Prospect Elementary School

This brick school complex displays several periods of horizontal growth and additions over the course of the latter half of the twentieth century. The oldest portion of the school follows 1950s-era modern movement style and has east and west-facing gable ends, while the newer addition has a flat roof. The east elevation includes the original gabled portion of the building at the left. This portion includes a bank of tall windows, which follow the shape of the roof's gable. The lowest panel of each window appears to be an awning or hopper style window. The gabled portion also includes a door at its north side, which has a transom and a large window immediately on the left side of the door. The center and right portion of the east elevation are the newer parts of the building. The center section has a low, flat roof, and includes a bank of four windows; the windows include a smaller lower portion that may be awning or hopper style. This center section also includes the double door of the main entry. The doors have a transom and a large window connected at the right of the side of the door. The entry is accessed through a walkway that has a flat roof. This walkway extends out continued...

Although the school currently standing on this site dates from the latter 1900s, 'Prospect School' has sat at the northwest corner of South Prospect and Elm Streets since 1887. Its twin on Pleasant Street was built the same year and for a long time they were renovated concurrently. The first Prospect school building had five rooms; additions and renovations occurred in at least 1903, 1911, 1931, and 1950-1951. These buildings have apparently been entirely replaced over time. The school board reports that today's building is made up of three separate additions. Around 1960 a 15,000 square foot addition with a library, classrooms, lunch room and kitchen was attached to the older buildings. The media center / library was expanded and more classrooms were added as part of a 1970 addition. continued...

A large parking lot is at the north side of the building. A playground at the northwest corner of the property includes two basketball hoops, a large playset with slides and climbing implements and two swing sets each have six swings. A softball/baseball diamond is at the southwest corner of the property. A brick sign in front of the school (at the east elevation) says 'PROSPECT SCHOOL' in dark letters.

Further Description of Important Interior and Exterior Features (Continued on Reverse if Necessary)

This brick school complex displays several periods of horizontal growth and additions over the course of the latter half of the twentieth century. The oldest portion of the school follows 1950s-era modern movement style and has east and west-facing gable ends, while the newer addition has a flat roof. The east elevation includes the original gabled portion of the building at the left. This portion includes a bank of tall windows, which follow the shape of the roof's gable. The lowest panel of each window appears to be an awning or hopper style window. The gabled portion also includes a door at its north side, which has a transom and a large window immediately on the left side of the door. The center and right portion of the east elevation are the newer parts of the building. The center section has a low, flat roof, and includes a bank of four windows; the windows include a smaller lower portion that may be awning or hopper style. This center section also includes the double door of the main entry. The doors have a transom and a large window connected at the right of the doors. The entry is accessed through a walkway that has a flat roof. This walkway extends out continued...

Description of Environment and Outbuildings (See #52)

A large parking lot is at the north side of the building. A playground at the northwest corner of the property includes two basketball hoops, a large playset with slides and climbing implements and two swing sets each have six swings. A softball/baseball diamond is at the southwest corner of the property. A brick sign in front of the school (at the east elevation) says 'PROSPECT SCHOOL' in dark letters.

Sources of Information

OHIO HISTORIC INVENTORY

Prospect Elementary School

1. No. LOR-02114-21
2. County Lorain
3. Quadrangle Name: Elementar
4. Present Name(s) Prospect Elementary School
5. Historic or Other Name(s) Prospect School
6. Specific Address or Location 36 South Prospect
7. City or Village Oberlin
8. U.T.M. Reference 0900084107034
9. Lot, Section or VMD Number 397089 4571777
10. Classification: Building
11. On National Register? NO
12. Alteration Date(s) 17/17b Dates:
13. Part of Established Hist. Dist? NO
14. Other Designation (NR or Local)
15. Other Designation (NR or Local)
16. Thematic Associations: Elementary
17. Date(s) or Period 1960
18. Style Class and Design Modern Movements
19. Architect or Engineer
20. Design Sources
21. Original Use, if apparent School
22. Present Use School
23. Property Acreage unknown
24. Ownership Public
25. Historic or Other Name(s) Oberlin CSD Board of Education
26. Other Surveys
27. No. of Stories One story
28. Chimney Placement Off center within ridgeline
29. Distance from & Frontage on Road 30'
30. Foundation Material Poured concrete
31. Exterior Wall Material(s) Brick
32. Roof Type Gable
33. Window Type(s) Plate Glass Hopper
34. Endangered? NO
35. Plan Shape L-shaped
36. Changes associated with 17/17b Dates:
37. Period of significant activity
38. Substantial alteration/addition
39. By What?
40. Associated Activity
41. Affiliated Inventory Numbers
42. History and Significance (Continue on Reverse if Necessary)
43. Archaeological (OAI)
44. Description of Environment and Outbuildings (See #52)
45. Sources of Information
46. Prepared By: Liz Schultz
47. Organization: Oberlin Heritage Center
48. Date Recorded: 12/31/2010
49. PIR Reviewer: 
50. PIR Review Date: 
1. No. LOR-02114-21
2. County Lorain
3. 4. Present Name(s) Prospect Elementary School
   5. Historic or Other Name(s) Prospect School

8. Site Plan with North Arrow

N

S.

Prospect

Elm

54. Farmstead Plan:

- Door Selection: Single centered
- Door Position: Recessed
- Orientation: Gable with lateral wing
- Symmetry: Bilateral asymmetry

Report Associated With Project:

NADB #: 
from the entrance around to the right, and runs parallel to the gymnasium at the right of the elevation. This walkway extends the majority of the east facade. The walkway has brick columns with benches in between each column, on either side of the sidewalk it shades. The remainder of the east elevation, at the far right, is much taller than any other part of the building, because it includes the gym. This has a flat roof. At the north elevation, the exterior includes the gym at the far left, which has a set of double doors to the far left, and tall windows above. The entry has a brick wall in front of it, which runs parallel to the building. Right of the gym, the building is two stories, and has a flat roof. In this two-story portion, three sets of windows are at both stories. Each set has three windows, consisting of a smaller window below a larger window. The smaller window may be an awning or hopper window. The windows each have concrete sills. Double doors at the left and right sides of the two story portion have doors with transoms and a tall window attached at the left. At the far right, a one-story portion has two pairs of tall, narrow windows near the center. Each of these windows is comprised of two smaller windows (on the top and bottom) with a larger window between them. The windows have cement sills. At the south elevation, the oldest portion of the building, the exterior is an all-brick veneer. A bank of five large windows with a cement window sill is comprised of both awning and hopper style windows. Right of these windows, an entryway juts out. The entry consists of double doors that are recessed within a small porch, supported by brick walls. Each wall has three cutout openings with cement ‘sills.’ Right of this entry, there is a repetition of four nearly-identical bays. Each bay includes mullioned windows, set high in the wall. Below the windows are cement sills, which connect between each window. Below the cement, the exterior of the building is a brick veneer. Above the cement, the building is comprised of a solid material. To the right of this repetitive arrangement, another fully-bricked portion juts out, and includes a set of recessed doors at both the left and right sides of the portion that juts out. At the far ends of the recessed doors, a brick wall has three cutouts next to each door, with cement 'sills.' The right doorway has been screened-in. Between the two doorways, a pair of windows is flanked by two squares of projecting, decorative brickwork on each side. At the far right side of the elevation, right of the brick portion that projects out, a large bank of windows has a cement sill. At the west / rear elevation, to the far right, one small, projecting gable sits within the main gable of the roof. However, the main gable is not a true ‘triangle;’ rather, it is broken, and taller on the right side. The smaller gable appears to have a north-facing door, as well as an opening in the brick exterior, which creates a small, recessed stoop. The left side of the west elevation is comprised of the newer addition to the building. Because this newer portion is set quite a way back from the original structure, it is difficult to view the details. However, two pairs of tall windows are situated at the far left, as well as a plain door to the right of the windows, with another pair of windows right of the door.

Between 1976 and 1980 the oldest portion of the building was torn down. The final two story addition, around 1980, provided space for a gym, offices, music room and classrooms to the northeast side of the building. Although always located at this corner, the school had been listed at many different numbered addresses over the years; it was first listed at 26 S. Prospect in 1894, and then as numbers 38, 36, 30, 24 and finally 36. In several city directories it was listed without an address, or just at the intersection. In any case, no other buildings have ever occupied this corner. Prospect was one of several formal grade schools used in Oberlin over the years. The first school building (now known as the Little Red Schoolhouse and operated by the Oberlin Heritage Center) was built in 1836. Even as the first schoolhouse was opened, however, there were far more children in the district than could be accommodated. These children were taught in private homes and Oberlin College buildings; the district would continue to devote itself to expanding enough to meet the needs of all children until after the mid 20th century. The first grade school was built on Professor Street in 1851 and was known as the First Union School House. The Union High School was built on South Main in 1874, followed by Prospect and Pleasant, which together could house eight classrooms in the two story brick buildings. Both Prospect and Pleasant suffered serious fires in 1903 and were renovated again between 1910 and 1911 but otherwise the school district had few major projects until a new high school was built in the early 1920s. It opened in 1923 and became Langston Middle School in 1984. To supplement the other buildings, Centennial Hall (built around 1876) was acquired in 1934 and was in use until 1952. The Oberlin Kindergarten-Primary Training School purchased a building between Elm and Forest streets and converted it into a kindergarten in 1926. After the training program closed, the building continued to be used as a kindergarten by the Oberlin School District until the 1980s. The Oberlin School District had been formally organized in 1934. In 1955, Prospect and Pleasant were joined by a new grade school, Eastwood, on East College Street. Finally, in 1962, a new high school was built on North Pleasant Street. Additional construction occurred in the late 1960s, the 1970s and the 1980s. Because of declining student enrollment since the late 1960s, Pleasant School was closed in 1994; it now houses the Boys and Girls Club. Eastwood, Prospect, Langston and the High School remain in use. The Oberlin School District has dealt with many challenges over the years. From the very beginning of public education in Oberlin, male and female students, and more importantly, white and black students, have attended school together, despite state 'Black Laws' that prohibited integration. Despite these initial efforts, the informal segregation of neighborhoods by race meant that over time neighborhood schools became more homogenous. This was changed in 1959, when the neighborhood school model was abandoned in favor of grouping by grades and more extensive bussing. Currently Eastwood Elementary School houses grades kindergarten through 2 while Prospect Elementary School houses grades 3 through 5. Until 1950, all elementary school teachers were women; requirements for their credentials and pay were much lower than for male teachers. Indeed, the district has often had difficulty finding the funds to pay teacher salaries and construction occurred in the late 1960s, the 1970s and the 1980s. Because of declining student enrollment since the late 1960s, Pleasant School was closed in 1994; it now houses the Boys and Girls Club. Eastwood, Prospect, Langston and the High School remain in use. The Oberlin School District has dealt with many challenges over the years. From the very beginning of public education in Oberlin, male and female students, and more importantly, white and black students, have attended school together, despite state 'Black Laws' that prohibited integration. Despite these initial efforts, the informal segregation of neighborhoods by race meant that over time neighborhood schools became more homogenous. This was changed in 1959, when the neighborhood school model was abandoned in favor of grouping by grades and more extensive bussing. Currently Eastwood Elementary School houses grades kindergarten through 2 while Prospect Elementary School houses grades 3 through 5. Until 1950, all elementary school teachers were women; requirements for their credentials and pay were much lower than for male teachers. Indeed, the district has often had difficulty finding the funds to pay teacher salaries and creating a diverse faculty, but progress has been made on both measures. Although the focus of the curriculum has changed over the years, from rote memorization to 'hands on learning' to the International Baccalaureate program, the schools continue to serve the many young people of Oberlin well.

43. History and Significance (Con't)

44. Description of Environment and Outbuildings (Con't)

45. Sources (Con't)