



# CITY OF LA CROSSE HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION

## Historic Landmark Nomination Form

### 1. What is the historic name of the Landmark or Landmark District?

Abraham Lincoln Junior High School- (Nomination of Main/Original Building only)

### 2. What is the current name of the Landmark or Landmark District?(If applicable)

Lincoln Middle School

### 3. Property Address: 510 9th Street South, La Crosse, WI 54601

### 4. OWNERSHIP

- a. Owner(s): School District of La Crosse
- b. Street: 807 East Ave S
- c. City, State, Zip Code: La Crosse, WI 54601 Phone: (\_\_\_\_)\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Parcel ID#: \_\_\_\_\_

### 5. NOMINATED BY (If different):

- a. Name: Washburn Neighborhood Association
- b. Street: PO Box 1422
- c. City, State, Zip Code: La Crosse, WI 54601 Phone: (\_\_\_\_)\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Email: WashburnNeighborhood@gmail.com

### 6. CLASSIFICATION AND USE (Check all that apply):

#### Proposed Designation (choose one)

- Landmark District
- Landmark

If it is a Landmark, choose a category (definitions can be found on the instructions page)

- Historic Structure
- Historic Site
- Historic Object

#### Present Use

- |   |  |   |                                     |
|---|--|---|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture          | <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial    | <input type="checkbox"/> Religious              | <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Military             | <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Educational | <input type="checkbox"/> Museum     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation       | <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment | <input type="checkbox"/> Park                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Government |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____   |   |                                     |

**Condition:**

- Excellent                       Deteriorated  
 Good                               Ruins  
 Fair                                 Other      Status unknown

**Has the property been nominated previously?**    Yes    No

When? \_\_\_\_\_

What was the outcome? \_\_\_\_\_

**Is the proposed Landmark or District on the National Register?**    Yes    No

When? \_\_\_\_\_

**7. SIGNIFICANCE:**

**Section 20.90 of the *Municipal Code of Ordinances* lists 4 criteria that a district, site, structure or object may be designated under.**

**Please check one or more of the listed criteria that apply to this Property:**

- Associated with events or person(s) who have made a significant contribution to the history, heritage, or culture of the City of La Crosse, the County of La Crosse, the State of Wisconsin, or the United States.
- It embodies the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type or specimen, inherently valuable for a study of a period, style or method of construction or of indigenous material or craftsmanship.
- It is representative of the notable work of a master builder, designer or architect whose individual work is significant in the development of the City of La Crosse, the County of La Crosse, the State of Wisconsin, or the United States.
- It exemplifies or reflects the broad cultural, political, economic or social history of the nation, state, or community.

**8. HISTORIC OVERVIEW/ANALYSIS (See attached instructions for analysis outline):**

**Please attach the analysis as a separate document containing the following sections:**

**A. Existing Physical Description**

- a. Write a physical description of the nominated property or district in its current state.
- b. If it has been altered over time, indicate the date(s) and nature of the alterations.
- c. Include additional information as applicable.

**B. Narrative History**

- a. Provide a complete narrative history of the district, structure, site, or object.
- b. If known, include the year it was built, the architecture style, and the name of the architect or builder.
- c. Include references to source material that are listed in the bibliography.

**C. Additional Information**

- a. Include any additional information that helps support the claim of criteria (Section 7) made in this document; or is otherwise deemed useful for the purposes of evaluation.

**D. Bibliography**

- a. Include a list of all sources consulted.
- b. Include copies of relevant source materials with the nomination form.

**9. PHOTOGRAPHS:**

**Include photos, as applicable, of the nominated district, structure, site, or object as follows:**

**A. Current photographs**

- a. Exterior photographs are required.
- b. Interior photographs if available and relevant to its historic significance.

**B. Historic photographs**

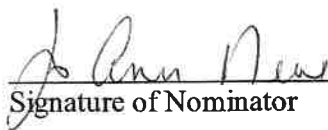
- a. Interior and exterior if available.

**Each photograph must be labeled with the street address of the building(s) and the month and year the photograph was taken.**

**Designation of property will require affixing a plaque to said property and that the plaque will be the sole property of the City of La Crosse. Signature of the property owner assures the Heritage Preservation Commission that designation and installation of a plaque are supported.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Property Owner

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Nominator

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**When completed, submit application to the City of La Crosse Planning Department, 400 La Crosse Street, La Crosse WI.**

**PLEASE NOTE: It is the responsibility of the nominator to provide the Heritage Preservation Commission and its Staff with information sufficient to fairly evaluate the nomination. **Incomplete nomination forms will not be accepted. A fee, in the amount stated in the Schedule of Fees and Licenses table in Section 25.01 of the Municipal Code, must be included.****



**Architect: Otto Merman**

Otto Merman (1890-1935) was born in La Crosse and received training in building design in his late teen years working in the office of Parkinson and Dockendorff from 1907 to 1910. He moved to Minneapolis for a short time and then returned to La Crosse. He joined Percy Bentley as a draftsman in 1912 and worked with Bentley off and on in the Twin Cities and La Crosse until Bentley's permanent departure from La Crosse around 1920. Merman assumed the practice and began specializing in public buildings, particularly schools. In 1922 he associated with Herman Skogstads and Alfred Widman for the rest of his career. Over the course of his career, his architectural style shaped the look of La Crosse with many structures in this City. Unfortunately, not all have survived. Otto Merman died at age 45 in June, 1935.

Following are all the known designs by Otto Merman and the dates of the design. Construction occurred in the same year or in some within a year or two. All the structures dated 1924, 1925, 1926, and 1928 are Merman and Skogstad designs.

**Residences**

- (1) Dan McMillan House, 1222 Cass St. (1914)
- (2) Frank Schwalbe, Jr. House, 1420 Madison St. (1914)
- (3) P. M. Gelatt House, 1212 Cass St. (1918)
- (4) Albert Arenz House, 2501 Cass St. (1918)
- (5) Frank Dietz House, 126 N. 11th St. (1921)
- (6) Ed Schwalbe House, 217 S. 17th St. (1920)
- (7) Frank Schwalbe House, 223 S. 1 7th St. (1920)
- (8) Charles Callaway House, 121 S. 17th St. (1921)



- (9) Ben Ott House, 241 S. 17th St. (1921)
- (10) Art Bruha House, 215 N. 15th St. (1921)
- (11) Emil Erickson House, 232 S. 17th Pl. (1922)
- (12) Fred Miller House, 353 S. 20th St. (1922)
- (13) George Schultz House, 1021 S. 4th St. (1922)
- (14) William Walker House, 503 S. 16th St. (1922)
- (15) Olaf Skaar House, 135 S. 16th St. (1922)
- (16) Carl Rau House, 1 73 3 Cameron Ave. (1923)
- (17) H. W. Skogstad House, 2145 King St. (1924)
- (18) Will Ott House, 121 Losey Blvd. (1924)
- (19) John Bayer House, 112 7 Cass St. (1925)
- (20) John G. Felton House, 2607 Cass St. (1927)
- (21) Frank Schwalbe House, 115 S. 17th St. (1925)
- (22) Dr. Gunnar Gundersen House, 1504 King St. (1927)
- (23) W. A. Kroner House, 131 Losey Blvd. (1927)
- (24) Leighton Oyen House, 120 N. 24th St. (1928)
- (25) Norman Meir House, 1820 Cass St. (1929)
- (26) Dr. James A. Evans House, 600 S. 28th St.  
(moved from 105 Losey Blvd. S.) (1928)
- (27) Alonzo Sisson House, 211 N. 16th St. (1922)
- (28) A. W. Lange House, 727 S. 4th St. (1923)

Commercial, Religious, School and Other Structures:

- (1) Grandview Hospital Addition, 1707 Main St. (1919 & 1925)
- (2) Hogan School, 807 East Ave. S. (1920)
- (3) La Crosse Lutheran Hospital Nurses Home,  
1910 South Avenue (1923)
- (4) La Crosse Vocational School, 304 N. 6th St. (1923)
- (5) Lincoln School, 510 S. 9th St. (1924)
- (6) North Branch School (Roosevelt) 1307 Hayes St (1923)
- (7) Lutheran Hospital Addition, 1836 South Ave. (1924)
- (8) Bath House, Pettibone Island (1925)
- (9) English Lutheran Church, 1601 Cass St. (1924)
- (10) Avalon Ballroom, 206 Copeland Avenue. (1927)
- (11) St. John the Baptist School, 818 St. James St. (1928)
- (12) Trane Company Building, 2313 S. 16th St. (1930)
- (13) Monkey Island & Zoo Building, Myrick Park (1929)
- (14) Roosevelt School Addition, 1307 Hayes St. (1931)
- (15) Salzer Flower Shop, 618 Main St.  
(moved to 1803 King St.) (1933)
- (16) Washburn School, 102 N. 8th St. (attributed) (1921)
- (17) Bill Zurn Bar, 324 S. 4th St. (1933)
- (18) La Crosse Public Library, 1552 Kane St. (1934)  
(constructed posthumously: 1942)

**LINCOLN/SOTA II/COULEE MONTESSORI**

Date Built: 1923

Date of Addition(s): 1959, 1973, 1991, 1997, 2011 (HVAC), 2014 (Secure Entry)

Overall Site Size: 2.1 Acres

Building: Size: 91,884 square feet

Pupil Capacity: 500 Students

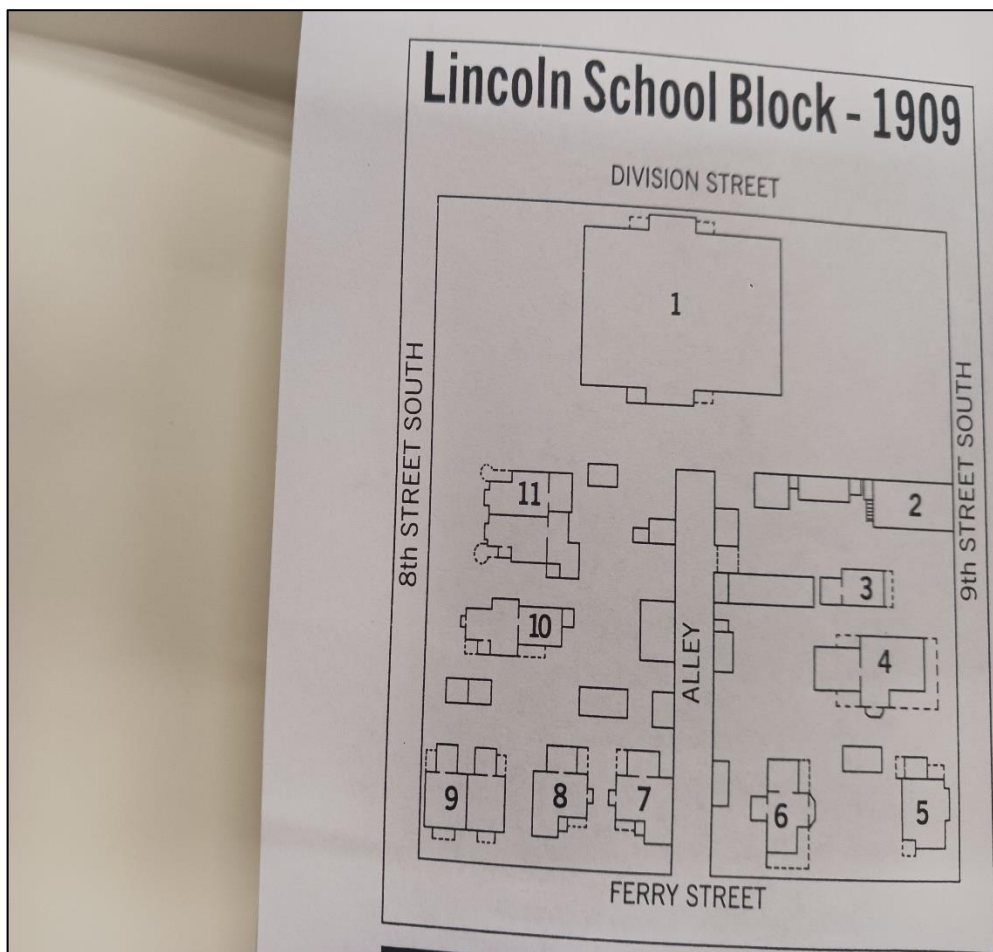
## REFERENCE MATERIAL AND SOURCES:

The below information has been provided by the La Crosse Public Library – Main Branch – Archives Department through various publications including the Report of Public Schools of La Crosse, WI for the years 1923-'24 1924-'25, The Triennial Report of the Superintendent of Schools, dated 1956-1958, a thesis submitted by Williard William Hanson in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree to Master of Arts, in the College of Education in the Graduate College of the State University of Iowa, dated February, 1951, City of La Crosse, Wisconsin Architectural and Historical Intensive Survey Report dated July, 1996, and various Tribune articles.

## NARRATIVE HISTORY

Pre-Otto Merman structure:

This site has been the home to a school since 1854. At that time, the block included not only a school, but 11 residences, reflecting a representation of the working-class population.



514 S. 9<sup>th</sup> – 2-story brick with meat market on 1<sup>st</sup> store and residence of John Matiak family above.

516 S. 9<sup>th</sup> – 1-story home to Henry Matiak, bottler at the Michel Brewery

520 S. 9<sup>th</sup> – 2-story home to Isaac Rosenberg, a traveling salesman

829 Ferry St – 2-story home to Joseph Leinfelder, co-owner of a sheet metal shop at 305 S. 3<sup>rd</sup>. St.

819 Ferry St – 2-story home to Charles Pavek, cigar maker at Dengler Cigar Tobacco Co, 129 N 3<sup>rd</sup> St.

813 Ferry St – 1 ½ Story home of Miss Zara Petterson who operated a dressmaking business there

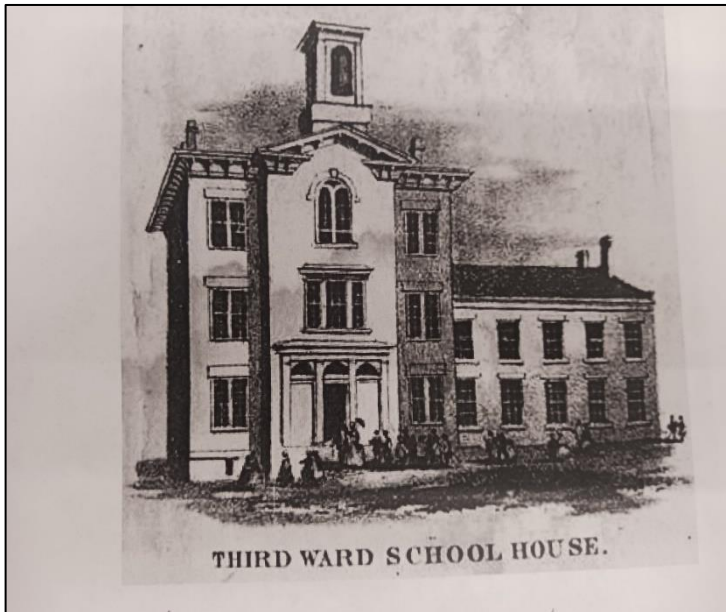
809 Ferry St - 1 ½ story home of Margaret McNamara and Miss Jacobia Engen, a seamstress

801-803 Ferry St – 2-story home to Mrs. Mary Reichert, widow and Frank Herlitzke, Post Office Janitor.

519 S. 8<sup>th</sup> – 1 ½ story home to Anton Anderson, electrician for La Crosse Gas and Electric Company

511-515 S 8<sup>th</sup> – 2-story duplex home to George Olson, porter at the Stoddard Hotel and Harry Taggart, secretary of Merchants Protective Association.

At that time, a 2-story brick building was constructed on the southeast corner of 8<sup>th</sup> and Division, called the First District School.



In 1856 it was enlarged and in 1857 the name was changed to Third Ward School. Because of poor construction, in 1872 that structure was razed and rebuilt into a 6-class structure.

In 1874 there was considerable storm damage requiring extensive renovation, and in 1893 an additional 6-room was added, allowing for a grammar room and a kindergarten.

In 1909 the name was changed to Lincoln School, named after President Abraham Lincoln. Although the name on the front states Abraham Lincoln School, it was and has continued to be referred to as just Lincoln.

In 1922 that structure was razed and in 1924 a new School was built. The school was dedicated on Tuesday, December 9, 1924, with Superintendent of Schools B.E. McCormick and Mayor J. J. Verchota conducting the ceremony.

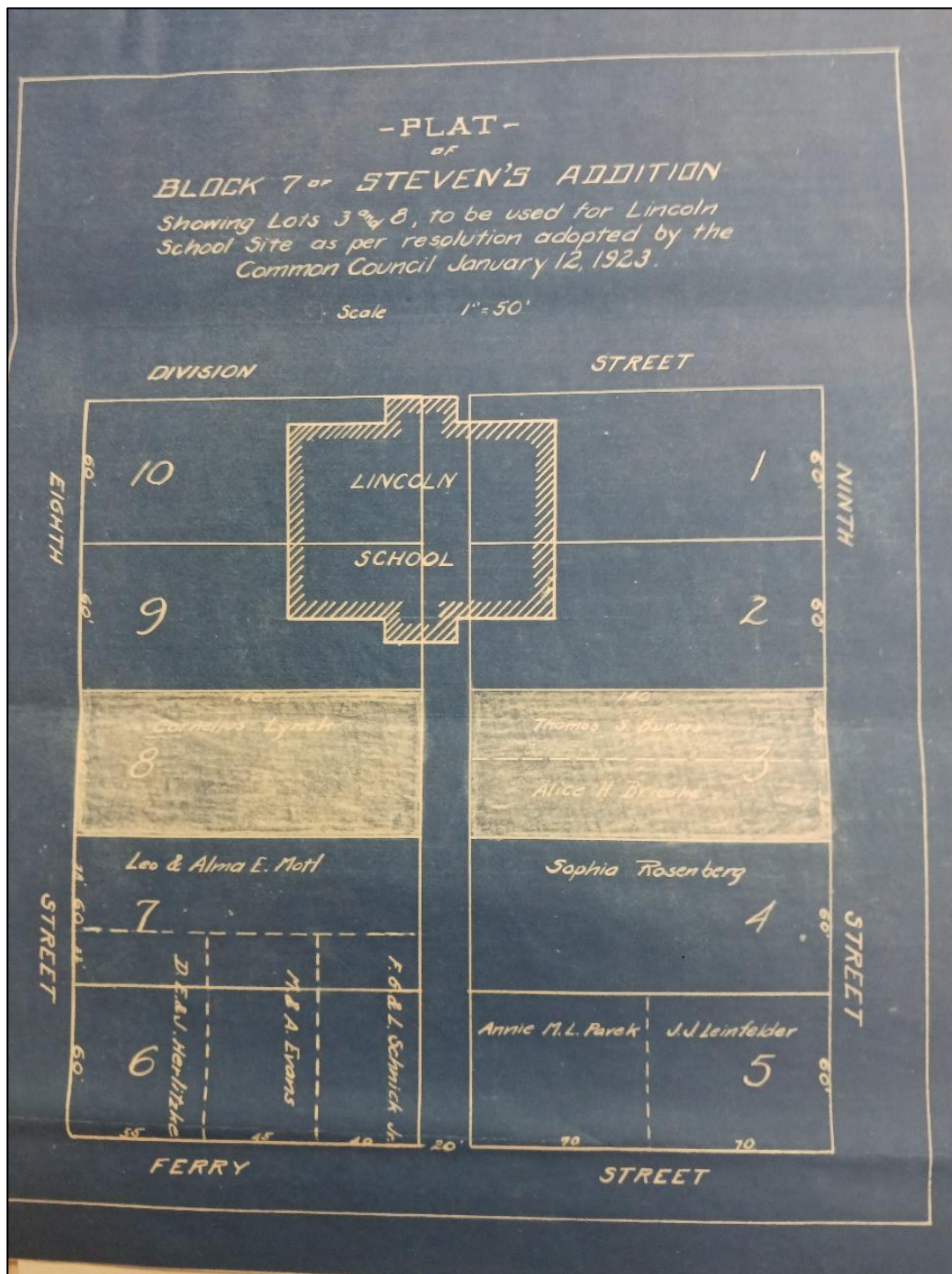
#### THE OLD LINCOLN SCHOOL

The first building on the present site of the Lincoln School was erected in 1854. It was called the Third Ward School. In 1856 this was enlarged and school was reopened in 1857.

In 1872 a new six-room building was built. This remained with the six-room addition put on in 1893 until torn down last year to make room for a new school. The addition provided for a grammar room and a kindergarten.





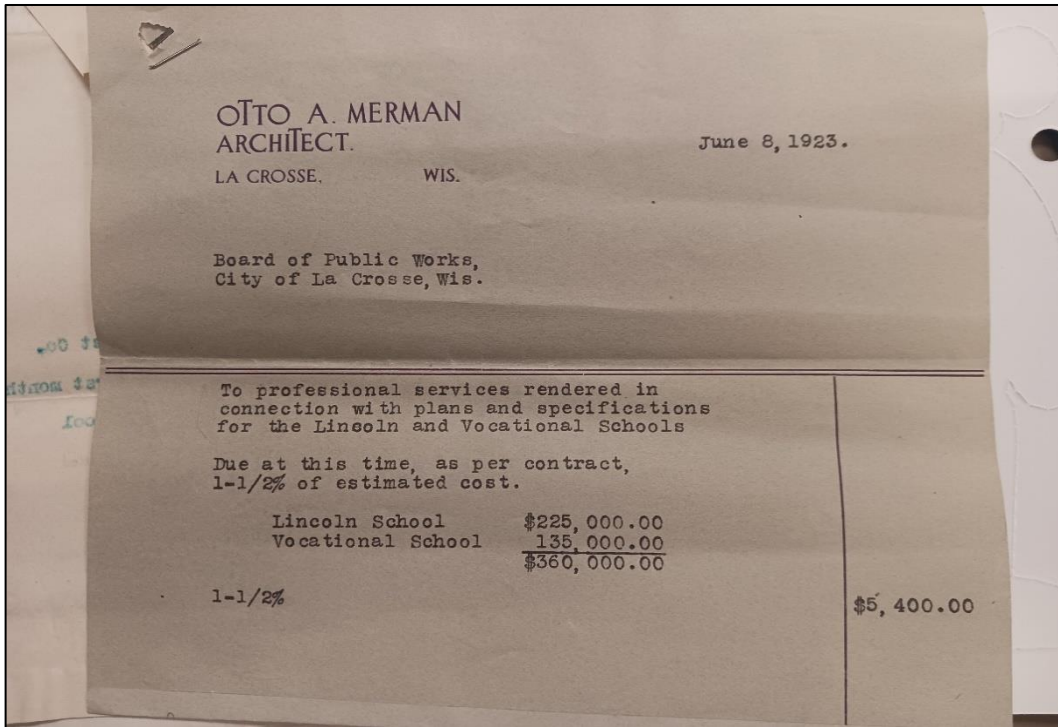


Designed by architect Otto Merman and built by the Grahn & Barthurst Construction of Minneapolis, the structure was touted as one of the best examples of Neo-classical school architecture. The new simplicity and flat surfaces associated with the 20<sup>th</sup> century historic styles, Lincoln School has a classical ornamented stepped back façade and rusticated base.

The trend toward control and the search for clarity in architecture began in the 1880's in America, reaching La Crosse in the 1890's. The return to

classical design was initiated on the East Coast while Chicago and the Midwest were strongholds of Richardsonian architecture as evidenced by the influence apparent in La Crosse architecture of the period. However, under the push for Neo-classicism fueled by the Columbian Exposition in 1893, the Richardsonian Romanesque gave way to the Neo-classicism of the "City Beautiful Movement" even in the Midwest and in La Crosse. Relying on Greek models rather than Roman, the Neo-classical Revival of 1900-1920 was best applied to the design of monumentally-scaled public buildings such as banks, schools, and civic buildings.



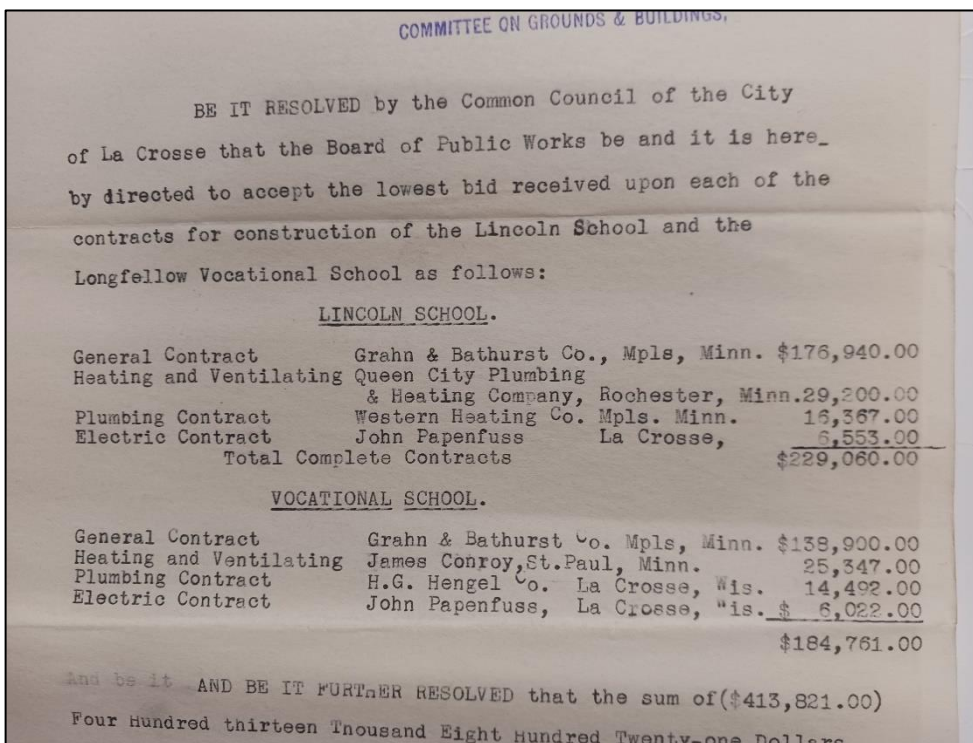


Public records show Otto Merman invoiced the Board of Public Works for \$225,000.00, requesting an advance of 1 1/2% for services.

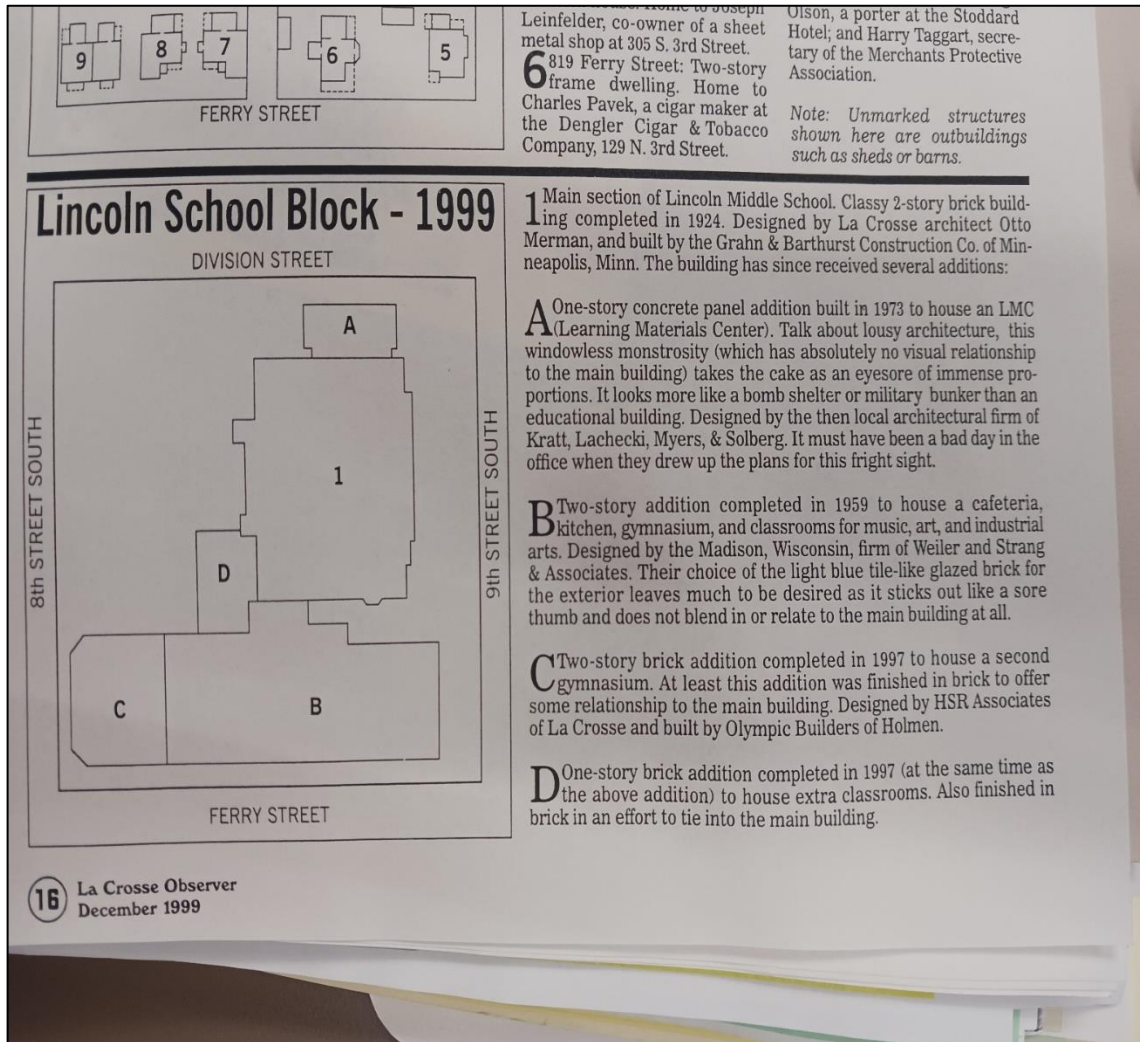
Over the course of years, from 1959 to 2014, a variety of additions were added, reflecting the needs of a growing student body, change in educational needs, and other improvements. Unfortunately, none of the architects involved attempted to continue or compliment the design of the original architect. Although each addition provided functionality, the strong influence of the original Otto Merman design continues to dominate when viewing the structure.

Needing extensive repairs, a resolution to voters in 1983 showed that district residents overwhelming opposed the closing of Lincoln. Therefore, a renovation project to modernize the 61-year-old building was proposed in the 1984-1985 capital budget. The \$737,000 first-phase renovation included an est.

\$404,000 in general construction work, replacement of windows, tuckpointing and repair of exterior walls, new doors, and an acoustical ceiling for the 1923 wing of the building and new acoustical ceilings for the 1954. New kitchens for the home economics department, new fluorescent lights in the entire building, lock room improvements and new auditorium and stage lights were included in the renovation.



Below is a list of additions and the less-than-flattering comments noted in the December 1999 edition of the La Crosse Observer



1 – Main (original) section

A – 1973 one-story concrete added the LMC (Learning Materials Center) designed by local architectural firm of Kratt, Lachecki, Myers and Solberg.

B – 1959 two-story housing a 1st floor cafeteria, kitchen, gymnasium with 2<sup>nd</sup> floor classrooms for music, art, and industrial arts. Designed by the Madison firm of Weiler and Strang & Associates

C – 1997 two-story addition for a second gymnasium. Designed by HRS Associates of La Crosse and built by Olympic Builders in Holmen

D – 1997 one-story brick addition to house extra classrooms. The only construction attempting to reflect the original structure by using brick.



LMC:



1<sup>st</sup> Gym, 1<sup>st</sup> floor cafeteria and 2<sup>nd</sup> floor art and industrial art classrooms viewed from 9<sup>th</sup> St.



2<sup>nd</sup> Gym view from the corner of 8<sup>th</sup> and Ferry.





Rear view from 8<sup>th</sup> Street showing the final 1-story brick addition.

