

PENNSYLVANIA HISTORIC RESOURCE SURVEY FORM- DATA SHEET

89B

Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Bureau for Historic Preservation

IDENTIFICATION AND LOCATION

Survey Code: <u>N/A</u>	Tax Parcel/Other No.: <u>N/A</u>
County: 1. <u>Erie</u>	0 4 9 2. <u> </u>
Municipality: 1. <u>City of Erie</u>	2. <u> </u>
Address: <u>Bounded by W. 38th St., Old French Rd., Eliot Rd., and Erie St.</u>	
Historic Name: <u>Academy District</u>	
Other Name: <u>Academy District Subdivision</u>	
Owner Name/Address: <u>Multiple</u>	
Owner Category:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public-local <input type="checkbox"/> Public-state <input type="checkbox"/> Public-federal
Resource Category:	<input type="checkbox"/> Building <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object
Number/Approximate Number of Resources Covered by This Form: <u>500</u>	
USGS Quad: 1. <u>Erie South, PA</u>	2. <u> </u>
UTM References: A. <u>17</u> <u>E</u> <u>576790</u> <u>N</u> <u>4661360</u>	C. <u>17</u> <u>E</u> <u>577480</u> <u>N</u> <u>4662270</u>
B. <u>17</u> <u>E</u> <u>576880</u> <u>N</u> <u>4662080</u>	D. <u>17</u> <u>E</u> <u>577450</u> <u>N</u> <u>4661680</u>

HISTORIC AND CURRENT FUNCTIONS

Historic Function Category:	Subcategory:	Code:
A. <u>Domestic</u>	<u>Single Dwelling</u>	<u>0</u> <u>1</u> <u>A</u>
B. <u>Religion</u>	<u>Religious Structure</u>	<u>0</u> <u>6</u> <u>A</u>
C. <u>Education</u>	<u>School</u>	<u>0</u> <u>5</u> <u>A</u>
D. <u>Commerce</u>	<u>Business</u>	<u>0</u> <u>2</u> <u>A</u>

Particular Type A. House

 B. Church

 C. Classroom Building

 D.

Current Function Category:	Subcategory:	Code:
A. <u>Domestic</u>	<u>Single Dwelling</u>	<u>0</u> <u>1</u> <u>A</u>
B. <u>Domestic</u>	<u>Multiple Dwelling</u>	<u>0</u> <u>1</u> <u>B</u>
C. <u>Religion</u>	<u>Religious Structure</u>	<u>0</u> <u>6</u> <u>A</u>
D. <u>Commerce</u>	<u>Business</u>	<u>0</u> <u>2</u> <u>A</u>

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Architectural Classification: A. <u>Modern, Other: Minimal Traditional</u>	<u>7</u> <u>0</u>
B. <u>Colonial Revival</u>	<u>5</u> <u>1</u> C. <u>Bungalow</u> <u>6</u> <u>5</u>
D. <u>Modern, Other: Ranch</u>	<u>7</u> <u>0</u> Other: <u>Cape Cod</u> <u>8</u> <u>0</u>
Exterior Materials: Foundation <u>Concrete</u>	<u>6</u> <u>5</u> Roof <u>Asphalt</u> <u>6</u> <u>3</u>
Walls <u>Wood</u>	<u>2</u> <u>0</u> Walls <u>Brick</u> <u>3</u> <u>0</u>
Other <u>Aluminum</u>	<u>5</u> <u>5</u> Other <u>Vinyl</u> <u>7</u> <u>2</u>
Structural System: 1. <u>Wood</u>	<u>1</u> <u>0</u> 2. <u> </u>
Width: <u>3 bays</u> <u>C</u> Depth: <u>2 rooms</u>	<u>B</u> Stories/Height <u>1 story</u> <u>A</u>

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Year Built: C. 1920 to C. 1970 Additions/Alterations Dates: C. _____ to C. _____
Basis for Dating: X Documentary X Physical
Explain: Based upon secondary historic sources and examination of resources.

Cultural/Ethnic Affiliation:	1. <u>N/A</u>	2. <u>N/A</u>
Associated Individuals:	1. <u>N/A</u>	2. <u>N/A</u>
Associated Events:	1. <u>N/A</u>	2. <u>N/A</u>
Architects/Engineers:	1. <u>Andrews Land Company</u>	2. <u>N/A</u>
Builders:	1. <u>N/A</u>	2. <u>N/A</u>

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See Bibliography

PREVIOUS SURVEY, DETERMINATIONS

None

EVALUATION (Survey Director/Consultants Only)

Individual NR Potential: _____ Yes X No Context(s): _____
Contributes to Potential District: _____ Yes X No District Name/Status: _____
Explain:

See Evaluation

THREATS

Threats: 2 1. None 2. Public Development 3. Private Development 4. Neglect 5. Other
Explain: Possible widening of West 38th Street at or near the Academy District.

SURVEYOR INFORMATION

Surveyor Name/Title: <u>Jerry Clouse/Historic Structures Specialist</u>	Date: <u>8/19/99</u>
Project Name: <u>West 38th Street</u>	
Organization: <u>McCormick, Taylor & Associates, Inc.</u>	Telephone: <u>(717) 540-6040</u>
Street and No.: <u>75 Shannon Drive</u>	
City, State: <u>Harrisburg, PA</u>	Zip Code: <u>17112</u>
Additional Survey Documentation: _____	
Associated Survey Codes: _____	

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Located in the Glenwood Park neighborhood of the City of Erie, the Academy District is situated just northeast of Glenwood Park. The Academy District is bounded by West 38th Street and Glenwood Hills subdivision on the south, Holland Street and Old French Road on the east, Eliot Road and Erie Street on the west, and by 32nd Street and State Street Heights subdivision on the north (see Figure 3). 32nd Street was an obvious boundary as this was the old city line until 1923. Historical atlases and maps show this land as undeveloped farmland from 1865 to 1917 (see Figure 2). Mill Creek meanders through Glenwood Park in a northerly direction west of Eliot Road and Erie Street. Just north of the Academy District is State Street Heights with the Academy High School (now abandoned) and Veterans Stadium at the northern tip of that neighborhood. At this point State Street intersects with 26th Street, a heavily traveled east/west artery of the City of Erie. To the southwest of the Academy District is the large Veterans Hospital (now Veterans Affairs Medical Center) complex. The terrain can be best described as low undulating hills, but the land generally rises from West 38th Street on the south to State Street Heights on the north.

The Academy District was laid out by the Andrews Land Company as a residential subdivision in 1920-21 with 585 lots. The main gateway into the subdivision is via State Street off West 38th Street. State Street, a major north and south artery through Erie, runs through the center of the Academy District, literally bisecting it. The State Street entrance on the south is flanked by the 1953 Trinity Lutheran Church on the east and the c. 1950 Blessed Hope Seventh Day Adventist Church on the west. It is a wide boulevard with central, grass-covered islands. State Street is generally lined with mature maples, oaks, and gum trees. There are ornamental fruit trees planted within the islands.

Except those on the northern edge of the subdivision, the east-to-west streets were laid out in curvilinear fashion. Otherwise, the plot plan is a grid-like design. There is a small, pear-shaped park filled with mature trees in the northeast corner of the subdivision, and c. 1920 maps note the Mehl tract on the northwestern boundary of the subdivision. The western part of this tract now contains the 1949 Brith Sholom School and associated c. 1960 Synagogue. Otherwise the Mehl tract has been subdivided into building lots. At the southeastern corner of the Academy District is the c. 1940 Jefferson School, a large brick, steel, and concrete structure with a large c. 1990 addition to the west end. (It is now the Jefferson Elementary School.)

Although the original plot plan shows long, narrow lots for residences facing onto State Street, they are now largely combined lots containing commercial and professional office buildings and apartment buildings (See Figure 3). For example, the western block of State between 36th Street and 35th Street is occupied by the mid 20th century WICU television station, later additions and transmission tower, and the western block between 35th and 34th Streets is occupied by two late 20th century medical arts buildings. The eastern block of State Street between 37th Street and 36th Street contains a mid-20th century apartment building and a concrete block convenience store.

The earliest housing as part of the subdivision dates to the 1920s and consists of then current national architectural styles including Four Square, Colonial Revival, and Bungalow. Some of

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these have detached garages. The late 1940s and 1950s housing consists of small Cape Cod and Minimal Traditional style houses. The Ranch style flourished during the 1950s and reflected American suburban single-family housing. The 1950s saw the garage integrated into the house, and this was especially true of the Ranch style. The Academy District continued to be developed into the 1960s and 1970s. Styles representative of this period include Contemporary, Split-Level, and Neoelectic.

The Academy District is not distinctive or innovative in suburban planning designs. The Andrews Land Company and its subsidiaries were associated with many development projects, including subdivisions, in and around the City of Erie. Other projects such as the Lake Shore Golf Club, Veterans Stadium, Land Light House Park subdivision, or Lake Shore subdivision retain better integrity. Due to the various development stages of the Academy District subdivision, it does not retain the cohesiveness and integrity necessary for recognition as a historic district. There are areas such as West and East 36th Street which retain a good number of early 20th century houses, but in between is the swath made by late 20th century commercial/office building along State Street. Likewise, the area along West 38th Street between Eliot Road and Beech Street is largely intact, but East 38th Street between State and Holland Streets is largely post-1950 or altered housing (see Figure 3).

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HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

The late 1800s and early 1900s was a period of great growth and expansion in and around Erie. Erie was not only a commercial and transportation hub but increasingly a heavy metals industrial center. In 1880 Erie's population stood at 27,737, and by 1900 it had nearly doubled to 52,733. The 1920 census shows that it had nearly doubled again at 93,372. A 1913 publication titled, Greater Erie: Plans and Reports for the Extension and Improvement of the City, described the overcrowding in the city and how this problem has been solved in other cities in the United States and abroad. A 1921 promotional broadside for Glenwood Hills noted that it is "high and clean and free from the dust, smoke and annoyances of the industries." The Academy District was one of six subdivisions the Andrews Land Company laid out in the Glenwood section of Erie. The six subdivisions were: Glenwood, Glenwood Hills, State Street Heights, Academy District, Hillside Boulevard, and Athletic Park

Andrews Land Company

In 1909 the seven Andrews brothers, Frank G., Wilburforce, O.P., Truman O., James A., Andrew W., and Albert J. formed a partnership. The Andrews Land Company was chartered in 1911. The company's 1911-12 promotional brochure titled "The Booster Annual" noted that the company is the "biggest operating realty company in Northwest Pennsylvania and undoubtedly the most successful organization of its kind in the United States." Attorney Truman O. Andrews was the promoter and actual head of the company until his death in 1951. He was the driving force in the development of the Glenwood section, Southlands, and many other subdivisions in and around Erie, ending with the Lake Shore Club District. His last major real estate operation was the building of the Lake Shore Golf Club. At one point he headed seven western Pennsylvania baking firms. He was famed for his investigation of the U.S. government's claim to the peninsula while a state legislator. His work led to the establishment of Presque Isle State Park. He was also influential in the extension southward of State Street and the building of Veterans Stadium.

The company's archives, located at the Erie County Historical Society, show that it was involved in at least 15 other subdivisions in and around the city of Erie. In addition, they were involved in the development of a subdivision in Greenville, Mercer County. State Street Heights and Land Light House Park subdivisions were considered among Erie's most desirable building locations in the early 20th century. The Andrews Land Company were involved in both.

The Andrews brothers also formed another corporation named the Erie Housing Corporation. It was this corporation that developed the Academy District. After the boom following World War I, business slowed down in Erie. During the early 1930s the market was flooded with vacant lots. Nearly all the land dealers of Erie went broke and abandoned their lots. The Andrews Land Company was in financial trouble prior to the beginning of the Great Depression in 1929, but it wasn't until 1934 that the Company went into bankruptcy.

In 1935, T.O. Andrews, George W. Brown, O.P. Andrews, and W. F. Andrews began a new

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business which became incorporated as the Andrews Land Corporation. Many of the assets of the old company were purchased at Sheriff's sales. Often, these were vacant lots with several years of back taxes. Business improved for the corporation after World War II, and once again home building increased. T.O. Andrews died in 1951, and that same year C. B. Andrews became president of the corporation. C. B. Andrews was the sole employee from 1965 until 1975 when the corporation was dissolved.

History Prior to Development

Millcreek Township continued to be primarily rural and agricultural even after the Civil War. The 1865 Atlas of Erie County shows that the land where the Academy District subdivision would be located was then owned by the R. N. Knox heirs. (The original two-and-a-half story, brick Knox house still stands on the west side of Sassafras Street but has a large addition to the rear.) According to the 1850 census Robert W. Knox was a farmer in Mill Creek Township along with wife Eliza and six children.

The 1876 Combination Atlas Map shows John Eliot as owning the tract along Mill Creek and west of the approximate location of present-day Sassafras Street. The Eliot family was well established on Mill Creek, owning several adjoining tracts and operating at least two mills on the creek. One of their mills was located just northwest of the Academy District.

By 1876 P. Metcalf and M. W. Caughey owned the Knox property and the land east to present-day State Street, and J.P. Metcalf and M. Mehl owned the tract between State Street and Holland Street. Prescott Metcalf was mayor of Erie (1862-65), noted as a oil shipper in 1867, and a founder of Erie Malleable Iron Company in 1880. The 1876 atlas shows part of this tract as plotted in city blocks indicating that even then development plans for the area were being made. Metcalf and others likely had purchased the land as an investment.

The 1917 Atlas of the City of Erie showed George R. Metcalf as owning most of what would become the Academy District. A 20-acre tract contained the Knox brick house, stable/barn, and three outbuildings. Another 34-acre tract completed the District's land east to what would become State Street. (George R. Metcalf, Sr. became a partner in Erie Malleable Iron Company in 1881 and was president from 1901-1930.) The Atlas noted "Knox's Subdivision" as east of State Street. The land between State and Holland Street was owned by J.P. Metcalf and Mrs. W.W. Mehl. In 1917 the Andrews Land Company obtained options on the farmland and tracts left over from the Glenwood Park purchase by the City of Erie in 1903.

Post 1920 Development

The Andrews brothers' subdivision plot plan for the Academy District was accepted by the City Planning Commission in 1920. Although the subdivision was originally planned as a residential development, State Street became a through-way, and in the late 1940s began to be developed as a commercial area. Lot sizes were increased to accommodate these changes. Now two or three

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businesses occupy a block which was originally intended to contain 10 residential houses. In addition, certain areas of the subdivision were apparently developed later. This is especially true for the area of 38th Street between State Street and Holland Street and the area along Eliot Road and Erie Street.

The Atkinson Erie City Directories were examined and illustrate the post World War II expansion in the Academy District subdivision, particularly the period between 1945 and 1955. The addresses, residential, cultural, and commercial, on State Street between 32nd Street and 38th Street grew from 18 in 1945 to 35 in 1955. Two of these buildings were apartment buildings, one with six residents, and the other with 18 residents. Likewise, the addresses (residential, cultural, and commercial) on West 38th Street between State Street and Elmwood grew from 12 in 1945 to 26 in 1955. In addition, the 1951 Sanborn Maps of City of Erie, updated in 1954, shows 76 lots vacant from French Street west to Eliot Road. The majority of these were along State Street and the block between West 35th and West 34th Streets.

On July 29, 1999 a field view was conducted of the Academy District subdivision with PennDOT District 1-0 Environmental Manager David Parker, District 1-0 Historic Structures Specialist David Anthony, and Jerry Clouse, Historic Structures Group Coordinator for McCormick, Taylor and Associates. At that time the streets of the subdivision were walked and driven and all buildings which were believed to post date 1950 and those without sufficient integrity were marked. These have been highlighted in green (see Figure 3). In addition, the present lot lines were compared with those on the original 1920 plot plan. If they are now different, they were so noted in blue (see Figure 3). This illustrates that not only has the plan of the subdivision changed over the years but that approximately 40% of the buildings within the District would not contribute to a historic district.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Atkinson Erie City Directory for 1916 (Erie, Pa.: Atkinson Erie Directory Co., 1916)

Atkinson Erie City Directory for 1944-45 (Erie, Pa.: Atkinson Erie Directory Co., 1944)

Atkinson Erie City Directory for 1955 (Erie, Pa.: Atkinson Erie Directory Co., 1955)

Erie Business Directory for 1867-68 (Erie, Pa.: Lynn & Company, 1867)

Insurance Maps of Erie, PA Vol. II (New York: Sanborn Map Company, re-published 1951,

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amendments 1953, 1954)

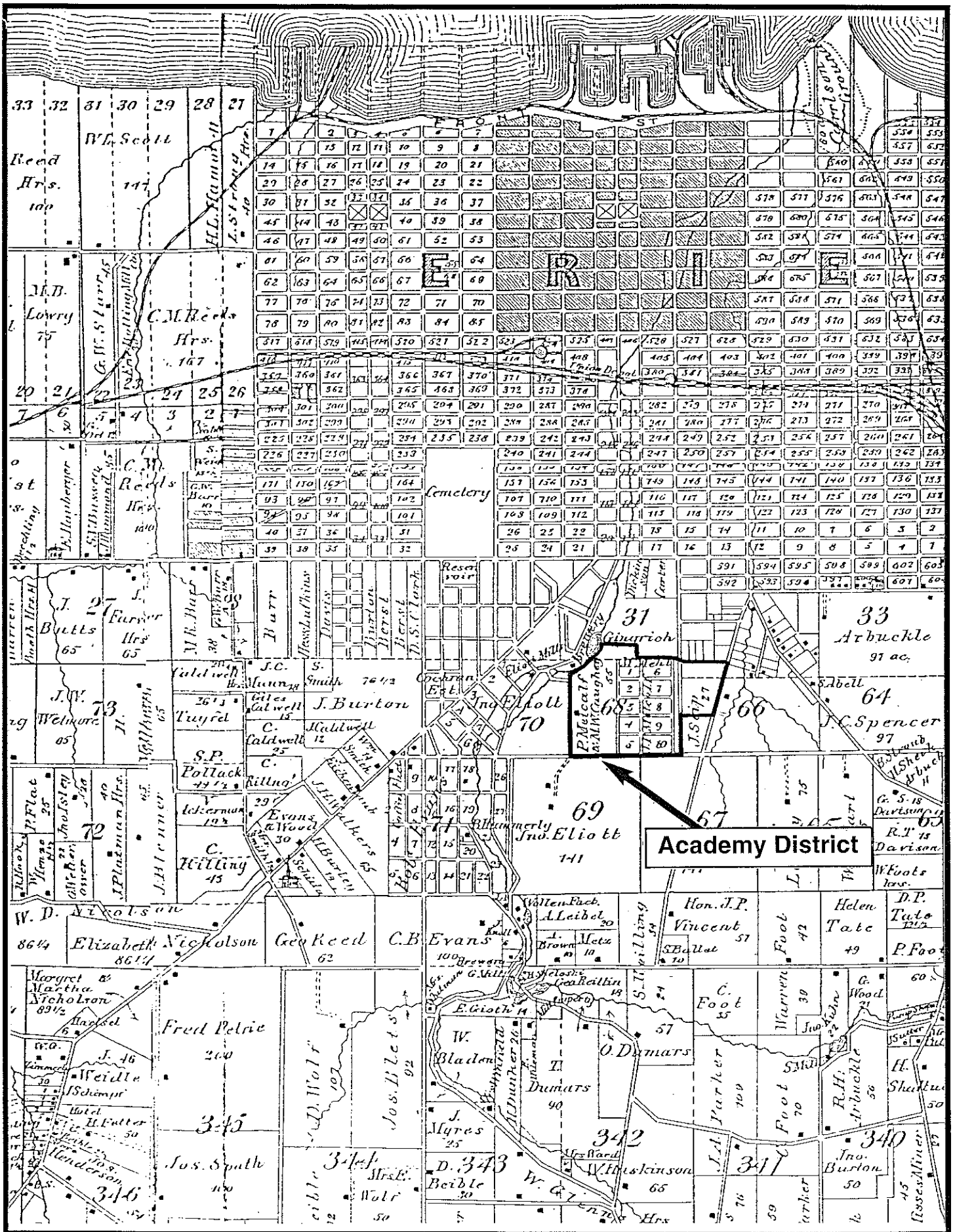
Nolen, John. Greater Erie: Plans and Reports for the Extension and Improvement of the City
(Erie, Pa.: Ashy Printing Co., 1913)

The Booster Annual (Erie, Pa.: The Andrews Land Company, 1911)

The Erie Daily Times, Erie, Pennsylvania, April 5, 1951

EVALUATION

The Academy District subdivision lacks the necessary homogeneity and integrity to be eligible as a planned community. The Academy District subdivision is associated with the Erie Housing Corporation, an Andrews family development company. There is no documentation to show that the Academy District is distinctive or innovative as the work of the Andrews Land Company. Truman Andrews, perhaps the best known of the Andrews brothers, was famed for the establishment of Presque Isle State Park, and this may best represent his significance to Erie. There is no documentation to show that Truman Andrews actually had a hand in the development of the Academy District. The Academy District subdivision was plotted in a grid format with east/west curvilinear streets within that grid. The subdivision was originally planned as a single-family residential community but the center is now filled with commercial/business properties, religious structures, and apartment buildings. Since this subdivision was developed over a long period of time it lacks homogeneity in style, plan, and feeling. The range of architectural styles found in Academy Hills subdivision from Bungalow and Four Square to Neocolonial and Ranch along with the change in lot sizes do not reflect the 1920 design intent of the subdivision's plot plan.



Taken from combination Atlas Map of Erie County, 1876
 prepared by McCormick, Taylor & Associates, Inc.

Figure 2

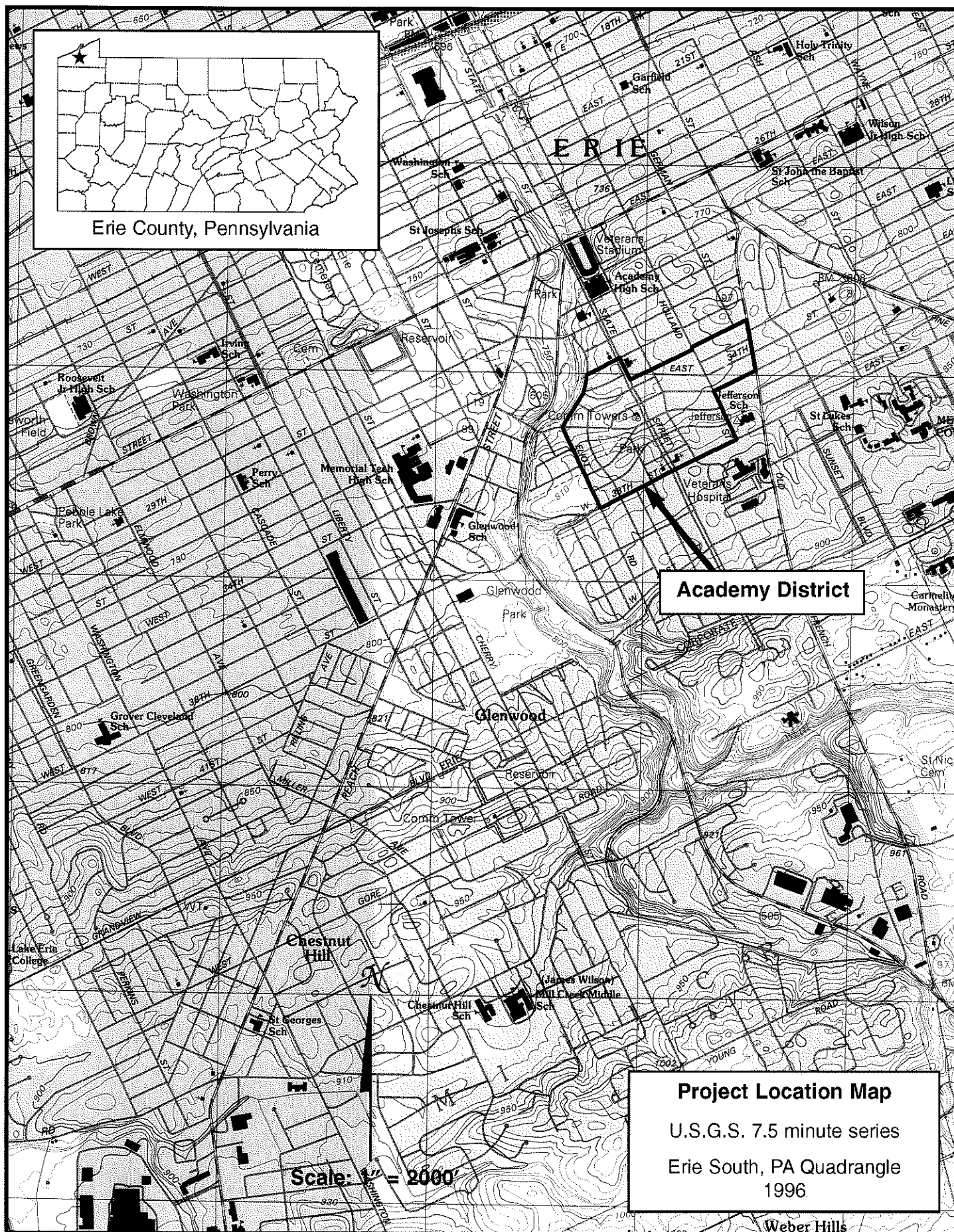


Figure 1