Haddon Heights High School

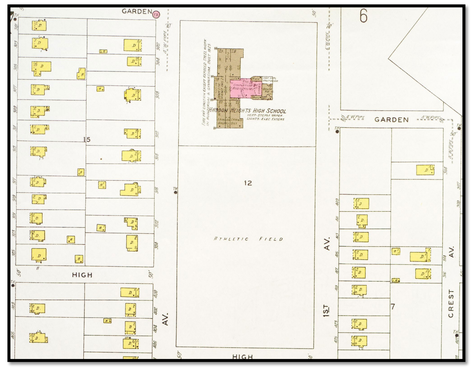
◆ 301 2nd Avenue ◆ Built 1923 ◆

In 1924, Haddon Heights opened a new high school at this location. After the creation of Haddon Heights as a borough in 1904, the population of the community swelled. The first high school on Kings Highway quickly became overcrowded, despite attempts to expand the school and the construction of Seventh Avenue School.

Mirroring Haddon Heights' over crowding issue, other Camden County communities struggled to accommodate the growing population in their schools. To address the issue, several municipalities met in June 1922 and proposed constructing regional high schools. Haddon Heights school officials offered to build a regional school on a lot of land recently purchased for $50,000. The plan received support as Merchantville's mayor Volney Bennett predicted a failure to act would result in "serious consequences."

The issue of overcrowding came to a head in September 1922 when Lawnside, New Jersey, residents accused the County Board of Schools of denying 18 students from attending at the Kings Highway School based on racial prejudice. While the county denied any wrongdoing, the issue demonstrated the consequences Mayor Bennett predicted. By October, local board of education officials surveyed schools throughout the state to ensure the new school would maintain "the best obtainable system." In late November 1922, the borough approved the new high school's construction.





Upon learning of the new building's approval, *The Courier-Post* reported Haddon Heights high school students celebrated the "new, modern High School building" by leading a "snake dance," that involved a "long line of dancing, jumping, wriggling, and above all, yelling students" along the White Horse Pike, causing a traffic jam.



(Bottom Left) High School under construction; (Top center) Detail, 1927 Sanborn Map Company, Haddon Heights, Sheet 7; (Bottom center) Finished High School (Bottom right) the Haddon Heights High School upon completion.

In memory of Lynn Laitman
Haddon Heights Historical Society

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CAMDEN COUNTY CULTURAL AND HERITAGE COMMISSION AT CAMDEN COUNTY COLLEGE
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The firm of Wills, Bill, and Company quickly commenced construction of Haddon Heights High School (HHHS) and work continued through 1923, '24, and '25. Philadelphia architect Charles R. Peddle designed the school. The gothic-revival brick and Georgia-marble exterior with crenelated towers separated by a shield and battlement along the roofline demonstrate Peddle's plan to create a veritable bastion of learning. The completed fire-proof school cost a reported $500,000.

HHHS opened in 1924 despite ongoing construction. Newspapers praised the school as "the last word in modern high school planning:" Supervising Principal of Haddon Heights Schools Frank S. Woolson noted, "Haddon Heights has a high school of which it can justly be proud … It has been constructed for the present and for the future." Audubon, Barrington, Magnolia, Stratford, Laurel Springs, and Clementon initially sent students to the new school. During the Great Depression, overcrowding forced the school to divide the student body into morning and afternoon sessions.

In the 1950s, school officials approved the addition of a new gymnasium and middle school to the rear of the building along 1st Avenue. During the 1960s, 70s, 90s and 2000s, additional classrooms accommodated more students. The district built the $300,000 Frank De Martini Wrestling & Fitness Center in 2002 naming it to honor the HHHS alumni killed while saving lives during the September 11, 2001, World Trade Center terrorist attack. Today HHHS continues to fulfill its original purpose as a regional high school still serving several local municipalities.

