

The Parker Elementary School is attractively placed on a high site with a large level playground at the rear. — Joseph W. Radotinsky, Architect, Kansas City, Kansas.

## Functional and Artistic Schoolhousing in Kansas City, Kansas

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On February 26, 1942, Parker Elementary School of Kansas City, Kans., was chosen for an award, by the American Institute of Architects, as being the best public building erected in 1940 in the area including western Missouri and eastern Kansas.

### Significance of the Award

In the *Kansas City Kansan* for Monday, March 7, that newspaper commented as follows about the award:

"The little red schoolhouse has come a long way. It is one of America's most valuable traditions and institutions. As a tradition the public school has welded its pupils into strong communities. As an institution it has made democracy practical.

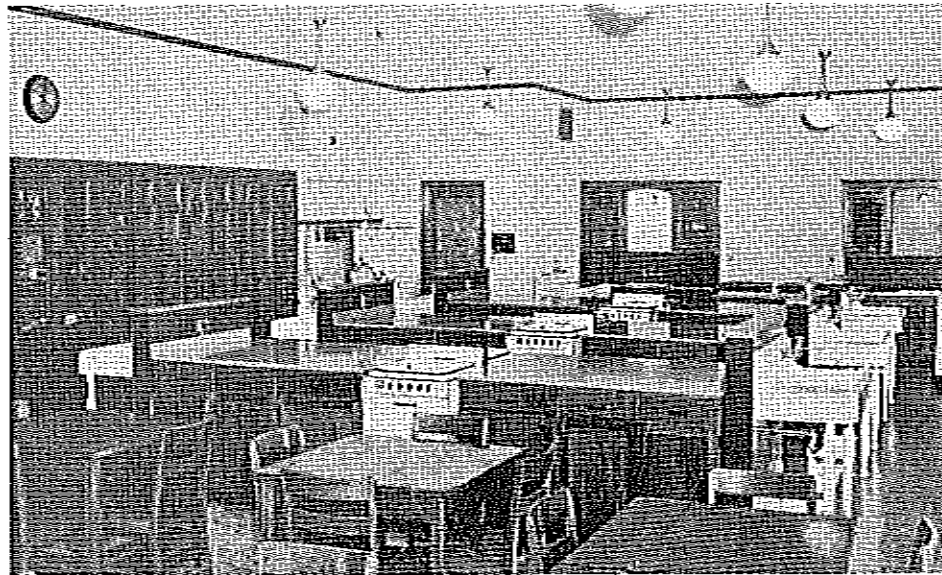
"Though we may have wavered at times or forgotten the precepts taught us in grade school days, we continue to owe much that we are as individuals and as a nation to the little red schoolhouse. It is therefore not improper that something be done to make that institution more beautiful and more useful in its physical form.

"Just because most of us survived the rugged simplicity if not atrocious appearance of the little red schoolhouse does not mean that we should not provide better

facilities for our children. We are providing better schools for each generation and proof of this is all around us.

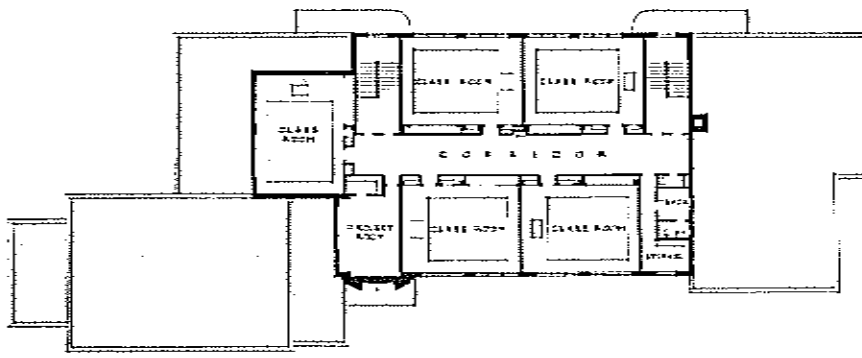
"Special proof comes now in the award announced by the Kansas City chapter of

the American Institute of Architects that has cited the Parker Grade School, Third and Haskell, as 'the best public built erected in this area.' This award pays tribute not only to the architect, Joseph W. Rado

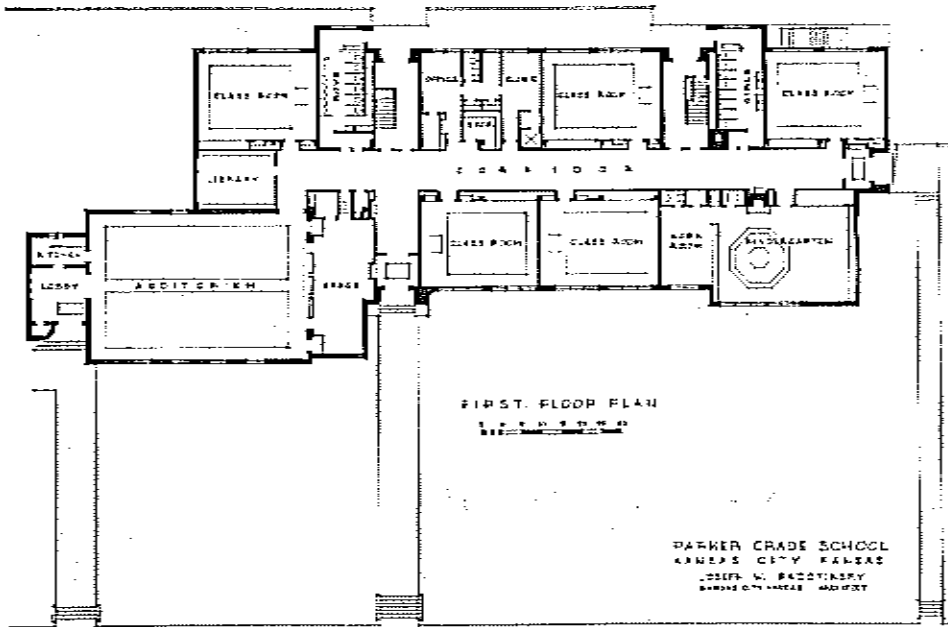


The home economics laboratory is arranged on the unit basis and is a fine example of desirable home equipment.

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SECOND FLOOR PLAN



FIRST FLOOR PLAN

PARKER GRADE SCHOOL  
KANSAS CITY, KANSAS  
JOSEPH W. RADOTINSKY  
ARCHITECT

Floor Plans, Parker Elementary School, Kansas City, Kansas. — Joseph W. Radotinsky, Architect, Kansas City, Kansas.

block slabs of cut stone were used. Into this field were inserted highly ornamental and protruding sculptural pieces of stone.

The school houses every educational need for 430 elementary students. Besides 10 classrooms, it has an office, clinic, gymnasium-auditorium with stage and adjoining kitchen, kindergarten, library, work project room, teachers' rest room, and boys' and girls' toilets.

The gymnasium-auditorium can be used independently without interfering with the academic portion of the school. The room reflects the fact that any activity for which the room might be used is adequately taken care of by the choice of interior finish materials. The wainscoting, for example, is a deep chocolate, smooth-face iron-spot brick. Above the wainscoting line a checkerboard pattern of large 8 by 8-in. buff fire-clay brick is used. The ceiling is finished with an acoustical reflecting block, with lighting fixtures recessed flush into the ceiling.

The stage is located directly off the classroom corridor to afford easy accessibility to classrooms. This allows teachers and students the use of the stage for productions and activities without undue traffic. A red velvet curtain is provided for the stage, as well as footlights to facilitate correct lighting for all dramatic activities. Space under the stage provides storage for 350 chairs.

At the other end of the gymnasium-auditorium is a kitchen connected by an adequate sliding serving window. Its facilities make it a logical community center for parent-school activities.

The 10-ft. corridors have floors of black asphalt tile, acoustically plastered ceilings, and glazed tile wainscoting topped by light-green elongated glazed tiles.

Each classroom is equipped with standard slate blackboards, a unit wardrobe, an individual teacher wardrobe, a bookcase, and 40 combination chair and desk units.

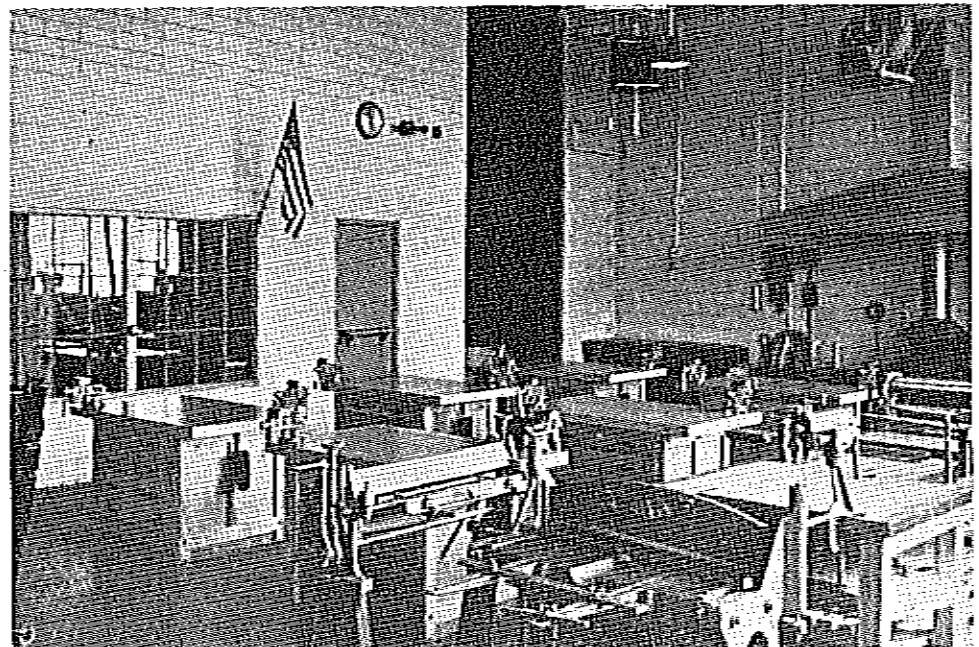
sky, who designed the structure, and to the builder, Lysle W. Weeks, of the Weeks Construction Company, but also commends the board of education and its management for the vision to build both attractive and useful school buildings."

The Parker Elementary School and the one million dollar Sumner High School for Negroes culminated the Kansas City, Kans., four million dollar school building program started in 1933.

Both buildings show that modern school-housing allows beauty of architectural form and arrangement, complete compatibility with practical educational and mechanical planning. Both buildings also reflect the national improvement of school buildings, and a wide understanding of the functional yet artistic housing that has come through years of local planning and building experience.

#### The Parker Elementary School

The motif of Parker is simplicity. It emanates modernity, grace, and dignity. Its modern design is expressed definitely by mass and fenestration and by extensive use of dark shades of fire-clay brick. For striking contrast, particularly the tower entrance, large



Modern equipment for cold and hot working of metals, glazed tile walls, unit heaters and exhaust ventilators, are to be found in the metalworking shop of the Sumner High School.

The kindergarten room has tables, fireplace, boys' and girls' juvenile toilets, and a project room. This room, equipped with a workbench and modern educational play equipment, is separated from the classroom by a 4-ft. wall, making supervision easy yet giving children a feeling of independence. The floor of inlaid linoleum has a colorful ornamented reading circle with inlaid animals, figures, and alphabet inserts. The over-all ceiling is acoustical plaster.

On the second floor is the culminating activity room with a room-length workbench and adequate storage space. It has a 5-ft. unglazed tile wainscoting and an acoustical plastered ceiling.

Both boys' and girls' toilets have a corridor and a playground entrance. Considerable work was done with ground improvements surrounding the school in both planting and playground areas. The ground which covers 3.6 acres is well drained, with an adequate play area covered by a 1-in. top of emulsified asphalt.

The Parker School cost for building and equipment was \$133,917.75.

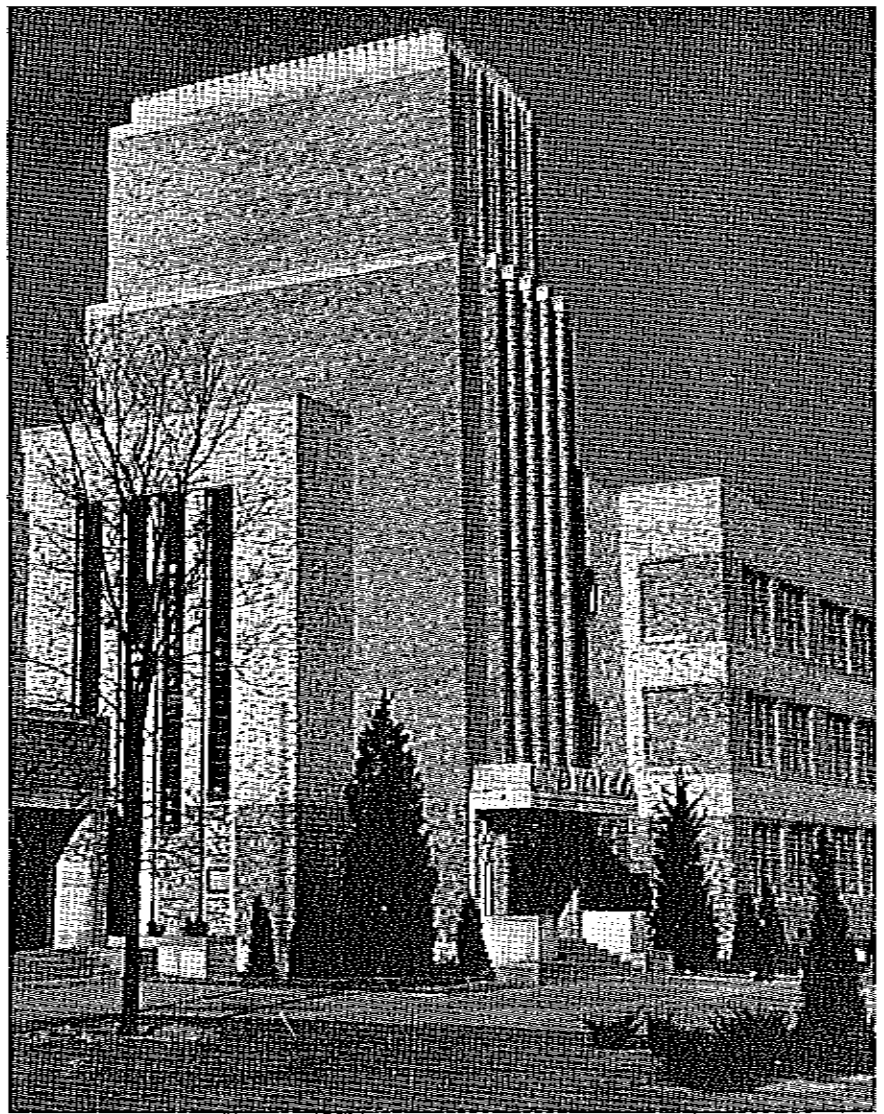
### The Sumner High School

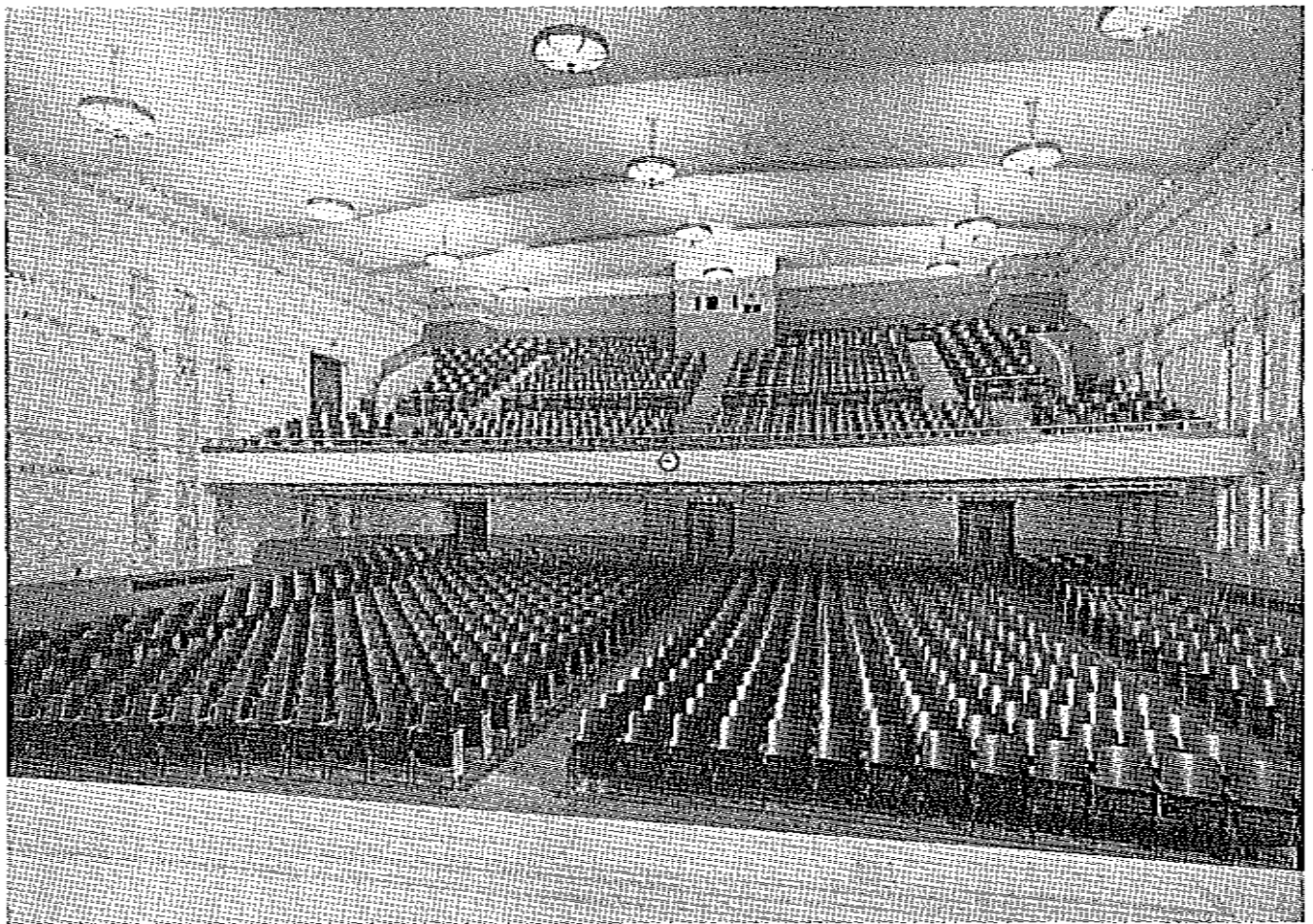
Sumner High School was constructed to serve the educational objectives and needs of the Kansas City, Kans., Negro commu-

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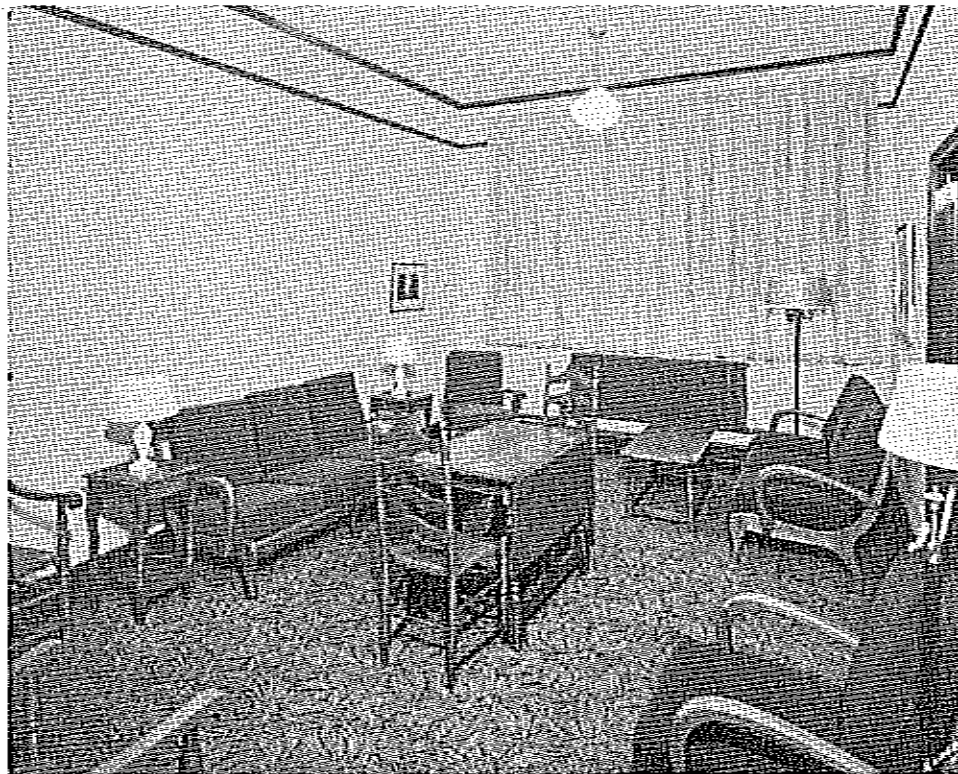
Below: General View, Sumner High School, Kansas City, Kansas.

Right: The lower entrance is one of the striking architectural monuments of the city. The entire space in the tower has practical uses for instructional purposes and for housing machinery and tanks.





The auditorium is attractive in color, complete in equipment, and beautifully lighted.  
The seating capacity is 1100.



The living room of the housekeeping suite is attractively furnished. It serves to teach the principles of interior decoration and home care. By a clever arrangement the room may be used for a living room, a dining room, or even a bedroom.

nity. The building's architectural arrangements and provisions have taken full cognizance of the requirements of Negro education.

#### Modern Functional Design

The building is an example of modern design adapted to a modern functional plan. The usual architectural principles of planning which do not encourage dual entrances were enforced here because of the site and its relation to the school's population.

The streamlined tower is entirely functional as it houses the air-intake chambers, filters, and heating units.

The building exterior is of fire-clay brick. The success of the design is accomplished in the unique massing combined with the symphony of color and shades used in the exterior treatment.

The school is excellently equipped in vocational facilities. The girls' vocational department is comprised of a complete home-living and foods suite, and a cosmetology room. A class in cosmetology, such as is housed in this room, is unique in a Kansas public school. It has complete, modern cosmetology facilities for 20 students. The instructor, a registered beauty operator, is employed under the provisions of the Smith-Hughes Act.

The boys' vocational facilities are even more extensive. Here the cue was taken from the growing complexity of occupational requirements. This section includes a building-