

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name: North Little Rock High School

other name/site number: Ole Main

2. Location

street & number: 101 W. 22nd St.

not for publication: N/A

city/town: North Little Rock

vicinity: N/A

state: AR

county: Pulaski

code: AR 119

zip code: 72114

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: Public-local

Category of Property: Building

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing

Noncontributing

1

1

 buildings
 sites
 structures
 objects
0 Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

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4. State/Federal Agency Certification

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As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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. _____ See continuation sheet.

Catharine L. Byford
Signature of certifying official

1-25-93
Date

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register criteria. _____ See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

=====

National Park Service Certification

=====

I, hereby certify that this property is:

_____ entered in the National Register
_____ See continuation sheet.

_____ determined eligible for the
National Register
_____ See continuation sheet.

_____ determined not eligible for the
National Register

_____ removed from the National Register

_____ other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper

Date
of Action

=====

6. Function or Use

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Historic: Education

Sub: School

Current: Education

Sub: School

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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X See continuation sheet.

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 # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- ☒ State historic preservation office
- ☐ Other state agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other -- Specify Repository: _____

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10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of Property: Approximately four

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

A	<u>15</u>	<u>566980</u>	<u>3848260</u>	B	___	___	___
C	___	___	___	D	___	___	___

___ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: X See continuation sheet.

Boundary Justification: ___ See continuation sheet.

This boundary includes the historic high school and associated surrounding property but excludes the WPA-constructed stadium and all of the ancillary school buildings which were constructed less than fifty years ago.

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7. Description

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Architectural Classification:

Art Deco

Other Description: N/A

Materials: foundation concrete/brick roof asphalt
walls brick other _____

Describe present and historic physical appearance. X See continuation sheet.

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8. Statement of Significance

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Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: local.

Applicable National Register Criteria: C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): N/A

Areas of Significance: Architecture

Period(s) of Significance: 1928-1930

Significant Dates: N/A

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Mann, Wanger & King
Peterson, William (contractor)

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.
X See continuation sheet.

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Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 1**Summary**

The North Little Rock High School is a three-story school with a full basement and a central, five-story tower designed by the architectural firm of Mann, Wanger & King in the "zigzag moderne" trend of the Art Deco style. Constructed 1928-1930, the buff-colored brick-constructed school is of an irregular plan that is basically two "T" projections extending to the east and west from the central tower and a large, auditorium projecting behind the tower to the north. A continuous concrete foundation faced with brick supports this conglomeration. All roofs are flat behind parapets with the exception of a shallow-pitched gable that is also behind a parapet over the auditorium.

Elaboration

The North Little Rock High School is a three-story school with a full basement and a central, five-story tower constructed 1928-1930. Designed by the architectural firm of Mann, Wanger & King, the buff-colored brick-constructed school is of an irregular plan that is basically two "T" projections extending to the east and west from the central tower and a large, auditorium projecting behind the tower to the north. A continuous concrete foundation faced with brick supports this conglomeration. All roofs are flat behind parapets with the exception of a shallow-pitched gable that is also behind a parapet over the auditorium.

The front, or southern, elevation is dominated by the massive, centrally placed, five-story tower. The tower is accessed by three levels of brick steps ascending to a large brick stoop. Three sets of recessed, double-leaf doors permit entry. Each wood-frame door is fully glazed, consisting of ten panes. A band of chevron decoration is applied above each double-leaf entry and below the twelve-pane transom. The doorways are flanked by fluted, concrete pilasters, the outer two are topped with geometric half-scroll reliefs, and the two, taller inner pilasters are capped with a ziggurat-shaped projection adorned with two chevrons. Chevrons are also utilized to decorate the space between the pilasters.

Three bays of paired, four-over-four, double-hung windows (beige-colored aluminum-frame replacement windows that duplicate the original sash configuration) fenestrate the second and third stories of the tower. The fourth story contains three bays (on each of the four elevations) of original, metal-frame windows, each consisting of ten stationary panes and two awning windows within the sash. Illumination for the fifth story is provided by similar windows that feature a multiple-pane, semi-circular window sash above a sash identical to those found on the fourth floor. Likewise, each of the four elevations of the tower contain three of these windows.

A ziggurat effect, a common design element in the early "zigzag moderne" trend of the Art Deco style, is employed in the design of this tower. Three separate projections at each corner recede in progressively smaller stages to the summit. Each projection is capped with an ornate, geometric scroll relief over a chevron course. The pinnacle of the tower is provided by two pilasters, each topped with a half-scroll relief, symmetrically positioned in between the stepped, vertical projections on all four elevations.

The three-story "hyphens" to either side of the tower are composed of three bays separated by brick pilasters, which are similarly decorated with large chevrons at the summit. At the top of the parapet, a chevron course composed of much smaller chevrons encircles the building. Each bay contains twelve (four per floor) modern, beige-colored, aluminum-frame replacement windows that duplicate the original six-over-six, double-hung sash

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configuration. The raised basement level projects from the main wall (the roof is a continuation of the brick entry stoop) and is fenestrated by nine six-over-six windows identical to those on the upper stories.

Identical two-story projections (each forming a "T" that extends from the tower) are located at the eastern and western ends of the front elevation. The two respective side elevations which face inward are fenestrated with eight of the previously described six-over-six windows (four per floor). The front of the two projections are identically arranged with a central entrance flanked by two brick pilasters crowned with the familiar chevron decoration. Like the three-story section, a chevron course also encircles each projection along the top of the parapet. The narrow, central bay consists of a double-leaf entry with full, eight-pane glazing on each door. Above, a pair of juxtaposed nine-pane transoms aid in lighting the interior hallway. The stairwell to the second story is illuminated by a pair of nine-over-nine double-hung windows each topped with a six-pane transom. The area between these windows and the first-story transoms is decorated with a chevron relief similar to those found above the tower entrances.

The western elevation also contains a central entrance defined by two brick pilasters. A pair of six-over-six windows are located on each of the two floors above. Otherwise, the two stories are fenestrated by sixteen six-over-six windows on each floor. The raised basement is visible on this elevation and also contains sixteen six-over-six windows. The eastern elevation is identically arranged.

The rear, or northern, elevation is dominated by the large rectangular auditorium. The different heights and elevations of the rear of the school are fenestrated by a wide variety of windows, which like the front and side elevation windows are aluminum-frame replacements that duplicate the original sash configuration. A large, brick chimney is located at the rear of the auditorium. The only principal exterior alteration to the building has been the bricking-in of four large, window openings on each side of the auditorium.

As originally constructed, the interior basement contained a cafeteria, capable of serving 700 students, and a music room with a 500 seating capacity. The machine, wood work, auto mechanics, manual training, and printing shops were also located in the basement. In addition to classrooms, the first floor housed the administration offices as well as the principal floor of the auditorium, which seated 1500. The gymnasium was located on the same floor level with the auditorium stage and could be opened to form a larger stage area. One interesting feature of the gymnasium was a "U" shaped shower. Student athletes would walk through the corridor passing first through warm, gradually hotter, then cold water.

The second floor consisted of the auditorium balcony, with a maximum seating capacity of 1000, a chemistry room, physical laboratory, lecture room, two club rooms, two drawing rooms, two study halls, several class rooms, a stenographic room, bookkeeping room, and a library that could accommodate 75 students. The third floor was comprised of domestic science and sewing rooms, botany, biology, and zoology laboratories. In all, the three floors housed the equivalent of fifty-two standard class rooms. On the fourth story of the tower, a model home for the Home Arts Department was constructed and furnished with a living room (complete with a Colonial Revival mantel), dining room, bedroom, kitchen and bath.

Although still used as a high school today, the usage of the interior has changed. The addition of separate facilities for music, industrial arts, gym, and science since World War II has enabled the space formerly allotted for these subjects to be used for other purposes. Other changes include the moving of the library to a larger

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area in the basement.

Principal interior detail is basically limited to the entrance lobby and the auditorium. The lobby is adorned with the recurrent chevron ornamentation, but also features some ziggurat-shaped detail flanking the doorways and an unusual elliptical-shaped pattern placed within the valleys of the chevron course. The auditorium is styled in a vague Middle Eastern motif, which was common in the early zigzag moderne trend of the Art Deco style. Ziggurat-shaped reliefs decorate the wall surfaces, a much more elaborate chevron course extends above the stage but below the cornice, and geometric, wrought iron grates are scattered throughout on the two stage columns and ceiling.

The most prominent ornament in the auditorium, however, are two unusual stepped arches that define the stage area. A vertical emphasis is established by the use of widely separated fluting on the columns and the band across the top of the stage that is crowned with the aforementioned chevron course. The fluting extends from the chevron course to each rounded step of the arches. Circular reliefs placed within the space defined by the fluting at the base of the step further accents the unique arches. There are also five original Art Deco-styled light fixtures.

The nomination does not include the WPA-constructed football stadium or the various ancillary buildings that were constructed since World War II (Music Bldg.-1953, Industrial Arts Bldg.-1956, Gymnasium-1956, P.E. Bldg.-1964, and Science Bldg.-1966). All of the ancillary school buildings are constructed separate from the high school, though some are connected by covered walkways.

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Summary

Designed by the architectural firm of Mann, Wanger & King, the North Little Rock High School is an outstanding example of the "zigzag moderne" trend of the Art Deco style of architecture. Featuring a massive, centrally placed tower of a ziggurat configuration and adorned with chevron and other geometric-patterned ornament, the 1928-1930 high school building exemplifies the design characteristics of the then-fashionable style. The North Little Rock High School is being nominated under Criterion C with local significance as the best example in North Little Rock of an Art Deco-styled building of this size and scale.

Elaboration

Constructed from 1928-30, the North Little Rock High School represents the culmination of the North Little Rock School Board's efforts to establish a school "unsurpassed in architectural beauty, in quality of workmanship, in arrangement, and in equipment by any school building in the South."

In 1929, the population of North Little Rock was estimated at 30,000, and the city was steadily growing northward. An increase in white senior and junior high school enrollment from 600 students in 1923 to 1,332 in 1929 necessitated the construction of a new high school building to replace the overcrowded facility (constructed in 1912 as the Argenta High School) at 4th and Willow Streets. In late 1927, plans to levy a tax for the construction of a new school were announced, and in May, 1928, the North Little Rock School Board selected the corner of 22nd and Main Streets as the site of the new school. The architectural firm of Mann, Wanger & King was chosen to design the structure, and a Little Rock contractor, William Peterson, submitted the low bid of \$249,987 and was awarded the contract. The November 21, 1928, edition of the *North Little Rock Times* reported that Peterson also agreed to employ North Little Rock labor in the construction.

The cornerstone was laid on May 17, 1929, following a parade and dedication ceremony. By the beginning of the 1929-30 year, the exterior and the majority of the interior had been completed; however, work on the auditorium and other interior spaces had yet to be completed. Nevertheless, classes were held in the new building with an enrollment of about 900 students. To prevent disturbing the students, work on finishing the school was conducted only after school hours. On November 27, 1929, the *North Little Rock Times* published a special edition featuring the new high school, and noted that workmen were "... adding the finishing touches to the interior decorations" and that completing the auditorium "... has required considerable time because of its size and the intricate arrangements of stage, etc." The article also mentioned that landscape architects from Memphis, Tennessee were surveying the grounds and expected to begin work soon. By the time of completion, the cost of constructing the new school totaled \$750,000. The formal dedication of the North Little Rock High School was held on January 23, 1930.

At the time of the construction of the North Little Rock High School, the city proclaimed itself the "industrial center of the south" and promoted the fact that it was free of municipal debt. Three railroads provided the industrial and financial base for the city with the Missouri-Pacific shops, the largest facility maintained by that company, being the principal employer in the city. The aforementioned special edition of the *North Little Rock Times* mentioned that the school had made arrangements with the Missouri Pacific railroad to employ graduating students who had been enrolled in the mechanical shop courses. Other heavy industries were located in the eastern section of town, including the Ayer-Lord Tie Plant, reputed to be the largest of its kind in the United

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States, numerous cotton oil mills and lumber mills, concrete and rock companies, etc. The city also boasted three modern ice plants, two banking facilities, a city-owned electric company, good fire protection with low insurance rates, and no privilege tax.

After 1930, the city could also herald (through the *North Little Rock Times*) the "second finest high school in the South . . . excelled only by the Little Rock High School, which building is regarded as the most pretentious high school in the United States." Comparisons between the two structures reveal many architectural similarities and some pronounced differences. Completed in 1927, the Little Rock High School (placed on the National Register in 1977 and designated a National Historic Landmark in 1982 for its role in the 1957 desegregation crisis) was designed by John Parks Almand with George Mann, Eugene Stern, George Wittenberg, and Lawson L. Delony as the associate architects. In massing, the two high schools are very similar in their design around a dominant, centrally placed tower, which is typical of Art Deco structures. In architectural style, however, the larger Little Rock High School reflects the older, Gothic Revival style, whereas the North Little Rock High School exemplifies the then-current "zigzag moderne" trend of the Art Deco style.

The Art Deco style was a comprehensive design movement that, besides architecture, affected interior design, furniture, industrial design, fashion, crafts production and graphics. In the United States, architecture is perhaps the most noticeable expression of the style. The new style was first popularized in 1922 when the *Chicago Tribune* held a worldwide architectural competition to design their new headquarters building in Chicago. Although the winning design reflected the traditional Gothic style, the second-place prize was awarded to a young Finnish architect, Eliel Saarinen, who submitted a simplified skyscraper design that combined a variety of decorative motifs. Saarinen's design was widely publicized and the new modern style soon became fashionable, especially for public and commercial buildings. The 1925 Paris *Exposition Internationale des Arts Decoratifs et Industriels Modernes* at which new French furniture and other luxury household accessories were displayed was also instrumental in gaining international recognition for the Art Deco style. Incidentally, the term "Art Deco," which is derived from the name of the Paris exposition, actually dates from the 1960's when the style experienced a revival in interest. At the zenith of its popularity in the late 1920's and 1930's, the style was simply known as "style moderne" (in the United States, it is commonly referred to by the Anglicized version, "modern style").

A very eclectic style, Art Deco drew upon a wide variety of historical and contemporary sources. In architecture, the style can be divided into three distinct trends. The first is described by some as "zigzag moderne" an ornamental and often exotic style utilized on many skyscrapers of the day. The word "zigzag" refers to the zigzags, chevrons, sunbursts, abstract plant and animal reliefs, and other angled and geometric patterns which were applied in mosaic, relief and mural form to the exterior and interior of buildings. Ziggurat-shaped massing is another common design element of this trend. The second trend, known as "streamlined moderne" or Art Moderne, occurred in the 1930's and emphasized a futuristic-looking aerodynamic style of rounded corners and horizontal bands. The third trend, "classical moderne" blended monumental, neoclassicism in a simplified form with Art Deco detailing. This trend is best exemplified by certain W.P.A.-constructed buildings in the late 1930's.

For its size and scale, the North Little Rock High School is one of the better, and earlier, examples in the state of the zigzag moderne trend of the Art Deco style. The prominent ziggurat-massing of the tower is perhaps the most recognizable Art Deco feature of the building. Ornamental detail is present in quantity; however, George Mann deviated but little in his use of a basic chevron pattern. The interior lobby and auditorium possess the most decoration as Mann incorporated an unusual and vaguely Middle Eastern motif into their design. Virtually

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unaltered, the North Little Rock High School is undoubtedly the finest expression of this trend of the Art Deco style in North Little Rock and is being nominated under Criterion C with local significance.

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Bibliography

Information supplied by Mary Hess, July 1992.

Information supplied by Sandra Taylor Smith, March 1992.

"Laying of Corner Stone of New High School Building." Dedication Program, May 17, 1928

"New High School is Architectural Beauty." *North Little Rock Times*. North Little Rock, Arkansas. Wednesday, November 27, 1929.

"North Little Rock is a City Free of Debt." *North Little Rock Times*. North Little Rock, Arkansas. Wednesday, November 27, 1929.

North Little Rock Times. November 21, 1928.

Weber, Eva. *Art Deco in America*. New York: Exeter Books (Simon & Schuster), 1985.

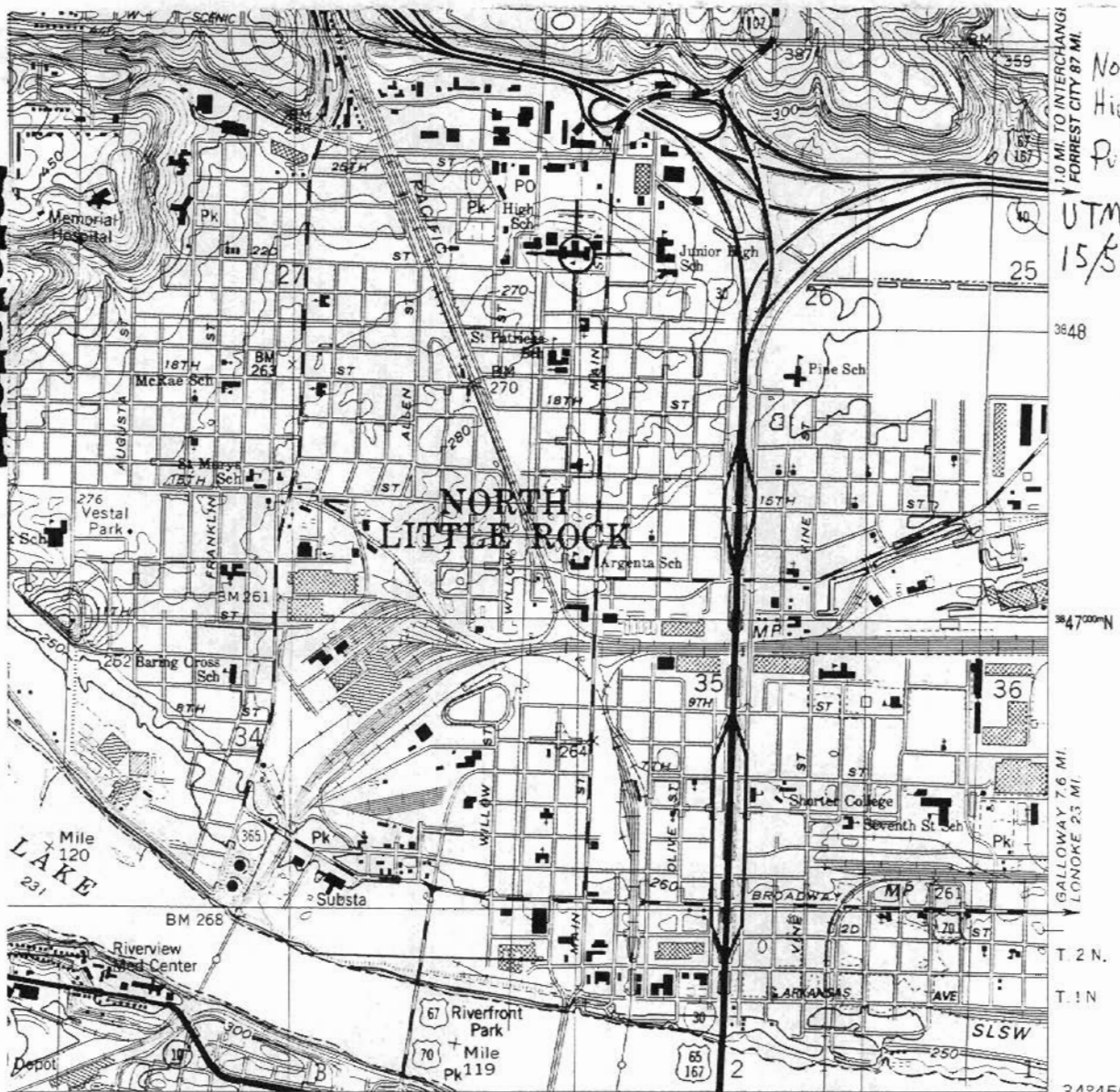
United States Department of the Interior
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**National Register of Historic Places
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Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at a point on the northern curblineline of 22nd Street that is 155 feet west of the northwest corner of the intersection of Main and 22nd Streets, proceed 357 feet west along the curblineline; thence proceed 360 feet north (between the western elevation of the high school and the eastern elevation of the Music Bldg.); thence proceed 282 feet east (between the rear, or northern, elevation of the high school and the southern elevation of the stadium grandstand); thence proceed 120 feet south; thence proceed 75 feet east (between the northern elevation of the eastern wing of the high school and the southern elevation of the P.E. Bldg./Gymnasium); thence proceed 240 feet south to the point of beginning.



North Little Rock
High School
Polaski Co., Ark.

UTM:

15/566980/384826

Mile
120
LAKE
231

LITTLE ROCK (CAPITOL) 1.1 MI.

8.9 MI. TO S. PASS INTERCHANGE
MALVERN 46 MI. (VIA U.S. 67)

INTERIOR—GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA—1986

168°00'00"E

92°15'

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Heavy-duty ————— Light-duty —————

Medium-duty ————— Unimproved dirt =

○ Interstate Route ○ U.S. Route ○ State Route



QUADRANGLE LOCATION

NORTH LITTLE ROCK, ARK.

34092-G3-TF-024

1986

DMA 7553 IV SE—SERIES V884

(SWEET HOME)
7553 II NW

000 2 2 1000

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11. Form Prepared By

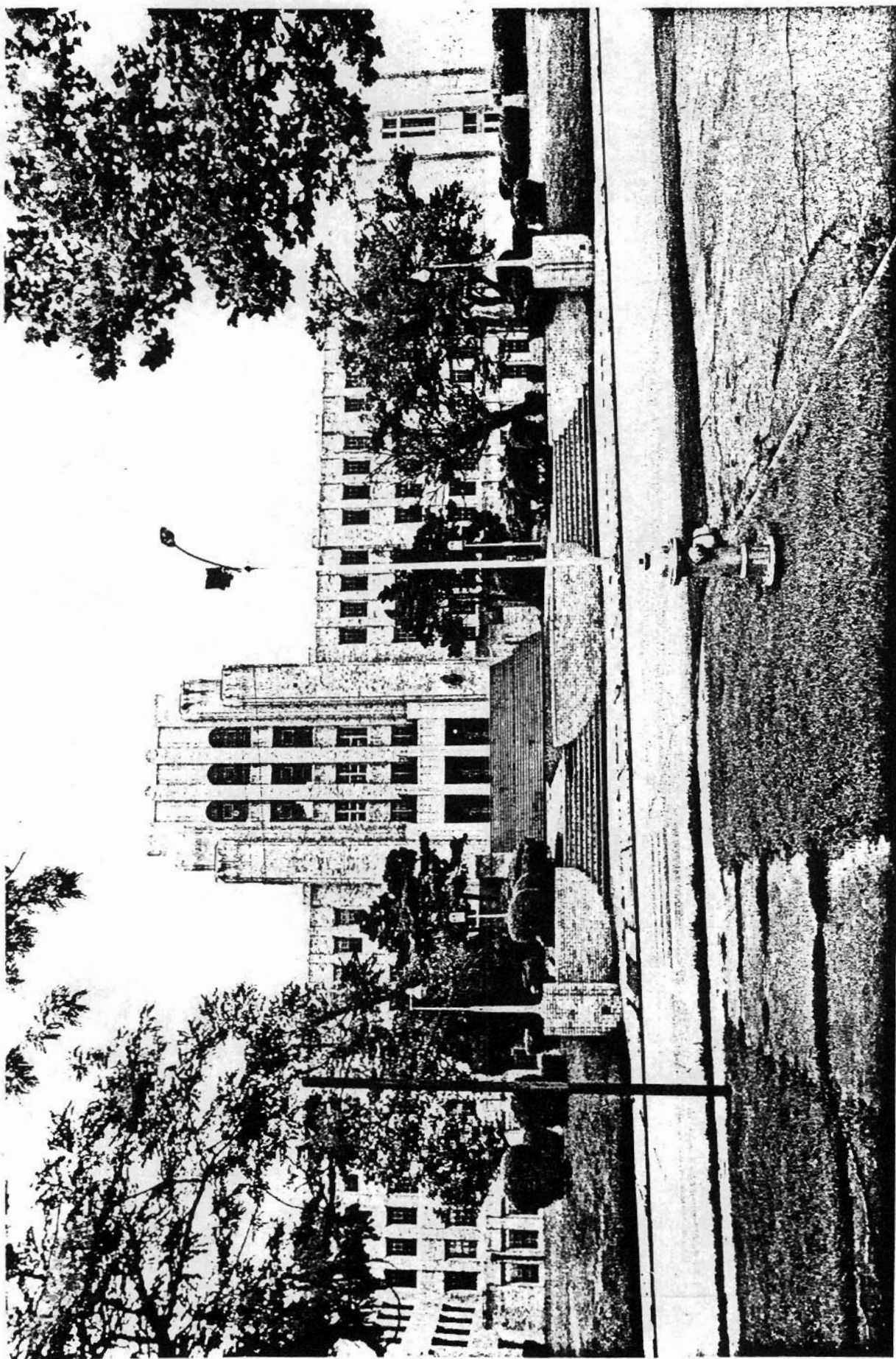
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Name/Title: Patrick Zollner, National Register Historian

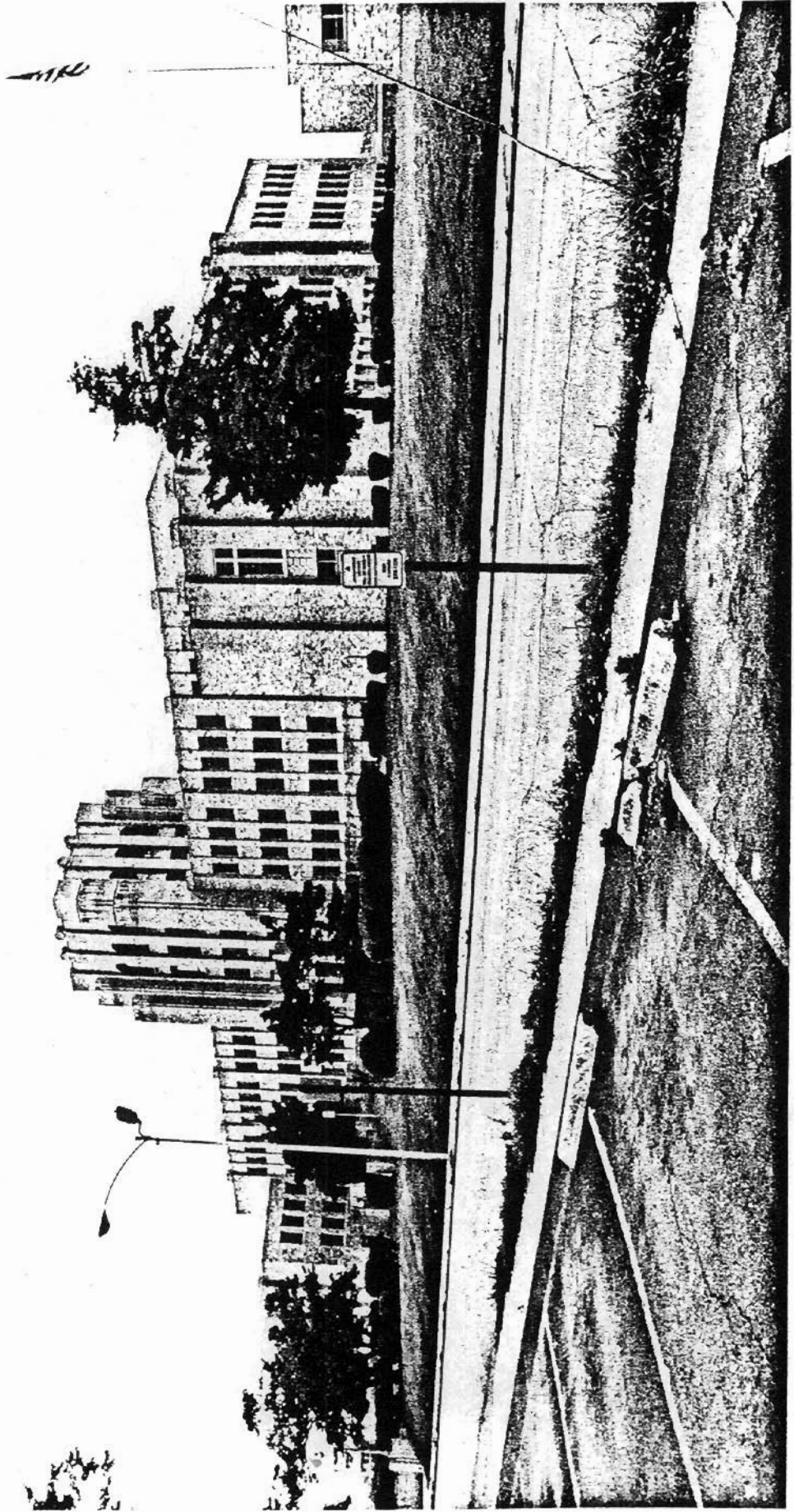
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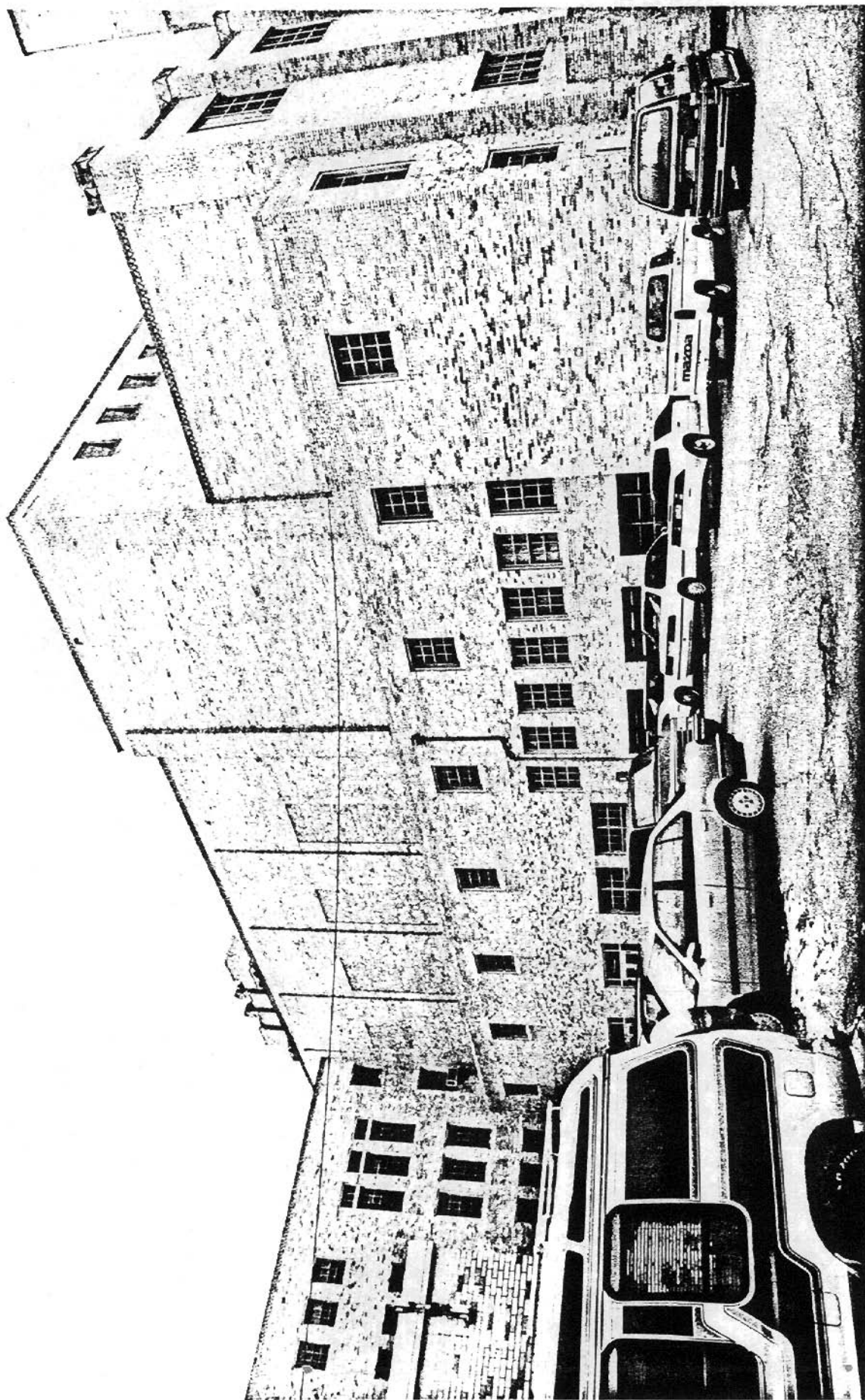
Street & Number: 323 Center, 1600 Tower Bldg. Telephone: (501) 324-9880

City or Town: Little Rock State: AR ZIP: 72201

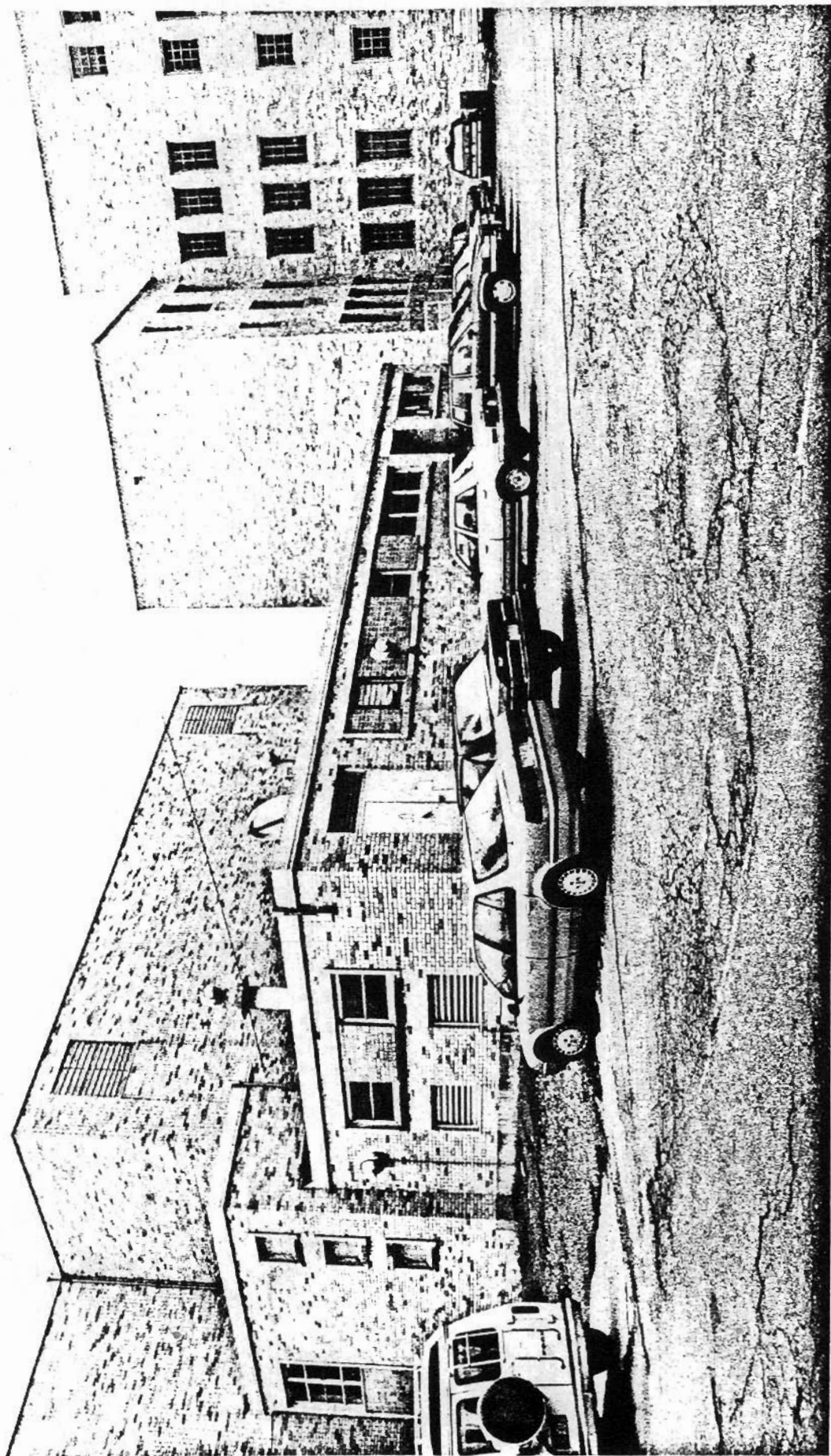


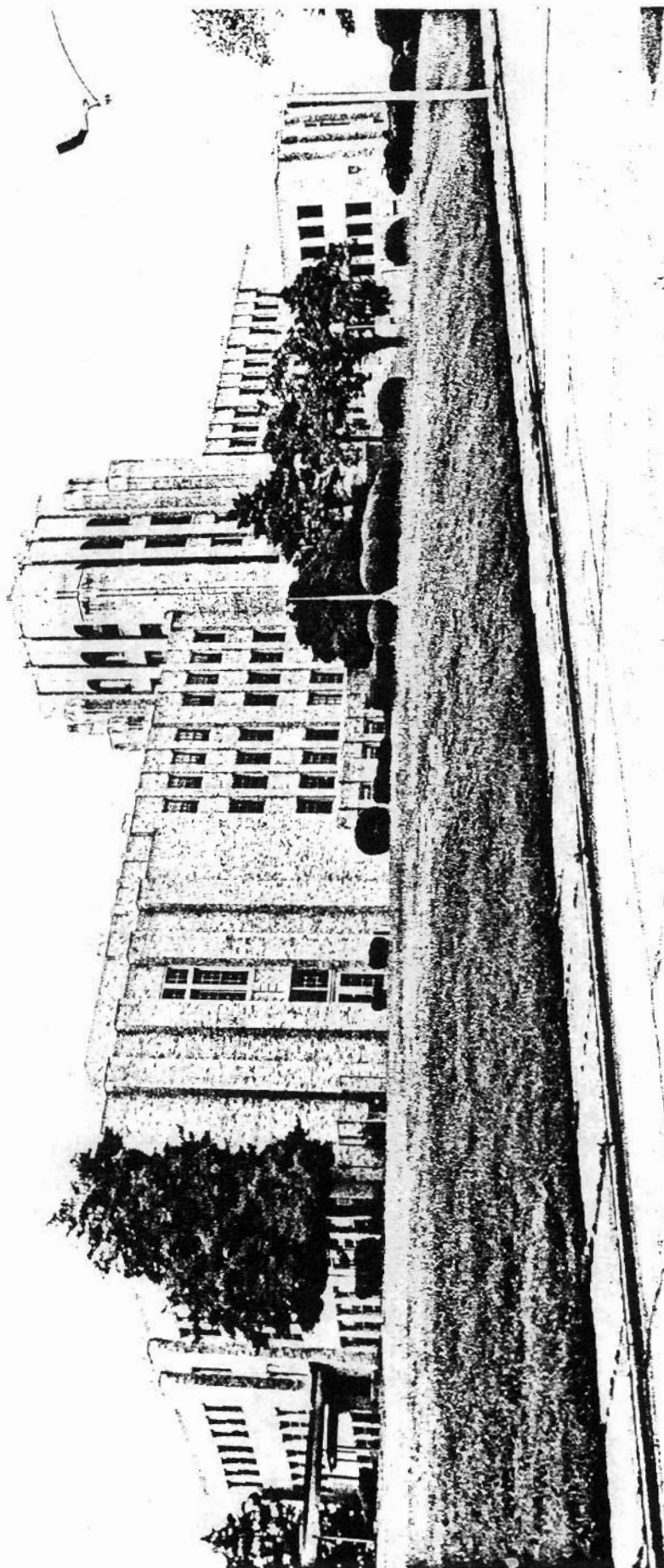
North Little Rock High School
Polaski Co, Arkansas
Photographed by Sandra Taylor Smith
August 1992
Negative on file at AHPP
View from the south



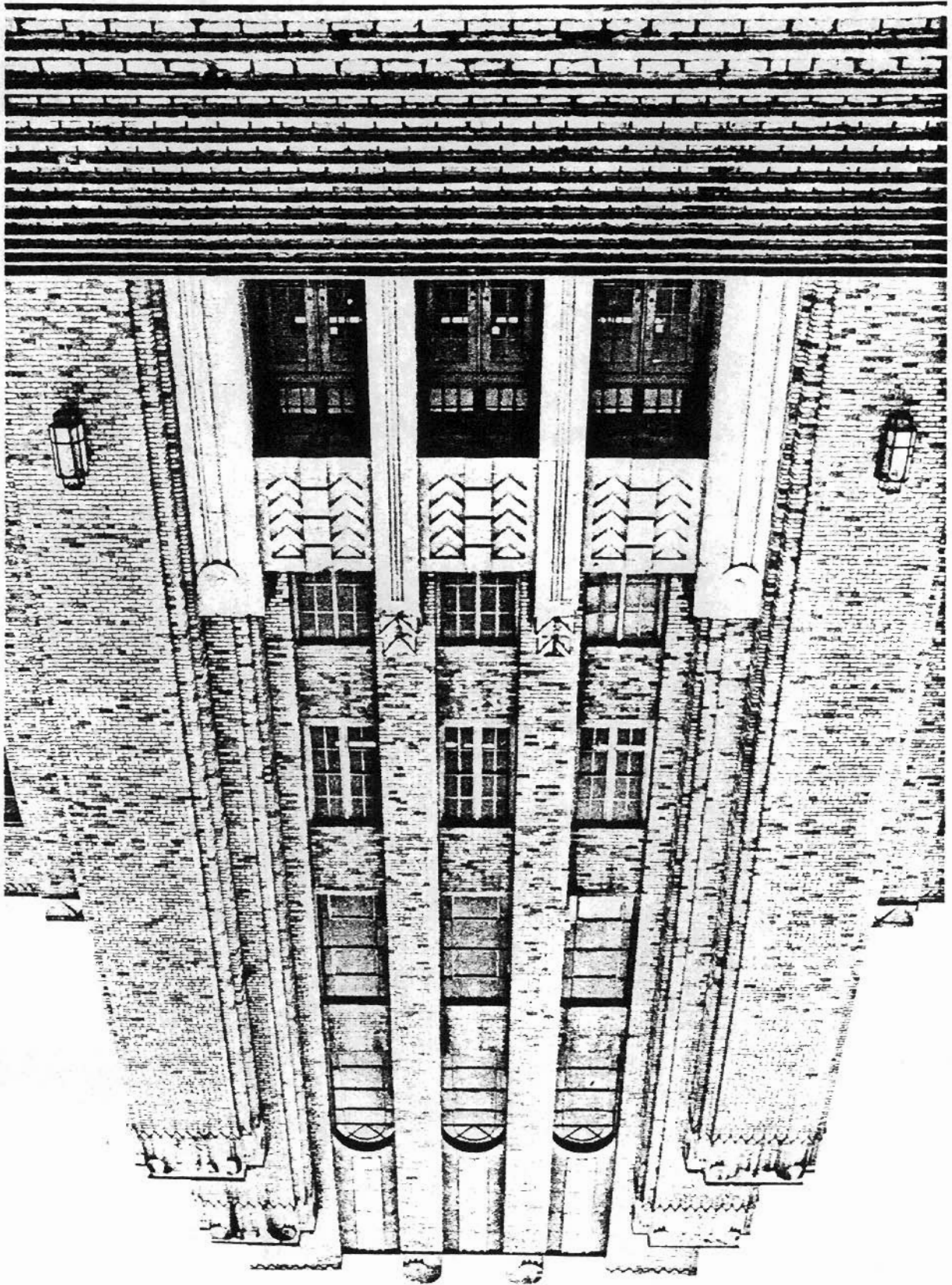


North Little Rock High School
Pulaski Co. Arkansas
Photographed by Sandra Taylor Smith
August 1992
Negative on file at AHP
View from the northeast

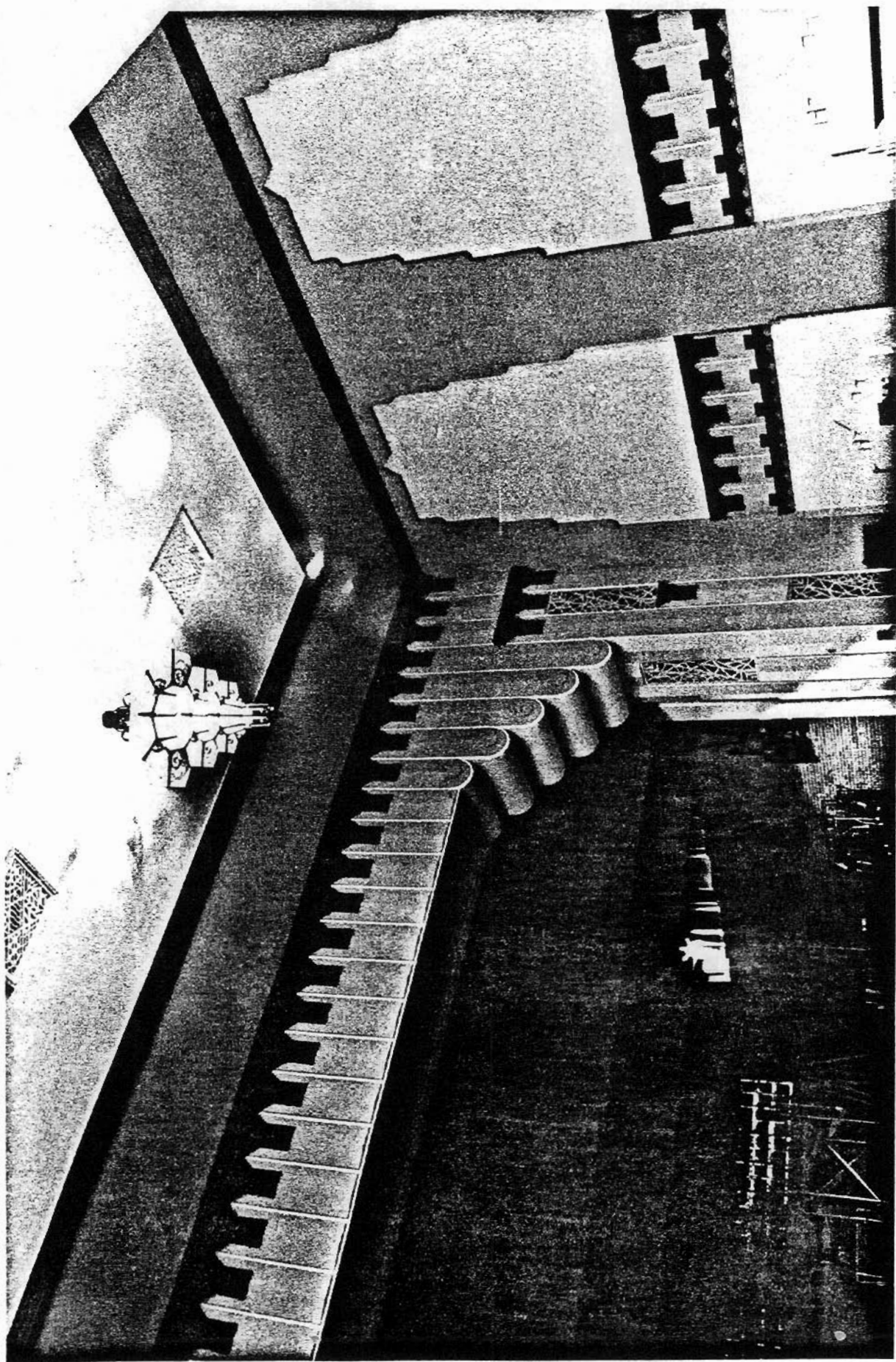




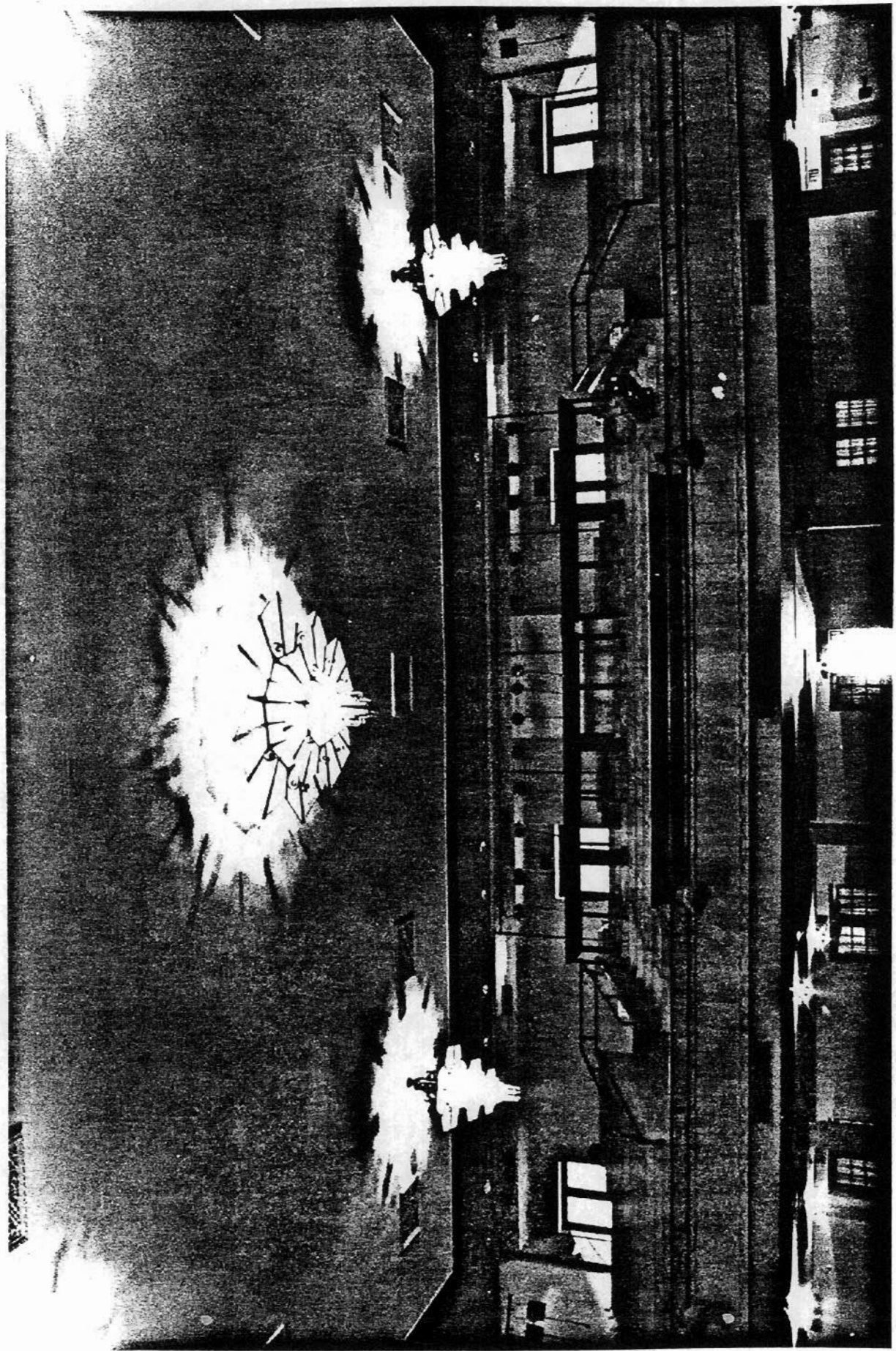
North Little Rock High School
Pulaski, Co., Arkansas
Photographed by Sandra Taylor Smith
August 1992
Negative on file at AHP
View from the southwest



North Little Rock High School
Fulaski Co., Arkansas
Photographed by Sandra Taylor Smith
August 1992
Negative on file at AHDP
View from the south



North Little Rock High School
Polaski Co., Arkansas
Photographed by Patrick Zollner
August 1992
Negative on file at AHPP
View of auditorium





North Little Rock High School
Polaski Co, Arkansas
Photographed by Sandra Taylor Smith
August 1992
Negative on file at AHPP
View of front entrance lobby



Little Rock High School
Pulaski Co., Arkansas
Photographed by Sandra Taylor Smith
August 1992
Negative on file at AHP
View of front entrance doors from the lobby