



John A. Martin Grade School  
Name of Property

Atchison County, Kansas  
County and State

**5. Classification**

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

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

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

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	private
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>Total</b>

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION/School  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT/NOT IN USE  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS:  
Classical Revival (1915 building)  
MODERN MOVEMENT (1952 gym)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Stone (1915); Concrete (1952)  
walls: Brick  
\_\_\_\_\_  
roof: Asphalt  
other: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

John A. Martin Grade School  
Name of Property

Atchison County, Kansas  
County and State

---

## Narrative Description

### Summary

Atchison's John A. Martin Grade School (Martin Grade School) is located at the northeast corner of 5th and Division Streets in Atchison County, Kansas (*Figures 1 & 2*). The 1915 school is a three-story brick building built on the location of a previously existing school.<sup>1</sup> In March 1952, a gymnasium was added to the east with a transitional entry space connecting the two buildings. A final addition was made to the north end of the building for a generator. The 1915 portion contains Classical Revival elements that include bands of stonework running around the perimeter as well as simple columns at the entryway complete with classical temple elements including triglyphs, metopes and a broken ornamental arch above. The 1952 gymnasium has Modern Movement styling.

---

### Elaboration

#### Site

The Martin Grade School is located in a historically residential neighborhood approximately ½ mile from downtown Atchison (*Figure 1*).<sup>2</sup> Atchison is picturesquely located in the hills and bluffs overlooking the Missouri River in the northeast corner of Kansas. The metropolitan areas of Kansas City, Topeka, and St. Joseph (Missouri) are within an hour's drive.

The building sits on a 30,953 SF lot just south of its old athletic fields. The building's main facade faces south towards Division Street. The building sits at a higher elevation than the street. At the sidewalk, on the axis of the main entry of the building, is a stair flanked by two curved brick walls with concrete bases extending out toward the sidewalk; each curved wall is terminated with a square brick pedestal. Two retaining walls spring from taller brick pedestals that originally held light fixtures. These two walls enclose two flights of stairs divided by a landing that ends at the ground level of the existing building. This sidewalk is bisected by another sidewalk that runs parallel to the front facade of the building and curves around to the west to meet the sidewalk at the west entry. The main entry of the building is elevated; the door stands on an elevated masonry platform with a concrete topping. There is a plaque on the southeast corner of the original building that reads, "The John A Martin School 1915." There is a second entry into the main building located on the west side. A retaining wall abuts the generator addition and extends to another stair that descends down the hill to the school's athletic fields. Along this run of stairs, there is a landing at the entry level of the generator room which is at a lower level than the basement level. This sidewalk leads to an open concrete area that has a stair feeding into a rear entry. Continuing east from the building is the addition that was added to connect the gymnasium to the main building. A sidewalk from this location connects to the sidewalk in the front of the building; a concrete wall with metal railing (dating to 1952) separates the parcel from the house to the east.

#### Exterior

The school's south elevation is split into three distinct sections: the original 1915 building, the 1952 gymnasium addition, and the area added to connect the gymnasium to the original building. The original building has the most articulation on this facade and consists of three main bays and is axially symmetrical about the front entry. The facade is symmetrical - the eastern and western bays are mirror images of one another. The gymnasium is a simple brick building with metal flashing running around the top with a concrete base. The connection piece is currently clad in plywood.

The two symmetrical parts of the 1915 facade are designed as follows. The four basement windows are located effectively at ground level. On either side of this group of windows is a smooth stonework base, beveled in towards the basement wall that is approximately 6" thicker than the walls above. The casing of each window is of a matching color smooth stone. Directly on top of the windows is a second stone band; it is beveled in and this brick extends in a straight line up to the cornice on top of the third story windows. The second story windows are vertically aligned with the basement windows. Their casing is also constructed of stone identical to the basement windows; however, on this story, they are not as thick. Between the first story's stone band and the window jams sit approximately seven rows of brick. The sill and jam are stone and thinner than the casings and constructed of the same stone. On either side of the bay of four windows extending up to the cornice is a series of square stones articulated with various lengths on either side of the windows mirrored symmetrically about the window group's center. Above the second story windows is a band of brick, thicker than the brick

---

<sup>1</sup> Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, Atchison, Kansas, 1910.

<sup>2</sup> The close proximity to the city's downtown defines this as a City School property type. Brenda Spencer, *Historic Public Schools of Kansas*, National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Submission (Topeka: Kansas Historical Society, 2005), F-31.

John A. Martin Grade School  
Name of Property

Atchison County, Kansas  
County and State

between the second story windows and the first story stone band. The windows on the third story are similar to the windows on the second story. Above the third story windows is a cornice that runs around the building and is split horizontally into three separate sections. The lowest section is the tallest approximately 12" and protrudes slightly from the brick on the building facade. The next horizontal division protrudes further out from the first and is much shorter approximately 4". The final portion of this cornice is curved and extends out the furthest and is a similar height as the portion below. Above this is a final area of brick. The top of this portion is crenulated with two crenels located in-between three elevated portions. The center high point of the wall steps down on either side once before stepping down to the crenel. Centered underneath the high point and on the wall itself is a rectangle of stone with a small rectangular indent.

Set back approximately five feet from the two side portions is the center section of this elevation. The center portion of this facade has the same three horizontal stone bands as the two sides: the one touching the ground, the one above the basement windows, and the cornice above the second story windows that is articulated differently in this portion of the facade. At the center of this facade is the entry which consists of two smooth columns supporting an architrave located below a series of triglyphs and metopes. This supports a broken arch pediment with an oval section removed and a pedestal in the center of the opening. On either side of this entry, there are two basement window similar in height to the windows on the east and west portions; however, they are thinner. Next to these windows is a still smaller window which has a jam that corresponds with the bottom of the stone line like the others do and a sill that corresponds with the stonework base. The second story windows line up vertically and are similar on either side of the entry; however, the small window nearest to where the building steps out is lined up along the bottom of the window line rather than the top. This pattern is repeated for the third story. Extending down from the cornice is a vertical line of stone on either side of the two windows on the third and second story. The frame extends from the second window sill up to the third story's sill. The third story window has a third pair of windows centered above the entry. They are similar to the other normal sized windows in this section. Above the centered pair of windows, the cornice maintains its proportions but pushes up approximately one foot at a ninety-degree angle. Above this is a horizontal stone that is approximately the same width as the two windows below. Three horizontal bands are located above this and gradually reduce in size. On the front of these sections is a cartouche. Above the cartouche is a semicircle of brick that ends on an elevated portion of the top of the building line which aligns with the cornice stepping up below.

The west facade consists of two original sections and a third section which was added c. 1952. Included in this facade are the stone base, band, and cornice that correspond to the south facade. This side also has an entry that mimics the main entry facade design including the windows above, the shift in the cornice and all of the brick forms above the entry windows. To the right of this entry is a small window that corresponds with the second stone band and cuts into the cornice. A narrow set of cement steps descend from ground level to a small landing. There is no current entrance to the building at this level. However, an original narrow entrance into the basement has been replaced with a window on the west wall. The next section to the left is a fairly simple facade. It has three windows that are similar to the windows on the front facade, stone trim with windows that sprint from the stonework base and end at the stone band. On the north side of the facade is a lengthened chimney-like structure that is indicated on the original plans as a fresh air shaft. The original north elevation is broken into three different sections by two of the chimney-like structures which are located on either side of the center portion of the facade. To the east of this is the addition which connected the 1915 school with the gymnasium addition.

The original 1915 building maintains the stone bands that run along the building. These bands run over the chimney structures. The generator addition aligns with the top of the second stone band. The first floor in this central section has a window on the west side and a door on the east side which is elevated from the ground accessed by a wide stair. The second story has two groups of four windows. The windows are trimmed in stone and begin horizontally at the fresh air stacks and extend towards the center of the building. In between these two sets of windows are two doors which access the roof of the generator addition. The doors are standard height and have been filled-in above as the trim of these original openings terminates on the same level as the window jam. The third story has the same configuration of windows: two groups of four which line up with the windows on the second floor. Aligned with the doors below are two small windows. Their sills line up with the sills of the other windows on this story and are approximately 1/3 of the height. Centered on this portion of the facade is a chimney which was added for the furnace in the area accessed by the basement. This chimney is thinner than the two which flank this portion of the facade and is topped in stone work instead of the metal which is on the fresh air shafts. In between the windows and the side chimney structures is a gutter with an opening in the parapet wall to allow drainage. The west portion of the building is set back approximately thirty feet. Located near the exterior edge of the building on the third story is a door cased in stone which extends up to the cornice. Below that and similar in width is a rectangular window shorter in length than width separated by seven course of brick. On the same level where the two walls meet is a second window vertically oriented for the stair and below this slightly offset is a third window on this portion of the facade. The west side of the original building facade is similar to the east.

John A. Martin Grade School  
Name of Property

Atchison County, Kansas  
County and State

Below the lowest window on the east portion of the north facade is the addition. It is a simple brick structure with a flat roof that projects out over two doors. Above the roof is a bay of three windows which are on a wall that extends to the original building and is offset in front of it. Next to this addition is the gymnasium. On the façade, the gymnasium has a concrete base similar in profile to the base on the rest of the building. Cast into this base is a door and a ribbon of windows.

On the west elevation at ground level only the gymnasium is visible. It is a simple brick wall with the metal flashing on the roof and four square windows surrounded by stone on the north side of this wall is a door which accesses the gymnasium. Above the gymnasium are the windows which were above an original entry piece. This side would match the west side however only the windows at the entry remain, the original entry has been demolished for the gymnasium. The bricks at the old entry are visibly different than the rest of the building.

## Interior

The building plan for the main building is symmetrical about the north-south axis. The front entry faces an oversized set of stairs leading up to the second level of the school. At the end of the stairs on this level is a group of windows which at one point had a set of doors that lead to the main hallway of this floor. The hallway is very large and was designed to accommodate all of the students going from class to class. On either end of the hallway are stairs which access both the basement and the third story. To the north of the hall are two classrooms that are separated by two thin approximately 25' x 5' rooms which are accessible from both the hallway and the classroom they serve. These rooms were originally cloak rooms. On the south end, located near the exterior walls, are large chases with chalks boards or bulletin boards. They have a closet on one side and a built-in case on the other. To the south of this hallway are two more class rooms located on the southwest and southeast sides respectively. They also have a chase which doubles as a chalk board with casework and built-in closets to the side. Abutting either of these classrooms is a cloak room similar to the cloak rooms on the north side of building. In between both of these cloaks rooms and a stair is an office space. All of the ceilings on this floor are plaster. The addition is accessible from the landing on the east side of this building between the first and basement floors. It uses the old opening from the west entry.

There is a set of stairs descending from the second floor to the level of the transitional space between the gymnasium and the main building. This is a large room with stairs leading down to the locker rooms in the basement and stairs leading down to one of the classrooms in the basement as well. The locker rooms/bathrooms are accessible from the exterior on the north side. Historic features in this hyphen include light fixtures, doors into the gym, and designed railings. The gymnasium which is approximately 15' high has a stage on the north side and is open to the rest. The interior of the gymnasium is simple, having a brick wainscot with bands of concrete block and brick above (two rows of 8" block and a single row of brick). A solid brick course separates the brick wainscot from the concrete block.

The basement level has a classroom to the east which runs from the original exterior wall to the wall of the entry stairs. There is a closet and a restroom located under the stairs. This is the largest classroom in the building. There is a large built-in bench which partially separates the east portion of the room from the west portion of the room. Behind this bench is low cabinetry which runs along three sides until it reaches the door. On the rear wall facing the short counter is a closet with a series of four doors which rotate together sitting directly next to a closet. To the east of this closet is a door which leads out towards the stair. Next to this door is a wall full of cubby holes and cabinetry. Running along the top of the entire north wall of this room is panel wood. The far east wall has a chalk board. The ceiling has 1' x 1' ceiling tiles attached to the ceiling with adhesive, and the floor has tiles with the "alphabet" lettering on them.

Upon exiting the large classroom to the right is a stair and to the left is a door to a large open space. The northeast of this space is closed off with a room and the north east side and the northwest portion of this area is open with closets surrounding the chimney. Three of the four main structural columns are visible; the last one is encapsulated by the room to the northeast. In the far west bay is the kitchen with storage along the outside wall and a vent hood above the location where a stove used to be. Accessible from this area is the space under the stairs which was presumably used for storage. At the rear end of this floor in the northwest area is a door which accesses the furnace room. The furnace room is a very high room with an expanded metal grate floor on the level of the basement and a flight of stairs running down to another floor which is where the furnace itself sits. Next to this furnace room is a small room that was originally used for coal storage.

From the main level is a switch back stair with a small room on the landing which has some windows and short cabinets. The third story is accessed by this open stair on either side and has a wide hallway similar to the floor below. On the east

John A. Martin Grade School  
Name of Property

Atchison County, Kansas  
County and State

side of the hallway is a teachers' lounge and in a matching space on the west side of the building which had a private teachers' restroom. The classrooms are oriented similarly to the classrooms below they total four and are located on each of the corners of the building. The west classroom still has the hallway like cloak room; however, the south east classroom does not. In the space where the stair was on the first floor is a library which was enclosed with concrete masonry blocks and has shelves on the north and west side of the library.

### **Integrity**

The John A. Martin Grade School meets all of the registration requirements presented in the MPS for its property type. It was constructed as a public school prior to 1955. It remains in its original location, and although, many of the neighborhood homes have fallen into a state of disrepair, it continues to retain much of its historic residential character. The building also retains its massing, exterior form, original primary building materials, pattern of configuration. Though exterior doors and windows were replaced between 1960-1970, most of the historic interior finishes remain intact.

John A. Martin Grade School  
Name of Property

Atchison County, Kansas  
County and State

### 8. Statement of Significance

#### Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

#### Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

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

#### Areas of Significance

Education

Architecture

#### Period of Significance

1915 - 1966

#### Significant Dates

1915, 1952, 1955

#### Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

#### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

#### Architect/Builder

Saylor, William H. (architect, 1915 building)

Kaaz, Julius (contractor, 1915 building)

Radotinsky, Joseph W. (architect – 1952 addition)

Gering, F. P. (contractor – 1952 addition)

#### Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance for John A. Martin Grade School stretches from the completion of the original school building in 1915 to 1966, the 50-year mark established by the National Park Service. The building's appearance, which has changed little over time, is interpretive of this period.

#### Criteria Considerations (justification)

N/A

John A. Martin Grade School  
Name of Property

Atchison County, Kansas  
County and State

---

## Narrative Statement of Significance

### Summary

The John A. Martin Grade School is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C for its local significance in the areas of education and architecture. Constructed between 1915 and 1916, the nominated property exemplifies a city graded school from the pre-World War I era, as defined in the *Historic Public Schools of Kansas* MPS. W. H. Saylor & Herbert R. Seddon, of the firm Saylor & Seddon, designed the three-story Classical Revival masonry structure with classrooms arranged in a uniform, symmetrical fashion and incorporated specialized rooms for manual training and assembly. In 1952 a one-story brick gymnasium, designed by Joseph W. Radotinsky, was added to the east of the 1915 building. The entire nominated property includes both the 1915 & 1952 buildings. As a whole the complex retains a high degree of architectural integrity from its period of significance, 1915 to 1966, though continued to function as an elementary school through May 1997.

---

### Elaboration

#### Brief History of Atchison

Approximately 300 years ago, the area of present-day Atchison was home to the Kanza Indians. Their abandoned village was noted by Lewis and Clark when they explored the area on July 4, 1804. Fifty years after Lewis and Clark's visit, Kansas Territory opened, and Atchison was one of the territory's first Euro-American settlements. On July 20, 1854, a group of gentlemen from Platte City, Missouri crossed the Missouri River and staked out a town site. They named the site for David Rice Atchison, a noted Missouri senator. The *town* of Atchison was incorporated on August 30, 1855, by a special act of the Territorial Legislature under Governor Wilson Shannon, and on February 12, 1858, the *city* of Atchison was incorporated under Governor Robert J. Walker.<sup>3</sup> The town's early history includes a bitter rivalry between abolitionists and Missouri pro-slavery advocates. Atchison was made a city of first class on March 14, 1881 by a proclamation issued by Governor John P. St. John. Samuel C. Pomeroy, a prominent freestater, was the first mayor of Atchison.<sup>4</sup>

Atchison had one of the best steamboat landings on the west side of the Missouri River. Geographically, Atchison was located at a great bend in the Missouri River. This location was extremely advantageous because it was approximately 25 miles further inland than any other Midwestern city on the west side of the river; therefore, the town flourished as a leading commercial and transportation center. The wagon roads west took full advantage of Atchison's geographic location. Early freight shipments bound westward were brought from St. Louis to Atchison via steamboat then hauled by ox or mule across the prairie. The Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway, founded in 1859, was a successful venture that established the city as the eastern terminus for a railroad system stretching west and south. Even early mail delivery from the town to points west developed into a million-dollar business.<sup>5</sup>

The boom years for Atchison occurred between 1870 and 1915, when major industries were established, large wholesale firms were developed and the commercial life of Atchison reached its peak. Atchison was one of the first banking centers in the state. Industries grew along with the railroads, dealing in grains and milling, lumber and manufacturing.<sup>6</sup>

Construction reflected the town's prosperity. Many of the city's wealthier residents built palatial home in the city. The town's reputation as a home to the affluent was reported in an 1898 article in the *Topeka Mail and Breeze* entitled, "Atchison's Rich Folks," which described Atchison as possessing more rich men and widows than any other city in Kansas.<sup>7</sup> An article in the *Kansas City Star* entitled "Seeing Atchison" discussed the large number of wealthy residents and the money expended on industrial and public construction within the city.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> William Cutler, *History of the State of Kansas* (Chicago: A. T. Andreas, 1883), n.p., Internet; Kansas Collection Books, <http://www.kancoll.org/books/cutler/atchison/atchison-co-p5.html#ATCHISON> (accessed 22 February 2016).

<sup>4</sup> *Atchison Centennial Souvenir*, 1854-1954 (Atchison, Kans., 1954), 5-10.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> "Atchison's Rich Folks," *Topeka Mail and Breeze* (1 April 1898): 1.

<sup>8</sup> "Seeing Atchison," *Kansas City Star* (5 April 1914): 2A.

John A. Martin Grade School  
Name of Property

Atchison County, Kansas  
County and State

The financial panic of 1893, supplemented by an area drought, set back Atchison institutions, as it did to other Midwestern businesses, especially banks and railroads. Late in 1890, however, improvements in agricultural prices and a general increase in wages brightened the financial picture. Atchison's population between 1890 and 1900 followed suit.

The population of Atchison County dropped slightly every decade since 1900.<sup>9</sup> However, construction within the community was not static. The town's successful citizens continued to invest in Atchison's industries, businesses, educational institutions, and neighborhoods. The town experienced a wave of commercial and educational construction between 1900 and 1915 that included several large warehouses and public buildings in the downtown area. The architecture of the town was indicative of other Kansas communities with a combination of Victorian-era houses and storefronts, and a gradual infiltration of 'modern' commercial architecture and public buildings.

One of the oldest established towns in Kansas, Atchison played host in pioneer days to such notables as Abraham Lincoln, Mark Twain, and Horace Greeley. It was the birthplace of the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad, and the starting place for some of America's greatest railroad leaders. Industrialists, agriculturalists, entrepreneurs, writers, journalists, musicians, churchmen, and statesmen have resided in this historic community.<sup>10</sup>

### History of John A. Martin Grade School

Originally on this nominated site sat the North School constructed in 1884 (*Figure 3*). On October 5, 1892, the name of the school was changed to "The John A. Martin School" to honor John A. Martin (1839-1889) the recently deceased *Freedom Champion* editor (a local Atchison, Kansas newspaper), Civil War commander, and 10<sup>th</sup> governor of Kansas.<sup>11</sup> Immediately after the close of school, May 28, 1915, this first John A. Martin School was razed to make way for a new school building.<sup>12</sup> During the year 1915-1916, the classes for students of this school were housed in the Ingalls Building (later known as Atchison High School) on North Fifth Street between Santa Fe and Atchison Streets.<sup>13</sup>

The building of the new school was prompted by a growing enrollment and a need to upgrade to a facility that incorporated the elements of a more progressive school environment. As early as 1913, plans were being discussed to construct a new school on this site.<sup>14</sup> At this time, the bond indebtedness of the school district was quite miniscule,<sup>15</sup> prompting them and the general public to feel secure in their decision to move forward with plans.<sup>16</sup> The final cost of the new school was approximately \$50,000.<sup>17</sup>

The new school (*Figure 4*) opened its doors on the evening of October 12, 1916 with much fanfare and excitement.<sup>18</sup> Short addresses were given by the school superintendent and several members of the school board. The keynote speaker for the evening was ex-Governor Willis J. Bailey (16<sup>th</sup> Kansas governor and an eight-year resident of Atchison at that time) who applauded the school board and the citizens of Atchison for their forward-thinking ability and their desire to promote education.<sup>19</sup> Approximately 400 people attended the school opening.<sup>20</sup> One of the local newspapers reported that "Atchison has the finest public schools of any city in Kansas."<sup>21</sup>

In 1952 at a cost of \$118,244, a new addition was added to the Martin Grade School. In May 1950, the Atchison public school system marked the mid-century mark by a million-dollar modernization and expansion program. The projects were initiated in 1948-1949 and announced by the superintendent of schools and officers of the school board. With completion, the needs of the growing school population were accommodated as well as more adequate educational programs and facilities for Atchison's students were provided. The addition at John A. Martin School consisted of an auditorium with

<sup>9</sup> Kansas State Board of Agriculture, *Kansas Agricultural Centennial Report, 44<sup>th</sup> Report, July 1, 1960 through June 30, 1961*. Population is listed for Atchison County as 30,369 (1900); 25,584 (1920); 25,747 (1930); 22,414 (1940); & 20,717 (1950).

<sup>10</sup> *Atchison Centennial Souvenir*, 5-10.

<sup>11</sup> Sheffield Ingalls, *History of Atchison County Kansas* (Lawrence: Standard Publishing Co., 1916).

<sup>12</sup> *Atchison Daily Globe* (29 May 1915): 5.

<sup>13</sup> *Atchison Daily Globe* (4 September 1916): 6.

<sup>14</sup> *Atchison Daily Champion* (3 June 1913): 7.

<sup>15</sup> *Atchison Daily Champion* (8 December 1914): 6.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> *Atchison Daily Champion* (13 October 1916): 4.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> *Atchison Daily Globe* (14 September 1914): 6.

John A. Martin Grade School

Name of Property

Atchison County, Kansas

County and State

modern restrooms. Additionally, during this construction period, remodeling of the kitchen, lunchrooms, kindergarten, classroom lighting, clock and bell system, fire escapes, and the alarm system was undertaken. A dedication ceremony in March 1952 marked the completion of the addition and remodeling efforts.<sup>22</sup> The occasion served as a milestone in the years of planning and work which have gone into the improvement and expansion of the public school system in Atchison.<sup>23</sup>

Though settled by freestaters, the Atchison school district practiced partial segregation. High schools (grades nine through 12) were integrated from the beginning of public education in the town (though activities were segregated); kindergarten through eighth grade were completely segregated. However, before the Supreme Court's ruling in *Brown v. Topeka Board of Education*, Atchison's Martin-Lincoln public school district started the process of full integration beginning in 1952 and ending in 1955. Two blocks west of the all-white Martin Grade School is the Lincoln School (*Figure 5*). Constructed in 1921, this school, which served kindergarten through eighth grade, "was the first and only modern educational facility built for the education of African American students in Atchison."<sup>24</sup>

In late 1954 the Martin-Lincoln school district, in preparation of full integration, renamed both the Lincoln and Martin Grade schools and redistributed the student grade levels between the two buildings, though seventh and eighth grades created a junior high. At the November 30, 1954 school board meeting, board member Chester Mize moved the following:

...that the public be notified that segregation be ended in the present Martin-Lincoln school district commencing September 1955; that the present Martin school building be renamed Martin East and the present Lincoln School building be named Martin West and that the Martin East Building be used for the lower grades [kindergarten through third] and Martin West for the upper grades [fourth through sixth]....<sup>25</sup>

The newly-named Martin East School functioned as an elementary school through May 1997 when all of the neighborhood grade schools in Atchison – including the formerly-named Lincoln School – were abandoned by the school district and consolidated into one building on the western side of town.<sup>26</sup>

## The Design of the 1915 Building

### The City Graded School

John A. Martin Grade School was built during the Progressive Era, which is typically defined as the period from 1900 to 1920, but in Kansas, the influence extended into the Depression. The Progressive Era reforms influenced programs in schools across the country. New educational philosophies defined the era; it was in this period the standardization movement emerged, significantly impacting numerous aspects of the education system. The standardization movement attempted to equalize teacher qualifications, text books, and schools. Its influence was seen in all schools regardless of size.<sup>27</sup>

The Martin Grade School is an excellent example of a City Graded School, an elementary school property sub-type, defined in the *Historic Public Schools of Kansas* MPS. Early City Graded Schools in Kansas housed all grades from first through high school in one building with multiple classrooms. After high school instruction was removed to its own building, City Graded Schools included only first through eighth grades. The Progressive Era initiated changes to the curriculum and organization of primary education. There was an increased demand for specialized spaces, not just at the high school level, but for the lower grades as well, including spaces for art, music, kindergarten, and physical activity.<sup>28</sup> The Martin Grade School had specialized classrooms for manual training and assembly. Further separation of grades into junior high

<sup>22</sup> *Atchison Daily Globe* (15 March 1952): 4.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Angela Tyler, "Statement of Significance," *Lincoln School*, National Register of Historic Places nomination, edited by Jim Sherow (Topeka: Kansas Historical Society, 2004). Lincoln School (Martin West) was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on 7 June 2006 for its association with local African-American education and school desegregation in the 1950s. It was the last extant public building in Atchison built for and served African Americans.

<sup>25</sup> As quoted in Tyler, *Lincoln School*, Section 8, p10.

<sup>26</sup> The building and property were purchased in 2002 by Benedictine College in Atchison, Kansas and subsequently sold in 2010 to Riverbend Investment, LLC. In 2013, Riverbend Investment, LLC sold the structure and property to Loren Bradley. Mr. Bradley retains ownership of the property at this time (Atchison County, Kansas Quit Claim Deed – Book 475, Page 689; Atchison County, Kansas Quit Claim Deed – Book 583, Page 533; Atchison County, Kansas General Warranty Deed – Book 611, Page 801).

<sup>27</sup> Spencer, *Historic Public Schools of Kansas*, E-11.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., F-31.

John A. Martin Grade School  
Name of Property

Atchison County, Kansas  
County and State

and middle schools increased during the Progressive Era resulting in the development of the modern elementary school.<sup>29</sup> An elementary school educated kindergarteners through fifth or sixth graders, with each grade in a separate classroom, incorporating many of the specialized spaces encouraged during the Progressive Era.<sup>30</sup> As an early City Graded School, the Martin Grade School educated grades one through six when it opened in 1916.<sup>31</sup>

### Classical Revival Style

City school designs followed accepted architectural trends. Revival styles popular during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century were commonly used for school design. The school's significance to the community was often conveyed with its stately, formal, and symmetrical form constructed of solid masonry. Classical Revival architecture was popular near the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The style was a revival of classical architectural techniques which became integrated into modern design. The revival was brought about by a desire to divert from the new styles of architecture that were developing and recreate the grandeur of classical architecture in ancient Greece and Rome.<sup>32</sup>

This style was inspired by the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago held in 1893 which promoted a renewed interest in the classical forms, as well as a trend toward period architecture where historical interpretations of European styles were encouraged. Simultaneous to the rise of period-style architecture, the modern era saw its beginning with architects who were instead looking to the future, not the past, with more progressive, modernist styles. Similar to the Colonial Revival style which was popular in the same period, the Classical Revival style was more formal in its design. Relying on stylistic details of the earlier Greek Revival style, Classical Revival style buildings often have columns topped by a front facing pediment with a dominate entrance. One of the most distinctive of Classical Revival style is the symmetry and balance within the external elevations of the buildings. The repetition of form which is replicated throughout the entire exterior of the architecture is a common feature. The Classical Revival style is less ornate than the Beaux Arts style which was also popular in the 1885 to 1930 period but employs similar classical details.<sup>33</sup>

Classical Revival style with its impressive Greek form was most often used for courthouses, banks, churches, schools, and mansions. It was never quite as popular as the Colonial Revival style for more common residential buildings. The Classical Revival style was popular for educational buildings during the first half of the 20th century. This style was viewed as inspirational and appropriate for educational settings.<sup>34</sup>

## **The Design of the 1952 Addition**

### Mid-Century Modern

The 1952 Addition exterior elements mimicked the 1915 building; however, the form was clearly designed in the Mid-Century Modern style. Mid-Century Modern architectural style describes pre-and post-World War II developments in modern architecture from circa 1933 to 1965. This style was characterized by simplicity, democratic design and natural shapes. The style was more organic in form and less formal. Function was as important as form with an emphasis placed on specific targeted needs.

## **Architects Biographical Information**

### 1915 Building: Saylor & Sedden

Kansas City architects, William H. Saylor and Herbert R. Seddon, formed a partnership which spanned nearly a decade from c. 1906 until c. 1915.<sup>35</sup> They maintained offices in the Gumble Building in the heart of Kansas City's central business district. For a brief period from 1911 through 1912, the firm maintained a temporary office at 526 ½ Commercial Street in

<sup>29</sup> Spencer, *Historic Public Schools of Kansas*, F-31.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> *Atchison Daily Globe* (13 October 1916): 8.

<sup>32</sup> Virginia & Lee McAlester, "Eclectic Houses: Neoclassical 1895-1950," *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. 1984), 344-346.

<sup>33</sup> S. Allen Chambers, Jr. & John C. Poppliers, "Classical Revival," *What Style Is It?* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 1983), 70.

<sup>34</sup> James O. Betelle. "Architectural Styles as Applied to School Buildings," *American School Board Journal* 58 (April 1919): 28.

<sup>35</sup> City Directories, Kansas City, Missouri, 1900-1915.

John A. Martin Grade School  
Name of Property

Atchison County, Kansas  
County and State

Atchison, Kansas.<sup>36</sup> During Saylor and Seddon's brief tenure in Atchison, they designed the 1911 Blish, Mize, Silliman Hardware Building at 5<sup>th</sup> and Utah Street. However, they continued to complete architectural designs for businesses in Atchison including the 1915 Manglesdorf Brothers Seed Building at 11<sup>th</sup> and Main Streets, the Wherrett-Mize Drug Company Building at 2<sup>nd</sup> & Main streets,<sup>37</sup> and several others. The firm operated in Kansas City until approximately 1915.<sup>38</sup> The designs of Saylor & Seddon, especially those in Atchison, leaned toward massive, fireproof warehouses featuring classical detailing. In the era where reinforced concrete was the cutting edge material and a building's ability to withstand fire was prized above all other traits, the buildings of Saylor & Seddon were undoubtedly remarkable.

William H. Saylor (1879-1948) began his career as a draftsman for prominent architects Charles A. Smith in 1900 and for Shepard and Farrar in 1901. By 1904, Shepard and Farrar had promoted Saylor to the position of architect. He left to establish his partnership with Sedden in 1906. After the partnership dissolved, Saylor continued to practice architecture on his own. He joined Arthur James to form Wm. H. Saylor & Company in 1919. In 1927, he joined with two architects to form the firm of Owens, Saylor and Payson. Other known designs by Saylor include a stretch of mixed-use commercial/apartment buildings on Broadway between 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Streets in Kansas City, Missouri built in 1916 and a high school in Hill City, Kansas built in 1922.<sup>39</sup> Saylor was director and president of the Kansas City Chapter of the American Institute of Architects from 1911 to 1916 and remained active in the organization for a number of years.<sup>40</sup> According to the 1940 United States Federal Census, he was working as an architectural supervisor for the Federal Housing Administration.<sup>41</sup>

Herbert R. Seddon (1884-1916) was born in Kansas City. After working as a draftsman in the office of W. W. Rose in 1902 and 1903, Seddon studied architecture at the University of Illinois. He graduated in 1905 and spent the year studying abroad. Seddon returned to Kansas City in 1906 and entered into a partnership with William Saylor. The partnership dissolved in 1915. Seddon died in Kansas City on May 17, 1916 of tuberculosis at the age of 32.<sup>42</sup>

#### 1952 Addition: Joseph W. Radotinsky<sup>43</sup>

Joseph W. Radotinsky (1902-1983) was born in Kirkwood, Missouri. Radotinsky received his degree in architecture from the University of Kansas. He served as Kansas State Architect from 1928 – 1934. He had a long career of designing public education structures. Radotinsky designed several school buildings (and other notable public, commercial, and residential buildings) in Kansas City, Kansas between 1934 and 1938. In 1938, he was selected as the official architect for the Kansas City, Kansas Board of Education. He died in 1983 of a heart attack at the age of 81.

## Conclusion

The John E. Martin Grade School is historically significant as one of the few surviving neighborhood school buildings in Atchison, Kansas. Additionally, historical value lies in the expansion of the city neighborhood schools prior to World War I and for the collective memory of the structure's past function. Architectural value is seen in its representation as a "state-of-the-art" school of its time. Additionally, the building's fine design and quality craftsmanship demonstrate the architectural integrity of the structure.

<sup>36</sup> *Atchison Daily Globe* (7 July 1911): 5.

<sup>37</sup> This building was listed in the National Register on 6 July 2010.

<sup>38</sup> Saylor & Seddon were responsible for at least three buildings in Kansas City: a building for M. R. and E. C. Platte at 201 Independence Ave.; a building for the Hoover Brothers at 922 Oak St.; and a firehouse at 2329 Spruce St.

<sup>39</sup> Kansas City Landmarks Commission, Architectural Biographical Files.

<sup>40</sup> *Kansas City Architect and Builder* (May 1902): 7 & *Western Contractor* (15 October 1915): 9.

<sup>41</sup> U.S. Federal Census, 1940. [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com)

<sup>42</sup> Kansas City Landmarks Commission, Architectural Biographical Files.

<sup>43</sup> Biographical Information on Joseph Radotinsky originated from: "Joseph W. Radotinsky, Architect," biography, vertical file, *E. A. Lane Research Services*. Document obtained from the Kansas State Historical Society Archives in 2015.

John A. Martin Grade School  
Name of Property

Atchison County, Kansas  
County and State

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

*Atchison Centennial Souvenir*, 1854-1954. The Lockwood Company: Atchison, Kansas, 1954.

Atchison County Register of Deeds - Atchison County Courthouse. Deeds and Mortgages.

*Atchison Daily Champion*. June 1913 to October 1916.

*Atchison Daily Globe*. May 1915 to October 1956; & May 31, 1997.

Betelle, James O. "Architectural Styles as Applied to School Buildings." *American School Board Journal* 58 (April 1919).

Chambers, Jr., S. Allen & John C. Poppliers. *What Style Is It?* Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 1983.

Cutler, William. *History of the State of Kansas*. Chicago: A. T. Andreas, 1883.

Ingalls, Sheffield. *History of Atchison County Kansas*. Lawrence, Kansas: Standard Publishing Company, 1916.

"Joseph W. Radotinsky, Architect," biography. Vertical file, E. A. Lane Research Services. Document obtained from the Kansas State Historical Society Archives in 2015.

Kansas State Board of Agriculture. *Kansas Agricultural Centennial Report, July 1, 1960 through June 30, 1961*. 1961.

*Kansas City Architect and Builder* (May 1902): 7.

Kansas City, Missouri City Directories. 1900-1915.

Kansas City, Missouri Landmarks Commission. Architectural Biographical Files.

*Kansas City Star*. (4/5/1914): 2A.

McAlester, Virginia & Lee. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. 1984.

Photographs, Historic – Private Collection of Elizabeth A. Lane.

*Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps. Insurance Maps of Atchison, Kansas*. 12/1910, 05/1916, 03/1924. Database online at Kansas City Missouri Public Library. [www.kclibrary.org](http://www.kclibrary.org) (accessed October 15, 2015).

Spencer, Brenda. *Historic Public Schools of Kansas*, National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Submission. Topeka: Kansas Historical Society, 2005

*Topeka Mail and Breeze*. (4/1/1898): 1.

Tyler, Angela. *Lincoln School*, National Register of Historic Places nomination. Edited by Jim Sherow. Topeka: Kansas Historical Society, 2004.

US Federal Census. 1940. Accessed through ancestry.com.

USD #409 – Atchison County Kansas. Records for John A. Martin School.

*Western Contractor* (10/15/1915): 9.

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)  
 previously listed in the National Register  
 previously determined eligible by the National Register  
 designated a National Historic Landmark

**Primary location of additional data:**

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

John A. Martin Grade School  
Name of Property

Atchison County, Kansas  
County and State

\_\_\_\_ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ Other  
Name of repository: Kansas Historical Society

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): \_\_\_\_\_ n/a \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** Less than 1 acre

**Provide latitude/longitude coordinates OR UTM coordinates.**

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_  
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1 39.572313 -95.119923 3 \_\_\_\_\_  
Latitude: Longitude: Latitude: Longitude:

2 \_\_\_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_\_\_  
Latitude: Longitude: Latitude: Longitude:

**Verbal Boundary Description** (describe the boundaries of the property)

North Atchison, S36, T05, R20E, Block 4, Lot 13-19.

**Boundary Justification** (explain why the boundaries were selected)

The above noted boundaries reflect the property's current legal description as recorded by the Office of the Register of Deeds, Atchison County, KS. The nominated property includes the property historically associated with the John A. Martin Grade School.

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Elizabeth A. Lane & Zachary Arand (b+a Architecture)  
organization E. A. Lane Research Services date 20 November 2015  
street & number 841 South 4<sup>th</sup> Street telephone (913) 426-1981  
city or town Atchison, KS state KS zip code 66002  
e-mail ealane@att.net

**Property Owner:** (complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO)

name Loren Bradley  
street & number 1308 Walnut telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town Atchison state KS zip code 66002

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

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

John A. Martin Grade School  
Name of Property

Atchison County, Kansas  
County and State

---

### Additional Documentation

---

Submit the following items with the completed form:

#### Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each digital image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to a sketch map or aerial map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

#### Photograph Log

Name of Property: John E. Martin Grade School

City or Vicinity: Atchison

County: Atchison State: Kansas

Photographer: Elizabeth A. Lane & Amanda K. Loughlin (KSHS)

Date  
Photographed: 15 November 2015 & 25 March 2016 (KSHS)

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:  
All digital images labeled as follows:

- 01 of 21 Front (south) elevation, view north.
- 02 of 21 South elevation of entire school, view NW (KSHS)
- 03 of 21 View NE of south elevations of the hyphen and the west and south elevations of the gym (KSHS)
- 04 of South and east elevations of gym, view NW (KSHS)
- 05 of View north along east sidewalk, showing historic mid-century railing (KSHS)
- 06 of North elevations, view SW (KSHS)
- 07 of North elevation of 1952 bathroom addition to north of hyphen (KSHS)
- 08 of View SE at north and west elevations (KSHS)
- 09 of Side (west) elevation, view ESE
- 10 of View north from south entry (KSHS)
- 11 of Main level corridor, view ENE (KSHS)
- 12 of Upper level corridor, view NE (KSHS)
- 13 of Upper level, NW classroom (typical classroom), view SW (KSHS)
- 14 of Upper level, NW classroom (typical classroom), view SE (KSHS)
- 15 of Typical classroom built-ins
- 16 of Main level coat closet, view south
- 17 of Upper level library, view ESE (KSHS)
- 18 of Basement, SE classroom, view NW, showing mid-century built-ins at north wall (KSHS)
- 19 of Basement, SE classroom, view NE (KSHS)
- 20 of Basement, lunchroom area, view SW (KSHS)
- 21 of Maintenance room to north of lunch area, view north
- 22 of Gymnasium, view SW (KSHS)
- 23 of Gymnasium, view NW at stage (KSHS)

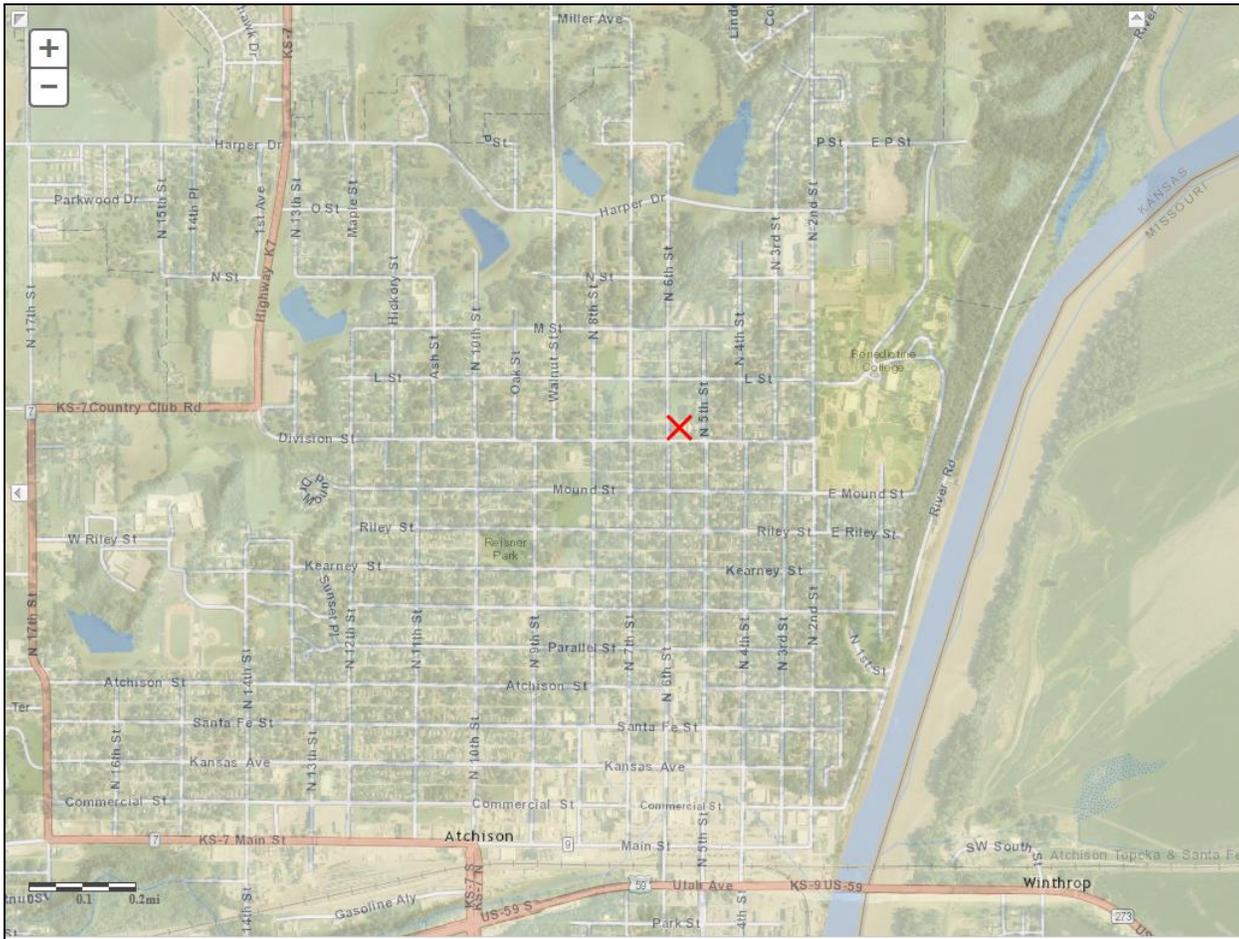
#### Figures

Include GIS maps, figures, scanned images below.

John A. Martin Grade School  
Name of Property

Atchison County, Kansas  
County and State

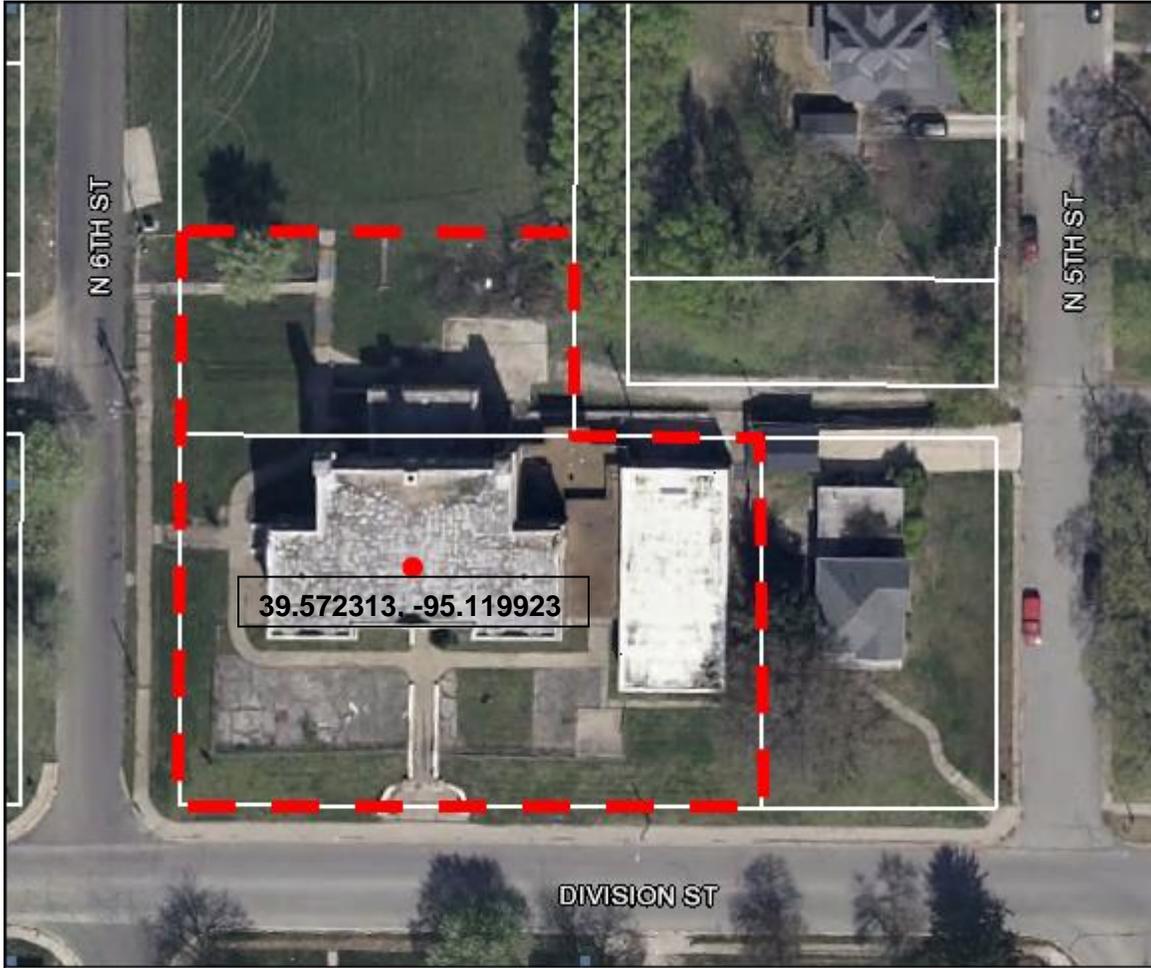
**Figure 1.** Contextual view of the John A. Martin Grade School, denoted by X below. North is up. Source: Kansas Historic Resources Inventory (kshs.org/khri).



John A. Martin Grade School  
Name of Property

Atchison County, Kansas  
County and State

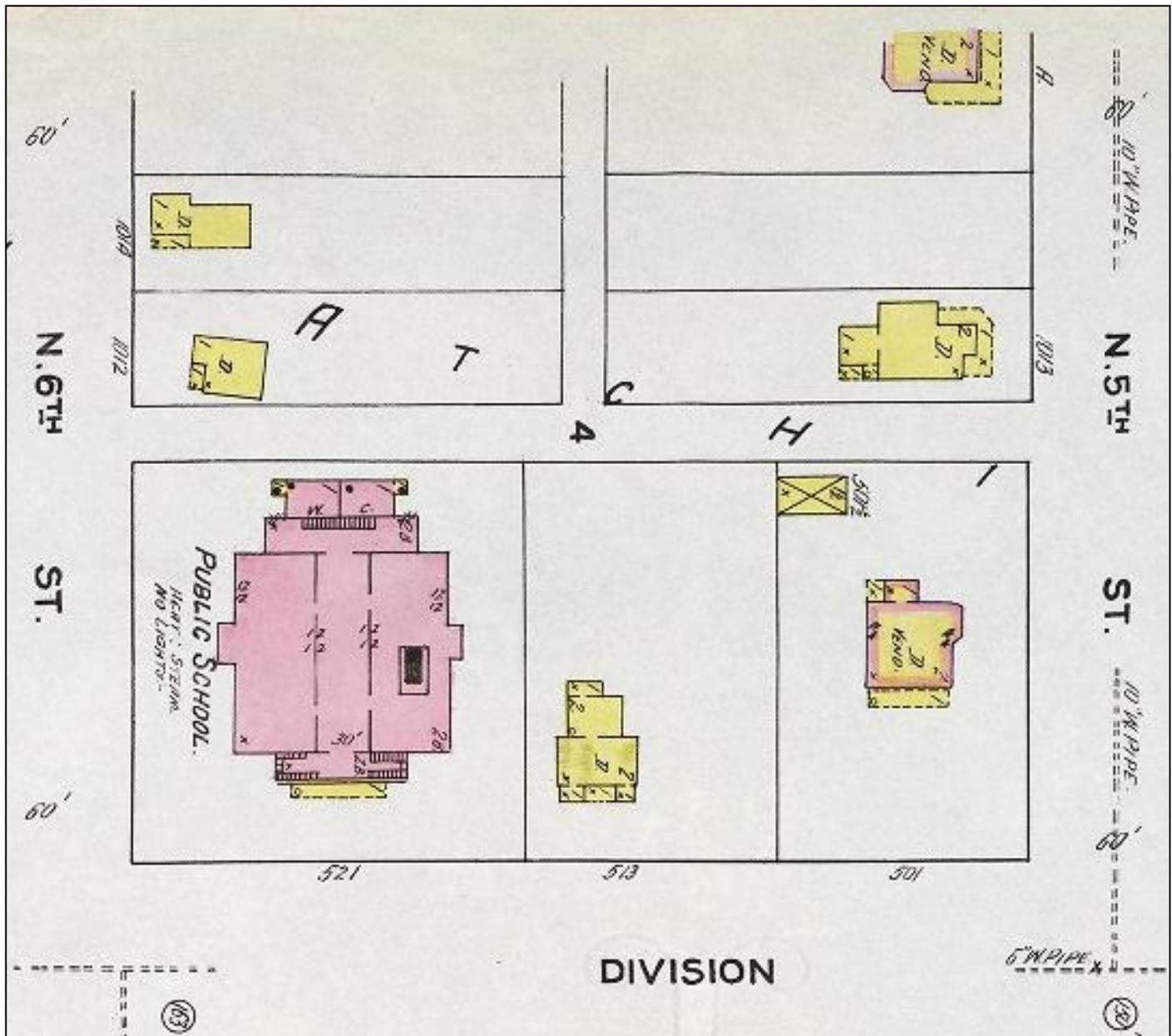
Figure 2. Boundary map. 2012 Aerial base image from Atchison County Appraiser.



John A. Martin Grade School  
Name of Property

Atchison County, Kansas  
County and State

**Figure 3.** Snippet of 1910 Sanborn map, showing the previous school building. Source: University of Kansas, Luna Insight Image Collections (luna.ku.edu). North is up.



John A. Martin Grade School  
Name of Property

Atchison County, Kansas  
County and State

**Figure 4.** South elevation of the John A. Martin Grade School, circa 1916, shortly after completion.



John A. Martin Grade School  
Name of Property

Atchison County, Kansas  
County and State

**Figure 5.** Current Google aerial image showing Lincoln School (A) in relation to Martin Grade School (B).

