

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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

1. Name of Property

Historic name Kansas City Public Library and Board of Education Building

Other names/site number N/A

Name of related Multiple Property Listing N/A

2. Location

Street & number 1211 McGee Street

N/A

not for publication

City or town Kansas City

N/A

vicinity

State Missouri Code MO County Jackson

Code 095

Zip code 64106

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

 national statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria: X A B C D

Toni M. Prawl

Signature of certifying official/Title Toni M. Prawl, Ph.D., Deputy SHPO

MAY 15 2017

Date

Missouri Department of Natural Resources

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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

Signature of commenting official

Date

Title

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

 entered in the National Register

 determined eligible for the National Register

 determined not eligible for the National Register

 removed from the National Register

 other (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Kansas City Public Library and Board of Education Building
Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

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

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

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

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION/Library

EDUCATION/Education-related

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Vacant

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT/International Style

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: CONCRETE

walls: GLASS

ALUMINUM

roof: OTHER

other: LIMESTONE

☒

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION ON CONTINUATION PAGES

Kansas City Public Library and Board of Education Building
Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri
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.

☒ **STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE ON CONTINUATION PAGES**

Areas of Significance

EDUCATION

Period of Significance

1960 – 1967

Significant Dates

1960

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Tanner, Edward W. (Architect)

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☒ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository: Missouri Valley Special Collections (KCPL)
Kansas City Public Schools

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A

Kansas City Public Library and Board of Education Building
Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 2.6

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1 39.09939 -94.57915 3 _____
Latitude: Longitude: Latitude: Longitude:

2 _____ 4 _____
Latitude: Longitude: Latitude: Longitude:

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

_____ NAD 1927 or _____ NAD 1983

1 _____ 3 _____
Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

2 _____ 4 _____
Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (On continuation sheet)

Boundary Justification (On continuation sheet)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Rachel Nugent, Senior Historic Preservation Specialist

organization Rosin Preservation, LLC date March 2017

street & number 1712 Holmes telephone 816-472-4950

city or town Kansas City state MO zip code 64108

e-mail rcnugent@gmail.com

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:**
 - A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
 - A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Photographs**
- **Owner Name and Contact Information**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

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 18 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.

Kansas City Public Library and Board of Education Building
Name of Property

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Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log:

Name of Property: **Kansas City Public Library and Board of Education Building**
City or Vicinity: **Kansas City**
County: **Jackson County** State: **Missouri**
Photographer: **Brad Finch, f-stop Photography**
Date
Photographed: **December 2016**

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

- 1 of 24:** Primary (north) elevation, view south.
- 2 of 24:** North and west elevations, view southeast.
- 3 of 24:** North and east elevations, view southwest.
- 4 of 24:** East elevation, view northwest.
- 5 of 24:** South elevation and parking garage, view northwest.
- 6 of 24:** West elevation and parking garage, view northeast.
- 7 of 24:** Primary entry detail, view south.
- 8 of 24:** Board of Education entry, view east.
- 9 of 24:** West elevation detail, view east.
- 10 of 24:** Library foyer, floor L-1 view north.
- 11 of 24:** Library foyer, floor L-1 view north.
- 12 of 24:** Library foyer, floor L-1 view south.
- 13 of 24:** Library, floor L-1, view southeast.
- 14 of 24:** Library, floor L-1, view east.
- 15 of 24:** Library, fireplace, floor L-1, view southeast.
- 16 of 24:** Library, view from balcony, floor L-2, view south.
- 17 of 24:** Library, view from balcony, floor L-2, view northeast.
- 18 of 24:** Library, floor L-3, view northeast.
- 19 of 24:** Library, view from balcony, floor L-4, view northeast.
- 20 of 24:** Library, conference room, floor L-5, view southwest.
- 21 of 24:** Library, conference room, floor L-5, view east.
- 22 of 24:** Auditorium, Floor B, south portion, view northwest.
- 23 of 24:** Board of Education offices, floor A-10 (10th floor), view north.
- 24 of 24:** Basement, Floor A, north portion, view northwest.

Figure Log:

Include figures on continuation pages at the end of the nomination.

- Figure 1. Context map. Source: Google.com, 2016.
- Figure 2. Site map. Source: Google.com, 2016.
- Figure 3. Photo Map, Exterior. Source: Google.com, 2016.
- Figure 4. Photo map, Level A. Source: Edward Tanner, Architectural Drawings, 1958.
- Figure 5. Photo map, Level B (south). Source: Edward Tanner, Architectural Drawings, 1958.
- Figure 6. Photo map, Level 1. Source: Edward Tanner, Architectural Drawings, 1958.

Kansas City Public Library and Board of Education Building

Jackson County, Missouri

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- Figure 7. Photo map, Level 2. Source: Edward Tanner, Architectural Drawings, 1958.
Figure 8. Photo map, Level 3. Source: Edward Tanner, Architectural Drawings, 1958.
Figure 9. Photo map, Level 4. Source: Edward Tanner, Architectural Drawings, 1958.
Figure 10. Photo map, Level 5. Source: Edward Tanner, Architectural Drawings, 1958.
Figure 11. Photo map, 10th Floor. Source: Kansas City Public School District As-Built drawings, 2000.
Figure 12. Level A. Source: Edward Tanner, Architectural Drawings, Sheet Q-1, 1958.
Figure 13. Level B. Source: Edward Tanner, Architectural Drawings, Sheet Q-2 1958.
Figure 14. Floor L-1. Source: Edward Tanner, Architectural Drawings, Sheet Q-3, 1958.
Figure 15. Floor L-2. Source: Edward Tanner, Architectural Drawings, Sheet Q-4, 1958.
Figure 16. Floor L-3. Source: Edward Tanner, Architectural Drawings, Sheet Q-5, 1958.
Figure 17. Floor L-4. Source: Edward Tanner, Architectural Drawings, Sheet Q-6, 1958.
Figure 18. Floor L-5. Source: Edward Tanner, Architectural Drawings, Sheet Q-7, 1958.
Figure 19. Floor A-10. Source: Edward Tanner, Architectural Drawings, Sheet Q-8, 1958.
Figure 20. Historic Photograph, Construction, July 1959. Source: Missouri Valley Special Collections.
Figure 21. Historic Postcard, c.1960. Source: Vertical File. Missouri Valley Special Collections.
Figure 22. Historic Photograph, Art and Music Department, c.1960. Source: Missouri Valley Special Collections.
Figure 23. Current Plans, Floor Level A. Source: Kansas City Missouri School District Archives, 2008.
Figure 24. Current Plans, Floor Level B. Source: Kansas City Missouri School District Archives, 2008.
Figure 25. Current Plans, Floor L-1. Source: Kansas City Missouri School District Archives, 2008.
Figure 26. Current Plans, Floor L-2 Source: Kansas City Missouri School District Archives, 2008.
Figure 27. Current Plans, Floor L-3. Source: Kansas City Missouri School District Archives, 2008.
Figure 28. Current Plans, Floor L-4. Source: Kansas City Missouri School District Archives, 2008.
Figure 29. Current Plans, Floor L-5. Source: Kansas City Missouri School District Archives, 2008.
Figure 30. Current Plans, Floor A-6. Source: Kansas City Missouri School District Archives, 2008.
Figure 31. Current Plans, Floor A-7. Source: Kansas City Missouri School District Archives, 2008.
Figure 32. Current Plans, Floor A-8. Source: Kansas City Missouri School District Archives, 2008.
Figure 33. Current Plans, Floor A-9. Source: Kansas City Missouri School District Archives, 2008.
Figure 34. Current Plans, Floor A-10. Source: Kansas City Missouri School District Archives, 2008.
Figure 35. Current Plans, Floor A-11. Source: Kansas City Missouri School District Archives, 2008.

National Register of Historic Places
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Kansas City Public Library and Board of Education Building
Name of Property
Jackson County, Missouri
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

SUMMARY

The Kansas City Public Library and Board of Education Building occupies a full city block at 1211 McGee Street in the heart of the central business district of Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri. The building is a nine-story office tower that rises from a two-story base. It also includes a basement, sub-basement, and attached multi-level parking garage. The abstracted columns of the symmetrical stone base and the regular grid pattern of the glass and aluminum curtainwall of the tower clearly communicate an expression of the International Style, specifically the influence of Miesian design. The interior of the Kansas City Public Library and Board of Education Building is organized into three distinct sections: the Board of Education administrative offices, the Kansas City Public Library, and the parking garage. The three sections remain separated throughout the building, except at Level B where elements of all three programs connect. The Board of Education occupied floors six through ten; the Kansas City Public Library occupied floors one to five, most of Level B (basement) and all of Level A (sub-basement).¹ The two-level parking garage occupies the south half of the building. Level B contains the entrance to the Board offices and the Board auditorium; the Children's Department and storage for the Library; and the lower level of the parking garage.² The building has sustained few alterations, retaining the historic exterior curtainwall design and the historic interior configuration of offices and library spaces specifically designed to optimize the organization of library services.

ELABORATION

Setting

The Kansas City Public Library and Board of Education Building occupies the full city block on which it stands (*Figure 2*). The tower portion occupies the north half of the block while the two-level parking garage occupies the south half. The building faces north and is set back from E. 12th Street and the public sidewalk (*Photo 3*). Low brick walls enclose the rectangular terraced landscaped areas that flank the wide concrete stairs that access the building from the public sidewalk. Grass covers the terraced areas as well as the land abutting the building on the north and east. The grade of the block slopes down toward the southwest. Site grading and building placement enable street-level access to the north parking lot on the roof of a portion of basement Level B, as well as the upper level of the parking garage (*Photo 5*). Due to the grade change, basement Level B is at grade on the west elevation, providing three separate entrances to the building and a street-level entrance to the lower level of the parking garage (*Photo 6*). A concrete public sidewalk encircles the property as it slopes down at the southwest corner of the block.

¹ The Kansas City Public Library vacated the library space in 2004; the Board of Education is in the process of vacating the rest of the building.

² The parking garage is integrated into the design of the building and is therefore not counted or described as a separate resource.

National Register of Historic Places
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Kansas City Public Library and Board of Education Building

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

The Kansas City Public Library and Board of Education Building property fills a city block near the southeast corner of downtown Kansas City, as bounded by a loop of interstate highways I-35, I-70, and I-670 (*Figure 1*). The nominated property is adjacent to the Depression-Era civic complex to the east that includes the 1934 Jackson County Courthouse at 415 E. 12th Street and the 1937 Kansas City City Hall at 414 E. 12th Street (*Photo 2*). These earlier civic buildings each occupy full city blocks and rise from expansive concrete and landscaped plazas (*Figure 3*). The wide base and narrow tower provide a modern reference to the stepped towers designed in the early twentieth century. Other local, regional, and federal office buildings occupy the blocks east and north of the 1930s towers. The blocks north and west of the nominated property contain private office buildings constructed throughout the twentieth century. Many of these buildings are individually listed in the National Register, including the Argyle Building at 306 E. 12th Street (NR listed 8/17/05) and the Traders National Bank Building at 1125 Grand Boulevard (NR listed 5/10/16) (*Photos 5 and 6*). The Sprint Center indoor arena, completed in 2007, occupies four city blocks immediately south of the nominated property (*Photo 3*).

Exterior

The Kansas City Public Library and Board of Education Building is composed of two distinct masses that together form a distinctly Modern building in the style of Mies van der Rohe. The nine-story rectangular tower with a curtainwall composed of aluminum panels and tinted glazing set in an aluminum frame rises from a wider two-story base clad in limestone (*Photo 1*). The limestone base has deeply recessed voids creating the modern interpretation of a classical colonnade. The clear anodized aluminum frame that creates a regular grid of enameled metal spandrel panels and fixed glazing or pivot sashes that clads all four elevations of the nine-story tower also fills the voids in the limestone base.

North Elevation

The front, north, elevation faces E. 12th Street (*Photo 1*). The base and the tower have a different number of bays. The two-story limestone base has three distinct sections. The east and west sections each have six bays. Limestone enframes the regular grid of aluminum panels and tinted glazing that fill the deeply recessed voids of each bay. The aluminum panels cover the spandrel areas at the tops and bottoms of each bay. Aluminum spandrel panels are present only in the two inner bays of each section. The four outer bays have glazing at the center spandrel area, indicating the two-story ceiling height of the spaces at the corners of the building. The two-story center section curves outward from the flat plane of the front façade and contains the main entrance to the Library. The two curved portions of the wall flanking the entrance consist of large stone panels with a regular grid of punched circular openings that create a two-story screen. Limestone bands frame the screen. The curved entrance wall is deeply recessed at the center of the curved projection and contains three bays (*Photo 7*). An aluminum opening provides access to a book chute connected to Level B to facilitate the return

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Kansas City Public Library and Board of Education Building

Name of Property

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N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

of library materials after hours. The entrance wall has the same aluminum frame, aluminum spandrel panels, and tinted glazing as the rest of the building. Three entrances each containing a pair of historic fully glazed doors provide access to the entry vestibule. Two free-standing and two engaged unadorned stone columns that align with the curve of the projection create a Modern Movement colonnade.

The nine-story tower that rises from the center of the limestone-clad base has a smaller footprint than the base on all elevations (*Photo 1*). The curtainwall façade consists of a clear anodized aluminum frame with vertical fins defining each column of the grid. Columns filled with gray aluminum panels identify the structural bays. Horizontal bands filled with gray aluminum panels identify the floor heights. Tinted glazing fills the bands between the horizontal and vertical spandrels. The spandrel bands are shorter than the vision bands. The north façade has seven bays. The center bay contains six panes of tinted glazing while the flanking bays each contain four panes. The glazing is fixed on the third and fourth floors while the openings on the fifth floor and above are center pivot sashes. The presence of glazing rather than aluminum spandrel panels between the third and fourth stories in the two outer bays indicates the two-story open space within. The four rows of the curtainwall at the top of the building contain only spandrel panels. The height of these rows is consistent with the height of spandrel panels on lower portions of the building. There is some color variation in the spandrel panels.³

East Elevation

The east elevation also illustrates the distinction between the base and the tower (*Photo 4*). A stacked grid of honed limestone veneer panels clads all of the base except for a narrow section at the center of the façade. The center section contains an aluminum-framed glazed wall. The frame forms a five-by-five grid with one row of five spandrel panels at the bottom and one row at the top of the glazed wall. The three rows of fixed tinted glazing are all the same height. The height of the glazing in this location indicates a two-story space within the building. Some non-historic mechanical equipment is minimally visible on the roof of the base.

The tower façade consists of the same curtainwall grid system as the north elevation with vertical aluminum fins, gray aluminum spandrel panels, and bands of tinted glazing, fixed on floors three and four and center pivot sashes on floors five and above. Columns of spandrel panels define three bays on the east elevation. Each bay contains five panes of vision glass. The presence of glazing at the spandrel area between the third and fourth floors at the north end of the façade indicates the two-story space within. The four rows of spandrel panels are present on this elevation as well.

Burnt orange brick is used to create a low planter, columns that support a concrete canopy, a taller wall, and a small office that line the east side of the upper level of the parking garage. A

³ It is unclear whether the color variation in the spandrel panels is due to deterioration, damage, or replacement.

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Kansas City Public Library and Board of Education Building
Name of Property
Jackson County, Missouri
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N/A
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low brick wall with concrete coping extends along the east perimeter of the lot to enclose the parking garage.

South Elevation

The south elevation is a simplified and slightly modified version of the front (north) elevation (*Photo 5*). The two outer sections of the limestone base have deeply recessed voids filled with aluminum frames, aluminum spandrel panels, and tinted glazing. Each outer section has six bays. Large flat stone screens with a regular grid of punched circular openings flank the three center bays with similar recessed voids and glazed walls. The three bays of the center section and the western four bays of the western section have glazing in the spandrels, indicating the two-story height on the interior.

The curtainwall on the south elevation uses the same materials as the north elevation and contains seven irregular bays. Bays 1, 2, 6, and 7 each contain four windows. Bay 3 contains aluminum panels within each frame. Bay 4 contains six windows. Bay 5 has two glazed panels and two aluminum panels in each row. The four rows of spandrel-height panels extend across the south elevation. At the eleventh story, however, tinted glazing follows the pattern of glazing on the floors below. The glazing is the same height as the spandrel panels. The glazing is fixed on the third and fourth floors while the openings on the fifth floor and above are center pivot sashes. This configuration of glass and aluminum is historic.

The parking garage integrated into the south side of the building includes what appears to be a surface lot accessible from Oak Street on the east side of the property. The north lot forms the roof of the basement level as it projects southward from the main portion of the building (*Photo 5*). The upper level of the two-level parking garage south of the basement is also accessible at street level from Oak Street.

The burnt orange brick wall and concrete coping encloses the lower level of the parking garage along the south perimeter of the property (*Photo 6*).

West Elevation

The west elevation of the base and tower are identical to the east elevation (*Photo 6*). A stacked grid of honed limestone veneer panels clads all of the base except for a narrow section at the center of the façade. The center section contains an aluminum-framed glazed wall. The frame forms a five-by-five grid with one row of five spandrel panels at the bottom and one row at the top of the glazed wall. The three rows of fixed tinted glazing are all the same height. The height of the glazing in this location indicates a two-story space within the building.

The tower façade consists of the same curtainwall grid system as the north elevation with vertical aluminum fins, gray aluminum spandrel panels, and bands of tinted glazing. Columns of spandrel panels define three bays on the east elevation. Each bay contains five panes of vision

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Kansas City Public Library and Board of Education Building

Name of Property

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N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

glass. The glazing is fixed on the third and fourth floors while the openings on the fifth floor and above are center pivot sashes. The presence of glazing at the spandrel area between the third and fourth floors at the north end of the façade indicates the two-story space within. The four rows of spandrel panels are present on this elevation as well.

The change in grade between Oak Street on the east and McGee Street on the west expose the basement level below the base of the building (*Photo 6*). Burnt orange brick walls conceal two separate concrete stairs that connect to the north terraced areas and south parking lot, respectively. Three bays of the basement level are recessed at the center of the building's west elevation (*Photo 8*). Two narrow columns clad in one-inch mosaic ceramic tile form piloti at the recessed area. The piloti terminate at a low brick wall that forms a low planter. The two north bays of the recessed wall are clad entirely in the same one-inch mosaic tile. The recessed area has a regular grid of can lights. The south bay contains the primary entrance to the Board of Education offices, as indicated by the aluminum lettering attached above the recessed entrance. The entrance, set within an aluminum frame with tinted sidelights and transoms, contains two pairs of doors flanking a center revolving door. The fully glazed aluminum doors are historic.

The brick wall that conceals the stairs up to the parking area continues across the façade of the portion of the basement level that projects westward. Burnt orange brick enframes the deeply recessed wall of what was designed as the Children's Department. This section of the building has its own entrance through a non-historic pair of fully glazed aluminum doors at the north end of the recessed wall. The aluminum frame has twelve bays with a narrow transom. The center six bays contain a historic glass mosaic. The flanking bays each contain aluminum panels at the base and tinted glazing above. The colorful mural, designed by Kansas City artist Arthur Kraft (1922-1977), is a whimsical depiction of a circus scene complete with children and a variety of animals (*Photo 9*).

The brick wall that frames the Children's Department entrance extends southward along the west wall of the parking garage. A recessed, sunken entrance provides a loading dock for the basement level. A wide punched opening in the brick provides the entrance and exit for the lower level of the concrete parking garage.

The base and tower have flat tar and gravel roofs. The low rectangular vents that rise from the roof are not visible from the ground. Some mechanical equipment is slightly visible on the east side of the roof of the base. A large mechanical enclosure composed of dark grey metal panels rises above the roofline at the south end of the center of the tower roof.

Interior

The interior of the Kansas City Public Library and Board of Education Building is organized into three distinct sections: Board of Education administrative offices, the Kansas City Public

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Kansas City Public Library and Board of Education Building

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N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Library, and the parking garage (*Figure 2*). Including utility spaces, the total square footage is roughly 262,000 square feet on thirteen floors. The three sections remain separated throughout the building, except at Level B where elements of all three programs connect. The Library occupies floors one through five (L-1 to L-5), with the first four floors containing the spaces open to the public and the fifth floor reserved for library staff. The Board of Education occupies floors six through ten (A-6 to A-10). There are no set corridors to organize the upper floors. The eleventh floor contains mechanical rooms and a television studio. The upper level of the basement, Level B, has the Children's Department and storage for the Library; the Board of Education entrance, the Board conference room, and a small auditorium; and the lower level of the parking garage (*Figure 5*). The lower level of the basement, Level A, contains storage for the Library and access to the boiler room (*Figure 4*). Each section of the building was designed to optimize the function of the associated organization.

The building frame is reinforced concrete with high tensile spiral steel reinforcement. A regular grid of concrete columns supports the poured concrete floor slabs (*Figure 20*). Floors are vinyl tile or carpet; walls are plaster; built-in cabinets, shelving, and decorative paneling in special locations are wood or wood veneer; ceilings are mineral acoustical tile grids with integral lighting and vents; interior partitions are historic removable metal partitions with obscure glazing and non-historic vinyl partitions.

Three circulation cores provide access between various floors throughout the building. Only the southeast circulation core provides stair and elevator access between all floors from Level A to A-11. The south-central circulation core consists of a passenger elevator that provide access between floors associated with the Library and a stairwell that accesses all floors, although the stairwell shifts location at the lower floors. Two passenger elevators near the southwest corner of the tower provide access from the lobby associated with the Board entrance to the administrative office floors (A-6 to A-10). These elevators do not stop on floors associated with the Library (L-1 to L-5). The stairs are metal frames with concrete treads while the walls and ceilings are plaster.

The nominated building retains the typical features and finishes, as well as the integral art pieces that communicate its civic and educational function as well as the Modern Movement era in which it was constructed.

Kansas City Public Library

The Library retains the spaces designed in accordance with national trends in library organization and services. The Library occupies roughly 165,000 square feet on floors one through five and the majority of both Levels A and B of the basement. Two entrances provide access to different sections of the Library. The primary entrance from E. 12th Street on the north elevation opens to a narrow vestibule that also follows the curve of the projecting entrance (*Figure 25*). Three pairs of historic fully glazed aluminum doors with rectangular wood handles

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N/A

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open to the foyer of the main level (L-1) of the Library (*Photo 10*). The main level occupies the full footprint of the base of the building, roughly 31,500 square feet. Portions of L-1 open up to two-story spaces. Balconies overlook six different areas of the first floor as the second floor (L-2) occupies only 25,900 square feet (*Photo 11; Figure 7*). The third (L-3) and fifth (L-5) floors occupy the full footprint of the tower at roughly 14,400 square feet each while the fourth floor (L-4), at 12,400 square feet, has balconies that overlook rooms at the northeast, northwest, and southeast corners of the third floor. Approximately 36,600 square feet of Level B, the upper level of the basement, was designed to house Library functions, including 4,000 square feet dedicated to the Children's Department with its own separate entrance. Most of the 30,000 square feet on Level A, the lower level of the basement, was dedicated to the Library. The nominated property retains the finishes and even some of the furniture designed specifically for the Library. Narrow stairwells with straight runs of concrete stairs connect Level A with L-2 for pedestrian access while four strategically placed book lifts connect these same floors for easy distribution of materials. One book lift connects all Library floors.

The narrow rectangular foyer is a unique space. The pattern of the terrazzo floor follows the radius used to establish the curve of the projecting entrance (*Photo 10*). A ceramic tile mosaic designed by Kansas City artist Gabriella Polony (b. 1918) fills an elongated diamond at the center of the foyer. The low ceiling has a metal screen composed of small cylinders to diffuse light from the numerous fixtures above the screen. The east side of the foyer contains a built-in service desk and associated offices. The west side of the foyer is clad in birch panels. Every other panel has a blind wood screen designed as a series of connected circles. Wood doors provide access to adjacent work rooms and offices. Beyond the foyer, the floors have vinyl tile flooring.

The first floor opens up a two-story space at the northeast, northwest, and southwest corners and at the centers of the east, south, and west sides of the building (*Photos 16 and 17; Figures 6, 14, and 25*). Balconies at the second floor surround these two-story spaces. The spaces beneath the second floor have low ceilings with acoustical tiles, wood panel walls and columns, built-in book shelves, and areas dedicated to specific library functions, such as the card catalog and service desks (*Photos 13 and 14*). The balconies have plaster-clad walls, historic aluminum frames with wood panels and curved aluminum braces. A historic pendant light fixture composed of cylinders of various sizes and lengths suspended over the two-story area opposite the main entrance is extant (*Photo 11*). A small alcove near the southwest corner of the main level has a stacked brick wall, a brick hearth, and a fireplace with a curved copper hood (*Photo 15*). Although much of the moveable metal shelving has been removed, the main level retains the original distinction of departments created by the balconies and openings in the second floor (*Figures 7, 15, and 26*).

The third floor retains the partitions that defined the various departments that provided materials to the public (*Photo 18; Figures 8, 16, and 27*). The two-story spaces open to the

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fourth floor at the northeast and northwest corners are extant (*Photo 19; Figures 9, 17, and 28*). A partition at the balcony in the northwest corner closed off the fourth floor while maintaining the two-story volume of the third-floor space. The balconies have low plaster walls with wood handrails and balusters. The murals historically attached to the balconies have been removed. The third and fourth floors have vinyl floors, built-in wood and moveable metal shelving, plaster walls, and acoustical tile ceilings with integral fluorescent light fixtures and vents.

The fifth floor offices were renovated in recent decades (*Figures 10, 18, and 29*). Non-historic vinyl partitions divide the space into offices of various sizes. The fifth floor has two distinct historic spaces that retain historic finishes. The conference room at the southwest corner has built-in wood cabinets with wire-mesh doors along the north wall (*Photo 20*). The east wall has historic wood paneling and a historic built-in fireplace framed in Italian marble (*Photo 21*). The conference room has non-historic vinyl tile floors and historic acoustical tile ceiling. The Librarian's office at the northwest corner retains its historic wood panel walls. The fifth floor was converted to District offices after the Library vacated the building. The conference room retained its historic function in addition to its historic finishes. The Librarian's office is still used as an office for multiple individuals.

The Library occupies most of the space on both levels of the basement. The lowest level, Level A, is an expansive open stack area with utilitarian finishes (*Figures 4, 12, and 23*). The floors, walls, columns, and ceilings are concrete (*Photo 24*). MEP systems and equipment are exposed. The upper level, Level B, contains a large stack area and sorting room directly beneath the main level of the Library (*Figures 5, 13, and 24*). The Children's Department occupied four thousand square feet at the southwest corner of the building and has its own exterior entrance, as well as an entrance from the interior. The stacks and sorting area have utilitarian finishes with concrete ceilings, painted concrete walls, and exposed MEP equipment and conduit. The floors have historic vinyl tile. The Children's Department was converted to offices in the early 2000s. The features of the Children's Department, including the small concrete amphitheater, were removed. The amphitheater was infilled with concrete to create a level floor. Non-historic finishes include carpet, drywall and demountable partitions, and dropped ceilings with acoustical tile grids.

Board of Education

Level B also contains several spaces associated with the Board of Education (*Figure 24*). The main entrance to the Board spaces is at the southwest corner of the base of the building, through a recessed entrance. The pairs of fully glazed aluminum doors open to a narrow vestibule. Three historic pairs of fully glazed aluminum doors with rectangular wood handles open from the vestibule into a small lobby. The one-inch ceramic tile mosaic wall on the north and the brick wall on the south continue from the exterior, through the vestibule, into the lobby. The historic finishes in the lobby include terrazzo floors, wood panel walls, and the same acoustical tile ceiling that is in the rest of the building. A pair of wood doors on the south side of

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the lobby accesses a small board room. An L-shaped corridor that extends from the east side of the lobby provides access to an auditorium, restrooms, and the passenger elevators that connect to the Board offices on A-6 to A-10 (*Figures 24 and 30-35*). The board room has historic cork floor tiles, wood panel walls, and acoustical tile ceiling. The center portion of the ceiling has a slight peak, articulated with historic wood beams. Several rows of metal auditorium seating are attached at the center of the room. The adjacent auditorium has a sloped floor with vinyl tile and non-historic carpet. Rows of metal auditorium seating fill most of the auditorium (*Photo 22*). The angled walls are plaster while the ceiling has drywall at the center with acoustical tile at the perimeter. A low stage with a curved plaster proscenium fills the south end of the auditorium. Storage areas and offices with non-historic finishes occupy the southeast corner of the building.

Two historic passenger elevators connect the Board entrance lobby to the offices on A-6 and above. Library functions and public spaces are kept separate from Board spaces. Floors A-6 to A-10 occupy the full footprint of the tower at 14,365 square feet on each floor (*Figures 30-34*).⁴ There is no one single layout of corridors and offices that is repeated on multiple floors, other than the placement of bathrooms near the northwest stairwell. Finishes and configurations vary from floor to floor, although most floors have carpet or historic vinyl floors; vinyl or historic metal demountable partitions, often with a portion of the wall glazed; and historic acoustical tile ceilings (*Photo 23*). Mechanical units below the windows are concealed behind metal vents and marble sills. Conduit for data and additional electrical lines are exposed. The tenth floor (A-10) has offices for those at the highest levels of administration for the school district, as well as a small cafeteria and associated kitchen.

The eleventh floor (A-11) primarily houses mechanical equipment for the entire building (*Photo 35*). Drywall partitions divide the rest of the floor into small offices, storage space, and a former television studio, a historic component of the building. The storage and mechanical spaces have utilitarian finishes while offices and the studio have non-historic finishes.

Integrity

The Kansas City Public Library and Board of Education building retains excellent integrity to convey the educational significance of this building as the main facility of the city's public library system and as the administrative offices of the Kansas City Public School District. The property retains integrity of location and setting, having not moved from its original location adjacent to local governmental and large-scale commercial resources in downtown Kansas City. The nominated building retains integrity of design, materials, and workmanship as it clearly reflects the design local architect Edward Tanner submitted to the Board for approval in the later 1950s. The plan includes distinct spaces to meet the Library's highly specialized service and storage needs, as well as to accommodate the various departments and public meeting spaces needed

⁴ "School Board of Administration and Public Library Building: Data Sheet," July 1, 1960. Vertical File, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.

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to administer western Missouri's largest public school district. The exterior retains the historic aluminum frame curtainwall with aluminum spandrel panels and tinted glazing, as well as the stone base and brick façades (*Figure 21*). On the interior, the historic floor and ceiling finishes are extant. Many of the walls were either book shelves or demountable partitions, both of which were designed to be adjusted to meet the needs of the tenant. Special features, such as the commissioned artworks, fireplaces, and balconies are extant and communicate the unique functions the building was designed to house (*Figures 14 and 25*). The Kansas City Public Library and Board of Education retains excellent integrity to communicate feelings about and associations with its significance as a public institution as well as the Modern Movement era in which it was constructed.

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SUMMARY

The Kansas City Public Library and Board of Education Building is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion A in the area of EDUCATION. The building is locally significant for its contribution to the combined administration of the Kansas City, Missouri School District and the Kansas City Public Library, illustrating the patterns of development of the public educational system in the city and its emphasis on providing educational resources to all citizens. The building incorporates design features specific to contemporary library design. Kansas City architect Edward W. Tanner designed the unique institutional office building to house the administrative offices for the Kansas City Public School District (District) and the main facility for the Kansas City Public Library (Library). The design was initiated in 1957 and was complete in July 1960. The Library has been linked to the Kansas City Board of Education (Board) since the library's inception in 1873, roughly six years after the establishment of the Board. Historically the two institutions operated concurrently, often from the same building. The growth of the Library into a network of branches paralleled the expansion of the District. Thus the Library has been an integral component of the city's public education system from its establishment. After sixty years in the building at 9th and Locust streets, the Kansas City Public Library required a new building, not only to house the significant number of volumes acquired over that period, but also to accommodate technological advances, both in the types of resources available and how those resources were viewed and stored. Tanner worked with Kansas City Librarian Richard Sealock, a student of Columbia University professor, Dr. Joseph Wheeler, who developed an innovative model for library organization, to design a library that could provide all of the desired services of a modern library. Sealock's modifications to Dr. Wheeler's plan resulted in an expansive main floor divided into distinct subject departments; ample reading, study, and storage space; accommodations for a newly-developed audio-visual department; and a dedicated children's department. The Kansas City Public Library and Board of Education Building retains excellent integrity to convey its educational significance. The building has sustained few alterations, clearly communicating feelings about and associations with the area and period of significance. The period of significance begins in 1960 with the date of construction and ends in 1967, the fifty-year closing date for periods of significance begun historically continue to have significance but no more specific date can be determined.

ELABORATION

Educational Background and Significance

The Kansas City Public Library and Board of Education Building is significant as the embodiment of the broader educational mission of the Kansas City Public School system through the incorporation of the resources and services specifically designed to facilitate access to information and educational programs. Progressive Era educational philosophy (c.1900-1930) recognized the importance of libraries in providing informational resources to students and adults. Even after the official end of the Progressive Era, the Library continued to embrace

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a similar educational philosophy, stating as late as 1971 that the importance of libraries is "because libraries form the nucleus of our public information system, because their resources are among the most effective deterrents to poverty, and because library services are basic to the education and general self-improvement of all of our citizens."⁵ Fulfilling this purpose, the Kansas City Public Library established branches in schools and independent buildings across the city, while maintaining a central location as the primary repository. When the main facility reached the end of its useful life for an institution that continued to grow, the organization sought a remedy in the construction of a new building. The new building was not only large enough to accommodate increases to the collection of volumes, it incorporated the latest contemporary concepts in library organization and services beyond books. Substantial space allocations for Art and Music, Business and Technical, Film, and Popular departments indicate the shift in how the public used libraries. The Modern Movement aesthetic expressed on the interior and exterior complemented the modern advancements in library programming. The building also houses all of the top administrative departments of the District in one location to strengthen the connection between departments and improve the organization and operation of the District. This consolidation was also designed to further the mission of the District to provide adequate public education to the citizens of Kansas City.

Early History of the Kansas City Public Library

The Missouri state constitution, adopted in 1865, established a system of state and county superintendents and a Board of Trustees for each district.⁶ Although Kansas City officially incorporated in 1853, it did not formalize its school system until after the adoption of the state constitution. The Board was organized on August 1, 1867 to administer the District.⁷ In the early years, the six-member board addressed substantial issues such as the organization of the District, the need for facilities and teachers, and the development of a curriculum.⁸ In the fall of 1873, the Board proposed funding a public library.⁹ While a series of donations provided the initial funding, the Board later adopted a resolution to establish an annual appropriation to fund the Kansas City Library (Library). A committee supervised by the Board would manage and control the library. The library opened in November 1876 with nearly \$1,000 in contributions from the Ladies Centennial Club and three schools, donated books solicited from local citizens, and rules established to set an annual subscription of \$2.00.¹⁰ The subscription entitled the individual to borrow one book for two weeks at a time. Lifetime subscriptions of \$10 or \$12

⁵ "Information about the Library" n.d., photocopy, Vertical File, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library. While Kansas City's public schools were segregated until 1954 with the landmark Supreme Court case, there is no indication in written histories that the public library itself was segregated. Kansas City passed a Public Accommodation Ordinance in October 1963 to discourage discrimination in public places.

⁶ Elizabeth Rosin and Rachel Nugent, "Historic Resources of the Kansas City Missouri School District, Pre-1970" Multiple Property Documentation Form, 2012, E-10.

⁷ Claude A. Phillips, *A History of Education in Missouri* (Jefferson City, MO: The Hugh Stephens Printing Company, 1911) 231.

⁸ Ibid, 234.

⁹ "Key Events in the History of the Kansas City Public Library: 1873-1993," Revised, December 1993, Vertical File, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.

¹⁰ Ibid.

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could be paid over the course of six years.¹¹ Committee members, Board members, and individuals employed by the Board solicited donations of books, purchased new books with donated funds, and gathered subscriptions sufficient to support the growing library.

The Library, with its constantly expanding collection of resources about philosophy, theology, history, biography, poetry, and classical works, quickly outgrew several subsequent leased spaces in existing buildings.¹² To address what seemed to be a perpetual issue in the early years of the Library of finding adequate space to accommodate the collection, Missouri legislators amended the existing School Law to allow the Board to construct new buildings designed to house libraries.¹³ Completed in 1889, the new building at 8th and Oak streets operated as a library for only eight years. In 1894, Kansas City voters approved a bond issue for \$200,000 to construct a modern library building. Completed in 1897, the Kansas City Public Library (NR listed 5/23/77) at 500 E. 9th Street represents a late nineteenth-early twentieth century aesthetic designed to convey its importance as a civic monument. The new building had sufficient reading room and storage space to accommodate an increase to the collection of five times the 30,000 volumes in the Public Library holdings at the time of the move.¹⁴ The following year brought substantial changes to the institution. The Library eliminated subscriptions as it converted to a free public library and acquired its first branch, the Allen Library, when Kansas City annexed Westport in 1898.

Both the Library and the Board focused on expanding throughout the District during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as the City acquired significant tracts of land. Between 1874 and 1913, the years that James M. Greenwood served as the first Superintendent of the District, the number of schools increased nine-fold from nine to eighty-one. Not only were there more schools, but the schools themselves were larger, incorporating more classrooms than earlier school buildings. An increase in the number of school rooms from 54 to 900 accommodated the exponential increase in the number of students enrolled, from 4,000 to 42,000, and an increase in the number of teachers from 56 to 1,214 in that same forty-year period.¹⁵ Following Supt. Greenwood's tenure, the Library expanded its network of branches rather than the main facility. Branch libraries, open to the general public as well as students of the school, were installed in converted classrooms in existing schools or, beginning in 1914, were planned as part of the original design for a new school.¹⁶ As the District expanded, so did the organizational structure necessary to administer the growing educational system. The administration quickly outgrew the offices in the old Library building. Departments were scattered among eight different buildings throughout the city.

¹¹ William H. Hoffman, "Kansas City, Missouri Public Library: 1873-1973. An Illustrated History," Vertical File, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, nd, 2.

¹² Ibid, 3.

¹³ "Key Events in the History of the Kansas City Public Library: 1873-1993."

¹⁴ Hoffman, 5.

¹⁵ A. Theodore Brown and Lyle W. Dorsett, *K.C.: A History of Kansas City, Missouri* (Boulder, CO: Pruett Publishing Company, 1978), 84.

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One of the tenets of early twentieth century Progressive Era educational philosophy was to broaden access to education for all as a way to create a better, more informed, and thus more productive society. The Library was crucial in fulfilling this objective. Not only did the Library make the materials (books, journals, periodicals, etc.) available to the general public free of charge, it continued to add materials to its collection and knowledgeable staff to assist the public in accessing those materials. In the 1940s, the Library committee requested several reviews of the main location and branch libraries to determine whether the institution provided adequate facilities.¹⁷ In 1947, the Library commissioned Dr. Joseph Wheeler, noted librarian and director of the Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore, Maryland, to assess the organization to determine the need for a new facility. The report indicated that a new facility would be needed to accommodate the library's extensive collection. Within several years after Dr. Wheeler submitted his report to the Library committee, the Board appointed Richard B. Sealock as the head Librarian.

Prior to his appointment as Librarian in Kansas City, Richard B. Sealock completed course work with the assistance of Dr. Wheeler, as a student of library science at Columbia University.¹⁸ Dr. Joseph L. Wheeler served as director of the Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore, Maryland from 1926 to 1945. During his tenure, Wheeler introduced a more holistic approach to improving a library system, which proved successful in Baltimore; Rochester, New York; Toledo, Ohio; and London, Ontario.¹⁹ Wheeler believed in the active importance a library played in civil society. He considered a library "neither a storehouse of books nor a refuge for the idle; neither is it primarily a civic monument. It is alive with activity."²⁰ In addition to examining the need for better organization and/or presentation of materials within the library, Wheeler also evaluated how effective the library was in engaging the public, and looked for ways to improve both aspects. Wheeler proposed evaluating the location of the facility in terms of proximity to heavily traveled downtown commercial/retail areas and accessibility from public transportation. Improvements to accessibility increased usage. Within a library's holdings, Wheeler advocated for a department plan where subject areas were grouped logically to consolidate and organize the number of subjects; as well as generating interest in the library by promoting resources popular with the general public.²¹ Wheeler's report of the Kansas City Public Library system, accepted in 1947, informed the decision in 1950 to renovate the existing building for \$115,000.²² Renovations included establishing the Art and Music Department, rearranging the Business and Technical Department to make the department's 20,000 volumes more accessible to businessmen and engineers, updating the finishes and furnishings in the browsing

¹⁶ "Key Events in the History of the Kansas City Public Library: 1873-1993."

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Richard B. Sealock, "Kansas City Dedicates New Public Library," *The Pioneer* September-October 1960, 3-15, 4. Vertical File, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.

¹⁹ Ibid, 3.

²⁰ Ibid, 4.

²¹ Ibid.

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room to increase the comfort of those enjoying works of popular fiction.²³ The film library established under the new Art and Music Department loaned thousands of films and records within its first year, clearly indicating the popularity of non-book materials.²⁴

While the renovations indicated a willingness of the Library to invest in its facilities and improve its services, the physical limitations of the 1897 library prevented full implementation of recommendations. Even with shelves installed in every conceivable location, the collection of materials had outgrown the existing building. The density of the block precluded expansion of the building or parking facilities; the location was far from retail centers and public transportation lines, further reducing its accessibility. The shortfalls of the existing library highlighted wider trends towards the specialization of departments, both in organizing and staffing.²⁵

The New Kansas City Public Library and Board of Education Building

The framework for constructing a new library began as early as 1952 when the Board authorized the preparation of legislation to present to the General Assembly to allow the Board to finance the construction of new library facilities. Planning officially began in 1954 when the Board hired prominent Kansas City architect Edward W. Tanner to produce studies for a new building.²⁶ A \$27 million bond issue passed in 1956 to finance the Superintendent's "Proposed Building Program," which included \$21 million for school improvements and \$6 million for a new main library. The Board authorized the purchase of the block from 12th to 13th streets, from McGee to Oak streets. With the site cleared in early 1958, final plans for the new building were approved in May and ground was broken in July. The cornerstone was placed during a ceremony in August, 1959 with construction completed in 1960.²⁷

Librarian Richard B. Sealock collaborated with Edward Tanner to incorporate the features and services central to contemporary library design. The goal was to improve the visiting experience for established patrons, while providing services and conveniences that would attract new members of the library. Sealock spoke of this collaboration as a privilege where he was in a unique position to "shape an aspiration into tangible form."²⁸ In an article he authored for the trade publication *The Pioneer*, Sealock articulated the four objectives in establishing a new library facility.

1—To make available to the reading public the present collection of 600,000 volumes and the quantities of related materials in many different fields of knowledge with maximum convenience,

²² Hoffman, 21.

²³ Ibid, 21-22.

²⁴ Ibid, 22.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ "Key Events in the History of the Kansas City Public Library: 1873-1993."

²⁷ "Key Events in the History of the Kansas City Public Library: 1873-1993."

²⁸ Sealock, 3.

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and to enable the library to increase its many distinctive services to readers, students, and others.

2—To permit flexible expansion of the collection to a million volumes during the established efficient life of the building itself and to allow for increase in reader space as demanded by the growth of the city.

3—To give proper physical care to the valuable book collection. Fire resistant, easily maintained, amply lighted and well equipped, the building has modern facilities for air condition that would protect the book collections against dust, vermin, chemical fumes and dampness, as well as provide more comfort for library patrons.

4—To provide subject departments, but by a combination of the large subject areas, reduce the number found in older libraries and thus relate the physical plant more closely to Kansas City's needs, and in the process lower costs."²⁹

When the building formally opened on July 18, 1960, the main Kansas City Public Library facility, located on major public transportation routes and within a few blocks of prime pedestrian commercial areas, fully embodied organizational trends and services of a truly modern library. These trends were reflected in architectural design and materials choices of the exterior and interior; reading rooms, shelving, and dedicated staff for individual subject departments; and ample space allocated for popular periodicals and fiction books as well as film and music resources.

The main level was divided into eight primary areas reflecting the new services and standard division of subjects (*Figure 14*). The plan allocated for each subject area sufficient shelf space for the storage of related books and materials, a desk for the staff assigned to that subject area, and tables and study cubicles for readers.³⁰ The Library secured a strong staff to support the departments by hiring individuals with college degrees in the different subject areas and provided library training.³¹ The central core at the center of the floor included registration, information, circulation desks, as well as 1,400 square feet for the extensive card catalog (*Photos 12-14*).³² The subject departments lined the perimeter of the building at the main level. The Social Science department, commonly associated with education and youth leadership, occupied a 3,000-square-foot reading room with approximately 756 square feet of shelf space at the northeast corner of the floor. The Social Science department also administered the bibliographic collection shelved at the central core. The adjacent Business and Technical

²⁹ Sealock, 3-4.

³⁰ Sealock, 6.

³¹ Sealock, 6.

³² Edward Tanner, "Kansas City Public Library and School Board Administration Building," Architectural drawings, 1958, Sheet Q-3. Kansas City Public School Archives.

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department immediately to the south provided 3,600 square feet for a reading room, 1,200 square feet of book shelving on the first floor and an additional 4,200 square feet of shelving on the second floor balcony. Since its establishment in 1951, the Business and Technical department grew substantially to fill 3,600 square feet in two reading rooms, 5,400 square feet of shelf space between the main floor and the balcony, and nearly 300 square feet of work space with study carrels. The Education, Philosophy, and Religion department occupied the southeast corner with facilities similar in size to the Social Science department.³³ The Reference department occupied the center rear section of the floor, opposite the main entrance. The Literature department occupied a smaller (1,500 square foot) reading room and limited (600 square foot) shelving at the southwest corner of the floor. The majority of the Literature books were stored in the nearly 4,000 square feet of shelving on the second floor balcony.³⁴ The Popular Library department was a relatively new addition to the Library's division of departments. Comprised of current and older fiction, popular non-fiction, and general reading for high school age children, this department provided 2,300 square feet of open shelves and 3,000 square feet of comfortable reading areas (*Photo 15*).³⁵ The History, Travel and Biography department occupied a 1,500 square foot reading room with nearly 3,800 square feet of shelf space on the second floor balcony.³⁶ A substantial portion of the holdings of this department were dedicated to current domestic and international affairs.

Open shelving dominated the second story, L-2, providing additional storage space for the subject departments below (*Figure 15*).³⁷ Balconies at the northeast, northwest, and southwest corners provided an openness and connection to the main floor below (*Photos 16 and 17*). The southeast corner, without a balcony, contained the Microfilm and Maps department. This department required special storage and equipment for the various materials. A reading lounge at the center of the north end of the floor had glazed walls to overlook the open space of the central core and reference areas below.

In addition to offices and other back-of-house spaces, the third floor, L-3, contained the Art and Music department on the east side of the building while the Local History department occupied the west side (*Photo 18; Figures 16 and 22*).³⁸ Both of these departments had reading rooms in the two-story volumes at the corners. A large open area at the center of the floor was designated as an art display area. Open and locked stacks for the departments below, as well as the film department, filled the east and west sides of the fourth floor, L-4 (*Figure 17*).³⁹ The Photographic department at the southwest corner of the floor had its own dark room.⁴⁰

³³ Tanner, Sheet Q-3.

³⁴ Seacock, 7.

³⁵ Seacock, 7.

³⁶ Seacock, 8.

³⁷ Tanner, Sheet Q-4.

³⁸ Tanner, Sheet Q-5.

³⁹ Tanner, Sheet Q-6.

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The storage facilities distributed throughout the Library had the capacity to hold well over one million volumes: 363,000 volumes on Level A, 326,000 volumes on Level B, 89,000 volumes on the main level (L-1), 162,000 volumes on the balcony (L-2), 29,000 volumes on L-3, and 64,000 volumes associated with the art and local history departments on L-4 (*Photo 24; Figures 12 and 13*).⁴¹ The increased capacity over the previous library building meant that more information was available for public consumption and improvement. In addition to books, the Library strove to provide periodicals and continuing series published by private organizations, trade associations, and governmental agencies.⁴²

The Children's Department was designed as an entity that was part of the Library but physically separated from the main library for several reasons. The organization and interconnection of the adult departments resulted in their full occupation of the main floor. While open, flexible spaces worked well for an adult environment, if the Children's Department was designed as part of the main floor, the elimination of walls would allow the noise from the children to carry into areas where adults were preferred reading and quiet study (*Figure 13*). Providing a separate entrance eliminated the potential for those distractions.⁴³ The Children's Department had its own entrance from McGee Street, just south of the Board of Education entrance (*Photos 8 and 9*). The entry vestibule, the loan desk, and offices lined the north wall of the rectangular space. An open reading room filled with low shelves and child-sized tables and chairs occupied most of the remaining space. A rectangular room at the southeast corner of the department enclosed a terraced amphitheater designed to host story hour.⁴⁴ Carpet covered the concrete terraces.

In addition to the significantly expanded library facilities, the new building provided over 75,000 square feet of office space for the Board of Education, allowing it to consolidate into one location, administrative offices that had previously been dispersed among eight buildings.⁴⁵ Floor A-6 housed the Division of Business; A-7 housed the Division of Practical Arts and the Division of Instruction; A-8 housed the Division of Instruction; A-9 housed the Division of Personnel. Floor A-10 provided offices for high-ranking positions within School Administration, specifically the Superintendent of Schools, Secretary of the Board of Education, Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent, and Assistant Superintendent in Charge of Buildings and Grounds, as well as the Research Department, Public Information, Archives, and a cafeteria and lounge for employees. Floor A-11 designated space at the southwest corner of the floor for a television studio.⁴⁶ Kansas City Public Schools expanded a program that began in 1957 with half-hour educational programming broadcast on the three commercial television stations. With

⁴⁰ It is unclear whether this facility was available to the public or was for use by library staff only.

⁴¹ Sealock, 10.

⁴² Sealock, 10.

⁴³ Sealock, 13.

⁴⁴ Sealock, 13. Tanner, Sheet Q-2.

⁴⁵ The Board of Education oversaw management of the library at this time.

⁴⁶ "School Board Administration and Public Library Building Data Sheet." Tanner, Sheets 13-17.

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the construction of the new building with its own television studio, the District broadcast up to four-and-a-half hours of its own educational programming each day. Lessons in science, social studies, and foreign language for grades one through ten were televised to the schools. In the evenings, the station broadcast biographies of famous persons.⁴⁷

The Kansas City Public Library as a Fixture of the City

The Library continued to administer the city's public library system. The *Kansas City Star* noted in 1961 that circulation increased more than fifty-six percent in the first six months of operation.⁴⁸ In 1966, there were fourteen branch libraries, including the main library.⁴⁹ In addition to the nearly 943,000 books, there were 1,500 periodicals, thirty-nine out-of-town newspapers, 4,500 phonograph recordings, 1,350 films, 55,800 works of art, 5,000 color slides, over 2,000 reels of microfilm, thousands of musical scores, and hundreds of thousands of government documents.⁵⁰ In 1971, there were twelve branch libraries and four library stations, in addition to the main location. Fifty-three professional librarians, forty-three library assistants, seventy-two clerks, and over one hundred part-time pages, desk assistants, and substitutes staffed these facilities.⁵¹ The Kansas City Public Library and the Board of Education Building continued to function as they were designed historically until the turn of the twenty-first century. In 1988, the Library separated from the Board of Education when it established its own governing board. By the 1990s, the Library began looking for a new location, eventually opting to renovate an existing building rather than construct a new facility. The Library moved its entire collections to the newly renovated First National Bank Building⁵² at 10th Street and Baltimore Avenue, five blocks northwest of the nominated building, in 2004. The Board of Education expanded its offices to utilize some of the space formerly occupied by the Library. The Board used the basement levels for storage of District resources and converted offices on L-5 to District offices, although the conference room retains its historic function. The Children's Department was also converted to District offices at this time. During the renovation, the terraced amphitheater was infilled to create a level floor.

Edward W. Tanner, Architect

Born in Cottonwood Falls, Kansas, in 1895, Edward W. Tanner moved with his family to Lawrence, Kansas, a year later. Tanner enrolled in the civil engineering program at the University of Kansas, but switched to the University's newly established architectural program

⁴⁷ "Your Key to KCSD-TV," Pamphlet, Kansas City Missouri School District, Photocopy (Kansas City: Kansas City Missouri School District, n.d.), Vertical File, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.

⁴⁸ "Circulation of Books Leaps" *Kansas City Star*, January 27, 1961, Microfilm, Mounted Clippings, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.

⁴⁹ "The Kansas City Public Library," pamphlet (Kansas City: Kansas City Public Library, 1966), Vertical File, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ "Information about the Library."

⁵² The First National Bank Building is a contributing resource in the West Ninth Street/Baltimore Avenue Historic District, listed in the National Register of Historic Places on November 7, 1976.

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two years later.⁵³ He graduated in 1916 after studying architecture under Goldwin Goldsmith, former secretary to Stanford White of New York's McKim, Mead, and White. Goldsmith's courses in architecture and architectural engineering emphasized the artistic aspects of design. The University of Kansas architectural program was one of the first in the country to embrace the modern architectural theories developing in Europe through the 1920s, particularly the International Style, which contributed to its general acceptance throughout the United States.⁵⁴

Upon graduating in 1916, Tanner briefly worked as a draftsman for the local architecture firm Shepard, Farrer, and Wiser, and then as a concrete foundation designer for the Concrete Engineering Company.⁵⁵ After serving in the Army during World War I, Tanner returned to Kansas City and took a position as a designer with the prominent local residential and commercial developer, the J.C. Nichols Company.⁵⁶ Under Nichols, Edward Tanner produced house plans used to construct over 2,000 residences in the Kansas City suburbs as well as neighborhood shopping centers within Nichols Company's planned communities.⁵⁷ Tanner's most prominent contribution to the built environment in Kansas City are the buildings and parking garages designed for the Country Club Plaza (Plaza), Nichols' signature retail development initiated in 1922, although construction continued into the 1960s.⁵⁸ Prior to 1950, most of Tanner's designs exhibited features and ornament characteristic of historical revival styles popular in the early twentieth century, primarily the Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival, Tudor Revival, and Colonial Revival styles. The Walter E. Bixby residence, designed by Tanner and built by the J. C. Nichols Company in 1936, is one of the earliest examples of the International Style in Kansas City.⁵⁹

Tanner's career included working with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in 1933 to plan the entire town of Fort Peck, Montana in preparation for the construction of the Fort Peck Dam and later designing O'Reilly military hospital in Springfield, Missouri. In partnership with Ansell Mitchell for the purposes of executing military contracts in 1942, the firm of Tanner and Mitchell designed the airfield at Whiteman Air Force Base in Knob Noster, Missouri, along with Hays-Walker and Great Bend airfields in Kansas.⁶⁰ The firm of Tanner and Associates remained

⁵³ "Critical Eye Leads to the Ideal," *Kansas City Star*, June 14, 1961, Microfilm, Mounted Clippings, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.

⁵⁴ David H. Sachs and George Ehrlich, *Guide to Kansas Architecture* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1996), 21, 24.

⁵⁵ American Institute of Architects, *AIA Historical Directory of American Architects: A Resource Guide to Information About Past Architects*, 1956.
<http://public.aia.org/sites/hdoaa/wiki/Wiki%20Pages/1956%20American%20Architects%20Directory.aspx>. (accessed December 6, 2016).

⁵⁶ "Critical Eye Leads to the Ideal," *Kansas City Star*, June 14, 1961.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Worley, William S Worley, *J.C. Nichols and the Shaping of Kansas City: Innovation in Planned Residential Communities* (Columbia, Mo: University of Missouri Press, 1990), 248.

⁵⁹ George Ehrlich, *Kansas City, Missouri: An Architectural History, 1826-1990* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1992), 111.

⁶⁰ Richard B. Fowler, "Leaders in Our Town," *Kansas City Star*, 1952.

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focused on private contracts, with the J.C. Nichols Company as the primary client, commissioning designs for houses and apartment complexes, commercial buildings, churches, offices, medical buildings, car dealerships, and service stations. By the late 1940s, Tanner and Associates had twenty employees, including draftsman, architects, and engineers, some of whom had worked for Tanner for twenty years.⁶¹ When J. C. Nichols died in 1950, Edward Tanner remained on the Nichols Company board of directors, serving as vice-president until he retired in 1964. During this time, Tanner also continued running his own architecture firm where he designed private commercial and public institutional buildings, including the Linda Hall Library for the University of Missouri. Constructed in 1954, the Linda Hall Library incorporated some of the design features exhibited at the Kansas City Public Library and Board of Education Building, such as the open floor plan with balconies and two-story spaces. The exterior is much more conservative in its Modern expression than the nominated building. The façade organization and ornament express abstract classicism. Tanner partnered with long-time employee Mayol Linscott and formed the firm of Tanner, Linscott, and Associates in 1961.⁶² Edward Tanner retired from Tanner, Linscott, and Associates in 1964 and died in 1974.

Conclusion

The Kansas City Public Library (Library) has been linked to the Kansas City Board of Education (Board) since the library's inception in 1873, roughly six years after the establishment of the Board. The two institutions operated concurrently, often from the same building. The growth of the Library into a network of branches paralleled the expansion of the Kansas City School District (District). Thus the Library has been an integral component of city's public education system from its inception. The Kansas City Public Library and Board of Education Building communicates the importance of the main Library as the city's primary facility dedicated to the education of the general public. The nominated building was designed to accommodate all of the services, departments, and technological advances necessary for a state-of-the-art public library. The building also housed the offices associated with the administration of the largest public school district in western Missouri.

⁶¹ "Presenting Edward W. Tanner, Swing Nominee for Man of the Month," *Swing* 3 No. 12 (December 1947): 41.

⁶² "Critical Eye Leads to the Ideal," *Kansas City Star*, June 14, 1961; American Institute of Architects, *AIA Historical Directory of American Architects: A Resource Guide to Information About Past Architects*, 1962. <http://public.aia.org/sites/hdoaa/wiki/Wiki%20Pages/1962%20American%20Architects%20Directory.aspx>. (accessed December 6, 2016).

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Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property occupies the full city block bounded by E. 12th Street on the north, Oak Street on the east, E. 13th Street on the south, and McGee Street on the west. The legal descriptions is: 311 E 12TH ST / MAIN LIBRARY 1211 MCGEE / BD OF EDUCATION MC GEES ADD LOTS 1 THRU 9 BLK 1 EXC PRT LOT 1 IN 12TH ST & ALL N/S ALLEY LU E OF & ADJ ALSO ALL LOTS 1087 THRU 1095 BLK 76 EXC PRT LOT 1087 IN 12TH ST & EXC PRT SD LOTS IN OAK ST.

Boundary Justification

The boundary encompasses the parcels historically associated with the nominated property.

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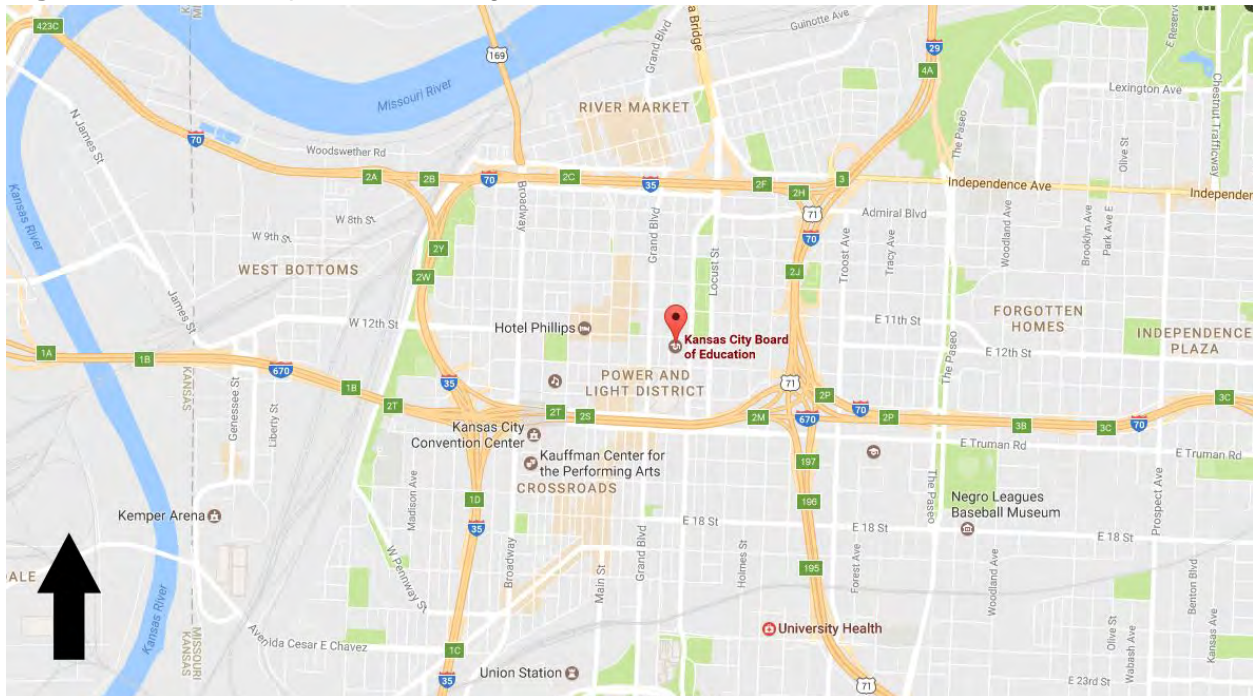
Jackson County, Missouri

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Figure 1. Context map. *Source: Google.com, 2016.*



1211 McGee Street
Kansas City, Missouri
39.09939, -94.57915

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Figure 2. Site map. *Source: Google.com, 2016.*



1211 McGee Street
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39.09939, -94.57915

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Figure 3. Photo Map, Exterior. *Source: Google.com, 2016.*

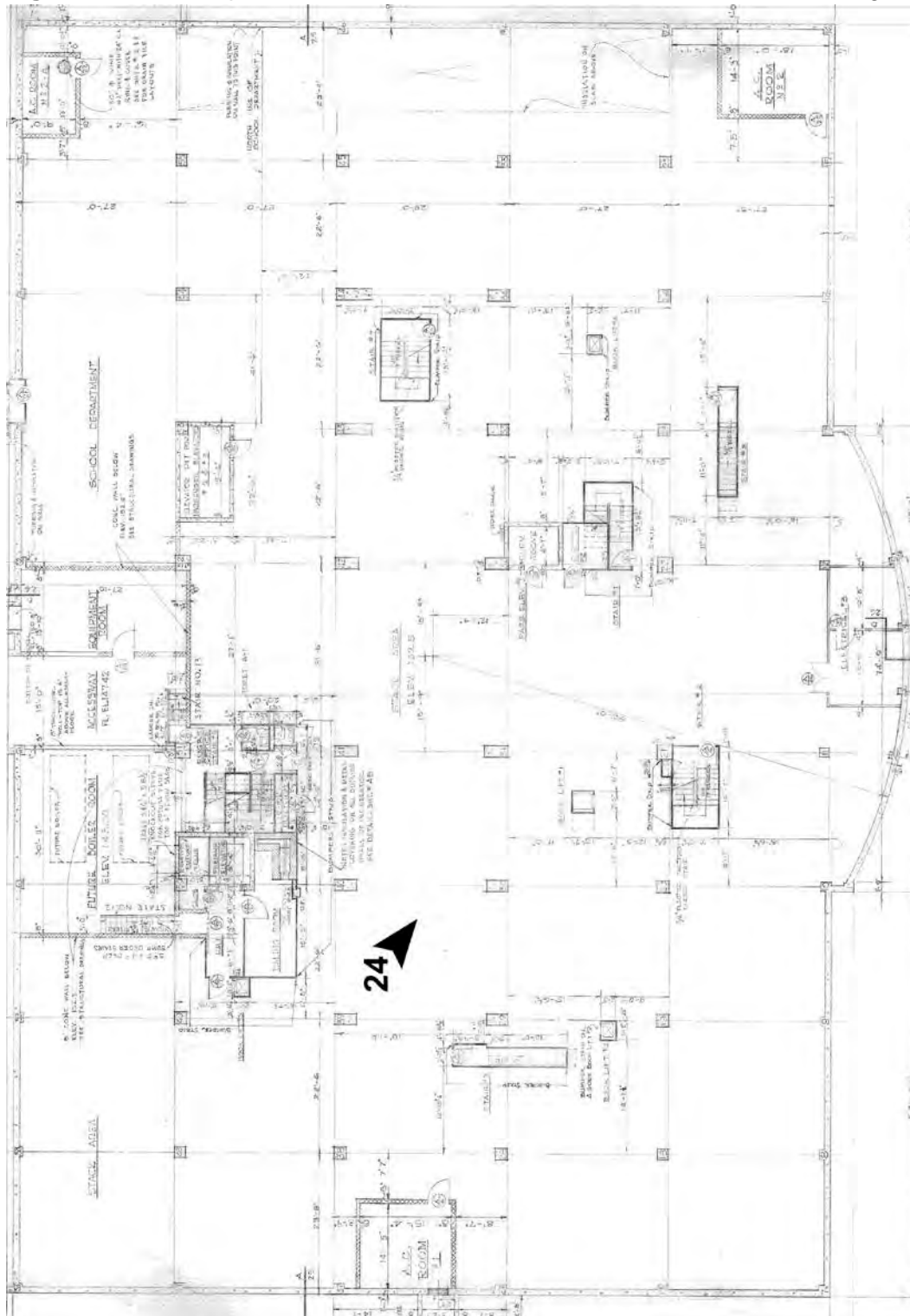


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Figure 4. Photo map, Level A. Source: *Edward Tanner, Architectural Drawings, 1958.*

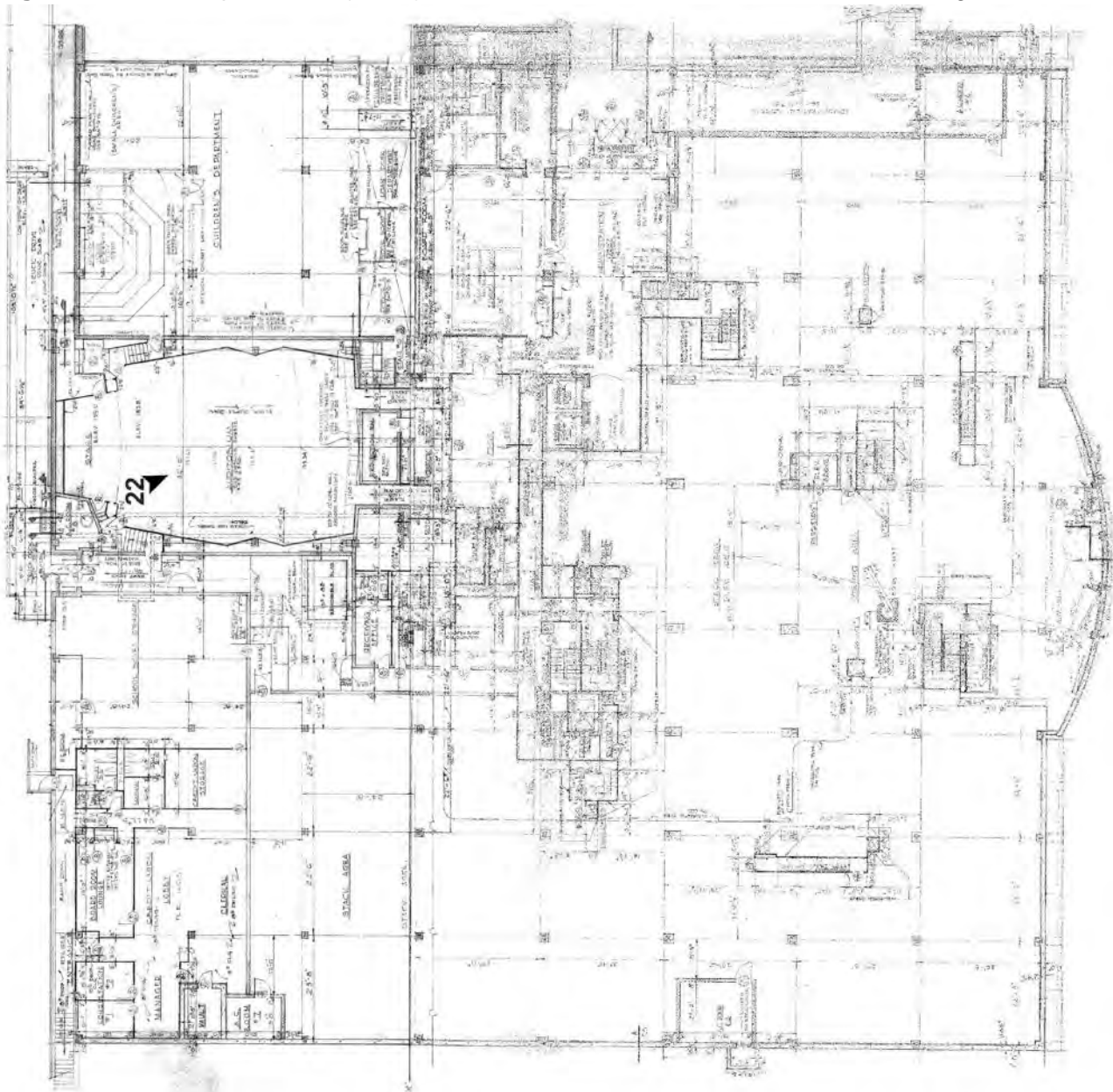


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Figure 5. Photo map, Level B (south). *Source: Edward Tanner, Architectural Drawings, 1958.*

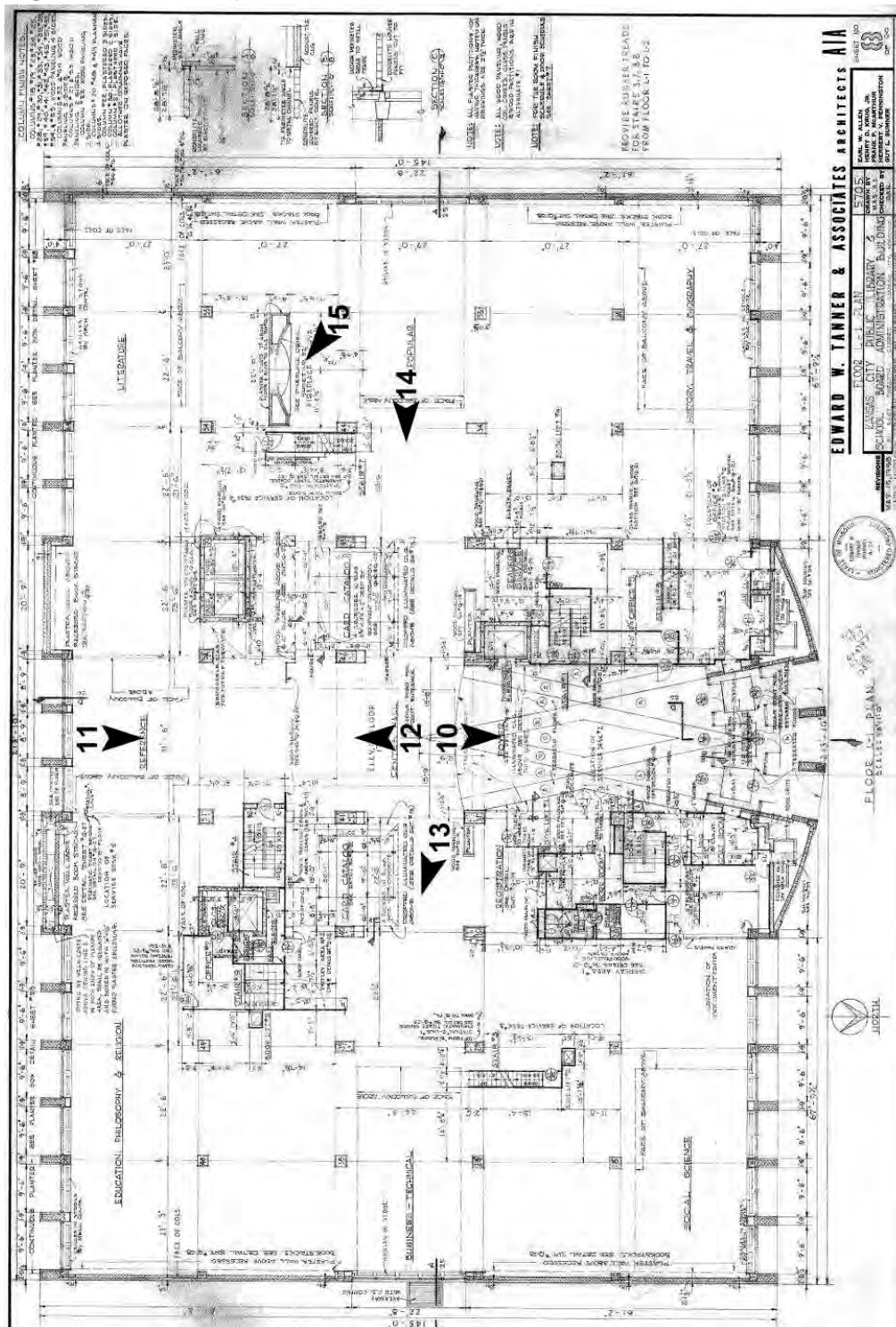


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Figure 6. Photo map, Floor L-1. Source: *Edward Tanner, Architectural Drawings, 1958.*

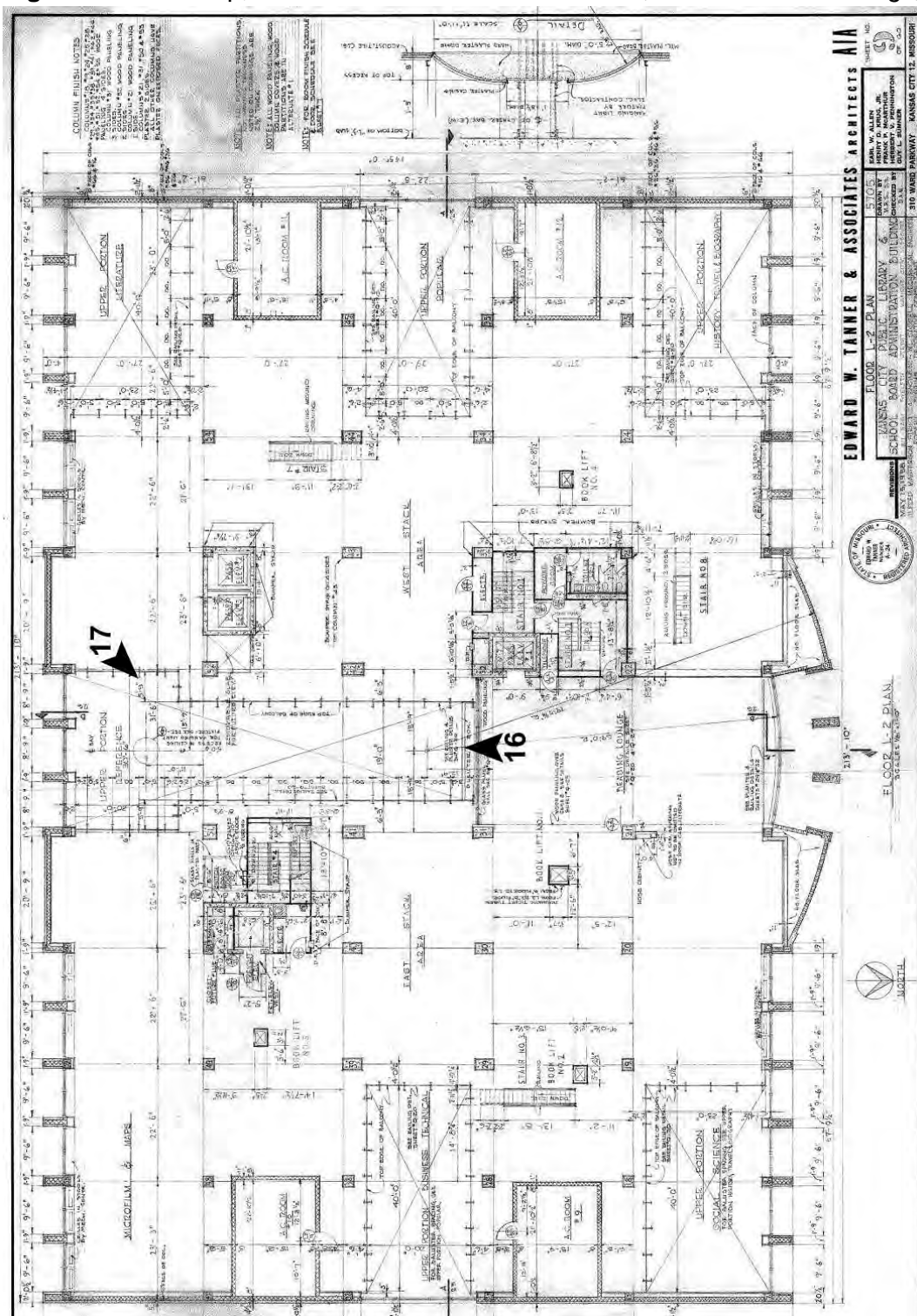


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Figure 7. Photo map, Floor L-2. Source: Edward Tanner, Architectural Drawings, 1958.

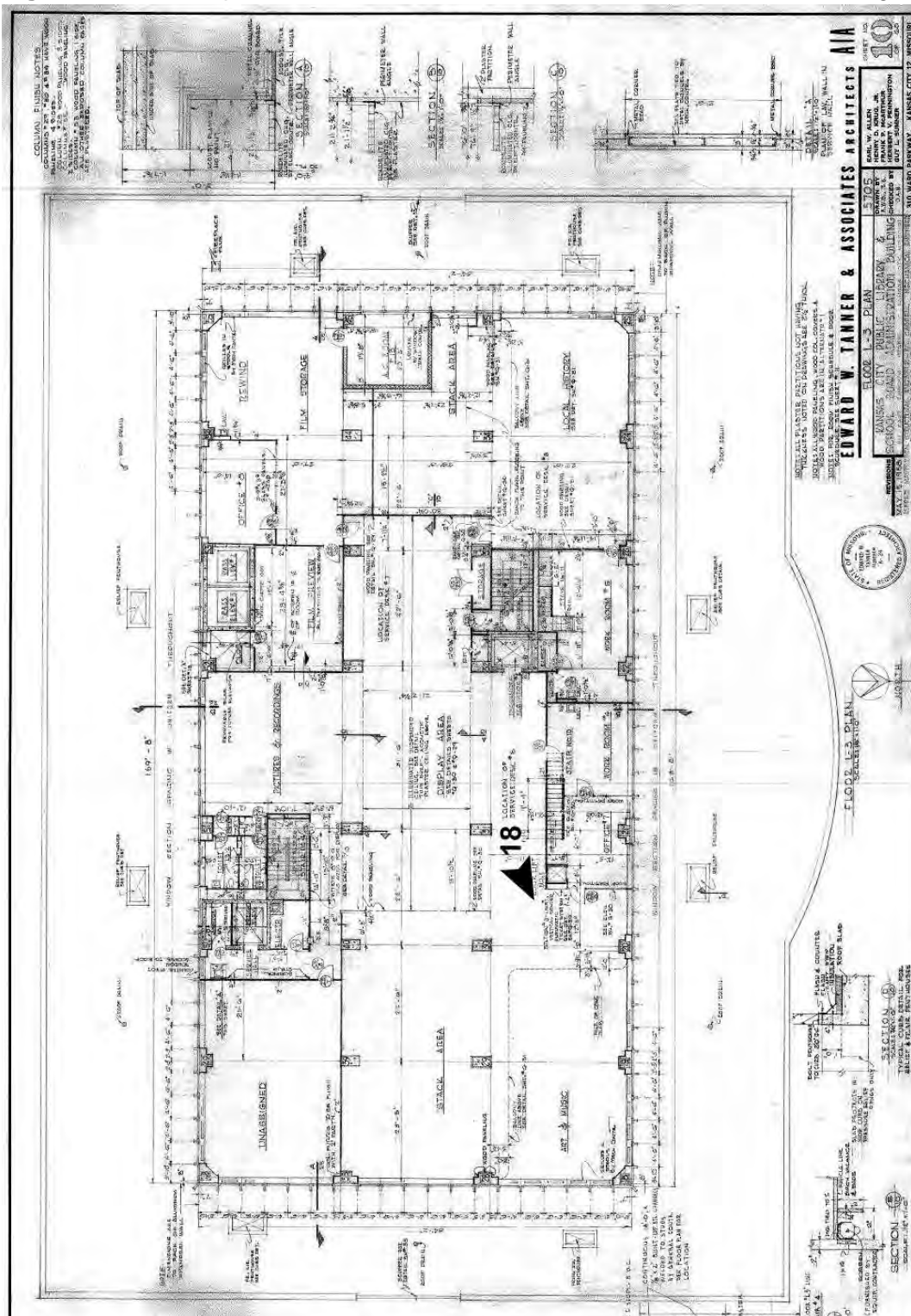


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Figure 8. Photo map, Floor L-3. Source: *Edward Tanner, Architectural Drawings, 1958.*

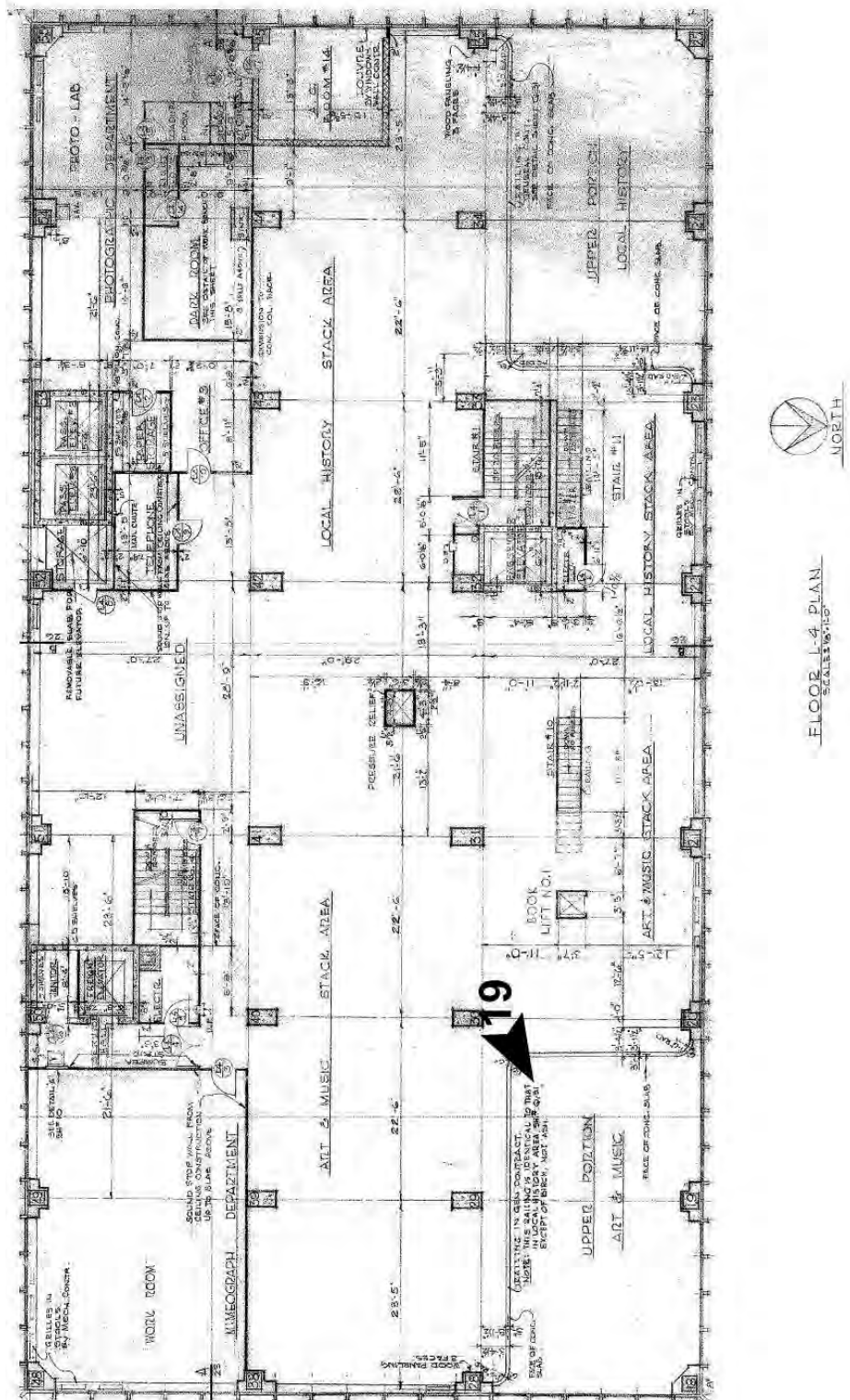


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Figure 9. Photo map, Floor L-4. Source: *Edward Tanner, Architectural Drawings, 1958.*

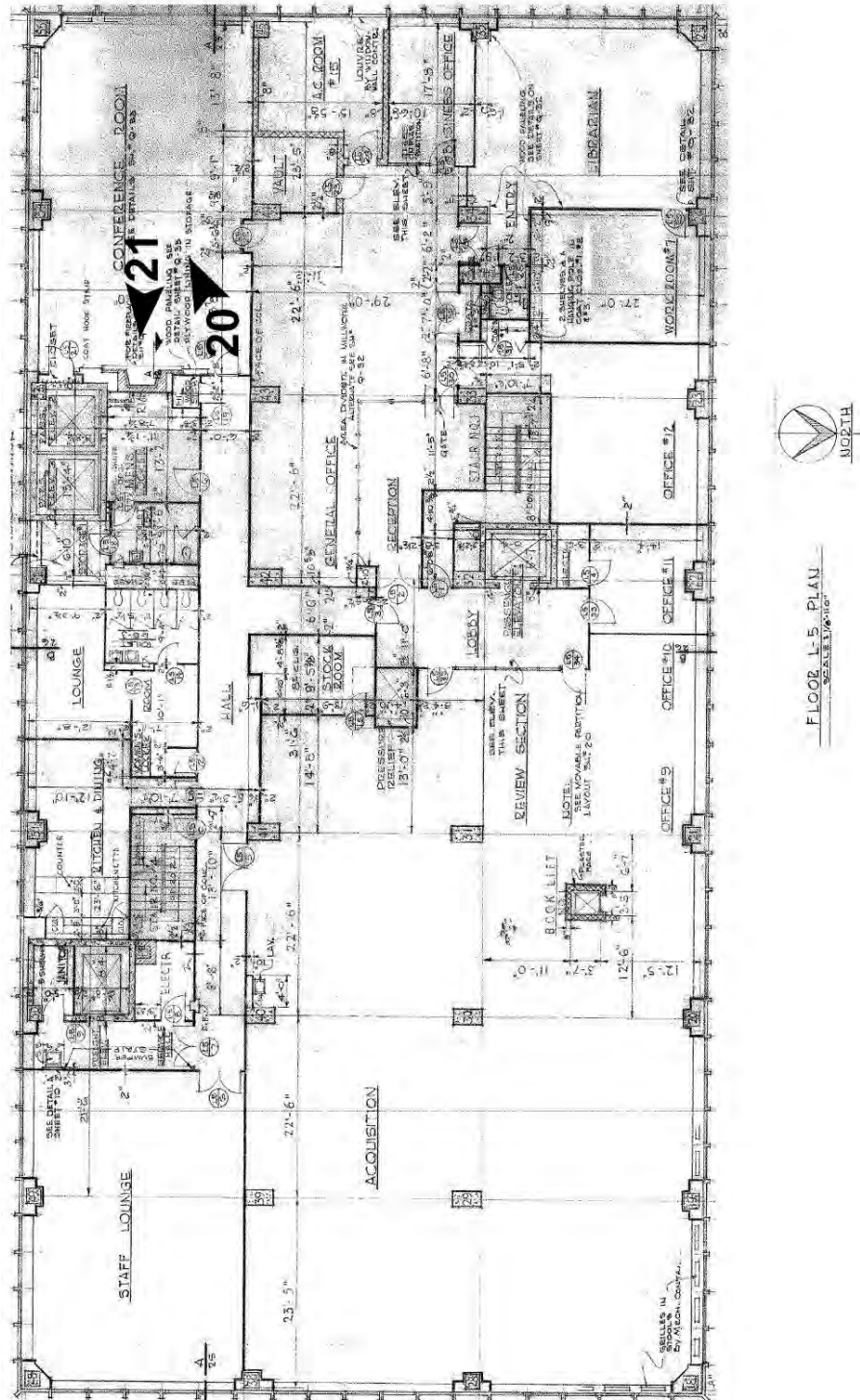


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Figure 10. Photo map, Floor L-5. Source: *Edward Tanner, Architectural Drawings, 1958.*

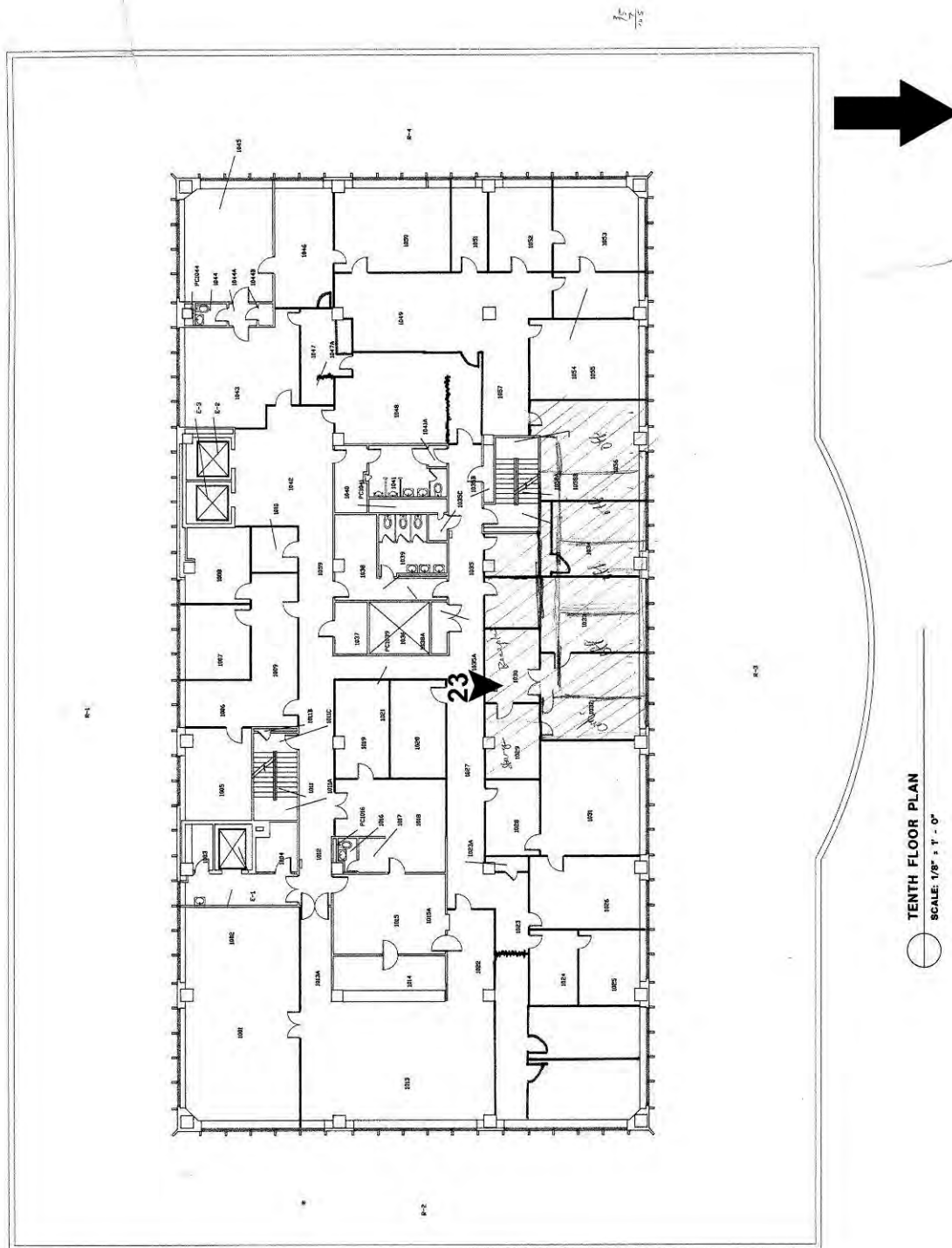


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Figure 11. Photo map, Floor A-10. *Source: Kansas City Public School District archives, 2000.*

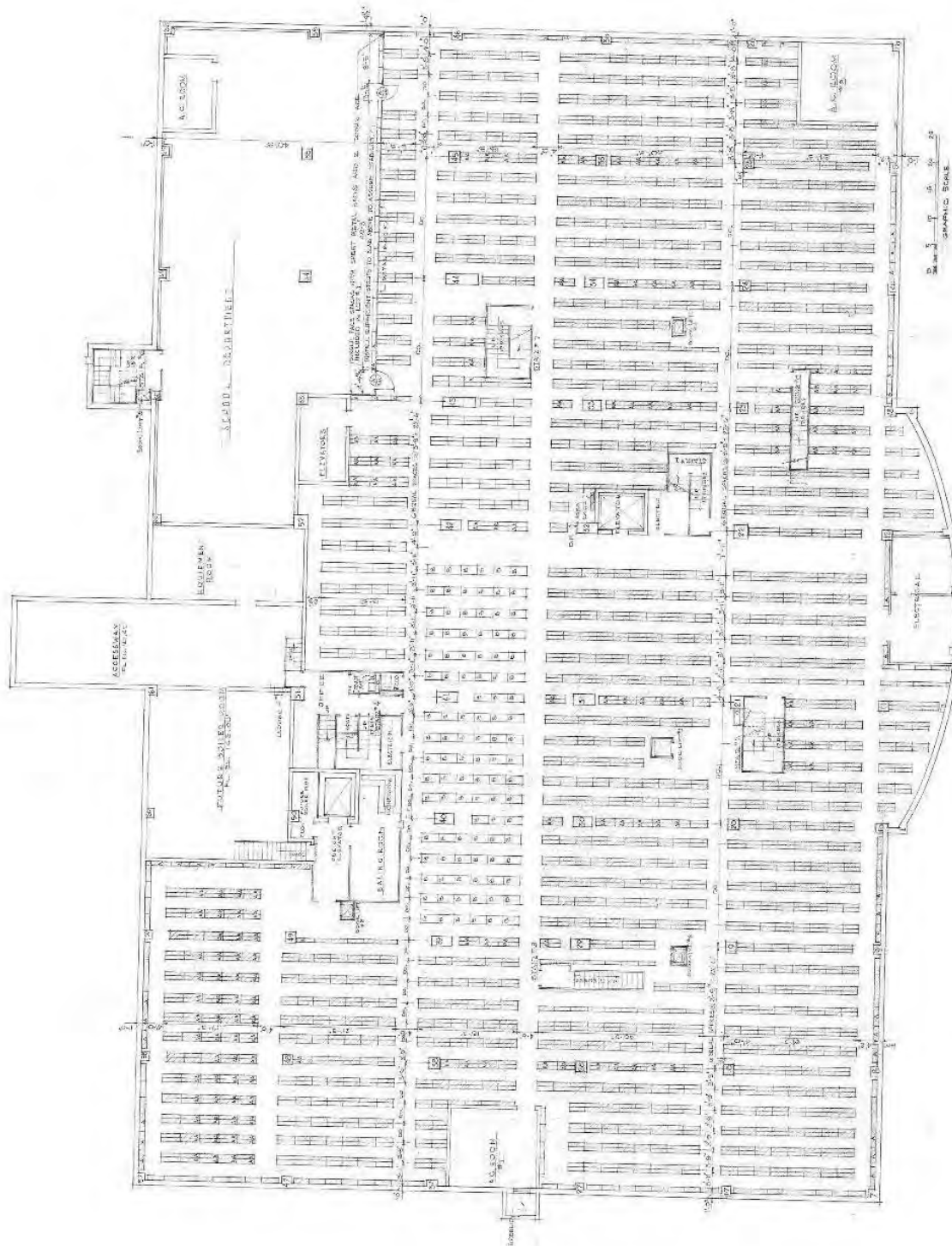


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Figure 12. Level A. Source: *Edward Tanner, Architectural Drawings, Sheet Q-1, 1958.*

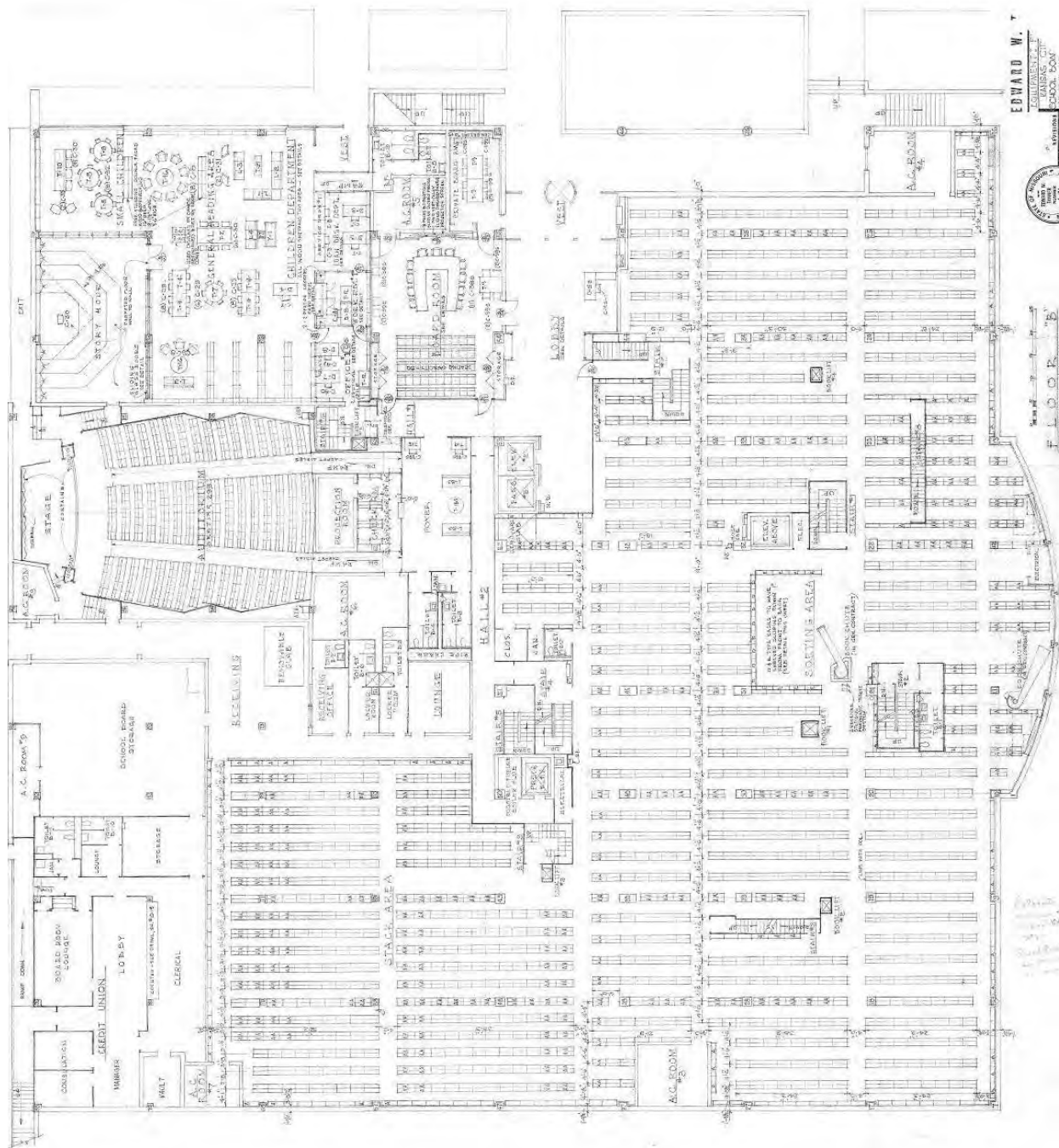


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Figure 13. Level B. Source: *Edward Tanner, Architectural Drawings, Sheet Q-2 1958.*

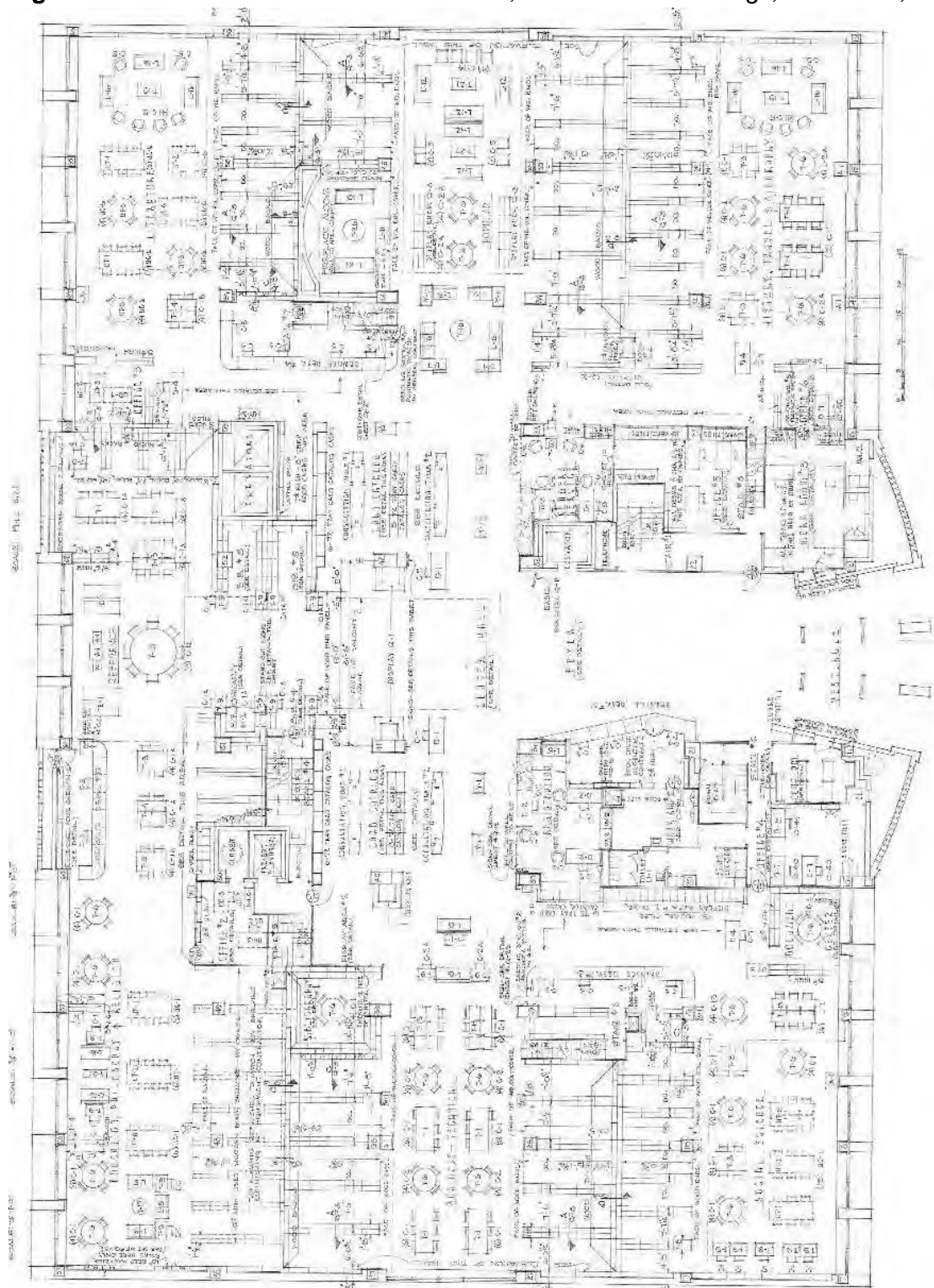


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Figure 14. Floor L-1. Source: Edward Tanner, Architectural Drawings, Sheet Q-3, 1958.

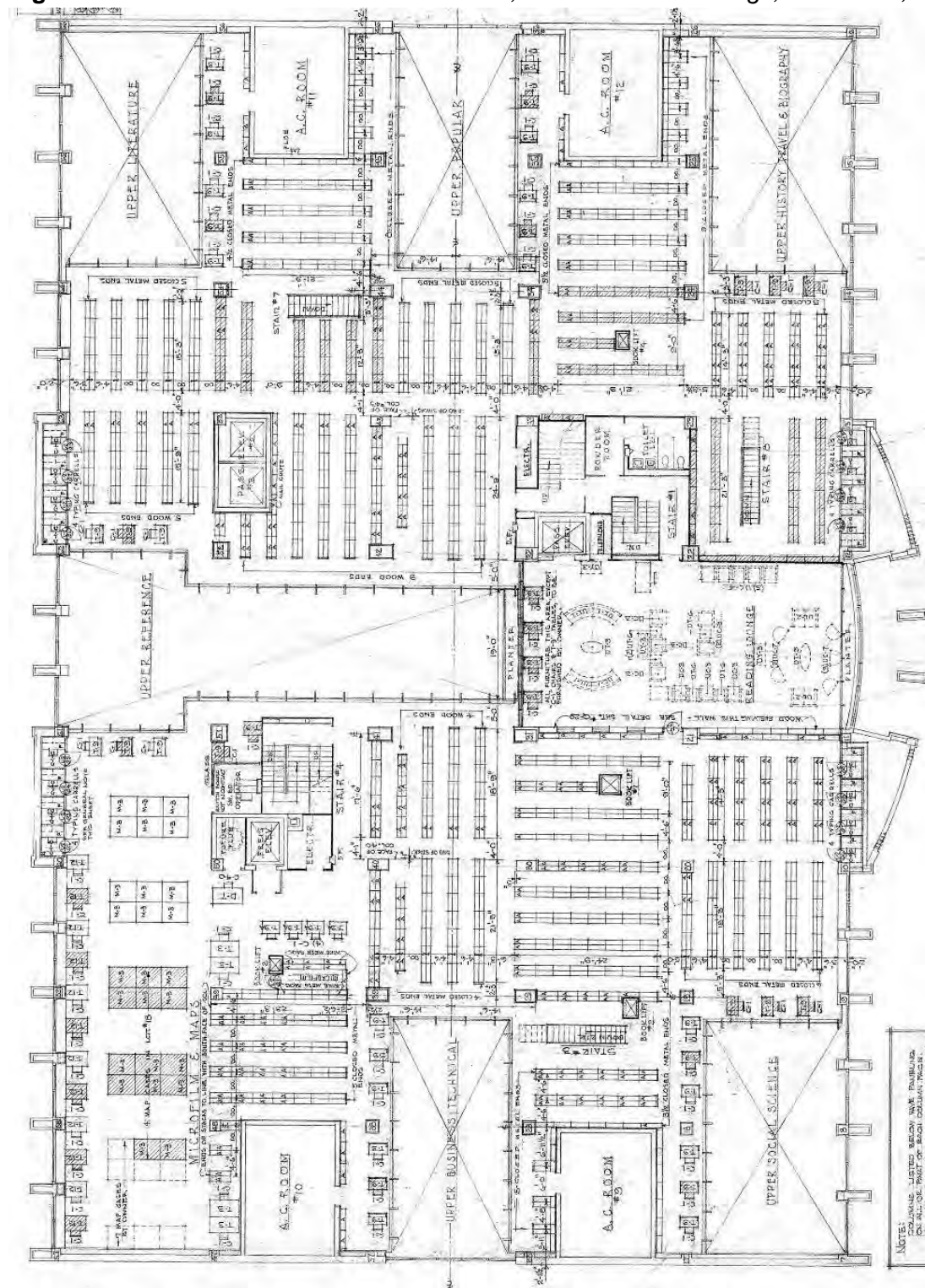


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Figure 15. Floor L-2. Source: *Edward Tanner, Architectural Drawings, Sheet Q-4, 1958.*

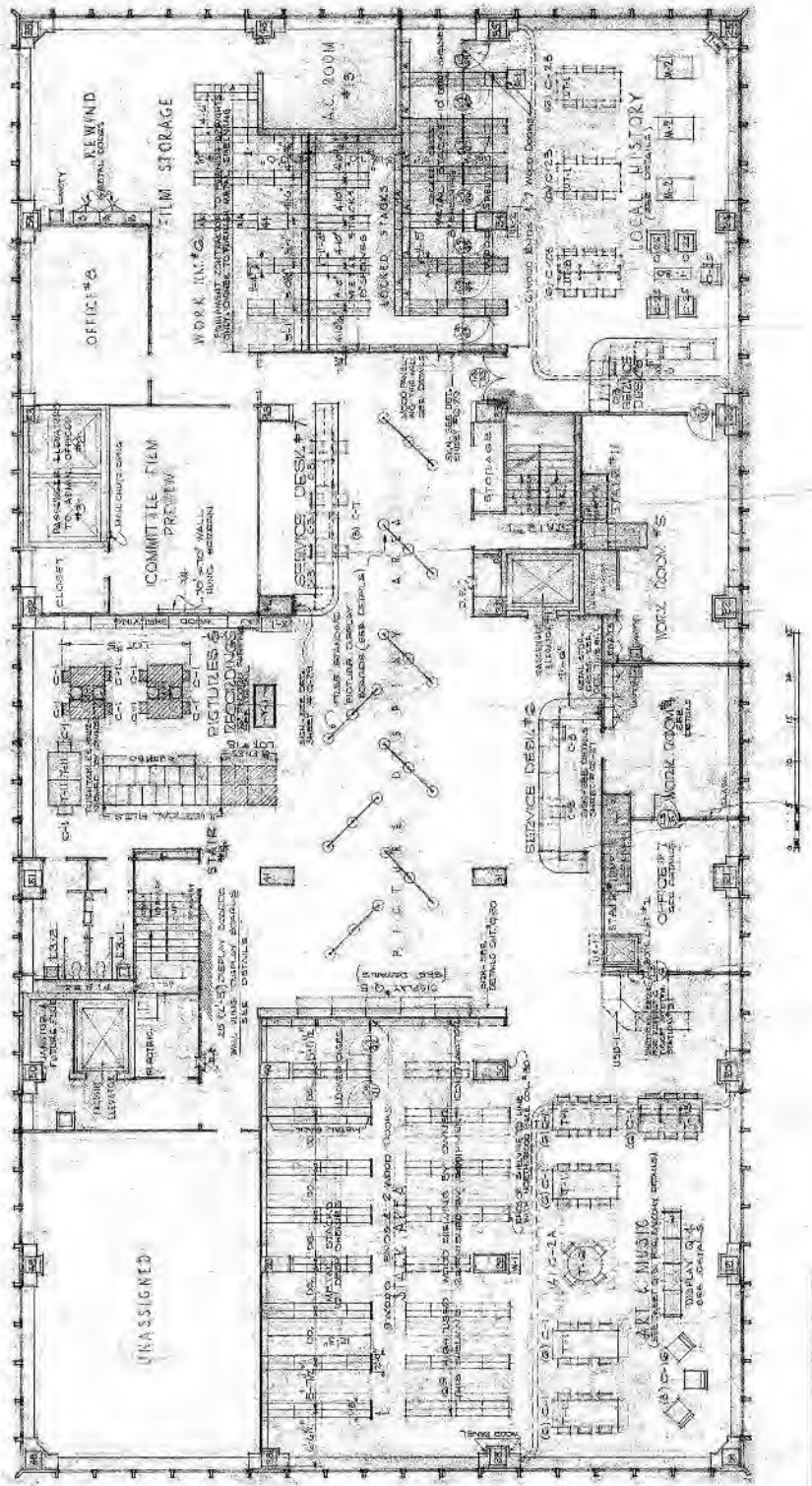


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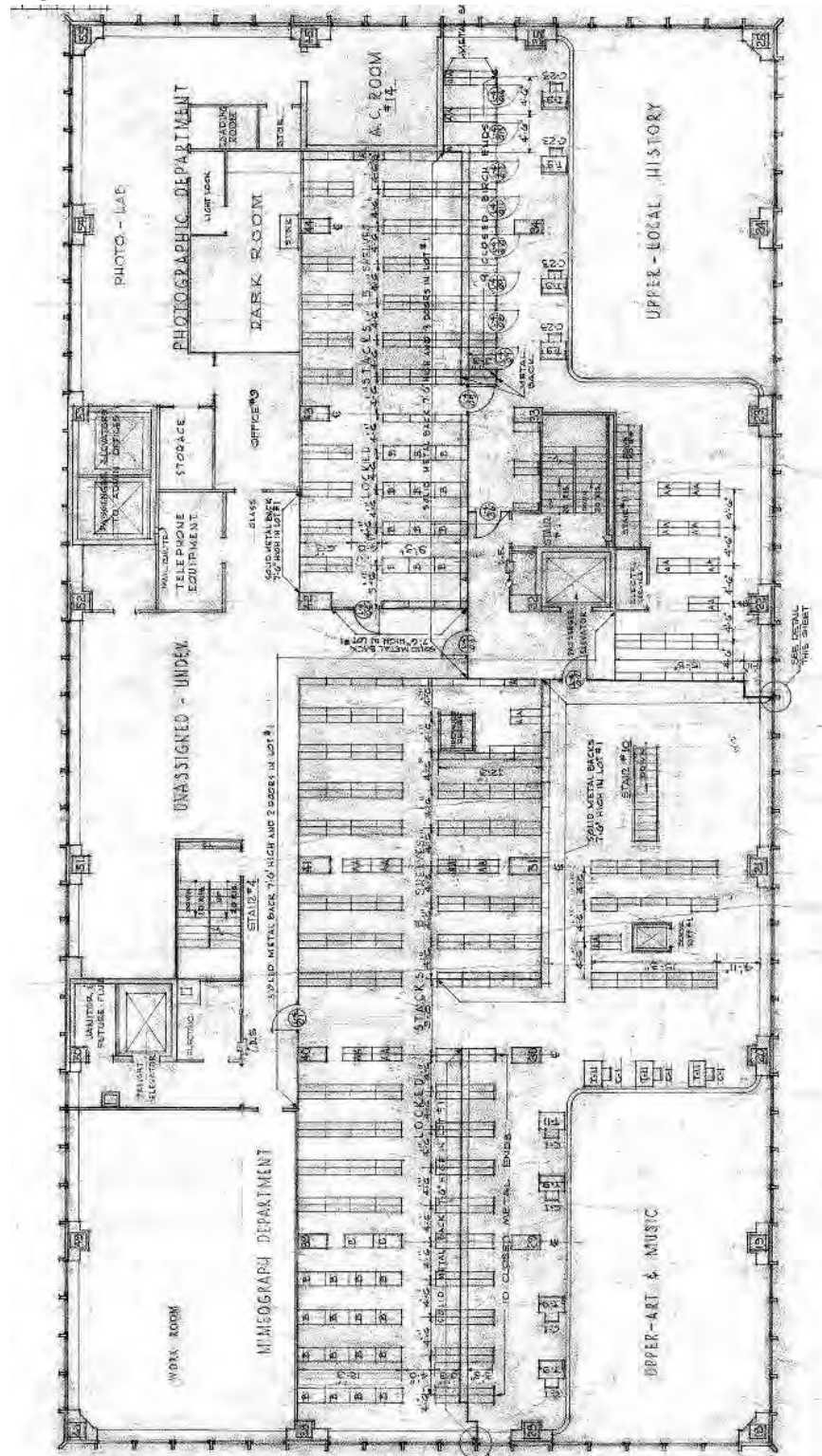
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Figure 16. Floor L-3. Source: *Edward Tanner, Architectural Drawings, Sheet Q-5, 1958.*



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Figure 17. Floor L-4. *Source: Edward Tanner, Architectural Drawings, Sheet Q-6, 1958.*

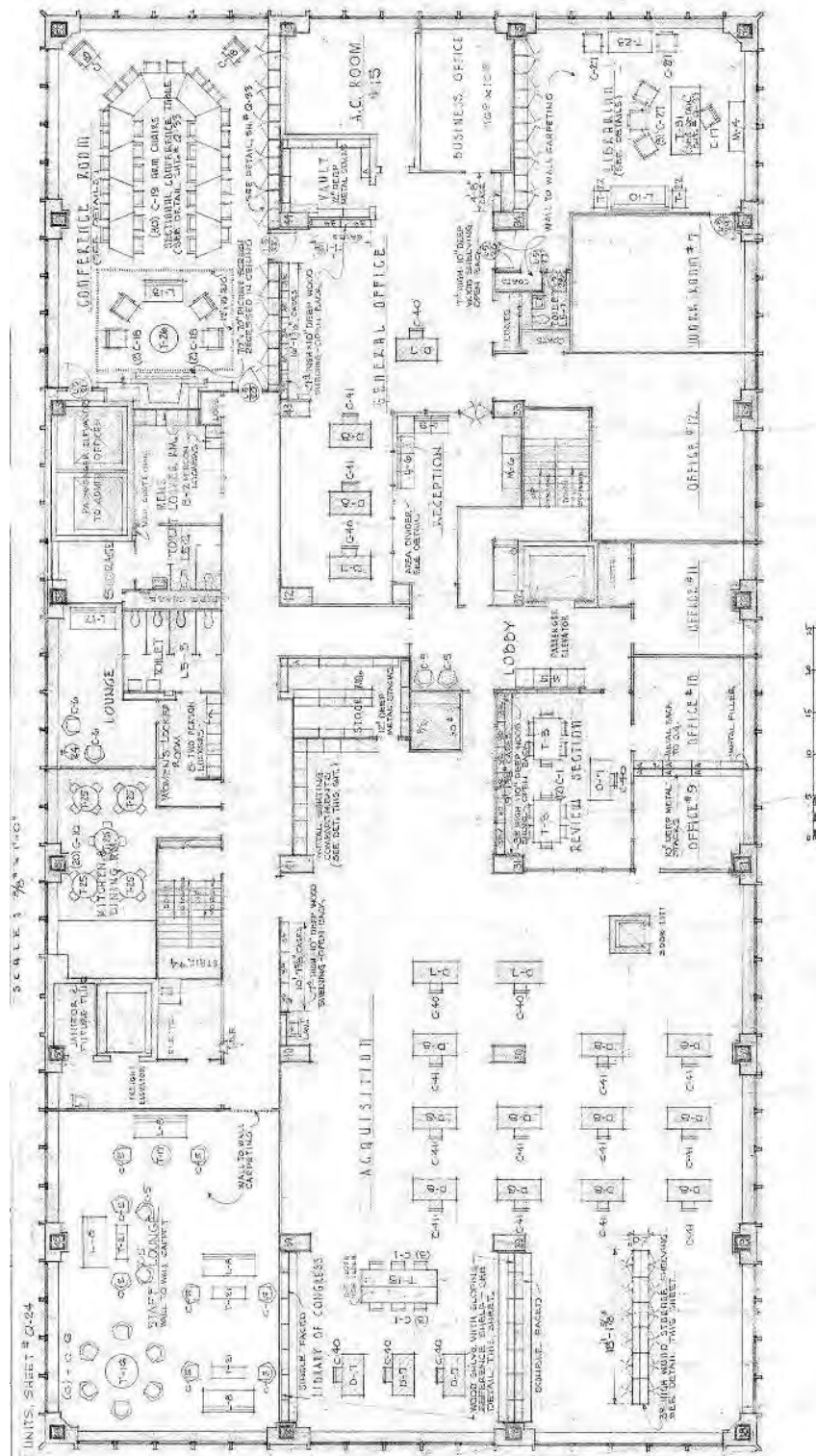


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Figure 18. Floor L-5. Source: Edward Tanner, Architectural Drawings, Sheet Q-7, 1958.

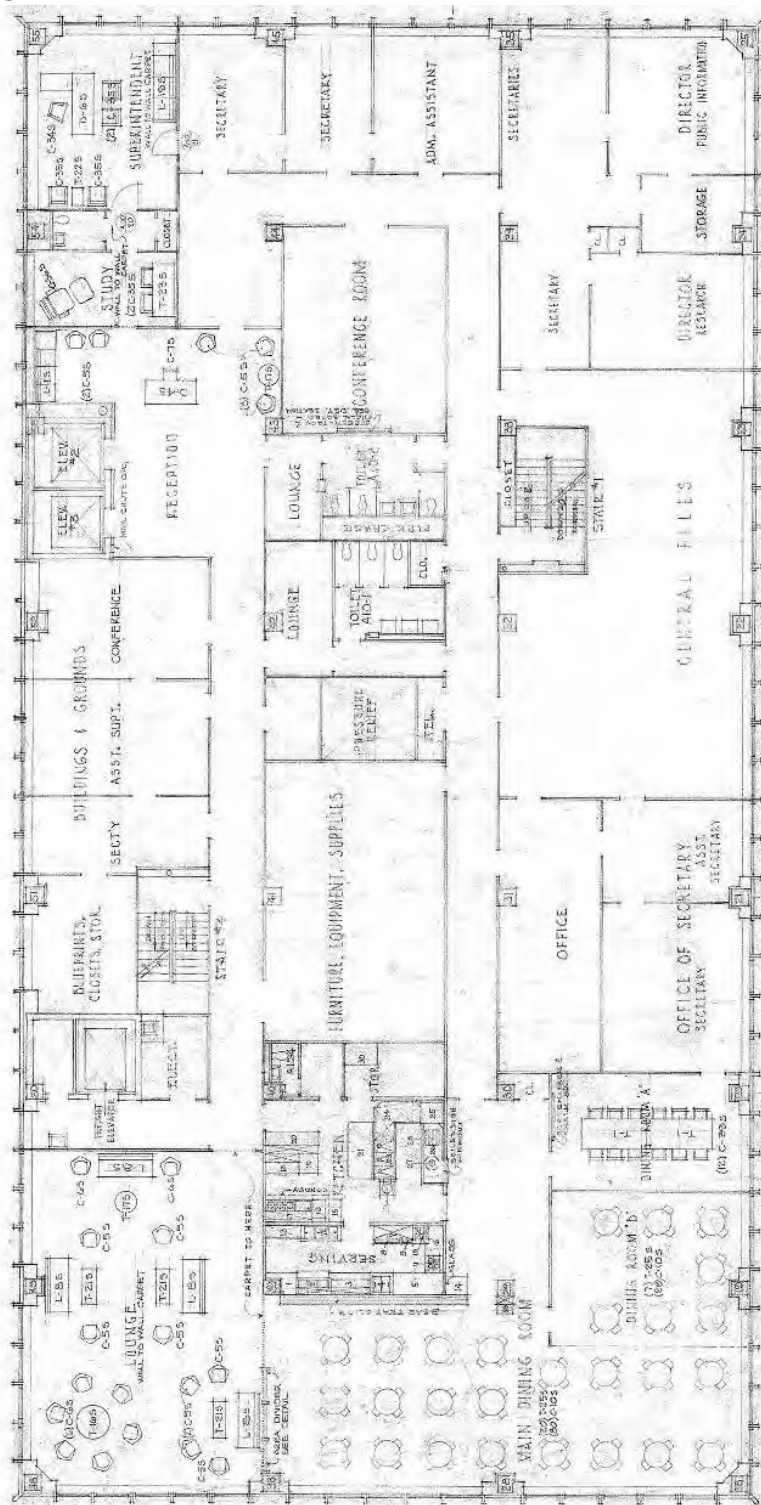


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Figure 19. Floor A-10. Source: Edward Tanner, *Architectural Drawings*, Sheet Q-8, 1958.



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Figure 20. Historic Photograph, Construction, July 1959. *Source: Missouri Valley Special Collections.*



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Figure 21. Historic Postcard, c.1960. *Source: Vertical File. Missouri Valley Special Collections.*



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Figure 22. Historic Photograph, Art and Music Department, c.1960. *Source: Missouri Valley Special Collections.*



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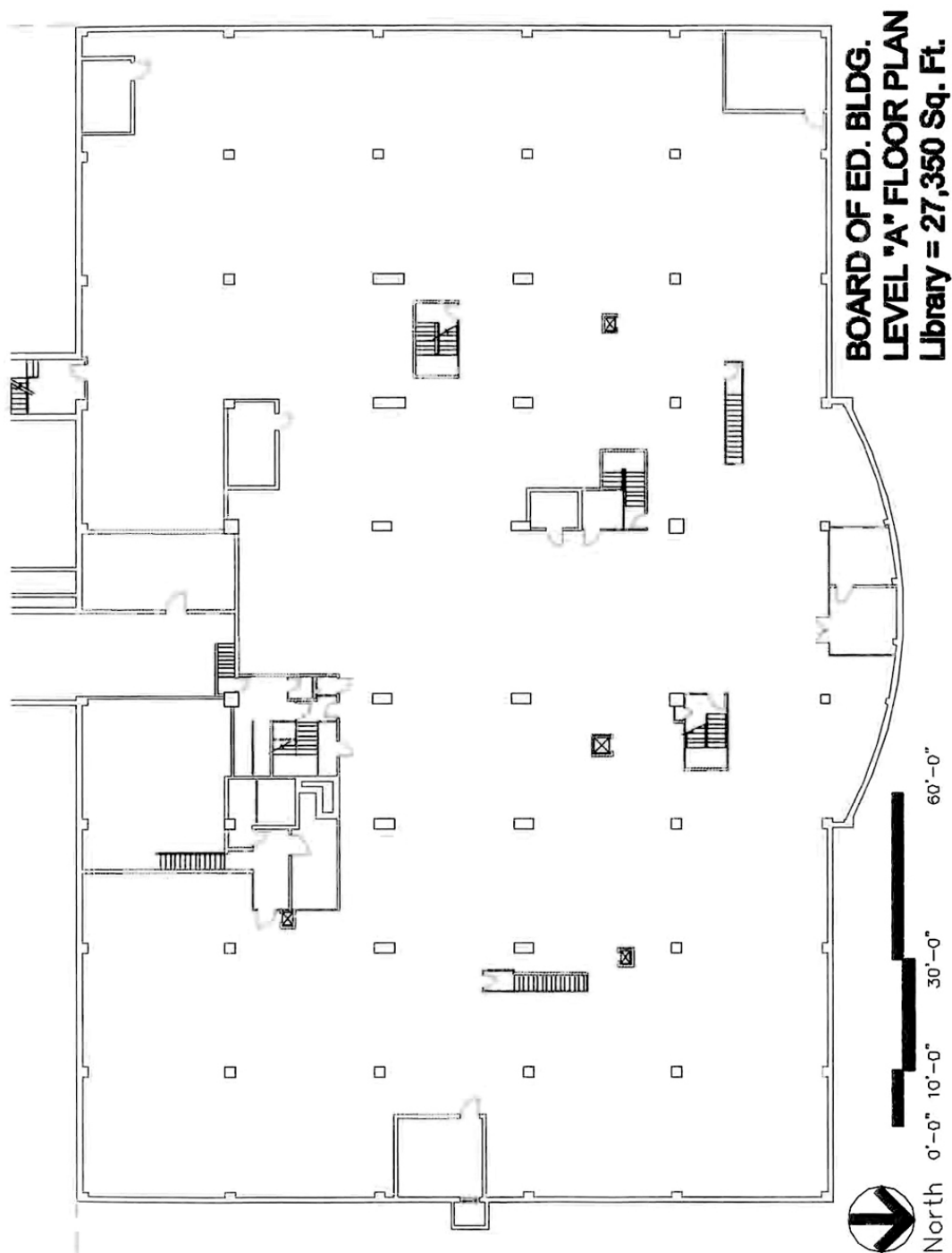
Jackson County, Missouri

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Figure 23. Current Plans, Floor Level A. Source: Kansas City Missouri School District Archives, 2008.



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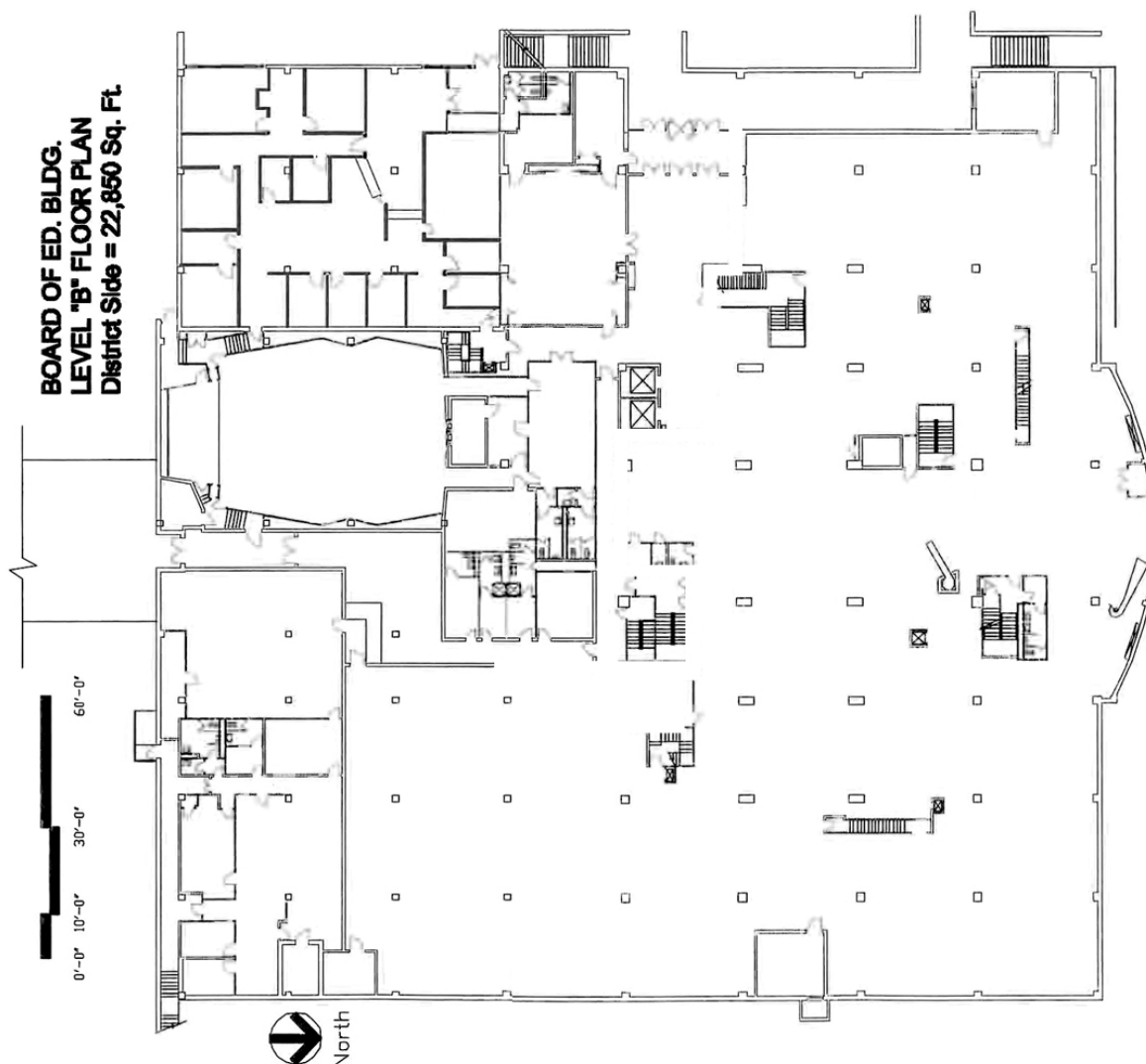
Jackson County, Missouri

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N/A

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Figure 24. Current Plans, Floor Level B. Source: Kansas City Missouri School District Archives, 2008.

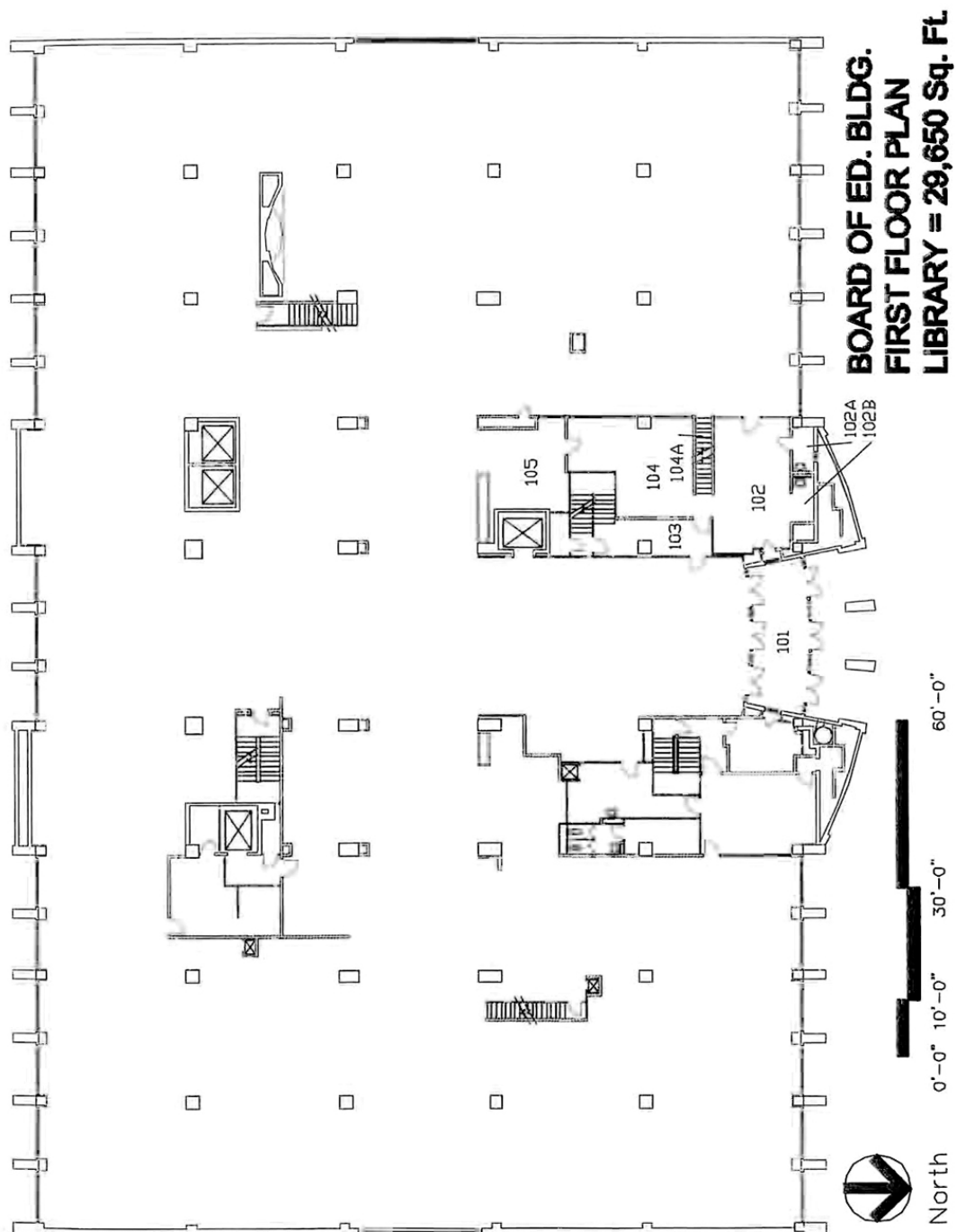


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Figure 25. Current Plans, Floor L-1. Source: Kansas City Missouri School District Archives, 2008.

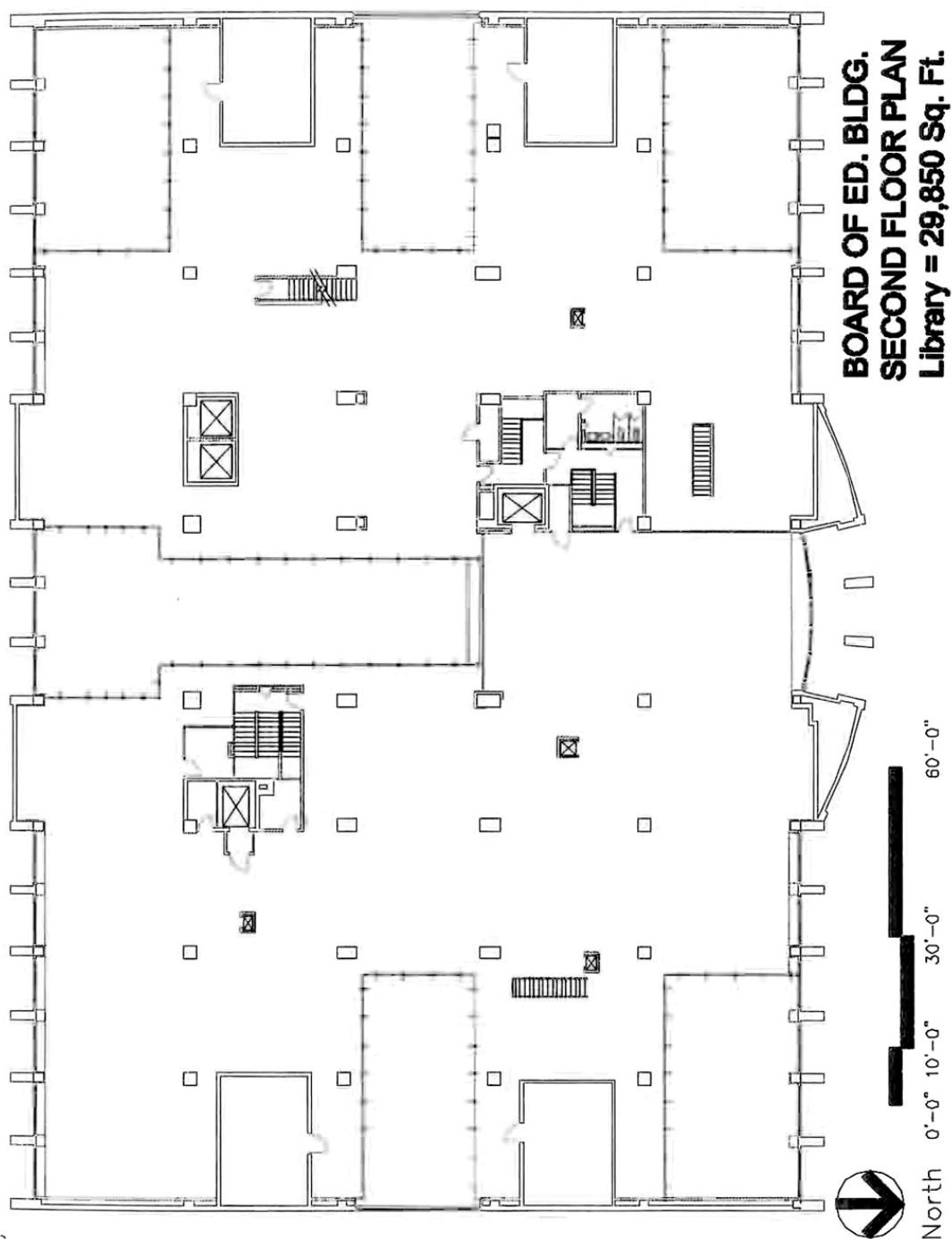


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Figure 26. Current Plans, Floor L-2 Source: Kansas City Missouri School District Archives, 2008.

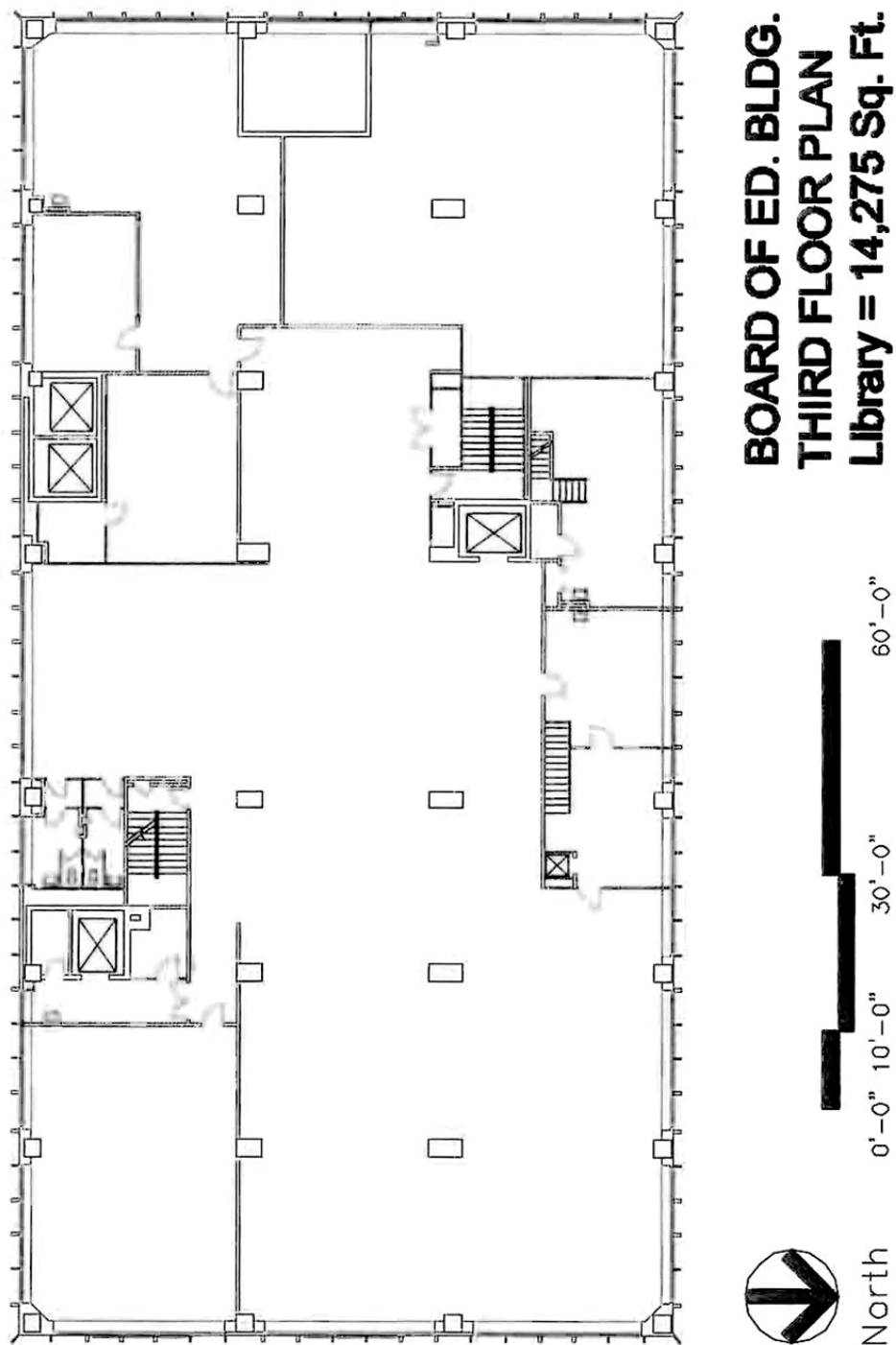


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Figure 27. Current Plans, Floor L-3. Source: Kansas City Missouri School District Archives, 2008.



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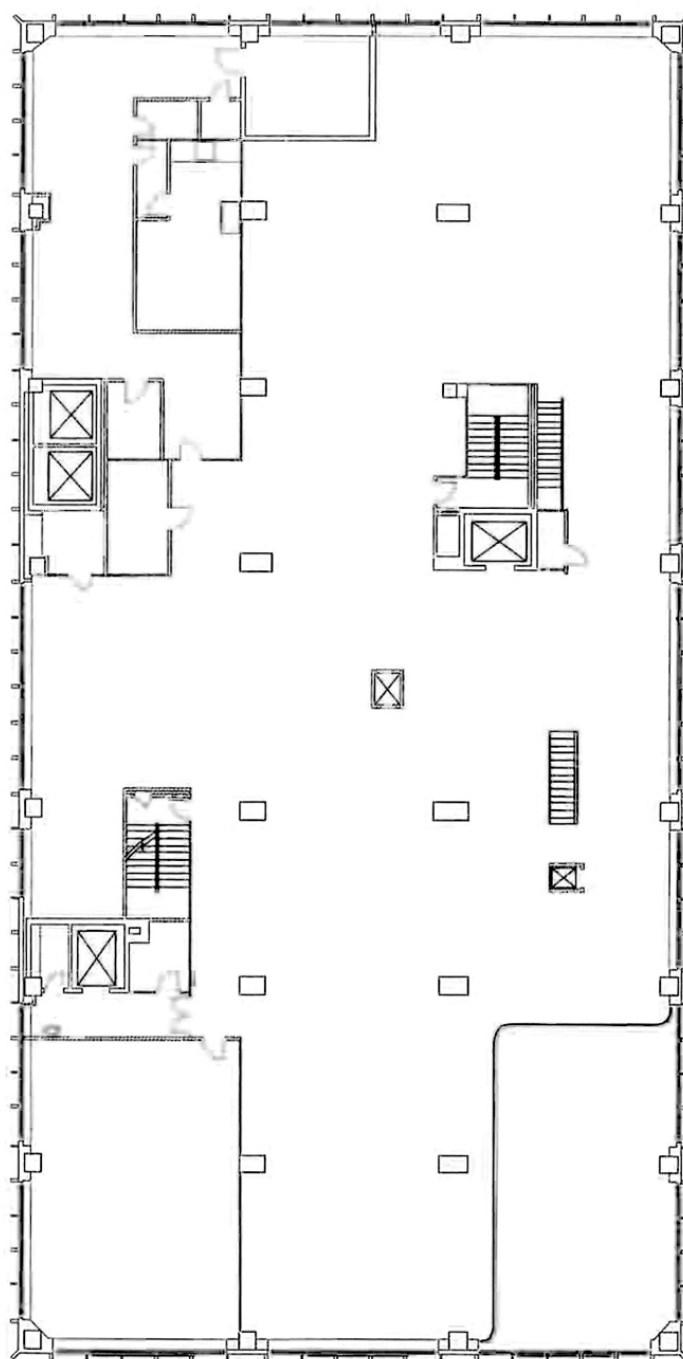
Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

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Figure 28. Current Plans, Floor L-4. Source: Kansas City Missouri School District Archives, 2008.



**BOARD OF ED. BLDG.
FOURTH FLOOR PLAN
Library = 14,250 Sq. Ft.**



North

0'-0" 10'-0"

30'-0"

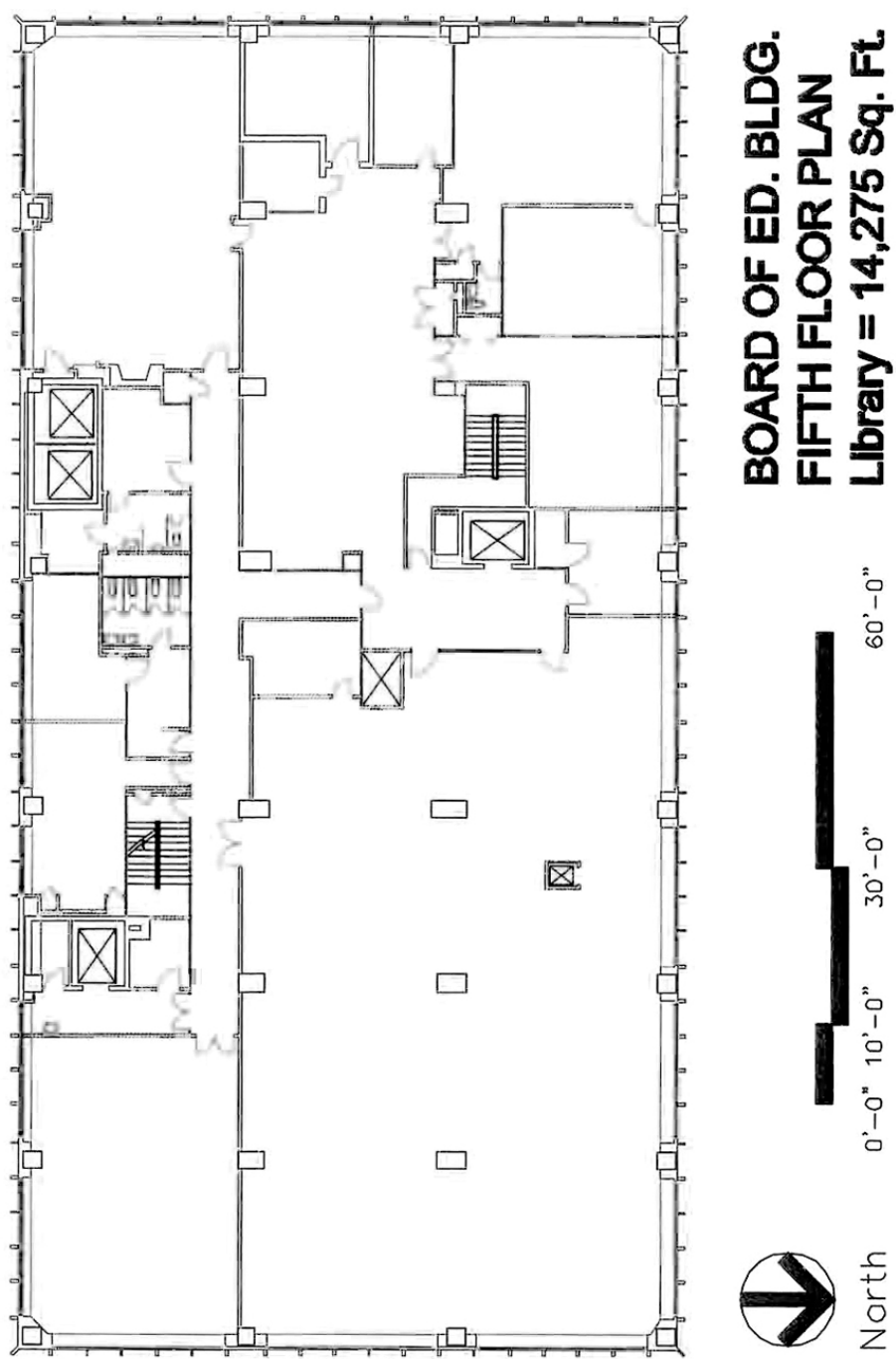
60'-0"

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

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Kansas City Public Library and Board of Education Building
Name of Property
Jackson County, Missouri
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 29. Current Plans, Floor L-5. Source: Kansas City Missouri School District Archives, 2008.

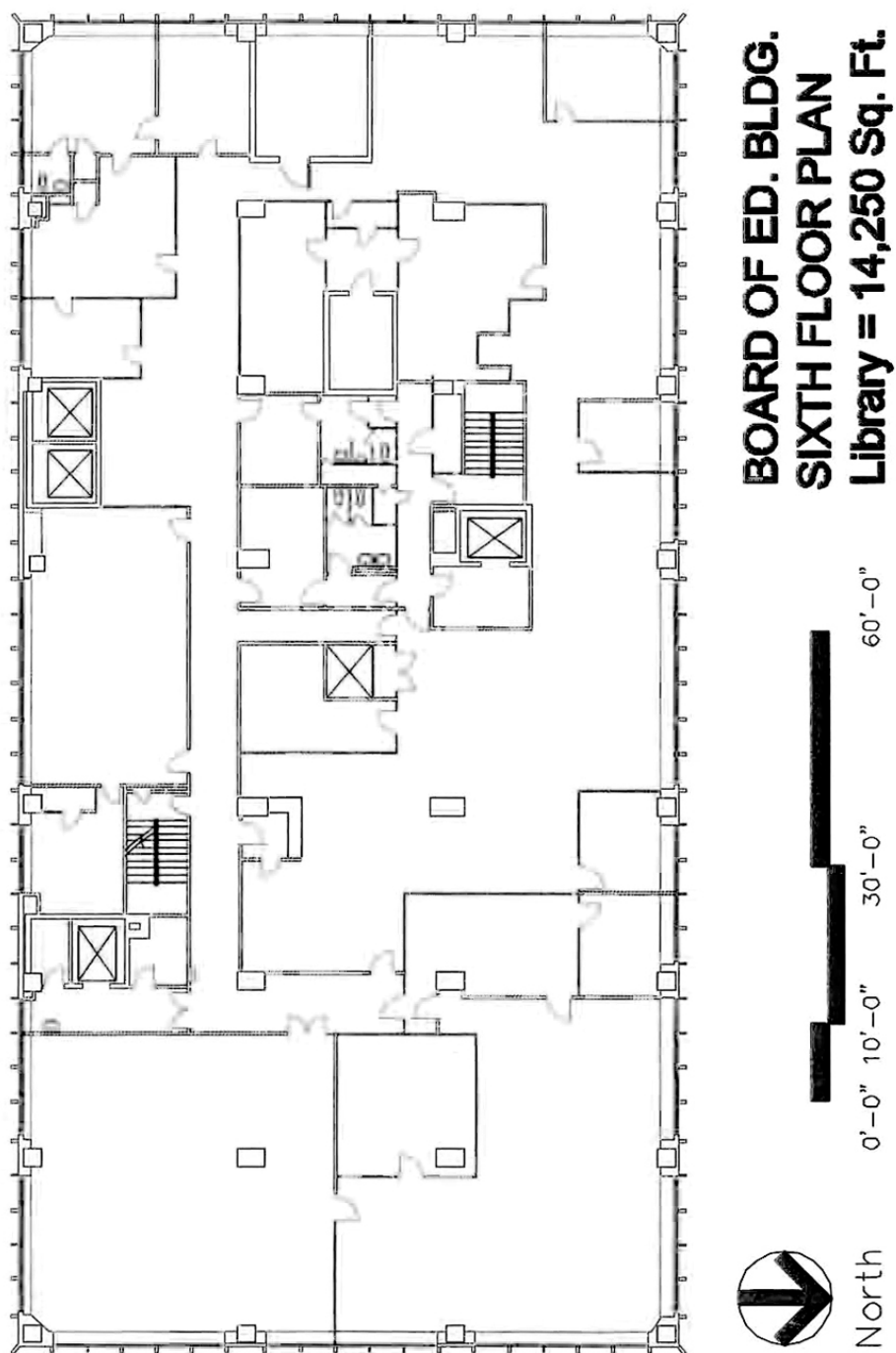


National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 54

Kansas City Public Library and Board of Education Building
Name of Property
Jackson County, Missouri
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 30. Current Plans, Floor A-6. Source: Kansas City Missouri School District Archives, 2008.

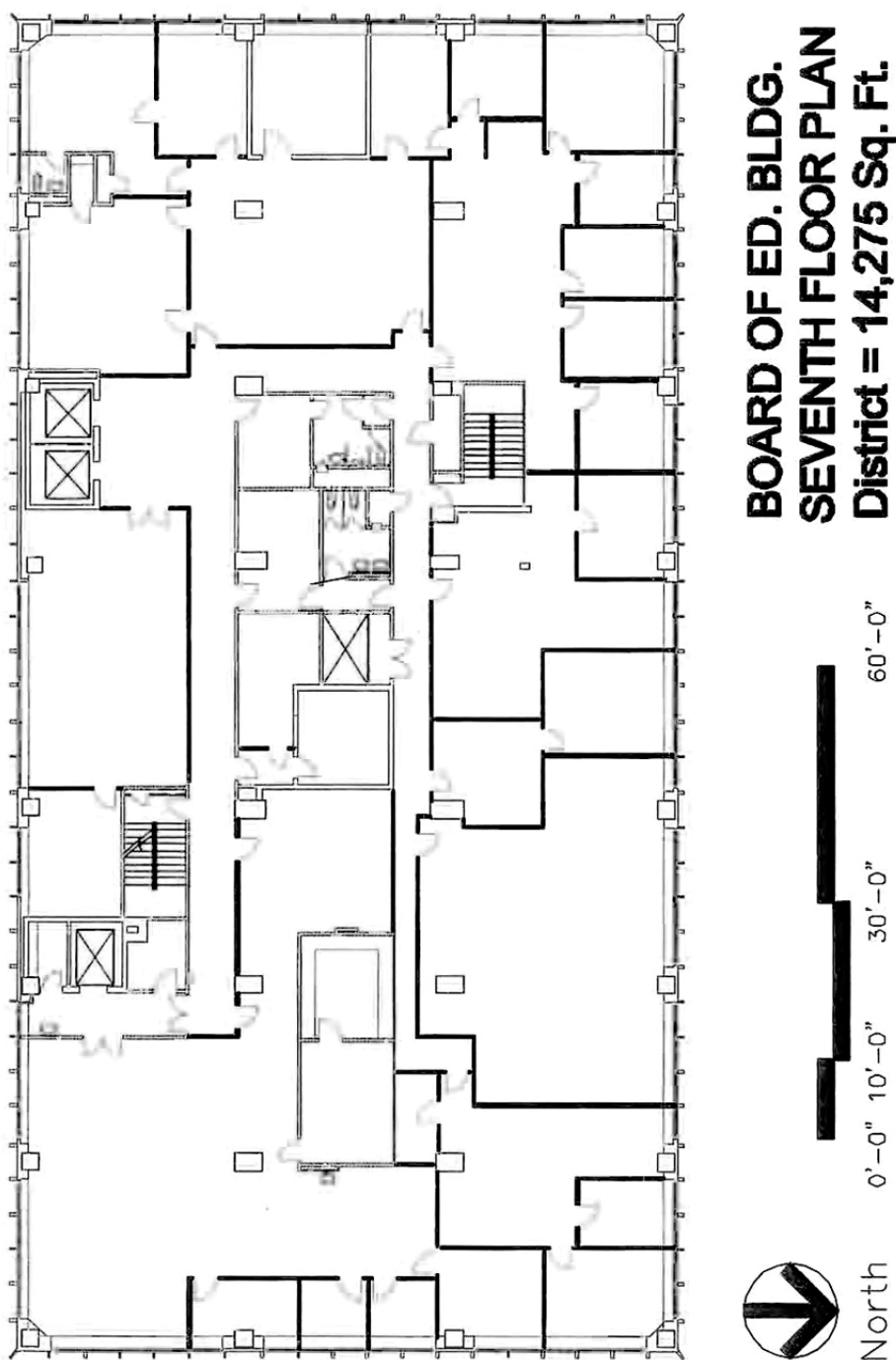


National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 55

Kansas City Public Library and Board of Education Building
Name of Property
Jackson County, Missouri
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 31. Current Plans, Floor A-7. Source: Kansas City Missouri School District Archives, 2008.

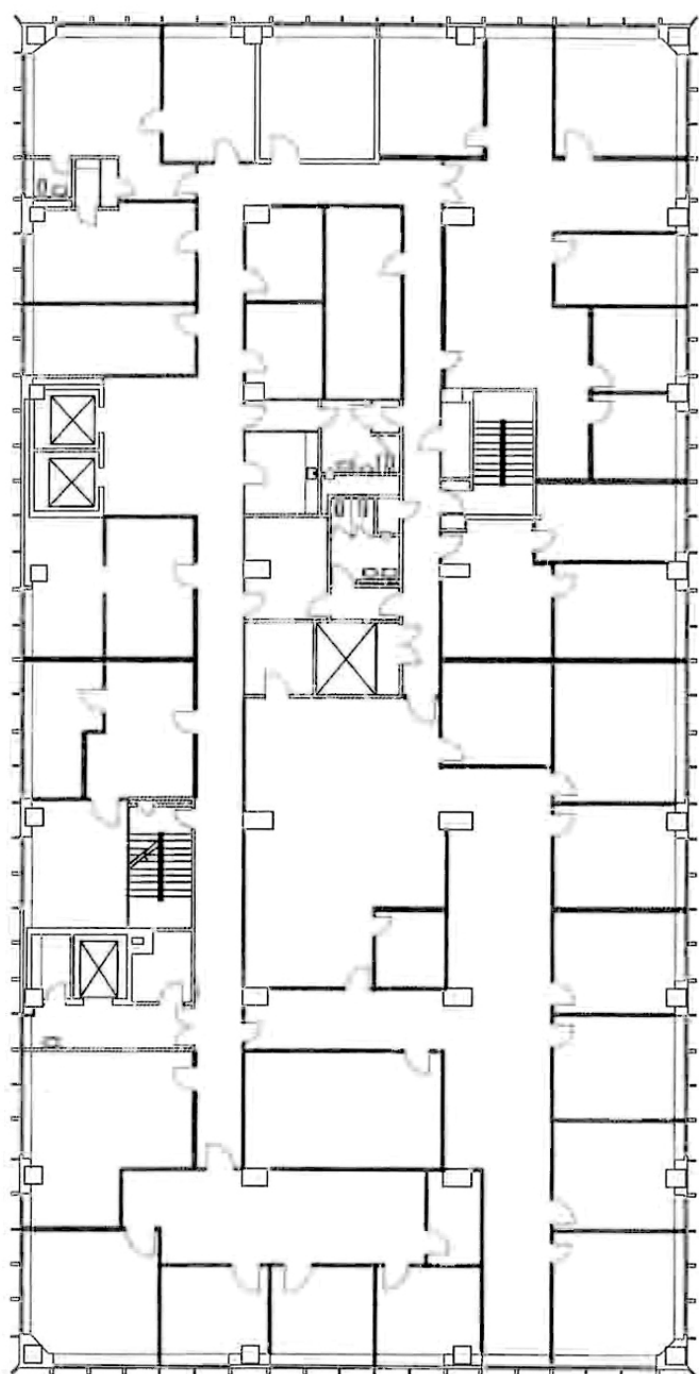


National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 56

Kansas City Public Library and Board of Education Building
Name of Property
Jackson County, Missouri
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 32. Current Plans, Floor A-8. Source: Kansas City Missouri School District Archives, 2008.



**BOARD OF ED. BLDG.
EIGHTH FLOOR PLAN
District = 14,275 Sq. Ft.**



North

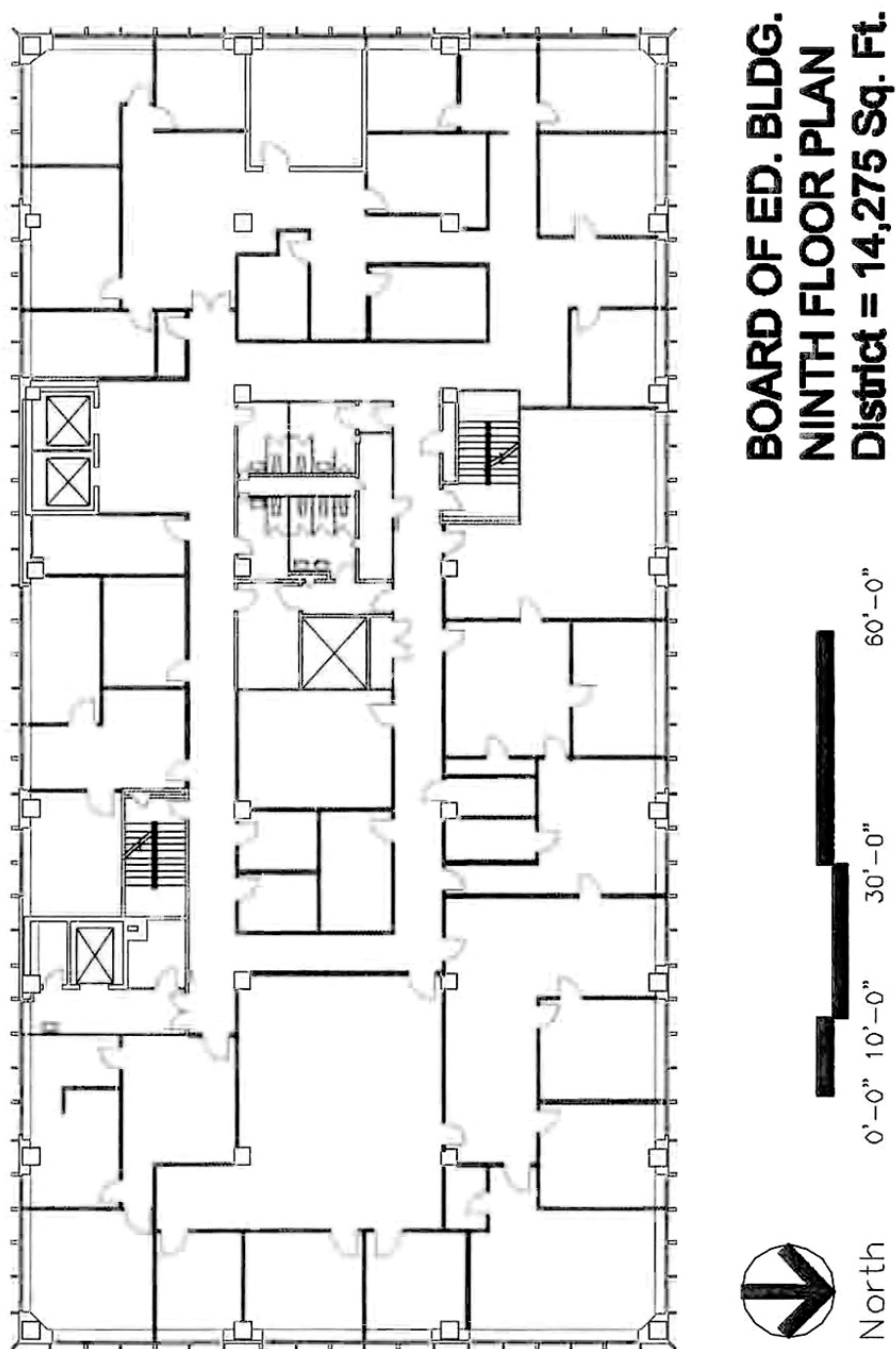
0'-0" 10'-0" 30'-0" 60'-0"

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 57

Kansas City Public Library and Board of Education Building
Name of Property
Jackson County, Missouri
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 33. Current Plans, Floor A-9. Source: Kansas City Missouri School District Archives, 2008.



National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

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Kansas City Public Library and Board of Education Building

Name of Property

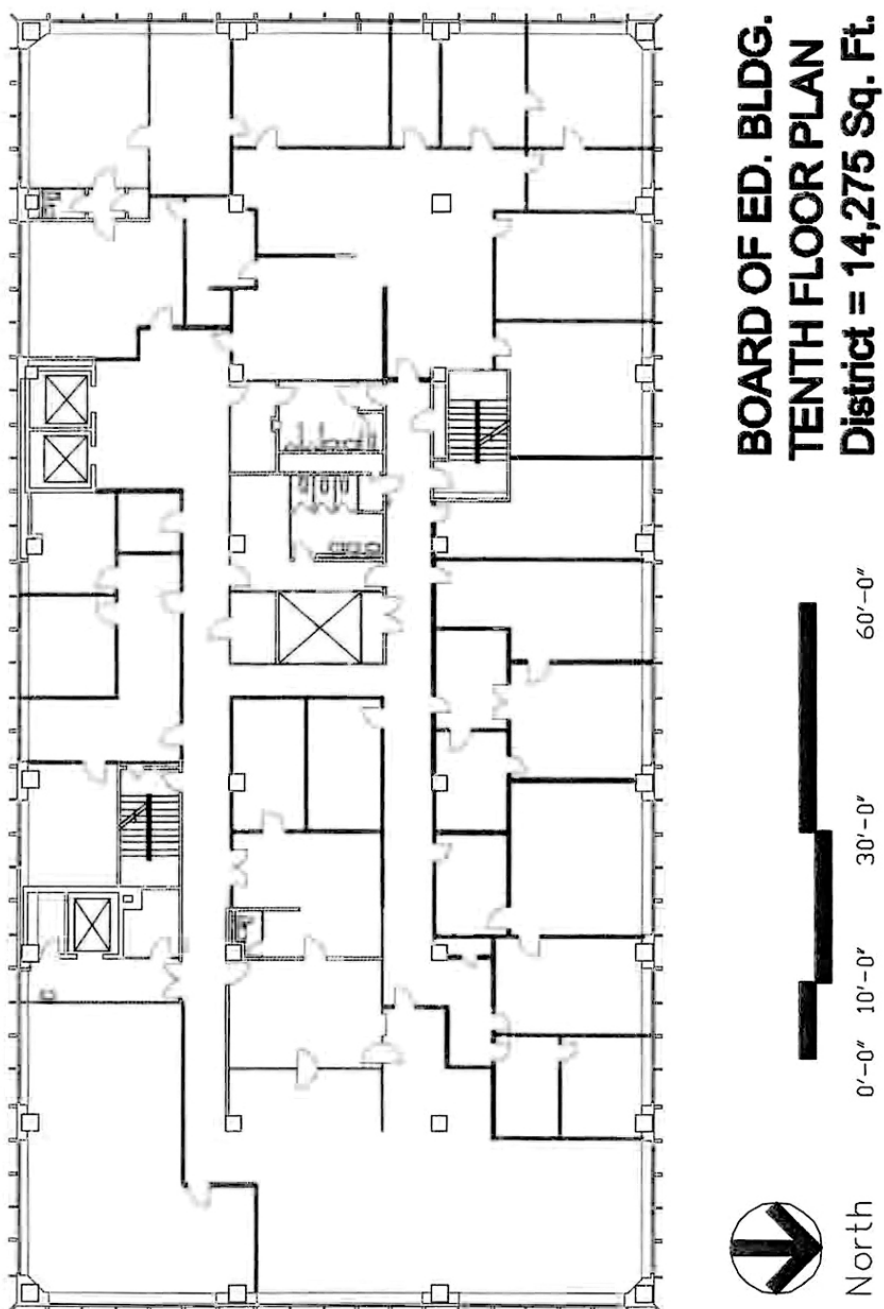
Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 34. Current Plans, Floor A-10. Source: Kansas City Missouri School District Archives, 2008.

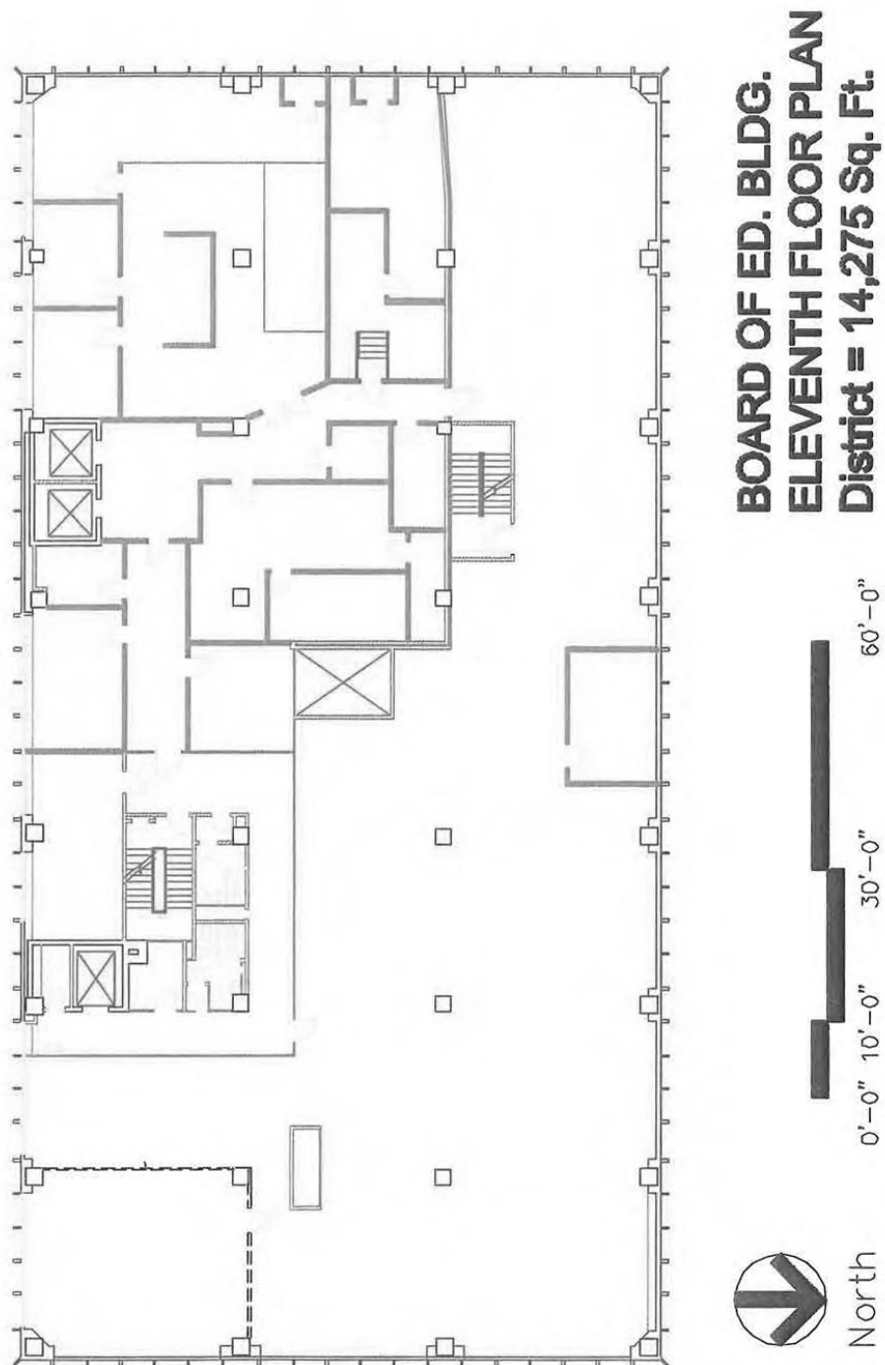


National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 59

Kansas City Public Library and Board of Education Building
Name of Property
Jackson County, Missouri
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 35. Current Plans, Floor A-11. Source: Kansas City Missouri School District Archives, 2008.







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WEAPONS ARE
NOT
ALLOWED
IN SCHOOL OR
ON SCHOOL
GROUNDS

























NO FLAMING PARTY
IN CASE OF A FIRE
PLEASE REMEMBER
TO EXIT CALM AND QUICKLY - THE
BUILDING HAS TWO EXIT ROUTES
STAYING IN ROOMS







