY

CLASSIFICATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>count</th>
<th>resource type</th>
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STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

FUNCTION

| historic | current |

DESCRIPTION

| architectural classification | materials | descriptive text |

SIGNIFICANCE

Period

Areas of Significance—Check and justify below

Specific dates

Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

| summary paragraph | completeness | clarity | applicable criteria | justification of areas checked | relating significance to the resource | context | relationship of integrity to significance | justification of exception | other |

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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<th>acreage</th>
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<td>boundary justification</td>
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ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTATION/PRESENTATION

| sketch maps | USGS maps | photographs | presentation |

OTHER COMMENTS

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to

| Phone |

Signed

| Date |

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Appendix 6: National Register Nomination for George W. Childs Elementary

Phila. Public Schools TR
Phila. County

George W. Childs School
NEc 17th & Tasker
1987
Negatives at Philadelphia Historical Commission
Photographed by City of Philadelphia
Front Facade
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