ATTACHMENT B

PASADENA PERMIT CENTER
www.cityofpasadena.net/permitcenter

PLANNING DIVISION MASTER APPLICATION FORM

Project Address: 315 N. PASADENA AVENUE PASADENA, CA. 91103

Project Name: ROOSEVELT SCHOOL FOR THE HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

Project Description: (Please describe demolitions, alterations and any new construction)
Nomination for Historic Preservation

Zoning Designation: School (Public) **General Plan Designation:** _____

Estimated Valuation (Cost of Project): N/A

APPLICANT / OWNER INFORMATION

APPLICANT NAME: Rene H. Gonzalez
Address: 515 Champlain Ave
City Pasadena State: CA Zip: 91103
Telephone: [ ] 626 786-1675
Fax: [ ]
Email: padrespusd@gmail.com

CONTACT PERSON: Rene H. Gonzalez
Address: 515 Champlain Ave
City Pasadena State: CA Zip: 91103
Telephone: [ ] 626-786-1675
Fax: [ ]
Email: padrespusd@gmail.com

PROPERTY OWNER NAME: Pasadena Unified School District
Address: 351 S. Hudson Ave
City Pasadena State: CA Zip: 91109
Telephone: [ ] 626-396-3600
Fax: [ ]
Email:

TYPE OF PLANNING REVIEW AND APPROVALS REQUIRED (Mark clearly the type of approval(s) required):

ADJUSTMENT PERMIT	HEIGHT AVERAGING	PREDEVELOPMENT PLAN REVIEW
AFFORDABLE HOUSING CONCESSION OR WAIVER	HILLSIDE DEVELOPMENT PERMIT	RELIEF FROM THE REPLACEMENT BUILDING PERMIT REQUIREMENT
CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS	✓ HISTORIC DESIGNATION (MONUMENT, LANDMARK, TREE OR SIGN)	SIGN EXCEPTION
CERTIFICATE OF EXCEPTION	✓ HISTORICAL RESEARCH/EVALUATION	TENTATIVE PARCEL/TRACT MAP
CHANGES TO APPROVED PROJECT	LANDMARK TREE PRUNING	TEMP. CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT
CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT	MASTER DEVELOPMENT PLAN	TREE PROTECTION PLAN REVIEW
DESIGN REVIEW	MASTER SIGN PLAN	TREE REMOVAL
DEVELOPMENT AGREMENT	MINOR CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT	VARIANCE
EXPRESSIVE USE PERMIT	MINOR VARIANCE	VARIANCE FOR HISTORIC RESOURCES
FLOOR AREA RATIO (FAR) INCREASE	PLANNED DEVELOPMENT ZONE	ZONE CHANGE (MAP AMENDMENT)
GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT	PRELIMINARY PLAN CHECK	OTHER:

Note: Space for signature is on reverse side

PLANNING DEPARTMENT //
PLANNING DIVISION
175 NORTH GARFIELD AVENUE
PASADENA, CA 91101
T 626-744-4009
F 626-744-4785

INDEMNIFICATION

Applicant agrees to defend, indemnify, and hold harmless the City and its officers, contractors, consultants, employees, and commission members (collectively, "City") from any and all liability, loss, suits, claims, damages, costs, judgments and expenses (including attorney's fees and costs of litigation), including any appeals thereto (collectively, "proceeding") brought against the City with regard to any approvals issued in connection with the application(s) by the City, including any action taken pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act. If Applicant is required to defend the City in connection with such proceeding, the City shall have and retain the right to approve counsel to so defend the City; and all significant decisions concerning the manner in which the defense is conducted; and any and all settlements, which approval shall not be unreasonably withheld. The City shall also have and retain the right to not participate in the defense, except that the City agrees to reasonably cooperate with Applicant in the defense of the proceeding. If the City's Attorney's Office participates in the defense, all City Attorney fees and costs shall be paid by Applicant. Further, Applicant agrees to defend, indemnify and hold harmless the City from and for all costs and fees incurred in additional investigation or study of, or for supplementing, revising, or amending, any document if made necessary by said proceeding.

CERTIFICATION:

I hereby certify that I am the applicant or designated agent named herein and that I am familiar with the rules and regulations with respect to preparing and filing this petition for discretionary action, and that the statements and answers contained herein and the information attached are in all respects true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief.

SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT OR AGENT: _____ Date: 9-09-2023

For Office Use Only			***Design & Historic Preservation:***
PLAN # _____ **CASE #**_____ **PRJ #** _____ DATE ACCEPTED:_____ DATE SUBMITTALS RECEIVED: _____ _ RECEIVED BY (INITIALS): _____ FEES: BASE FEE:: $ _____ 3% RECORDS FEE: $_____ TOTAL: $_____ HISTORIC ARCH. RESEARCH REQUIRED? YES NO PUBLIC ART REVIEW REQUIRED? YES NO TRANSPORTATION REVIEW REQUIRED? YES NO INCLUSIONARY HOUSING REQUIRED? YES NO	REVIEW AUTHORITY: ☐ STAFF ☐ HEARING OFFICER ☐ PLANNING COMMISSION/BZA ☐ DESIGN COMMISSION ☐ HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION ☐ CITY COUNCIL TAXPAYER PROTECTION ☐ DISCLOSURE REQUIRED ☐ NOT REQUIRED	CEQA REVIEW: ☐ EXEMPTION ☐ INITIAL STUDY ☐ EIR CEQA REVIEW STATUS: ☐ PENDING ☐ COMPLETED	TYPE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW: ☐ CATEGORY 1 (DESIGNATED) ☐ CATEGORY 2 (ELIGIBLE) LANDMARK/HISTORIC DISTRICT NAME: _____ TYPE OF DESIGN REVIEW: ☐ CONCEPT ☐ FINAL ☐ CONSOLIDATED ☐ PRELIMINARY CONSULTATION

Supplemental Application for
HISTORIC DESIGNATION

Note: In addition to this application, a completed **Planning Division Master Application Form** is also required. Submit all materials via email or file transfer to DHPquestions@cityofpasadena.net.

PROPERTY PROPOSED FOR DESIGNATION

1. Name of Property:	ROOSEVELT SCHOOL FOR HANDICAPPED CHILDREN
2. Property Address:	315 N PASADENA AVE PASADENA, CA. 91103
3. Date of Original Construction:	1953
4. Original Owner:	PASADENA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
5. Original Architect / Builder:	ARCHITECT:EUGENE WESTON, KEITH P. MARSTON BUILDER:SAMUELSON BROTHERS

DESIGNATION CATEGORY

(CHECK APPROPRIATE BOX—SEE CRITERIA ON PAGES 2 & 3 FOR MORE INFORMATION):

☐ **HISTORIC MONUMENT**

☑ **LANDMARK**

☐ **HISTORIC SIGN**

☐ **LANDMARK TREE**

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY & HISTORICAL PHOTOGRAPHS

Briefly describe the property proposed for designation, indicating whether the entire site or a portion of the site is the subject of the nomination (e.g., how many buildings or objects on the site are included in the nomination) or if the nomination is for an object, sign or tree. If applying for historic monument designation, specify whether any interior public or semi-public spaces are included in the nomination. A site plan and/or floor plan may be used to supplement the narrative description. Please also submit recent and, if available, historical photographs.

See Attached Picture files for area of site Nominated for Historic Landmark

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION ON SIGNIFICANCE OF PROPERTY

With this application, please attach information that will assist staff with the preparation of a designation report. Books, photographs, articles, and other archival information will all be useful to document the significance of the nominated resource. If applying for historic monument designation, an evaluation by a qualified architectural historian may be required to demonstrate exceptional or regional, statewide or national significance. Refer to bibliography, historical photographs, chronology, and other supporting information.

See atached files for Historic Reference records and photographs, chronology and other supporting information

Supplemental Application for
HISTORIC DESIGNATION

LEGAL DESCRIPTION

Attach a copy of the most recently recorded legal description for the property (usually in the deed for the property or other documents when the property was purchased—also available from a title company). See attached file for Legal Description from county assessors

CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION

Check the box under the category checked on first page that corresponds to the criterion/criteria under which you are nominating the property, object, sign or tree for designation. Multiple boxes may be checked if applicable. Submitted description and supplemental information should provide an explanation of how the property meets the specified criterion/criteria.

	CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATING AN HISTORIC MONUMENT (May include significant public or semi-public interior spaces and features)
☐	A. It is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of the history of the region, state or nation.
☐	B. It is associated with the lives of persons who are significant in the history of the region, state or nation.
☐	C. It is exceptional in the embodiment of the distinctive characteristics of a historic resource property type, period, architectural style or method of construction, or is an exceptional representation of the work of an architect, designer, engineer, or builder whose work is significant to the region, state or nation, or that possesses high artistic values that are of regional, state-wide or national significance.
☐	D. It has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history of the region, state or nation.

	CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATING A LANDMARK
☑	A. It is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of the history of the City.
☑	B. It is associated with the lives of persons who are significant in the history of the City.
☑	C. It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, architectural style, period, or method of construction, or represents the work of an architect, designer, engineer, or builder whose work is of significance to the City or possesses artistic values of significance to the City.
☐	D. It has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important locally in prehistory or history.

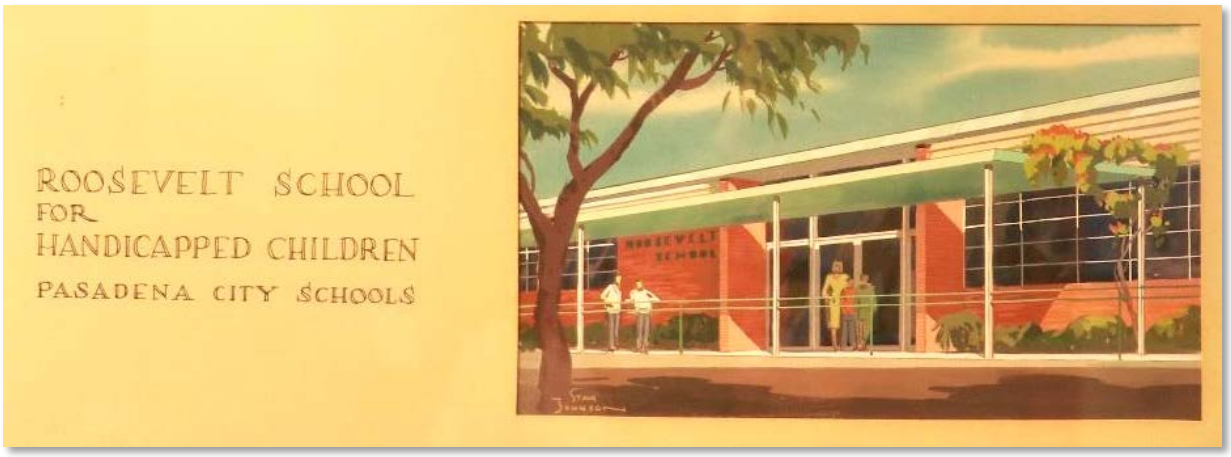
Supplemental Application for
HISTORIC DESIGNATION

CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATING A HISTORIC SIGN	
☐	A. It is exemplary of technology, craftsmanship or design of the period when it was constructed, uses historic sign materials and means of illumination, and is not significantly altered from its historic period. Historic sign materials shall include metal or wood facings, or paint directly on the façade of a building. Historic means of illumination shall include incandescent light fixtures or neon tubing on the exterior of the sign. If the sign has been altered, it must be restorable to its historic function and appearance.
☐	B. It is integrated with the architecture of the building.
☐	C. It demonstrates extraordinary aesthetic quality, creativity, or innovation.

CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATING A LANDMARK TREE	
☐	A. It is one of the largest or oldest trees of the species located in the City.
☐	B. It has historical significance due to an association with a historic event, person, site, street, or structure.
☐	C. It is a defining landmark or significant outstanding feature of a neighborhood.

DESIGNATION PROCESS (INFORMATION ONLY; NO ACTION REQUIRED)
§17.62.050 Pasadena Municipal Code:

1. A preliminary evaluation by staff to determine if the nominated property meets the applicable criteria and is eligible for designation.
2. If staff determines that the nominated property is eligible for designation, the nomination is scheduled for a public hearing before the Historic Preservation Commission. If not, the applicant may appeal the determination of ineligibility to the Historic Preservation Commission or it may be called for review by the Historic Preservation Commission or City Council.
3. If the Historic Preservation Commission finds that the nominated resource qualifies for designation, it forwards a recommendation on the designation to the City Council.
4. At a noticed pubic hearing, the Council then determines whether to approve or disapprove the application.



UPDATED Supplemental Landmark Nomination
Roosevelt School, 315 N. Pasadena Avenue, Pasadena

Prepared for:
City of Pasadena
Department of Planning and Building

Prepared by:
PADRES (501c3)
With the assistance of
Debi Howell-Ardila, MHP

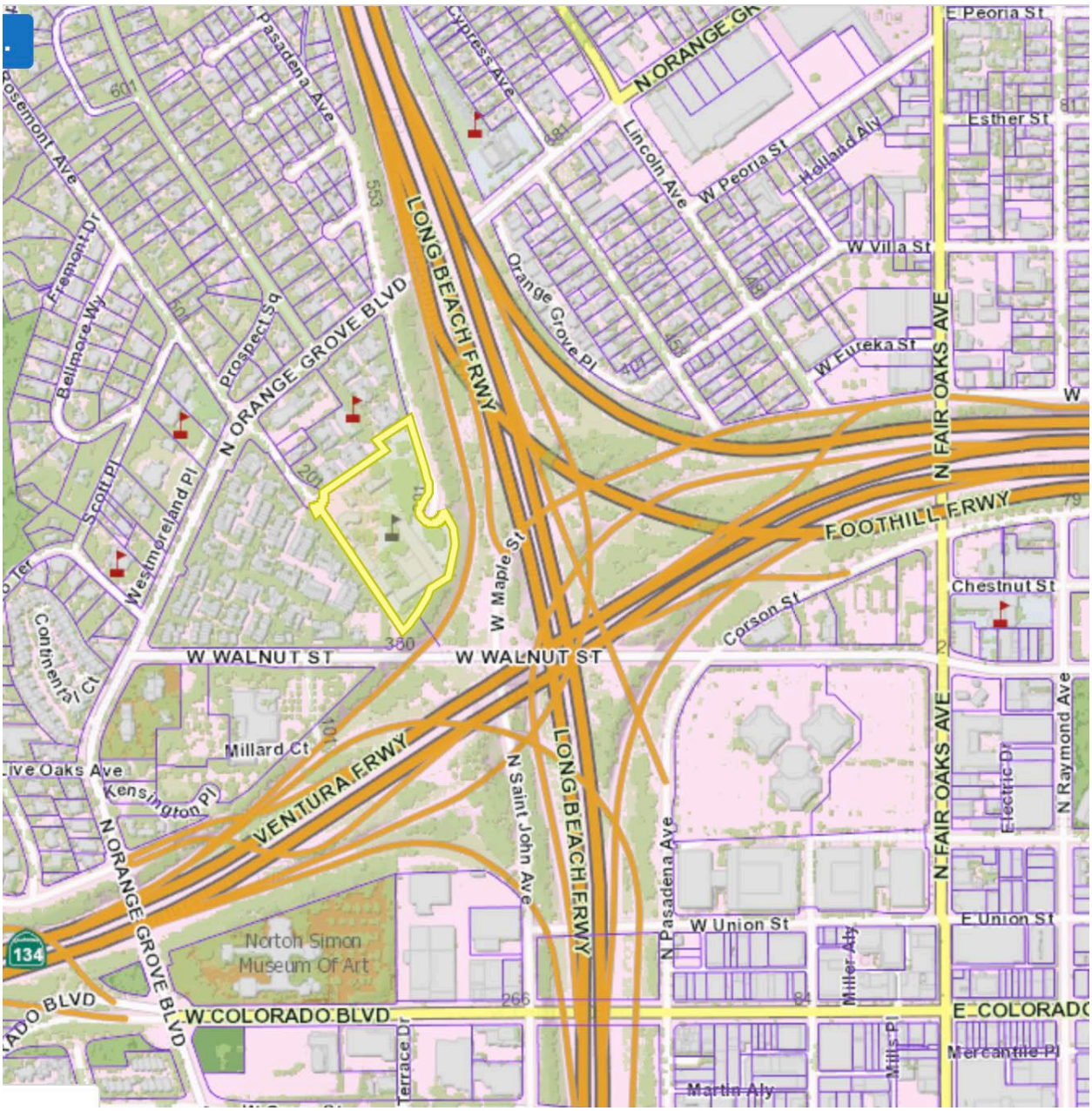
September 2024

Supplemental Landmark Nomination
Roosevelt School, 315 N. Pasadena Avenue, Pasadena

Table of Contents

Section		Page
1	Statement of Significance	2
2	Project Methodology and Background	5
3	Architectural Description and Existing Conditions	6
4	Historic Context	
	Brief History of Special Education Programs and Accessible Facility Design	38
	Historic Overview of Roosevelt School	41
	Design Professionals Associated with Property	46
	Mid-Century Modern Educational Design	47
5	Summary	51

Figure 1. Location of Roosevelt School, 315 N. Pasadena Avenue, in west Pasadena (APN # 5711-016-904), at the juncture of Highway 134, Ventura Freeway, Highway 210, Long Beach Freeway; school parcel enclosed in yellow



Source: Los Angeles County Assessor's Office, 2024

Figure 2. Images of Roosevelt School, Nursery and Kindergarten class, 1957

Source: Courtesy of the Pasadena Museum of History

Statement of Significance

Located at 315 Pasadena Avenue, Roosevelt School is (1) a pioneering, custom-designed school for special needs students and (2) an intact, textbook example of Mid-Century Modern school design.

For these reasons, Roosevelt School is eligible for local landmark designation under two criteria described in Section 17.62.040 of the City of Pasadena Zoning Code:

- Criterion A ("It is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of the history of the City")
- Criterion C ("**It is exceptional in the embodiment of the distinctive characteristics of a historic resource property type**, period, architectural style or method of construction, or that is an exceptional representation of the work of an architect, designer, engineer, or builder whose work is significant to the region, state or nation, or that possesses high artistic values that are of regional, state-wide or national significance")

In the preparation of this nomination, extensive research and review of available archival records also sought to answer the question of eligibility under the other relevant criterion of the City of Pasadena; a summary of those efforts is detailed below:

- Criterion B ("It is associated with the lives of persons who are significant in the history of the region, state or nation")

Numerous teachers, volunteers, administrators, parents, community members, social workers, occupational therapists, and various medical professionals have contributed over the years to helping Roosevelt School help generations of children and young people in receiving an education that met them where they are and in reaching their full potential. However, available research located to date did not suggest the strength of association for any one individual associated with Roosevelt School (i.e., a long tenure at the school for an individual who is significant in the history of the region, state, or nation during that individual's most productive professional years).

Therefore, Roosevelt School does not appear eligible under local Criterion B.

The following provides a summary of eligibility under Criteria A and C.

- Criterion A as a landmark ("It is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of the history of the City").

Roosevelt School is eligible under local Criterion A as a landmark ("It is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of the history of the City").

When it opened in 1953, Roosevelt School became one of a small handful of custom-designed special-needs schools in Southern California, during an era when very few schools took any steps to accommodate specials-needs children, including those with developmental and physical disabilities.

Roosevelt School meets Criterion A for its pioneering and significant contribution to the **broad patterns of educational/institutional development in Pasadena**, under the context of public institutional architecture, the theme of educational facilities, and the subtheme of special needs schools. The period of significance is 1953, the year of the reconstruction of Roosevelt School.

When it was reinaugurated in 1953, Roosevelt School became **one of only a small number of special-needs schools in Southern California**. Seen from the perspective of 2024, more than 70 years later, many of the school's accessibility features are readily recognizable, in light of national landmark legislation adopted since that time mandating accessibility features. As of 1953, however, the idea of accessible design and special education was in its infancy, with the most significant catalysts for change still two decades away. At the time, it was uncommon for school districts to offer programs for special education—and it was even more rare for districts to commission a custom-designed facility devoted to special-needs students. For example, as of 1970, the greater Los Angeles region offered approximately 10 special education schools (and only a handful of these were purpose-designed for special needs and accessibility).[1]

In this way, Roosevelt School represented an innovative, unique answer to a long-time design problem—namely, how to tailor an educational facility, including classrooms, entrances, access paths, circulation corridors, restrooms, and playgrounds, for maximum accessibility for special-needs students of all ages, with varying types of physical and developmental challenges. And to do so in a manner that capitalized on and nurtured the abilities and potential of each student. The incorporation of features such as entrance and door thresholds set flush with the ground, smooth concrete and tile floor surfaces, continuous bands of handrails at varying heights, restrooms with right-sized doors and stalls, among many others, provided a safe, nurturing, appropriate environment for disabled children and young people.

- Criterion C ("**It is exceptional in the embodiment of the distinctive characteristics of a historic resource property type, period, architectural style** or method of construction, or that is an exceptional representation of the work of an architect, designer, engineer, or builder whose work is significant to the region, state or nation, or that possesses high artistic values that are of regional, state-wide or national significance")

Roosevelt School is eligible under Criterion C as an intact, textbook example of Mid-Century Modern school design, tailored to a school and campus for special needs students.

Designed by renowned architects Eugene Weston, Jr., and Keith Marston, Roosevelt School combined an innovative approach to accessibility with the best ideas in Mid-Century Modern school design. With very few alterations, either on the exterior or interior, Roosevelt School retains the textbook examples of a modern, functionalist school plant. These features include its one-story massing and informal, domestic scale and character, with the incorporation of low entry thresholds, patterned brick veneer, and interior

[1] This estimation is compiled from records on file with the California Department of Education, California School Directory; the Los Angeles Unified School District; and Lewis, Roselle M., 1983, "Public, Private Schools Providing Education for the Handicapped," Los Angeles Times, 17 November 1983.

fireplace; hybrid finger/cluster-plan, with long axial classroom wings and a roughly L-shaped building footprint, providing ample opportunities for walls of windows and indoor-outdoor integration; wide sheltering roof eaves, treated simply; and, rather than relying on applied ornament, aesthetic effect is achieved through the balanced, modular design composition and rhythm of wall openings.

Mid-Century Modernism represents a middle ground between the machine-age aesthetic of the International Style and a regional idiom reflecting local precedent and history. As noted on page 126 of the *Los Angeles Unified School District Historic Context Statement, 1870 to 1969*, as practiced in Southern California,

> Mid-Century Modernism took its cues from the region's first-generation modernist architects such as Richard Neutra, Rudolph Schindler, Gregory Ain, Frank Lloyd Wright, and Harwell Hamilton Harris. In the postwar period, second-generation practitioners such as Raphael Soriano, Whitney Smith, and A. Quincy Jones, among many others, established Los Angeles as a center for innovative architectural design and culture.
>
> Mid-Century Modernism is characterized by an honest expression of structure and function, with little applied ornament. Aesthetic effect is achieved through an asymmetrical but balanced, rhythmic design composition, often expressed in modular post-and-beam construction. Whether wood or steel, post-and-beam construction allowed for open floor plans, ease of expansion, and generous expanses of glazing to heighten indoor-outdoor integration. Infill panels of wood or glass are common, with glazing often extending to the gable. Buildings are generally one to two-stories, with an emphasis on simple, geometric forms. Capped with low-pitched gabled or flat roofs, a Mid-Century Modern building often displays wide eaves and cantilevered canopies, supported on spider-leg or post supports.
>
> Sheathing materials vary, with wood, stucco, brick and stone, or steel-framing and glass. Windows are generally flush-mounted, with metal frames.
>
> This style was seen in postwar institutional and commercial buildings, as well as residences, from 1945 until circa 1975, when Title 24 restrictions on the use of glass curtailed the expansive glazing that characterizes the style.

Roosevelt School displays all the key character-defining features typically applying to assess Mid-Century Modern design as applied to an institutional property. These include but are not limited to:

- Horizontal design composition and massing; generally one to two stories
- Flat or shed roof, often with wide, cantilevered overhangs
- Simple, geometric volumes
- Generous expanses of fenestration, including bands of grouped multi-light windows, marking the location of windows
- Exterior materials include stucco, brick, or concrete
- Modular design and planning
- Direct expression of structural systems, often in wood or steel post-and-beam
- Lack of historicizing ornament
- Extensive use of sheltered exterior corridors, with flat or slightly sloped roofs supported by posts, piers, or pipe columns

Highly intact, with few visible alterations, Roosevelt School retains historic integrity to convey the reasons for its significance. The school represents a noteworthy commitment on the part of district administrators, staff, and community to serve the disabled student population, to ensure equal access to education, and to tailor the curriculum and rehabilitative programs to allow each child to realize their full potential.

Project Methodology and Background

This nomination was prepared by the nonprofit PADRES (501c3), with assistance from historic preservation specialist Debi Howell-Ardila, MHP. As community members and current and previous parents of students at Roosevelt School, PADRES contributed a wealth of historical information, photographs, and insights on the accessibility features and special education programs at Roosevelt School. PADRES was assisted by Ms. Howell-Ardila, who has 18 years of experience in historic preservation and has a specialized practice in the evaluation of schools. She was the primary author of the *Los Angeles Unified School District Historic Context Statement, 1870 to 1969*, which won preservation design awards from the California Preservation Foundation and Los Angeles Conservancy in 2014 and 2015, respectively.

In support of this nomination, a variety of archival sources were consulted, including the Pasadena Unified School District, Pasadena Museum of History, Division of the State Architect, Pasadena Public Library, and Los Angeles Public Library. Two site visits were conducted to gather information about the features of the campus and its buildings, on the exterior and interior, as well as changes over time and existing conditions. Overview photographs from those site visits are presented in this nomination in Section 2.

As noted above, the finding of landmark eligibility is based on Roosevelt School's significant contribution to broad patterns of development (Local Criterion A). Specifically, Roosevelt School has made a significant (and pioneering) contribution to the broad patterns of institutional development/educational facilities in Pasadena (under a presumed context of public institutional architecture, a theme of educational facilities, and the subtheme/property type of special needs schools).

As of January 2024, the City of Pasadena is in the process of preparing a thematic Citywide Historic Context Statement, which will include a framework for evaluating a range of property types. Because Roosevelt School's eligibility is tied to its contribution to broad patterns of institutional development (but the Pasadena Citywide Historic Context Statement is not yet available with its eligibility standards for this context), this nomination draws on the relevant background and available sources to characterize the context and themes. The goal is establishing the significance of Roosevelt School in light of its pioneering approach to accessibility, melded with the textbook characteristics of a postwar, modern, functionalist school. For additional context, this nomination draws on the *Los Angeles Unified School District Historic Context Statement, 1870 to 1969*. The LAUSD study is relevant for evaluations beyond Los Angeles, due to the high degree of regional and national standardization of school design in the postwar period. The LAUSD context, which guided school evaluations for the City of Los Angeles project SurveyLA, does not have a subsection for special education centers; therefore, this nomination presents a brief overview of relevant material.

This supplemental application includes the following sections:

(1) Summary Statement of Significance; and Project Methodology and Background;

(2) Architectural Description and Existing Conditions;

(3) Historic Context; and Summary

   a. Including Brief History of Special Education Programs and Accessible Facility Design; Historic Overview of Roosevelt School; Design Professionals Associated with Property; Mid-Century Modern Educational Design

Architectural Description and Existing Conditions

With plans by renowned architects Eugene Weston, Jr., and Keith Marston, Roosevelt School combined an innovative approach to accessibility with the best ideas in postwar school design. Central to this approach was the modern, functionalist school plant, a program-driven typology that reshaped educational architecture throughout the region (and the United States) in the postwar period.

With few alterations, Roosevelt School exhibits the textbook examples of a modern, functionalist school plant,[2] including one-story massing and an informal, domestic scale and character, with the incorporation of low entry thresholds, patterned brick veneer, and interior fireplace. In terms of the campus, these features include the inward-facing, finger/cluster-plan site design, with buildings extending across the site and oriented toward outdoor spaces such as courtyards, patios, and outdoor play areas; classrooms that clearly express their function, with axial wings lined with windows facing landscaping and mature trees. A common feature of the modern, functionalist school was an H- or L-shaped site plan, which creates ready-made interior courtyards and ample opportunities for indoor-outdoor integration.

In terms of design, the school also features the stylistic vocabulary of Mid-Century Modernism as applied to an institutional property; this includes an emphasis on the horizontal axis, through a very low pitched, side-gabled roof with broad sheltering eaves and patterned brick walls. The generous expanses of fenestration, with bands of grouped multi-light windows, and lack of applied ornament, also reflect the building's Mid-Century Modern style. Rather than relying on applied ornament, aesthetic effect is achieved through a balanced, modular design composition and rhythm of wall openings.

What stands out most prominently in the original drawings for Roosevelt School, however, was the degree to which the students' needs determined all aspects of the interior program, including classroom configuration, path of travel, amenities, and details. These custom-designed spaces also reflect the program and approach of Roosevelt School; not all special education centers catered to students with both developmental and physical challenges. Roosevelt School, however, accepted students with a wide variety of physical and developmental challenges, from preschool aged to young adults. The program was tailored to each student, with the goal of maximizing each student's potential and abilities, whether physical, educational, professional, or personal.

Spanning 25 rooms and over 40,000 square feet, the 1953 campus consists primarily of three wings: the Main Wing (facing east), the South Wing (facing south), and the Center Wing (a small, square wing near the playground). At the Main Wing, students enter through wide double-doors, flanked with decorative tile work. The main entrance consists of automated doors, each of which measures 4.5 feet (the minimum width for ADA access defined later was 32 inches). Throughout the interior, as well, the typical width for doors is 4 feet. One notable innovation for the school's program is the incorporation of restrooms directly off from classroom and therapy rooms, easily accessible via multiple, connecting interior passageways.

Forming a continuous path in the Main Wing are dedicated, separate spaces for occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech therapy, along with a large waiting room, first aid and nurses station. These rooms are accessed via 4-foot-wide doors facing the interior hallway, which displays double-height hand railings and easy-to-navigate, smooth floor surfaces, through wide doors.

[2] As of January 2024, the City of Pasadena has commissioned the preparation of a thematic Citywide Historic Context Statement, which will include a framework for evaluating a range of property types such as institutional/educational facilities. With the context slated for completion in 2025, this nomination draws on the evaluative framework provided in 2014 *Los Angeles Unified School District Historic Context Statement, 1870 to 1969*. For purposes of this nomination, the LAUSD context, which guided school evaluations for the City of Los Angeles project SurveyLA, is highly informative given the high degree of regional and national standardization of school design in the postwar period.

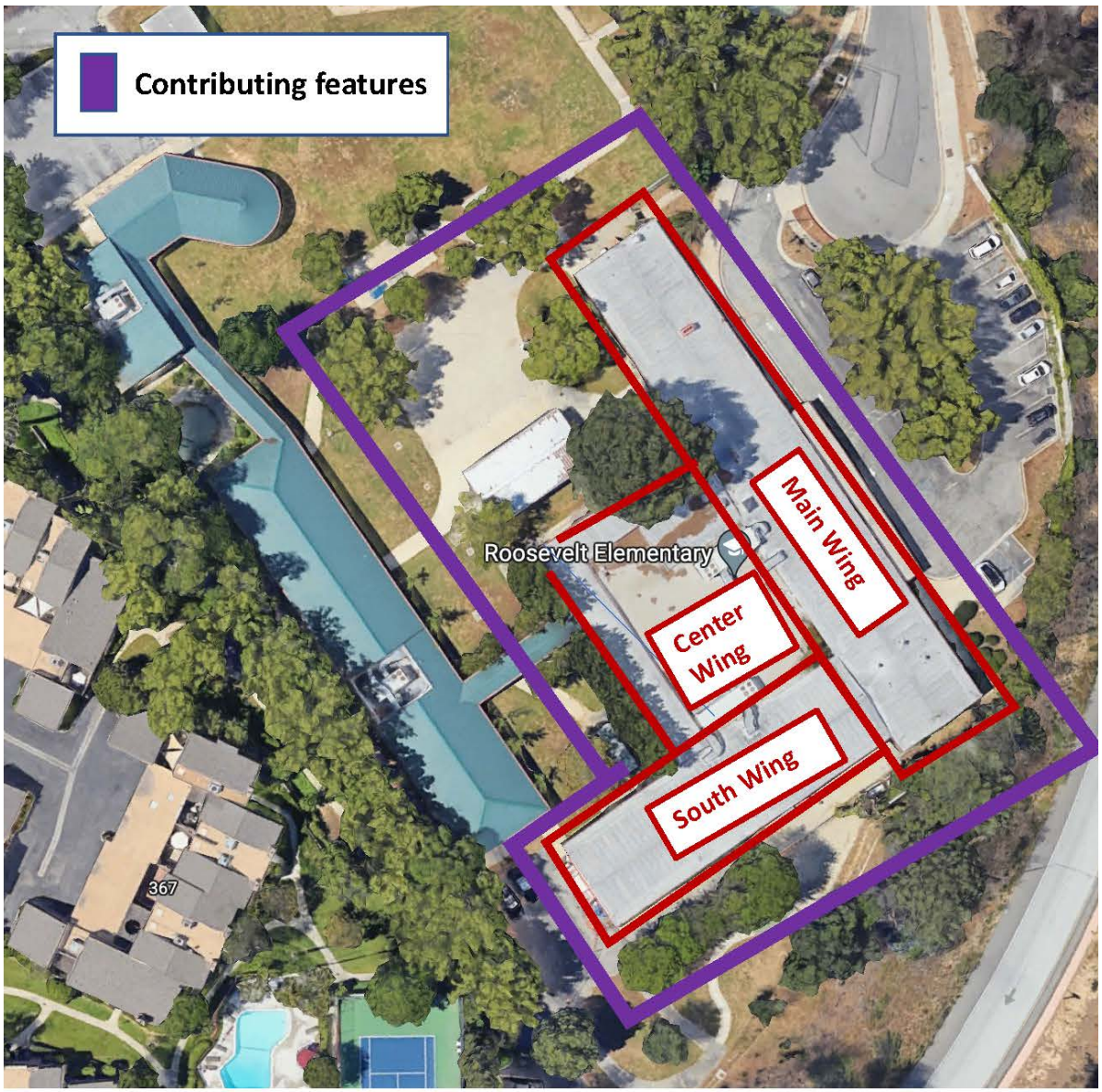
Inside the rooms, 4-foot-wide passageways provides ease of access between the occupational and physical therapy rooms. On the north portion of the Main Wing, teachers' rooms and separate spaces for domestic arts classes and a social/dining room round out the specialized interior rooms. The social and dining room features a fireplace.

The South Wing contains the classroom spaces. As with the Main Wing, classrooms are arranged along an axial building footprint, moving from junior high, primary, elementary, and preschool classrooms. Each classroom looks out on landscaping and plantings, visible through generous expanses of windows. Playgrounds adjacent to the South Wing are simple outdoor areas, with smooth asphalt and landscaping, and doors set flush with the ground.

Throughout the exterior and interior, each corridor or path of travel is flanked by attached hand railings at two different heights, to facilitate ease of access and self-sufficient mobility for students. Three decades before the ADA required such a level of accessibility, the school's restrooms accommodated wheelchairs through the use of right-sized doors and a thoughtful approach to door operation.

As noted above, the incorporation of entrance doors flush with the ground, continuous bands of handrails at varying heights, restrooms with right-sized doors and stalls, provided a safe, nurturing, appropriate environment for children with a variety of developmental and physical disabilities. The complete absence of stairs or steps is unusual in school design; even more unusual is the minute attention to detail in providing step-by-step ease of access to all of the campus's facilities for students with mobility issues or those utilizing a wheelchair. Once in the classrooms, as well, students could access chalkboards and easels, at an accessible height and equipped with hand railings.

Figure 3. Roosevelt School site plan, with Main, South, and Center Wings; landscaped courtyards line the inward-facing, west elevations; contributing elements are enclosed in purple



Source: Google Maps, modified by author

According to available historic aerial photographs, between 1964 and 1972, the Center Wing was expanded westward (though this was penciled in on the original conceptual drawings, as shown in Figure 4, suggesting it had been planned for a future phase of construction). In addition, the small area between the South Wing and Center Wing was filled in; window configurations and sheathing materials are compatible with but differentiated from adjacent historic features. In addition, new facilities were added along the western portion of the parcel, which also retains trees that pre-dated the school's 1953 reconstruction. Otherwise, the school exhibits few alterations and retains its original overall campus plan, exterior patterned brick wall sheathing, distinctive bands of multi-light windows (including framing, glazing, and other details), a high level of indoor-outdoor integration, and innovative accessibility features. The campus retains integrity and continues to convey the reasons for its significance.

The following section provides an overview of the original sketches and plans; all architectural drawings are from the Division of the State Architect, State of California.

Figure 4. Original sketch, Roosevelt School for Handicapped Children

Figure 5. Original sketch, Roosevelt School for Handicapped Children

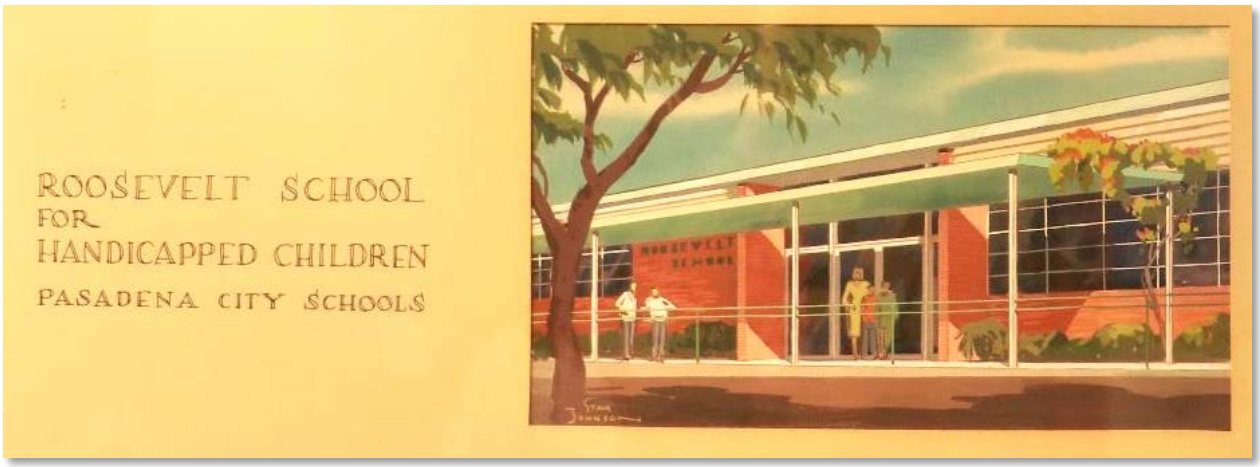


Figure 6. Main Wing, east (façade) elevation, and west (courtyard-facing) elevation; in circa 1970, the originally open area between the Center and South Wings was in-filled

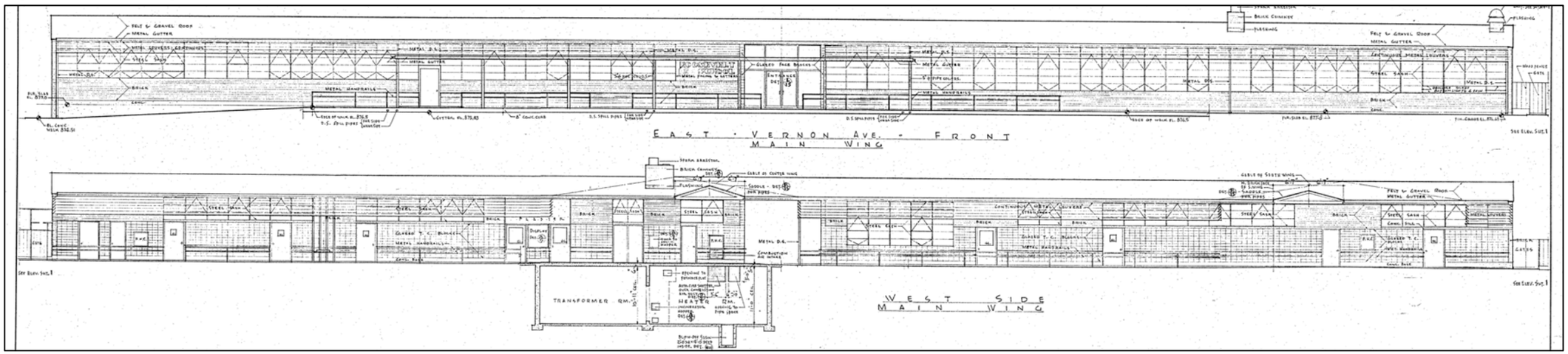


Figure 7. Main Wing interior, with progression from left to right of Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy rooms; Speech Therapy, nursing unit and administrative offices; teacher's facilities, and large, open classrooms for homemaking and social and dining room; the wing features connecting, central passageways between rooms and generous bands of steel-frame windows, facing landscaping

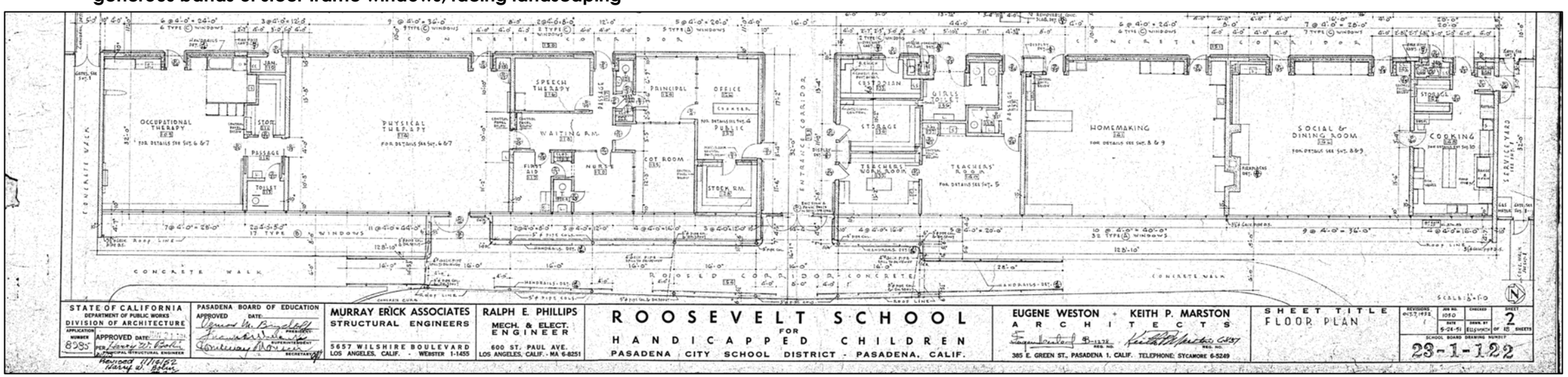


Figure 8. Elevations of South Wing, which contained the junior high, elementary, primary, and preschool classrooms, in a continuous corridor with connecting passageways

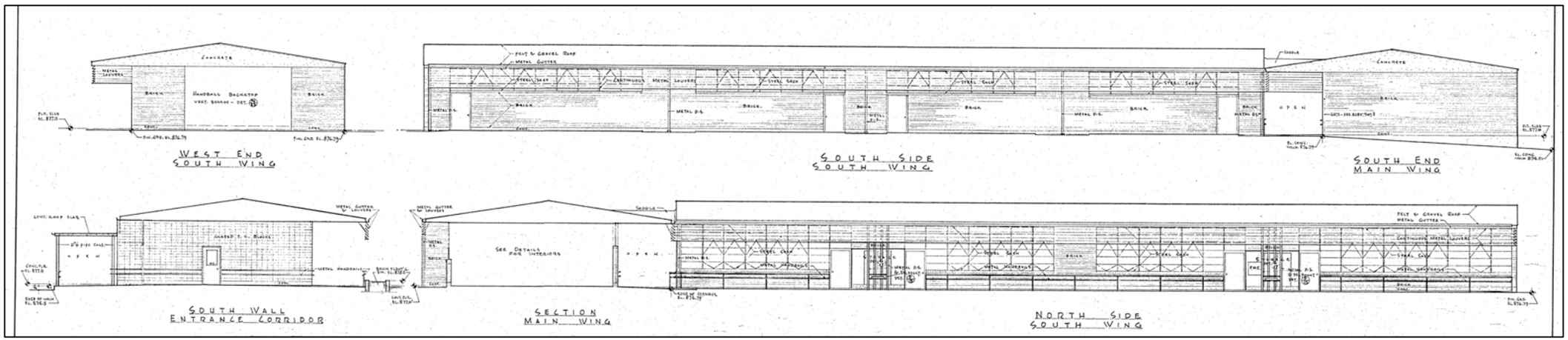


Figure 9. Interior of South Wing, with progression of rooms for junior high, elementary, primary, and preschool students, adjacent to occupational and physical therapy facilities

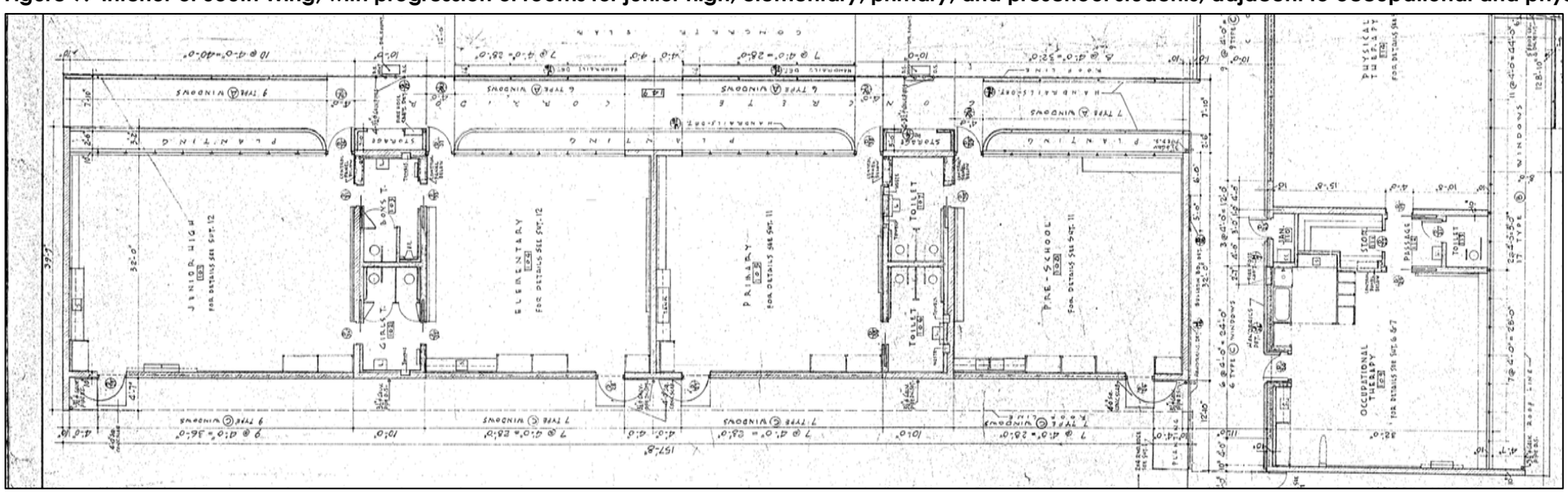


Figure 10. Center Wing, with wide sheltering eaves; in circa 1970, the area between the Center and South Wings, facing the interior courtyard of the campus, was in-filled

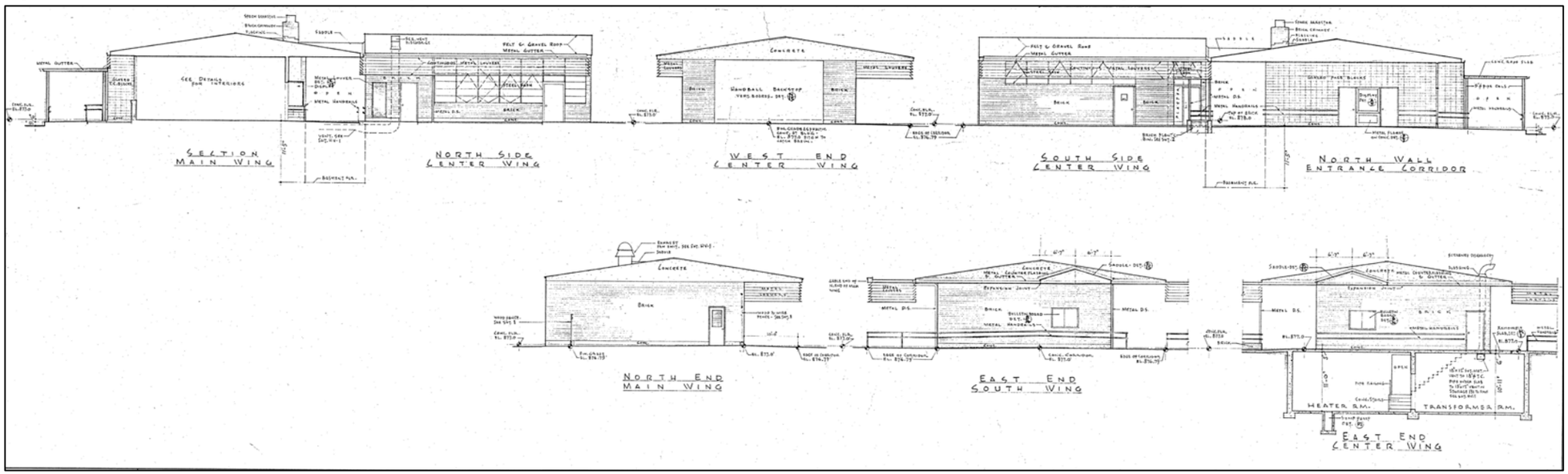


Figure 11. Detail of main entrance, Main Wing, with generous expanses of windows, double-height hand railings, and automated, wide, double doors flanked with glazed tile

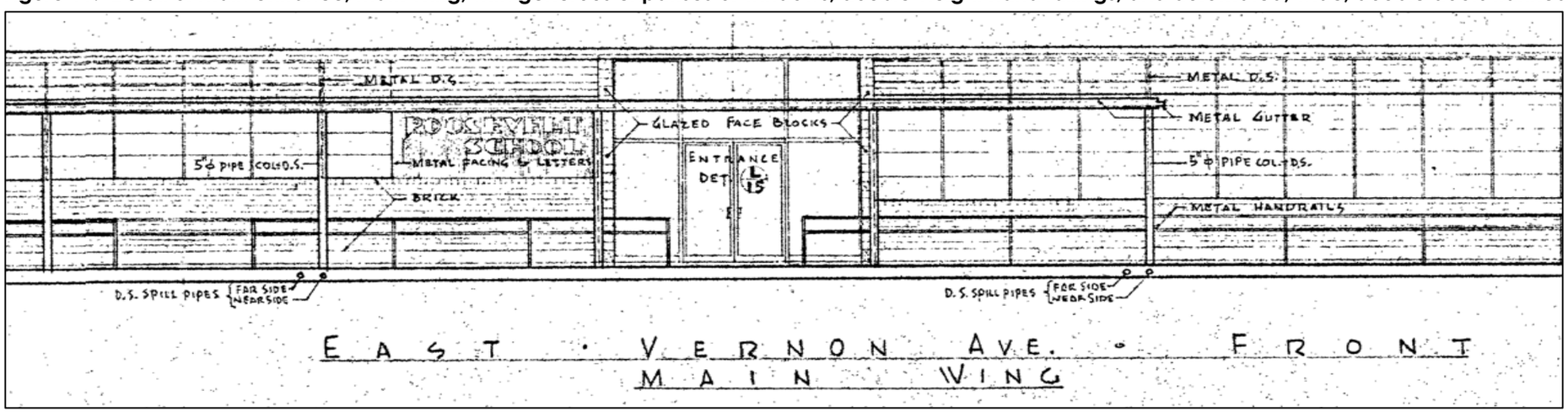


Figure 12. 1952 campus and landscaping plan; to rear elevation of Main Wing, shows original configuration of South and Center Wings, which were in-filled in circa 1970; trees that are extant along the west of the parcel pre-dated the 1953 reconstruction

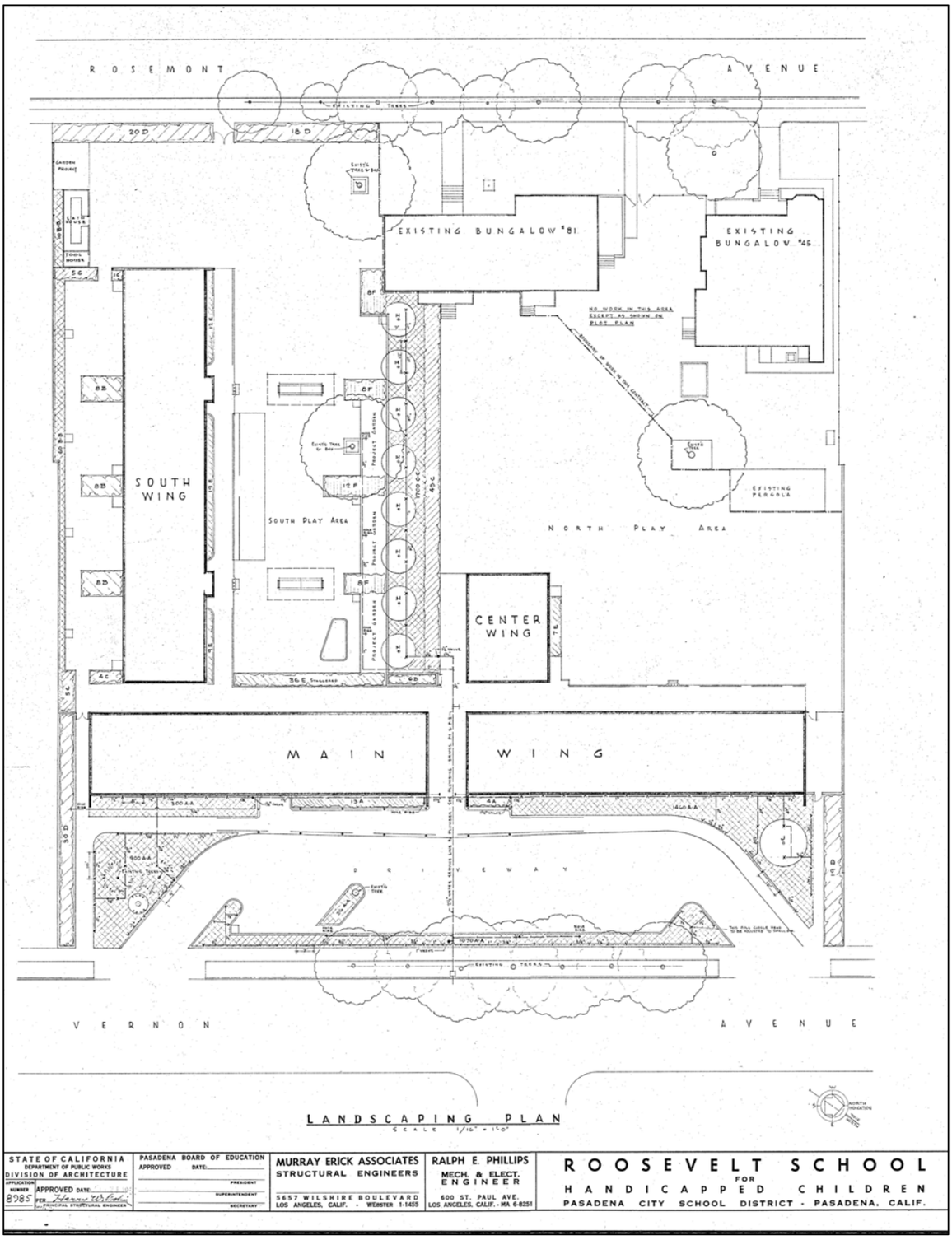


Figure 13. Approach to Roosevelt School, Main Wing, east elevation

Figure 14. Roosevelt School Main Wing (façade), east elevation

Figure 15. Main entrance, with doors set flush with the ground, double-height hand-railings, sheltered porch, and automated door opener; each door measures 4.5 feet (the minimum width for ADA access defined later was 32 inches)

Figure 16. Brick walls, school name lettering, and ceramic tile adjacent to main entrance

Figure 17. Detail of wide, double-doors, positioned for optimal accessibility, with double-height hand-railings and automated door openers, flanked with tile-clad wing walls

Figure 18. Detail of entrance, with automated door opener, double-height hand-railings, brick sheathing, and tile-clad wing walls

Figure 19. Roosevelt School, detail of brick walls and window sills and original windows; the school retains original multi-light sashes throughout campus

Figure 20. Transitional area at drop-off area, with sheltered entrance patio and double-height hand-railings optimizing accessibility

Figure 21. Drop-off area, with sheltered patio and double-height hand-railings, and entrance to Vernon Tolo Medical Therapy Unit, California Children's Services

Figure 22. Sheltered entrance patio with landscaping and wide roof eaves with continuous bands of multi-light windows; double-height hand-railings optimize accessibility

Figure 23. Corner of façade (east elevation) and south elevation, with continuous bands of multi-light windows looking out on landscaping, enhancing indoor-outdoor integration

Figure 24. Double-height hand railings optimize accessibility throughout the interior and exterior

Figure 25. Roosevelt School, classrooms lined with original windows, east elevation

Figure 26. Roosevelt School, detail of continuous bands of multilight windows, marking the locations of classrooms; mature trees in interior courtyard appear behind façade

Figure 27. Detail of main entrance

Figure 28. Detail of main entrance, with automated doors, each of which measures 4.5 feet (the minimum width for ADA access defined later was 32 inches)

Figure 29. Main Wing, east elevation; walls of windows enhance indoor-outdoor integration

Figure 30. Central Wing, courtyard facing elevation, with continuous groupings of windows looking out onto mature trees and open space/recreation area

Figure 31. Main Wing, interior courtyard, west elevation of main wing

Figure 32. Main Wing, facing interior courtyard, shelters over exterior walkways (a key feature of postwar functionalist schools) provide transitional area from interior to courtyard area

Figure 33. Main Wing and South Wings join to form an L-shape; facing courtyard on school interior, wide shelters over exterior walkways and central landscaping

Figure 34. Interior courtyard and mature landscaping; buildings in background are later additions and are not included among the contributing features of school

Figure 35. Interior courtyard, juncture of Main Wing and Central Wing, which was expanded westward and southward in circa 1970

Figure 36. When built in 1953, the school retained mature trees already on the site, including a progression of trees along the western portion of the parcel

Figure 37. Path of travel through courtyard and between buildings features smooth surfaces with minimal inclines and absence of stairs or other impediments to access

Figure 38. Lunch shelter on left and extension of Central Wing on right; the change in brick patterns marks the area of the extension in circa 1970

Figure 39. Central Wing addition, detail of patterned brick

Figure 40. Central Wing addition in interior courtyard, west elevation

Figure 41. Juncture of Central and South Wings, interior courtyard, north perspective

Figure 42. South Wing classrooms, with patterned brick, wide sheltering roof eaves, and continuous band of multi-light windows

Figure 43. South Wing, north and west elevations

Figure 44. South Wing, south elevation, with patterned brick, wide sheltering roof eaves, and landscaping around play area

Figure 45. Noncontributing facilities on the western portion of the parcel

Figure 46. Noncontributing facilities on the western portion of the parcel

Figure 47. Double-height hand railings optimize accessibility throughout the interior and exterior

Figure 48. Double-height hand railings optimize accessibility throughout the interior and exterior

Figure 49. Fireplace for story time, in an expression of the purposefully domestic character of the modern, functionalist school

Figure 50. Right-sized restrooms with wide doors enhance access

Figure 51. Interior plan features continuous, connected classrooms and passageways, with easily accessed, right-sized restroom facilities adjacent to classrooms

Figure 52. Double-height hand railings, and the absence of stairs or threshold changes, optimize accessibility throughout the interior and exterior

Figure 53. Double-height hand railings, and the absence of stairs or threshold changes, optimize accessibility throughout the interior

Figure 54. Sloped easels with handrailings

Figure 55. Main Wing, entrance for Vernon Tolo Medical Therapy Unit, California Children's Services

Figure 56. Main Wing, Vernon Tolo Medical Therapy Unit, California Children's Services

Figure 57. Resolution for Roosevelt School from Congressperson Jack Scott, 2007

Resolution

By the Honorable Jack Scott, 21st Senatorial District;
Relative to Commending

Roosevelt School

WHEREAS, Roosevelt School in the Pasadena Unified School District is celebrating its one hundredth anniversary, and upon this occasion, the students, staff, faculty, and administrators are deserving of the special recognition and heartiest congratulations of the people of the State of California; and

WHEREAS, Located in a community that understands the importance of education and views the school's facilities as a center for support of the neighborhood, Roosevelt School is committed to serving all of its students so that each may fully benefit from the rich academic and social programs offered; and

WHEREAS, Opening in 1907 as a two-story grammar school with eight classrooms at 315 North Vernon Street, Roosevelt School remains at the same location, although the street name was changed to Pasadena Avenue when the surrounding area was divided by the 210 and 134 freeways; and

WHEREAS, A separate frame building was opened in 1908 as one of the first kindergartens in the state and a part-time high school was housed at Roosevelt School from 1927 to 1929, when the school became Roosevelt School for Mentally Handicapped Children, to which physically handicapped children were admitted in 1930; and

WHEREAS, After the Long Beach earthquake of 1933, the building was condemned, razed, and replaced with bungalows, and the present buildings were constructed in 1953, with the main structure housing the administration offices and classrooms, as well as California Children's Services' Vernon Tolo Medical Treatment Unit; and

WHEREAS, In 1988, general education students returned to Roosevelt School, which presently serves as a neighborhood school for general education students in kindergarten and grades 1 through 6, and also accepts special education students ages 3 to 22 from throughout the school district; and

WHEREAS, Roosevelt School was selected as a Title I Achieving School in 2003 after its Academic Performance Index score increased by more than double the targets set by the state for a three-year period, and in 2002 the school received the High-Flying School Designation from the Education Trust, as well as the California High Performing School Designation from the Consumers' Research Council; and

WHEREAS, Roosevelt School has provided its students with a firm foundation upon which to base their future development, as well as a sense of community and belonging that is instilled in each student through the school curriculum; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED BY SENATOR JACK SCOTT, That he draws special public attention to Roosevelt School in the Pasadena Unified School District on the celebration of its one hundredth anniversary, points with great pride to the outstanding opportunities which it has provided to its students over the years, and extends sincere best wishes for its continued success in the future.

Member Resolution No. 1232
Dated this 11th day of October, 2007.

Jack Scott

Honorable Jack Scott
21st Senatorial District

Historic Context

Brief History of Special Education Programs and Accessible Facility Design

At the time of Roosevelt School's redesign and reinauguration in 1953, another 20 years would pass before legislation and legal precedent mandated access to education for disabled children. These changes, which were achieved incrementally, at the federal and state levels, established the principle that "quality education for every school-age child was not a privilege but a right."[3]

Before the watershed decade of the 1970s, however, access to an appropriate education and occupational skills throughout US schools remained woefully inadequate. In the United States as of 1970, for example, schools educated only 20 percent (one in five) of children with disabilities, and "many states had laws excluding certain students, including children who were deaf, blind, emotionally disturbed, or had an intellectual disability."[4] Prior to the Civil Rights-era, a unified approach for educational programs and accessible facilities had not yet fully emerged: indeed, at the time, "handicapped children, if they were taught at all, tended to be relegated to special classes down by the boiler room or to run-down facilities abandoned by others."[5]

Although the Progressive Era brought significant shifts in education (including the introduction of compulsory education), disabled children remained largely marginalized, and stigmatized: "'In the past, parents of handicapped children often tended to be embarrassed at their situation,'" according to Edwin Martin Jr., director of the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped in the United States Office of Education, said. "'They were grateful for whatever schools would do for their children.'"[6]

According to the US Department of Education, during the 1950s and 1960s, the federal government, in concert with the "strong support and advocacy of family associations, began to develop and validate practices for children with disabilities and their families."[7] This pioneering work developed a point-of-departure for more programs throughout the United States. New laws were adopted through the 1950s and 1960s, including the Training of Professional Personnel Act (1959), the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (1965), and the Handicapped Children's Early Education Assistance Act (1968).[8]

It was the decade of the 1970s, however, that brought a sea change in how educators, decision-makers, and the public came to see special education. Various related currents came together to make this possible—first, the 1954 US Supreme Court ruling on school segregation prompted parents and educators to point out that remedies for the segregation of disabled children were also needed.

Carrying forward this idea in the era of the Civil Rights movement, in the 1960s, a newly empowered movement for disability rights began challenging the status quo in the courts: "Allied with special education specialists within the schools, [parents of disabled children] went to court themselves to challenge [the] system" and push for a mandate recognizing that education was a right for all children.[9]

[3] Riske, Edward B., 25 April 1976, "Special Education Is Now a Matter of Civil Rights," *The New York Times*.

[4] US Department of Education, 30 November 2023, "A History of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act," Individuals With Disabilities Act.

[5] Riske, 1976.

[6] Riske, 1976.

[7] US Department of Education, 2023.

[8] US Department of Education, 2023.

[9] Riske, 1976.

In 1976, the *New York Times* published an article exploring the history of special education in the United States, noting that the

> landmark decision came in 1971 when…a United States district court ordered the state [of Pennsylvania] to provide education at public expense for all retarded (sic) children. The next year, in Mills v. Board of Education, another Federal court extended this principle to all handicapped children in the District of Columbia, and ruled further that lack of funds on the part of the school system was no excuse for failure to comply.[10]

The *New York Times* article further noted changes at the federal level, which had a significant impact: specifically, with the 1966 creation of the Federal Office of Education Bureau for the Handicapped. With this, federal funding for "research, teacher training and other activities has gone from $35 million to $350 million a year" and plans were underway to "include the handicapped in other federal programs." [11] In addition, the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 affirmed the civil rights of all disabled people and required accommodations for disabled students in educational environments.

Building on these advances, between 1971 and 1976, over two dozen more legal challenges had been filed, "in some cases by parents of handicapped and gifted children acting together."[12] In 1973, for example, a full two decades following Roosevelt School's reconstruction, a class action law suit in New York resulted in the State Education Commissioner ordering all school districts in the state to provide "'adequate and appropriate' education for all handicapped children."[13]

In 1975, Congress adopted the Education for All Handicapped Children Act "to support states and localities in protecting the rights of, meeting the individual needs of, and improving the results for infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities and their families."[14] Since the passage of this law in 1975, the United States went from "excluding nearly 1.8 million children with disabilities from public schools prior to EHA implementation to providing more than 7.5 million children with disabilities with special education and related services designed to meet their individual needs," as of 2020-2021.[15] One of the other noteworthy accomplishments of this landmark legislation was a focus on educating children in their local neighborhood schools rather than more distant schools and institutional settings. (The name of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act was updated in 1990 to the Individuals with Disabilities Act.)

In this way, the 1960s and 1970s transformed how school districts in California—and the United States—approached, designed for, and prioritized special education. What had been an uneven, and often parent-driven, approach to special education was transformed through federal and state legislation and court decisions. Taken together, these legislative and policy shifts signaled a new recognition (along with legal remedies) of the impediments to education access for developmentally and physically disabled children.

[10] Riske, 1976.

[11] Riske, 1976.

[12] Riske, 1976.

[13] Riske, 1976.

[14] US Department of Education, 2023.

[15] US Department of Education, 2023.

Figure 58. President Gerald Ford, 1975, signing Education for All Handicapped Children Act; caption notes "parents with handicapped children are optimistic about this change"

Through the 1980s, new legislation targeted early intervention and required that states provide program and services to disabled children from birth; early intervention programs were intended to proactively prepare children with disabilities to "meet the academic and social challenges that lie ahead of them, both while in school and in later life."[16] While no one single new policy or law solved the issue definitely, this era catalyzed a "quiet revolution" and national conversation (which is ongoing to this day) on how best to provide a "free and adequate public education" for disabled children.[17]

As the 1960s helped raise awareness of the need for educational opportunities and options for disabled students, it also heightened awareness about the need for accessible facilities. One catalyzing event took place in 1957, when President Dwight D. Eisenhower presented Hugo Deffner, an insurance executive from Oklahoma City, with the "Handicapped American of the Year" Award in 1957; the award was presented in "recognition of his work to promote accessibility in his community."

However, as recounted by the National Institute of Building Sciences,

> Minutes before the ceremony, Deffner was unable to enter the building where the ceremony was taking place due to the lack of a ramped entrance. This event helped to spawn the birth of the architectural barriers program after the incident disturbed the President's Committee and they immediately included addressing architectural barriers in their meeting later that same year.[18]

In 1961, the first set of accessibility design standards were published by the American National Standards Institute; funded by the Easter Seals Research Foundation, the standards offered a pioneering reference guide for public and private sectors. The topics addressed in the design standards included approaches

[16] US Department of Education, 2023.

[17] US Department of Education, 2023.

[18] National Institute of Building Sciences, 2023.

for restrooms, drinking fountains, public telephones, elevators, parking facilities, and entrances and doors. As of 2023, these are all areas that pose well-known accessibility problems and solutions; these issues and solutions were little recognized at the time.

These efforts were expanded in 1968 with passage of the Architectural Barriers Act, which required accessibility for facilities designed, built, altered, or leased with federal funding. Finally, in 1990, the landmark Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was passed, which expanded on the 1968 law and led to the 1991 publication of the ADA Accessibility Guidelines, which represented another key milestone.

Figure 59. President Eisenhower, 1957, presenting "Handicapped American of the Year" award to Hugo Deffner, who had been unable to access the building due to the lack of a wheelchair ramp (left); President George H.W. Bush, July 1990, signing the ADA (right)

Source: National Institute of Building Sciences, Washington, D.C., 2023

Historic Overview of Roosevelt School

A generation before the watershed moments of the 1960s and 1970s, Pasadena Unified School District's Roosevelt School already provided a multifaceted educational program, ***housed within*** an accessible facility for developmentally and physically disabled children. In this way, Roosevelt School represented a pioneering alternative for disabled children, in terms of its accessible facility, educational program, occupational/physical therapy, and skills training. Years ahead of its time, this innovative facility allowed generations of disabled children to gain an education, learn life skills, seek state-of-the-art physical and occupational therapy, and to live full lives.

When it was originally constructed in 1907, Roosevelt School did not serve special needs students; it was a two-story red-brick elementary school with eight classrooms; in 1908, a separate kindergarten was added to the campus. In May 1929, the campus was renamed Roosevelt School for Mentally Handicapped Children; by 1930, physically handicapped children were admitted to the school as well.[19]

[19] Pasadena Unified School District, 1955, 81 Years of Public Education in Pasadena: Superintendent's Annual Report, Pasadena City Schools, June 1955, p. 61. Available at Pasadena Museum of History, Pasadena, California.

Figure 60. Roosevelt School, 5th grade, as of 1911; though originally built in 1907, the school did not start serving special-needs students until 1929

Source: Courtesy of the Pasadena Museum of History

Within several years of establishing a special-needs program, Roosevelt School (like many other schools in the region) was damaged beyond repair in the 1933 Long Beach Earthquake. Following demolition of the original campus buildings, temporary bungalows were installed until a more permanent campus could be constructed. During the economic downtown of the Great Depression, this reconstruction was delayed until the postwar period, when a bond measure for Pasadena schools was passed and rebuilding Roosevelt School became one of the top priorities.

The 1953 reconstruction presented a unique opportunity to reimagine the campus, with a tailored, state-of-the-art facility. The redesigned Roosevelt School is a textbook example of the modern, functionalist school plant (described in more detail below), combined with a range of amenities and accessibility features. When it reopened in 1953, Roosevelt School became the first purpose-built special educational facility in Pasadena[20] and one of only a handful of special education centers in the Los Angeles region, particularly those that had been purpose-designed and built. Indeed, even with the second largest school district in the United States (i.e., LAUSD, with "nearly 800 campuses and a geographic span of over 700 square miles"),[21] only approximately 10 special education centers were open in the greater Los Angeles region as of 1970. (By way of comparison, in terms of the student population, LAUSD's enrollment stood at 645,000 by 1959).[22]

[20] Pasadena Unified School District, 1955, *81 Years of Public Education in Pasadena: Superintendent's Annual Report*, Pasadena City Schools, June 1955. Available at Pasadena Museum of History, Pasadena, California.

[21] Los Angeles Unified School District Historic Context Statement, p. 1.

[22] Los Angeles Unified School District Historic Context Statement, p. 102.

Table 1. Overview of pre-1970 Greater Los Angeles-region Special Education Schools[23]

#	School Name	Community	Year Founded	Population Served
1	Perez Special Education Center	Los Angeles	1926	Trainable developmentally disabled children and ortho disabled children
2	**Roosevelt School**	**Pasadena**	**1929; reconstructed in 1953**	**Pre-K through young adults; orthopedically disabled children, developmentally disabled, multiply disabled, autism, and other developmental/physical challenges**
3	Pacific Boulevard Special Education Center	Huntington Park	1932	Orthopedically disabled children; trainable developmentally disabled
4	Sophia T. Salvin Special Education	Los Angeles	1937	Physically disabled, multiply disabled, trainable developmentally disabled, autism, and other physical challenges
5	Ernest P. Willenberg Special Education Center	San Pedro	1950	Emphasizes occupational training, with students starting in workshops at age 13.
6	Charles Leroy Lowman Special Education Center	North Hollywood	1950	Ortho-challenged handicapped and other health impaired students, developmentally handicapped with severe impairment
7	Lokrantz Special Education Center	Reseda	1960	Named for Dr. Sven Lokrantz, the "Father of Corrective Physical Education," for autistic and orthopedically-handicapped, ages 3 to 13
8	C. Morley Sellery Special Education Center	Gardena	1961	Custom-built school to serve a special needs population of children with severe handicaps, ages 3 to 12
9	James J. McBride School	Los Angeles	1966	Orthopedically disabled, trainable developmentally disabled, and multiply disabled
10	Banneker Special Education Center	San Pedro	1968	Vocational training and instructional programs for moderate-to-severe disabilities

The school offered accessible entryways and exits, with automatic double-doors (wider than the subsequent ADA minimum requirements) to maximize accessibility; accessible playgrounds and bathrooms, with mobility aids, grab rails, and accessible sinks; shows and a bathtub at the on-site clinic; and wheelchair accessible bus valet with handrails; and thresholds and transitions designed for a smooth path of travel. In addition, design details included a color palette of calming and neutral shades, non-glare materials, and a variety of touchable, durable materials for students with tactile sensitivities.

Spaces in the school include the classrooms, life skills rooms, occupational/physical therapy rooms, sensory and respite rooms, health center, and an on-site clinic and psychologist office. In total, the school spans over 40,000 square feet.

[23] This approximate count is compiled from records on file with the California Department of Education, California School Directory; the Los Angeles Unified School District; and Lewis, Roselle M., 1983, "Public, Private Schools Providing Education for the Handicapped," *Los Angeles Times*, 17 November 1983. Available at ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Los Angeles Times.

From its inception through 2020, hundreds of educators and health care professionals staffed the school; this diverse staff included special education teachers, speech therapists, and nurses. One such specialist, orthopedic surgeon Dr. Vernon T. Tolo, was honored in 2006 for his service to the children of Pasadena; the school still retains a gold and black plaque dedicated to Dr. Tolo, on the exterior of the Medical Therapy Unit on the school's Main Wing. As of 1955, within two years of its reinauguration, the new school served over 110 students, with a staff of 10 teachers led by Principal Dr. Harold P. Blome.[24]

In 1956, a three-part series in the *Pasadena Independent* explored Roosevelt School, its range of services, and its approach. A central idea in the series reflected the relative scarcity of such schools and the fact that special needs students often went without an education or other occupational services that would help them find their place in society:

> What's to be done for Mary who is crippled by cerebral palsy or Johnny who's 'a little show at catching on.' Are they to be shoved into the background, shunned and forgotten? Or are they to be given the opportunity to take a place in society? Is their education the responsibility of the parents or the community?[25]

To answer the question, the reporter presents the case study of Roosevelt School, whose "multiple and flexible" approach to special education presaged the later debate and conversation about the best practice. Rather than offering a rigid approach, Roosevelt School embraced the "two philosophies regarding education of the handicapped" at the time. As described by Dr. Archie Turrell, director of the child welfare department, "one calls for placing the handicapped in a special school while the other favors placing the children in a regular school situation. We do both; it's sort of a middle of the road policy."[26]

One of the prominent issues discussed in the 1956 *Pasadena Independent* series acknowledged the lack of disabled-accessible facilities or programs, resulting in profound isolation and lack of educational or occupational opportunities. In one example, a long-time student, Bill, had suffered from recurrent rheumatic fever, including four episodes of pneumonia, by the time he was nine years old. Bill "was 9 ½ years old when he came here and had practically no schooling…he started with nothing and it was a task. At first he didn't want help but gradually he began accepting assistance,'" explained the Roosevelt School teacher Mrs. Holmes.[27]

By the time he was 15, Bill would "stay just as long as I will after school to work" on his studies, Mrs. Holmes observed, further noting that, due to the instruction he received at Roosevelt, Bill had progressed enough that he was planning for his integration in a standard junior high school.

The series in the *Pasadena Independent* is filled with similar success stories. In the context of the history of Roosevelt School, these personal anecdotes provide a snapshot of special education in Pasadena, circa 1956. They also serve as a powerful reminder of how great the need was for accessible facilities and comprehensive special education at the time—and how high the personal cost for disabled children and young adults, and their families, must have been when such programs were not available.

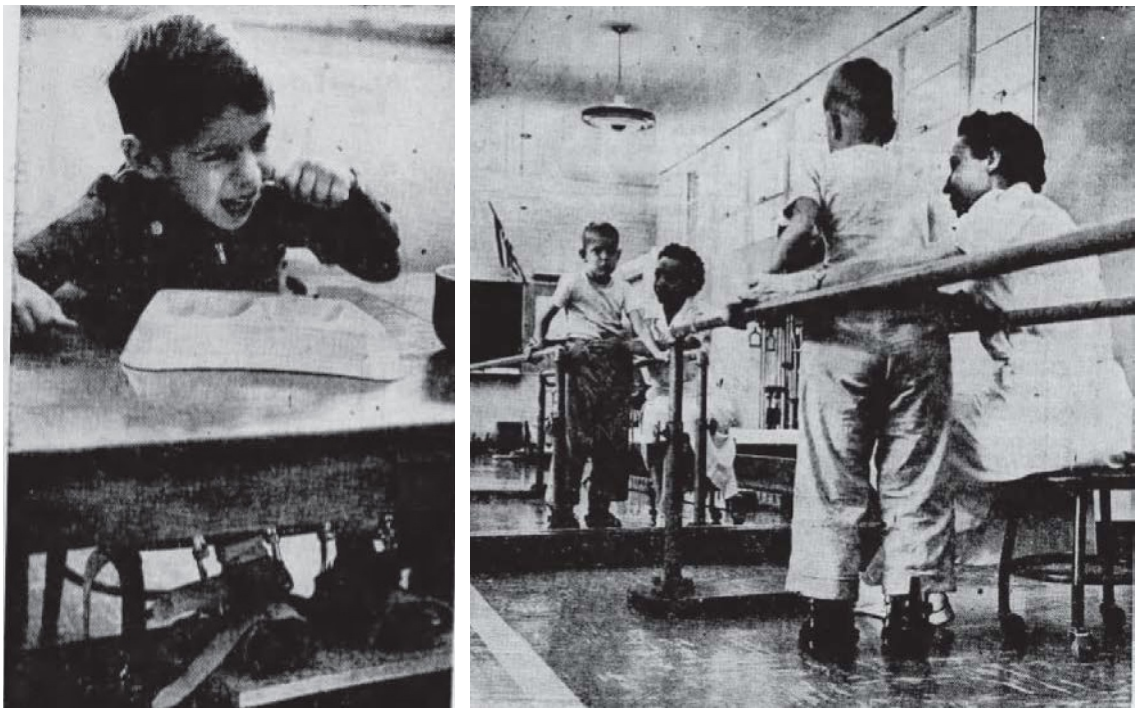
[24] Pasadena Unified School District, 1955, 81 Years of Public Education in Pasadena: Superintendent's Annual Report, Pasadena City Schools, June 1955. Available at Pasadena Museum of History, Pasadena, California.

[25] Gossett, Bill, 1956, "No 'Isolated' Children Here: Pasadena Schools Offer Aid to Handicapped," *Pasadena Independent*, 29 February 1956.

[26] Gossett, 1956.

[27] Gossett, 1956.

Figure 61. *Pasadena Independent* series on Roosevelt School, 1956; student with cerebral palsy in occupational therapy class (left), and 7-year-old student, also with cerebral palsy, assisted by physical therapist Florence I. Brock on the parallel bars



Source: *Pasadena Independent*, 1 March 1956

Figure 62. Interior amenities designed for arts classes at Roosevelt School, as of 1968

Source: Courtesy of the Pasadena Museum of History

Design Professionals Associated with Property

The design team selected for the "Roosevelt School for Handicapped Children," as it was known at the time, included the Pasadena-based firm of Eugene Weston Jr. and Keith P. Marston, Architects (described in more detail below), along with structural engineer Murray Erick & Associates and mechanical/electrical engineer Ralph E. Phillips.

Eugene Weston, Jr.

Eugene Weston, Jr., was a renowned master architect in Southern California, with offices based in Hollywood. Born in Los Angeles in 1896, Weston, Jr., was the second in a three-generational line of prolific, celebrated Los Angeles architects. He was the son of Eugene Weston, Sr. (1861-1934), who partnered with Ezra F. Kysor, himself one of the first practicing architects in Los Angeles, in the late nineteenth century; Weston Jr.'s son, Eugene Weston III (1924-2012),[28] became renowned for his embrace of Mid-Century Modernism in the postwar period, with a focus on residential design.[29]

After joining the American Institute of Architects (AIA) in 1927, Weston Jr. completed numerous well-regarded commissions throughout Southern California. These included the American Legion Headquarters Building in Hollywood (1929), the Alessandro Branch (1925) and the Amelia Earhart Branch (1929) of the Los Angeles Public Library, and the Farmers and Merchants Bank of Los Angeles at 7th and Mateo Streets in Los Angeles (1924).

Among his commissions, Weston Jr. contributed to Harbor Hills, one of the first housing developments commissioned by the Housing Authority in Los Angeles.[30] For this 1941 Garden City complex, Weston Jr. joined the team of "preeminent urban planner" Clarence Stein, along with Reginald Johnson, Donald B. Parkinson, and landscape architects Katherine Bashford and Fred Barlow, Jr. Weston Jr.'s commissions include other pre-1945 housing/garden city projects, including Aliso Village in Los Angeles (1941), Cabrillo Homes Housing Project in Long Beach (1942), and Ramona Gardens Public Housing in Lincoln Heights, Los Angeles (1940). For the Ramona Gardens project, Weston Jr. teamed with Ralph Flewelling, George J. Adams, Lloyd Wright, Lewis Eugene Wilson, and Walter S. Davis, a consortium called Housing Architects Associated. This group was also responsible for Aliso Village.

Keith P. Marston

For Roosevelt School, Weston teamed with Keith P. Marston, an architect based in Pasadena. Born in 1914, Marston was the son of renowned Pasadena architect Sylvanus B. Marston, for whom he worked as a draftsman between 1941 and 1946. Marston studied at Pasadena City College in 1933, later obtaining his Bachelor's in Architecture from the University of Southern California School of Architecture in 1936. Marston joined the American Institute of Architects in 1946. Other school commissions include Ganesha High School and Marshall Junior High in Pomona, California.[31]

[28] Conversation with Eugene Weston III and Debi Howell-Ardila, 26 February 2010, Pasadena, California. Notes on file with author.

[29] Withey, Henry F., AIA, and Elsie Rathburn Withey, Biographic Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased), (Los Angeles: New Age Publishing, Company, 1956).

[30] Los Angeles Conservancy, n.d., "Harbor Hills." Available at: https://www.laconservancy.org/learn/historic-places/harbor-hills/.

[31] Unless otherwise noted, this material is drawn from Pacific Coast Architecture Database, University of Washington. "Keith Palmer Marston, Architect." Available at: https://pcad.lib.washington.edu/person/1344. Accessed 10 November 2023.

Mid-Century Modern Educational Design[32]

With its informal, program-driven design, domestic scale and character, with patterned brick walls and sheltering roof eaves, outdoor walkways, and generous expanses of windows looking out onto landscaping, Roosevelt School represents a textbook example of a postwar, modern, functionalist school, albeit one purpose-designed for special needs students.

To observers in 2024, the common characteristics of the postwar school—with its low massing, lack of historicist ornament, axial classrooms allowing for double-loaded corridors and an expansive site plan, and hallways moved outdoors to covered arcades, are highly recognizable. Yet, in the immediate postwar years, the embrace of this more informal, domestic-scaled approach to school design represented the culmination of decades of reform.

During the first quarter of the twentieth century, schools typically displayed a more monumental style and scale, in particular for administration buildings and auditoria (the most publicly visible and accessed spaces). Typical architectural styles included Collegiate Gothic Revival, Italian Renaissance Revival, and Spanish Colonial and Mission Revival styles.

In the wake of the Progressive Era educational reforms, the function of schools had expanded. Education had become compulsory; in this way, a grand, ornamental facility, with an eye-catching monumental scale, served as an advertisement and announcement of the school's authority and prestige. As renowned educational architect William Wayne Caudill put it in 1954, "The old school was primarily designed to impress the adult and the new school primarily designed to impress and provide comfort to the pupil."[33]

Figure 63. Pasadena Unified Schools from the pre-World War II era; Washington Elementary School (left, shown in 1925) and Longfellow Elementary School (right, shown in 1926)

Source: "Roots of Education in Pasadena: 1870s-1920s," Pasadena Digital History Collection; www.pasadenadigitalhistory.com

[32] Except where otherwise noted, this material was adapted from *Los Angeles Unified School District Historic Context Statement, 1870 to 1969*, 2014. Prepared by Sapphos Environmental, Inc., for Los Angeles Unified School District, Office of Environmental Health and Safety.

[33] Caudill, William Wayne, *Toward Better School Design* (New York: FW Dodge Corporation, 1954), p. 16. Caudill himself was an early leader in the community of reform-minded school architects and designers. In 1946, California Department of Education official Charles Gibson informed Caudill that his book, Space for Teaching, was often used in Californian schools. Wrote Gibson to Caudill, "Your reputation as an authority on school design is already established in California. We use your Bulletin 'Space for Teaching' almost as a Bible in this state." Cited in Ogata, Amy F., "Building for Learning in Postwar American Elementary Schools," Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians 67, no. 4 (December 2008): 562–91; footnote 76.

In the 1920s and 1930s, several factors emerged to shift the approach to school design, in ways that presaged postwar reforms. For example, a nascent modern movement, which in California looked to local precedent, character, and high degrees of indoor-outdoor integration in architectural design, began to point the way toward a more "child-centered" school plant. Pioneering examples from the 1930s include Richard Neutra's 1934 Corona Avenue Elementary School and 1937 Ralph Waldo Emerson Junior High School in Los Angeles. The key issue was creating a space that was more child-friendly, more domestic in character, and connected to the outdoors through generous expanses of fenestration and L- and H-shaped site plans that created sheltered courtyard spaces. The one-story, ground-level classroom (lacking the monumental staircases of the previous generation of schools, for example), with a wall of windows looking out onto landscaping, was a key part of this approach.

The second and decisive factor was the 6.5-magnitude Long Beach Earthquake in March 1933, which destroyed and/or damaged scores of campuses throughout Southern California. Those schools deemed structurally sound typically saw major alterations in the form of the removal of applied ornament and parapets, for example, and structural reinforcements seen as effective at the time (including applying reinforced gunite to building exteriors). Following the Long Beach Earthquake, the authority for school design and plan approvals shifted to the California Division of the State Architect; in this way, school facilities were no longer subject to local zoning and instead went through a central, unified authority, to ensure consistent safety standards across all districts in California.

The Long Beach Earthquake also catalyzed adoption of a major piece of legislation called the Field Act; adopted in April 1933, the Field Act established uniform building standards for schools in California. A key part of the legislation, when it comes to the subsequent appearance of schools in California, was that elementary schools were not to exceed one story in height—high schools could rise as high as two stories, though this later changed due to the increased demand for classroom space.

With the end of World War II, as the building boom got underway, districts throughout California experienced a population expansion, along with maintenance and upgrade needs that had been deferred during the Great Depression and World War II. In Pasadena, the 20 years following the end of World War II brought rapid, significant economic growth and population expansion. For example, in Pasadena, the population grew from "just over 81,000 in 1940 to 106,000 by the close of the decade."[34] By 1955, Pasadena Unified School District had nearly 35 schools serving over 25,000 K-12 students, with only Roosevelt School designed for special needs.[35] This catalyzed the need for new construction and upgrades, funded through multiple rounds of bond measures (the first of which, a $5.5 million measure approved in 1948, funded the long-awaited reconstruction of Roosevelt School, along with two other schools).[36]

At the same time, architectural modernism was emerging as a contemporary, historicist-free option, one that expressed the optimism of the era.[37] In school design, modernism became the preferred stylistic vocabulary. With a philosophy that was highly compatible with that of the school reform movement, modernism "provided a quantum leap forward" for the new postwar wave of school design.[38]

[34] *Cultural Resources of the Recent Past, Historic Context Report, City of Pasadena*, 2007. Prepared by Historic Resources Group and Pasadena Heritage for the City of Pasadena.

[35] *Pasadena City Schools, 81 Years of Public Education in Pasadena: Superintendent's Annual Report*, June 1955. On file with the Pasadena Museum of History, Pasadena, California.

[36] *Pasadena Independent*, 29 September 1948, "City School Children Lack Space: Bond Issue Would Add 3 Buildings."

[37] For an exploration of modernism and the "recent past" in Pasadena, see *Cultural Resources of the Recent Past, Historic Context Report,* 2007.

[38] *Los Angeles Unified School District Historic Context Statement*, p. 52.

Modern school design (as in other sectors) focused on a program-driven approach and philosophy. As observed by William Wayne Caudill (a Texas architect who wrote the pioneering "Space for Teaching" in 1941), in school design

> [t]here is no "modern" style as such. Each new building ideally is the product of specific solutions to individual problems peculiar to that building's particular environs, site, function, budget, and designer. If two new schools are similar in appearance, they are … only because they were designed to perform similar specific functions in similar environments.[39]

Even so, postwar schools, whether embracing modernism or some degree of historicist design, were likely to share the "same basic design principles," all of which are on display at Roosevelt School:

> Postwar schools were designed to feel decentralized, nonhierarchical, approachable, informal, and child-centered (indeed, domestic-scaled for elementary schools, with lower ceilings making the class feel more like a living room). The preferred massing was one story, with an axial wing of classrooms usually one room deep, to provide cross-lighting, ventilation, and easy access to the outdoors. Roofs were flat, sloped, or occasionally gabled, with simple, exposed construction systems of steel or concrete framing with large-pane in-fill windows. Wide overhanging eaves with simple porch or piloti supports were common for connecting corridors. In terms of materials, the treatment and finishing were simple and unpretentious.[40]

Figure 64. Thomas Jefferson Elementary School, 1954, with covered corridors, outdoor courtyard spaces, ample awning casements and clerestories

Source: Getty Research Institute, Julius Shulman Archives

[39] Caudill, 1954, p. 16; cited in Ogata, 2008, footnote 76.

[40] Los Angeles Unified School District Historic Context Statement, p. 78.

In 1953 in Pasadena, the ideas expressed above—of new currents in architectural design and school reform, along with prioritizing special education—came together in the child-centered, domestic, accessible, and modern design of Roosevelt School. In addition to its many innovative accessibility features, the campus reflects the best ideas for postwar school design, including its inward-facing site design, with buildings extending across the site and oriented toward outdoor spaces such as courtyards, patios, and outdoor play areas; one-story massing and classrooms that clearly express their function, with axial wings lined with windows looking out onto landscaping and mature trees. In addition, Roosevelt School exhibits a combination finger plan/cluster plan site design, with axial classroom wings, coming together in a rough L-shape to form outdoor courtyards and landscaped areas.

In terms of Mid-Century Modern design elements, the school exhibits the textbook examples used in schools throughout the region, including an emphasis on the horizontal axis, through a very low pitched, side gable roof with broad sheltering eaves and a brick veneer base. The generous expanses of fenestration, with bands of grouped multi-light windows, and lack of applied ornament, also reflect the building's Mid-Century Modern style.

In addition, the level of racial integration at Roosevelt School was noteworthy at the time, as well, especially in light of the de facto segregation of Pasadena's schools. As many other cities throughout the United States, Pasadena was a city with a history of "redlining" and official and later de facto racial segregation. Even following the Civil Rights Movement and the 1954 US Supreme Court ruling for Brown vs. Board of Education (which declared segregation of public schools unconstitutional), the level of segregation in Pasadena's public schools remained a problem. Such was the continuing level of segregation that, in January 1970, Pasadena became "the first non-Southern city ordered by the federal courts to desegregate its public school system and implement a cross-district busing plan."[41]

In this way, at a time when Pasadena Unified School District was under federal court order to desegregate schools through mandatory busing, Roosevelt School offered an early integrated environment for special education students of all races and ethnicities.

Figure 65. At a time when Pasadena Unified School District was under federal court order to desegregate schools through mandatory bussing, Roosevelt School offered an early integrated environment for special education students of all races and ethnicities

[41] Verlaque, Laura, 2021, "The Founding of Pasadena's Schools: Pasadena Unified School District," Pasadena Museum of History. Available at: https://pasadenahistory.org/collections/school/.

Summary

As documented in this supplemental material, Roosevelt School meets local Criterion A ("It is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of the history of the City") and Criterion C ("It is exceptional in the embodiment of the distinctive characteristics of a historic resource property type, period, architectural style or method of construction…").

In the preparation of this nomination, extensive research and review of available archival records also sought to answer the question of eligibility under Criterion B ("It is associated with the lives of persons who are significant in the history of the region, state or nation"); however, sufficient evidence is not presently represented in the record to suggest eligibility under this criterion.

In terms of eligibility under Criterion A: When it opened in 1953, Roosevelt School became one of a small handful of custom-designed special-needs schools in Southern California. Roosevelt School meets Criterion A for its pioneering and significant contribution to the **broad patterns of educational/institutional development in Pasadena**, under the context of public institutional architecture, the theme of educational facilities, and the subtheme of special needs schools. Roosevelt School represented an innovative, unique answer to a long-time design problem—namely, how to tailor an educational facility, including classrooms, entrances, access paths, circulation corridors, restrooms, and playgrounds, for maximum accessibility for special-needs students of all ages, with varying types of physical and developmental challenges. The incorporation of features such as entrance and door thresholds set flush with the ground, smooth concrete and tile floor surfaces, continuous bands of handrails at varying heights, restrooms with right-sized doors and stalls, among many others, provided a safe, nurturing, appropriate environment for disabled children and young people. The period of significance is 1953, the year of the reconstruction of Roosevelt School.

In terms of eligibility under Criterion C: Roosevelt School is eligible as an intact, textbook example of Mid-Century Modern school design, tailored to a school and campus for special needs students. With very few alterations, either on the exterior or interior, Roosevelt School retains the textbook examples of a modern, functionalist school plant. These features include its one-story massing and informal, domestic scale and character, with the incorporation of low entry thresholds, patterned brick veneer, and interior fireplace; hybrid finger/cluster-plan, with long axial classroom wings and a roughly L-shaped building footprint, providing ample opportunities for walls of windows and indoor-outdoor integration; wide sheltering roof eaves, treated simply; and, rather than relying on applied ornament, aesthetic effect is achieved through the balanced, modular design composition and rhythm of wall openings. The period of significance is 1953, the year of the reconstruction of Roosevelt School.

Highly intact, with few visible alterations, Roosevelt School retains historic integrity to convey the reasons for its significance.

As noted above, level of racial integration at Roosevelt School was also noteworthy at the time, especially in light of the de facto segregation of Pasadena's schools. Even following the Civil Rights Movement and the 1954 Brown vs. Board of Education (which declared segregation of public schools unconstitutional), the level of segregation in Pasadena's public schools remained a problem. In this way, at a time when Pasadena Unified School District was under federal court order to desegregate schools through mandatory busing, Roosevelt School offered an early integrated environment for special education students of all races and ethnicities. However, this nomination does not presently include this area as a reason for significance; additional information is needed to understand Roosevelt School's history in this area. It is recommended that this question be considered following completion of the City of Pasadena Citywide Historic Context Statement.