This school is located at 222 Noble Road, Clarks Summit, Pennsylvania, in South Abington Township, Lackawanna County. It is part of the Abington Heights School District, 200 East Grove Street, Clarks Summit, Pennsylvania 18411. Its pin number is 10001010001. The 1966 school building is set far back from Noble Road, separated from the roadway by a large lawn and paved teachers’ parking lot. This lot was constructed in 2002 on what had been a lawn. An original large paved parking lot primarily for students is located southeast of the school. The building is oriented towards the large parking lot, perpendicular to Noble Road. Sports fields are located southwest of the school. They include original baseball, softball, and football fields (with a rubberized track, metal bleachers, and lights), and a newer soccer field. A 2002 field house is located west of the school. An expanded practice field is located north of the building. A driveway and smaller parking areas circle the school building. A flagpole and a school sign are also located on the property.

The 1966 core of the school is a one-story building generally arranged along a main linear hallway and four perpendicular hallways or wings. The school measures multiple bays wide and up to approximately thirteen rooms deep. The core is a concrete-block structure with brick and porcelain enameled steel curtain walls, set on a concrete slab foundation. Portions of the façade are faced with a contrasting grayish brick. The primarily flat roof is covered with rubber membrane. The building has no chimneys, only metal flues. The main entrance is located towards the southwest end of the school. Exterior doors are original aluminum-frame glass doors. An entrance vestibule features steel-frame glass doors dating to 1996. The entrance is sheltered by a shallow pitch gabled portico with a metal roof supported by I-beam columns. Concrete steps and a ramp access the entrance. Similar porticos shelter two secondary entrances on the front façade. The building is lit by original metal-frame picture and awning windows. Two two-story additions were constructed at the rear of the school in 1996. These are both clad in Dryvit. A one-story addition constructed in 2004 is located at the southern corner of the building. It is clad in Dryvit and brick.

The main entrance is located between the first and second perpendicular wings of the school, from southwest to northeast. It features a vestibule with a second set of doors accessing the main lobby and hallway. The main lobby features brick and paneled walls, glazed brick floor tiles, acoustic ceiling tiles, and fluorescent lights. One of three interior courtyards is located directly across from the main entrance, visible through a wall of metal-frame windows and doors. Brick and slate benches line the wall flanking the doors to the courtyard. The lobby and the window wall wrap around the courtyard to extend partially down the first, or southwestern most, perpendicular wing, between the courtyard and an auditorium. The window wall in this area features multiple bends, a pattern that is reflected in the terrazzo floor tile. Two school plaques are displayed in this lobby, next to the auditorium and entrance to a music classroom wing. The auditorium features concrete-block walls with acoustic panels, acoustic ceiling panels, “high-hat” lights, carpeted cement floors, a proscenium stage, original seating, and a lighting booth. The music wing includes a choral room, band room, instrument storage areas, three individual practice rooms, and an orchestra room added in 2004. The music classrooms feature a variety of elements conducive to music education such as risers or tiered floors, blackboards with music staff, acoustic wall treatments, and specialized storage wall units.
PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION (Continued):

The auditorium lobby narrows to a corridor that accesses the original gymnasium and related athletic spaces northwest of the auditorium. The gymnasium features a wood floor, gabled metal truss ceiling, suspended basketball hoops, concrete-block and paneled walls, and replacement plastic and steel bleachers. A balcony was removed from the gymnasium ca. 2002. An extant original porcelain water fountain is located in the girls locker room area on the southwest side of the gym. A boys locker room is located on the northeast side of the gym. Located underneath the gymnasium, at the basement level, is an original indoor pool. The pool area features a ceramic tile floor, plaster walls, and a steel truss ceiling. Bleachers, surrounded by a low ceramic-tiled wall, are located on the southwest side of the pool. A window wall behind the bleachers looks out to three health classrooms. Appended to the end of the original gymnasium is an auxiliary gymnasium and a variety of specialized and general classrooms located on the ground and basement levels of one of the two 1996 additions to the school. In addition to the auxiliary gym, the addition includes a fitness center, computer classrooms, and rooms for CAD and art.

The second perpendicular wing, northeast of the main lobby, is relatively short. Its southeastern end contains the main school office and a row of administrative offices. Across a hallway is the school cafeteria, located on the northeast side of the courtyard mentioned above. The cafeteria features vinyl tile floors, ceramic tile and wood paneled walls, a metal-frame window wall accessing the courtyard, and folding tables and chairs. The high stuccoed ceiling of the cafeteria exhibits a zigzag form, in which hanging light fixtures and ceiling fans are located. A kitchen with original elements is located on the northwest side of the cafeteria. In the northwest end of this wing, accessed by a hallway that wraps around the cafeteria, are a faculty lounge and assorted other spaces. This portion of the school had previously been occupied by art and home economics.

Between the second and third perpendicular wing are another lobby and interior courtyard. A decorative display case is centered in the lobby. At the southeastern end of the third perpendicular wing are a lecture hall and a language lab. The lecture hall has a tiered, carpeted floor, and an overhead audio-visual system. The language lab has a specialized set-up with tape-recorder learning units installed in the late 1980s. Across a hallway is a library. The library features carpeting, dropped acoustic ceiling tiles, fluorescent lights, newer shelving, and an original turret with skylight. Original wood furniture is located in a newer reference room. At the northwest end of the wing are six classrooms and storage areas. The fourth, northeastern-most wing contains classrooms only. A sample English classroom features terrazzo floor tiles, acoustic ceiling tiles, fluorescent lights, wood storage units, and plaster walls with painted murals of literary topics. Specialized classrooms also include physics, chemistry, biology, and environmental science. Dispersed through the school’s hallways are display cases, terrazzo floor tiles, brick and slate benches, painted plaster and ceramic tile walls, inset solid classroom doors, and original lockers with divided narrow lower sections and shallow upper sections. The second two-story 1996 addition extends across the rear of the school and is accessed by short connector hallways between the third and fourth original wings. This addition contains the guidance and nurse’s offices, a faculty lounge and multiple classrooms. This addition’s hallways feature corner inset classroom doors and single-section lockers. The third school courtyard is enclosed by these two wings and the addition. A dark room, a print shop, a former auto shop, and a planetarium converted for use as a conference room, are also located in the school building.

An athletic field house was constructed in 2002. The field house includes two locker rooms, a weight room, and a team conference room. The brick-clad building is banked into the hill west of the main school building.
HISTORICAL NARRATIVE:

Abington Heights School District was created in the mid-twentieth century from the Clarks Summit-Abington, Glenburn, South Abington, and Newton-Ransom joint school districts (Anonymous 2007). Eight municipalities, including the boroughs of Clarks Summit and Clarks Green, and the townships of Abington, North Abington, South Abington, Glenburn, Newton, and Ransom were included in the consolidated school district (Abington Heights School District 2006a). Abington Heights High School was constructed in 1966 as the second high school in the school district. It was built in response to population growth, as the rural area around the Borough of Clarks Summit became increasingly suburban. It was named for the neighborhood in which it was built just outside the borough boundary (Erik Elliott, District Head of Maintenance, pers. com., January 31, 2007).

Abington Heights High School was designed by the architects George M.D. Lewis and Donaldson Berghauser. Lewis was a Scranton-area architect and well-known World War I bomber pilot. Lewis joined the long-established firm of Edward H. Davis after the war, continuing it upon the death of Davis under his own name until 1960. Donaldson Berghauser became a partner in Lewis’ architecture firm in that year. The firm was discontinued in 1970 (Cooperman 2007). Abington Heights High School was a later project in the firm’s history. The school originally opened for grades eleven and twelve. Until a district-wide reorganization project in 1996, a separate school building housed ninth and tenth-grade students. Abington Heights High School was known as the high school North Campus and the other school was known as the high school South Campus.

In the mid-1990s Abington Heights School District embarked on a major reorganization of the district and multiple renovation and expansion projects. Organizationally, the high school was combined into one building—the current Abington Heights High School. The South Campus, functioning as a junior high school, was renovated into an elementary school. Currently operating as the Clarks Summit Elementary School, it is one of four elementary schools in the district, with grades five through eight housed in Abington Heights Middle School. To accommodate all the district’s ninth through twelfth-grade students in the combined high school on the North Campus, (approximately 570 additional students) additions were constructed to the building during 1996 (Grochowski 1997; Greg Lucash, Head Custodian, pers. com., January 31, 2007). The renovation/addition project was designed by the architects and engineers of Scranton-based A.E. Peters Assoc. & E.J. Peters, and Dunmore-based V.S. Riggi. The building’s changes were described in a newspaper article shortly before reopening:

The renovation/expansion project includes 26 new classrooms, according to John Page, clerk of the works. ‘We’ve added two new chemistry labs, a new chemistry/physics lab and a physics classroom,’ Page said. ‘There will be a new guidance suite which would include the research center for children to look up college resources. It has all the different colleges and what they offer. They can actually communicate directly with the schools.’

The high school, which was renovated and expanded with two additions, will also include a new health suite, and an expanded and remodeled library.

‘It’s double the size,’ he said. ‘We’ve doubled the size of the cafeteria. We’ve remodeled all the administration offices.’

The specialty classrooms will offer a new home-economics center, including a disabled-accessible area for cooking, and a child-development center, Page said.
HISTORICAL NARRATIVE (Continued):

The school will also feature a new computer drafting center, a new graphics arts and photography center, a new electronics classroom, and a new ceramic arts center, and attached to that is a new fine arts center, he said.

New shop areas include auto, masonry, wood and metal shops, as well as industrial art training and new classrooms for shop courses.

A new technology center will feature computer-generated laboratory work which will touch on pneumatics and hydraulics, radio and satellite, air currents and aviation, and weather-station studies, Page said.

The terrace area behind the pool has been remodeled to include disabled access to the pool. A new gym and a remedial gym are also among the additions (Manzano 1997).

The renovated North Campus re-opened as a combined high school on September 3, 1997 (Manzano 1997). The size of the renovated cafeteria was brought into question shortly after the school re-opened; however, crowding issues evident during lunch time in 1997 appear to have been corrected sometime thereafter (Grochowski 1997). A rededication ceremony and open house were held at the school on February 1, 1998 (Jones 1998).

Additional modifications were made to the school and its grounds in 2002. These included a new field house, new parking lot, and sport field renovations, as well as alterations to the original gymnasium. At this time, the Abington Heights School Board also voted to have an architect design a new music wing. This was in response to overcrowding in the 400-student music department (Seder 2002). The resulting orchestra room was added to the building in 2004 (Greg Lucash, Head Custodian, pers. com., January 31, 2007). School district budget cuts in 2005 necessitated the elimination of some programs such as an automotive repair class (Kemeny 2005). However, the well-appointed high school still has a varied curriculum as described on the school district website:

The High School Program consists of an outstanding array of core and elective subjects, preparing all students for their post-High School goals. English curriculum addresses literature, writing, visual and performing arts, oral communication and drama, and offers a Writing Clinic; Mathematics offerings range from practical computation to Advanced Calculus, include a state-of-the-art Computer Laboratory, incorporate the TI-82 Graphing Calculator in select courses and offer a Mathematics Clinic; Science provides a whole foundation of scientific fundamentals, offers a state-of-the-art laboratory and a modern, computer-assisted facility; Social Studies prepares students to become global and civic-minded citizens by addressing modern-day developments in the United States and the world via critical book reviews and position papers, in Practical Law through a mock trial, and through public service.
HISTORICAL NARRATIVE (Continued):

Foreign Languages, including French, German, Latin, Russian and Spanish, are taught over a 4-year sequence; Business Education and Industrial Technology are taught in a completely computerized setting; Family and Consumer Science is highlighted by the Community Classroom; Art focuses on the development of individual abilities, including the making of unique masks, jewelry, crafts and ceramics; Music touts Concert and Marching Bands, Orchestra—featuring violin, viola, cello, and string bass, and Concert Choir; and Health and Physical Education features traditional and non-traditional sports, a Fitness Center, a Triathlon, nutrition, first aid and personal/social responsibility.

Technology in High School and throughout the District is defined by technical knowledge, actual use, knowledge of technologies—including their global effects, creative problem solving, relationships between people and technology and making informed decisions about technology, including those based on major social and ethical issues. Also, students with special needs are challenged according to their interests and abilities (Abington Heights School District 2006b).

Abington Heights High School is highly ranked nationally and well-regarded by its community and students (LaCoe 2007; Jones 1998). The availability of Advanced Placement and introductory level college courses is expansive. Abington Heights High School sent 84% of the class of 2006 to 4-year colleges or universities and 8% to 2-year schools (Abington Heights School District 2006b).

NATIONAL REGISTER EVALUATION:

Abington Heights High School was evaluated according to criteria set forth in the National Register Bulletin 15: “How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation” (National Park Service 1997). The Draft Pennsylvania Public Schools Historic Context was also used to evaluate the resource (Vitiello 2006). The school was constructed during a period of widespread consolidation throughout the country and the increase of the automobile suburb. The school was constructed by a consolidated school district on a large lot of land situated just outside an urban area. The original core is a sprawling one-story structure of simple modern design oriented not towards the roadway, but towards an original large parking lot provided for students as well as staff. Between the building and Noble Road is a large field, or “safety zone,” that has been partially paved to provide staff with additional parking. The school’s current curriculum reflects the post World War II shift in high schools to a college preparatory role. By 2006, 92% of its students went on to continue their education. Vocational education was also covered in the range of shops and specialized classrooms in the building. General areas, such as the original athletic wing and auditorium and music wing, were well appointed. Specialized areas included such spaces as a planetarium and a language lab. While Abington Heights High School appears to reflect mid- to late twentieth-century educational trends as described in the Draft Pennsylvania Public Schools Historic Context (Vitiello 2006), more research would be necessary to determine if this school is a significant example of its type. It is recommended that the school be re-evaluated when the resource becomes 50 years old to determine its eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A.
NATIONAL REGISTER EVALUATION (Continued):

The school is not associated with any significant person and is recommended not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion B. The architecture of the building and the design of its interior space exhibit a variety of typical features of the time period. More research would also be necessary to determine if this school is an architecturally significant example of its type. While the core of the school has undergone some alteration and large additions have been appended to its rear, they can be visually separated from the original structure and do not necessarily compromise the integrity of the building. Therefore, it is also recommended that the school be re-evaluated when the resource becomes 50 years old to determine its eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C. Eligibility under Criterion D cannot be fully addressed since the property has not been subject to archaeological testing.

REFERENCES CITED:

Abington Heights School District


Anonymous

Cooperman, Emily

Grochowski, Mitch

Jones, Pamela

Kemeny, Matthew Charles
REFERENCES CITED (Continued):

LaCoe, Elvin

Manzano, Maureen

National Park Service

Seder, Andrew M.

United States Department of Agriculture

United States Geological Survey
1992 *Scranton NW, PA Aerial Photograph*. USGS Reference Number 41075-D6-01-PHT. Created on April 15, 1992.


Vitiello, Domenic