

12-18-08

ALBION ACADEMY — GRAMMAR SCHOOL

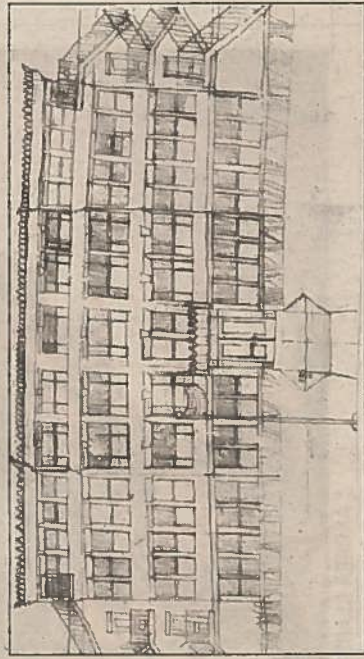
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It was with community pride that the Albion "Academy" project has received an award for its superior renovation project. What a well-deserved designation for reuse and preservation of one of the most outstanding gray Medina sandstone buildings in our region.

The Academy project, now set for senior housing, Nutri-Fair and other community needs, is a shining example of how historic structures can be adaptable for modern needs.

One thing bothers me however about its name, from an historical perspective. The building was built in 1906 as a high school and



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called just that. In the early 1930s, when a new high school was erected on East Avenue, the one built between East and West Academy streets became known as the Albion Grammar School. Never in its history was it called an Academy. However, there was an academy on that site from the mid-1830s until

1875, when it closed.

The academies were private educational institutions for the secondary level of education, paid for by tuition. When the academy became defunct, the old brick building was taken over by the newly-formed, tax-supported school system and added on to what became a high school. In the

mid-1880s, it was enlarged again. In 1906, it was torn down for the current gray sandstone structure.

The developers of this fine project are welcome to call it anything they want. But from this historian's

perspective, let's not be misled by a name that infers that it was something it never was.

As a student who attended the grammar school in the 1950s, I remember the building well. When I was in

fourth grade in 1954-55, my teacher, Mrs. Blanch Larwood, allowed me to go outside and make this drawing of the school building. Probably not bad for a fourth-grader, it I do say so myself.