

HISTORIC RESOURCE ASSESSMENT REPORT

Of

**The North School Campus
Hermosa Beach City School District
417 25th Street
City of Hermosa Beach, Los Angeles County, California**

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This assessment report documents and evaluates the federal and state significance, and eligibility of the buildings within the property known as the North School located on a 2.0±-acre parcel at 417 25th Street, Hermosa Beach, Los Angeles County, California. The report includes a discussion of the survey methodology used, a brief historic context of the property and surrounding area, and the identification and formal evaluation of the subject buildings.

The subject parcel features a campus with built environment resources over 50 years of age located along the north side of 25th Street, in a residential neighborhood of the City of Hermosa Beach (City), just five blocks to the east of The Strand and the beach. The North School property is under the jurisdiction of the Hermosa Beach City School District (District), and the property is currently being leased to Children's Journey, a privately owned preschool, and to Redondo Beach Unified High School District's Parent Participation Program. (See Figures 1, 2, and 3)

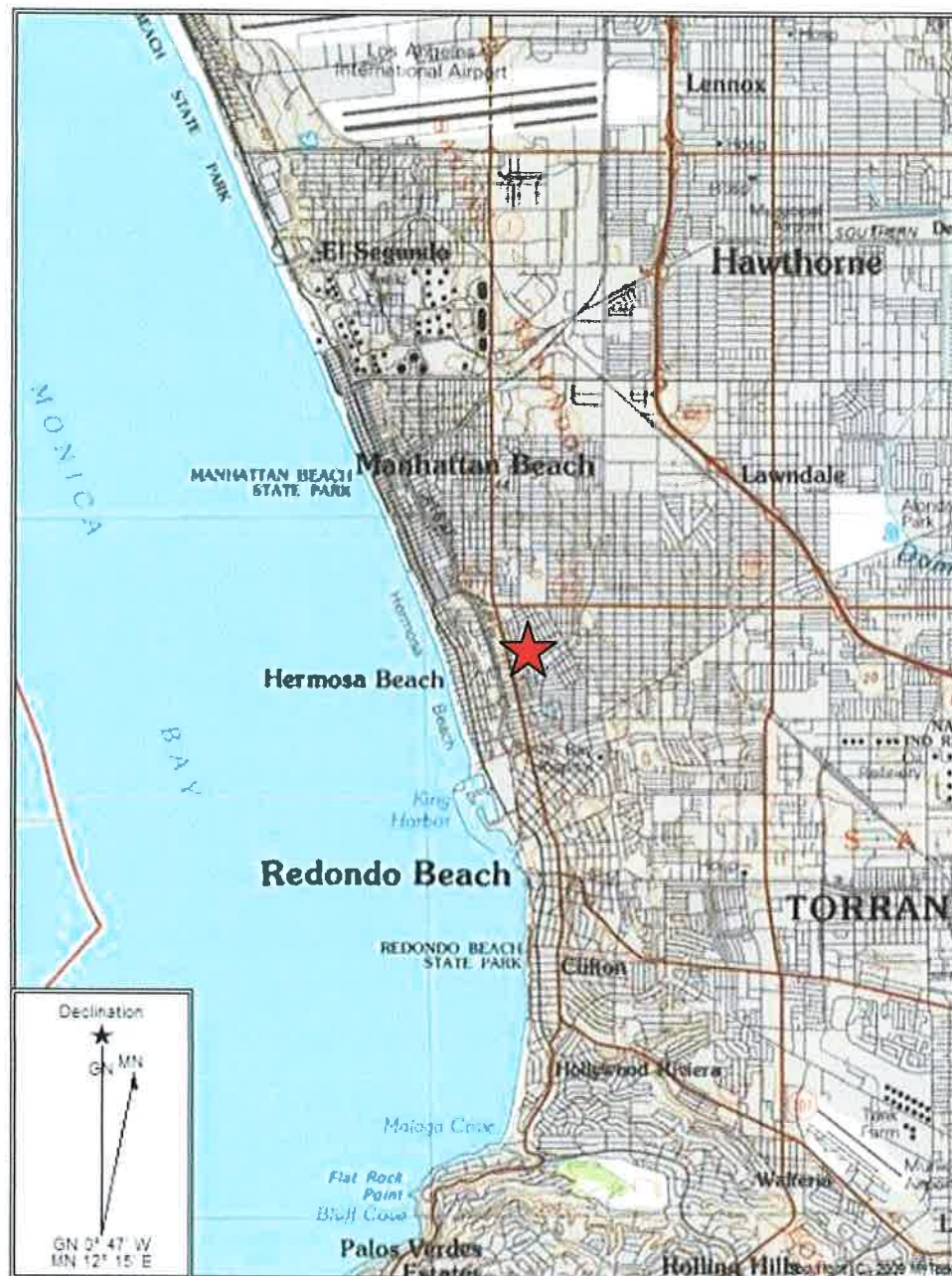


Figure 1:
Project Vicinity
North School Campus
Hermosa Beach, Los Angeles County

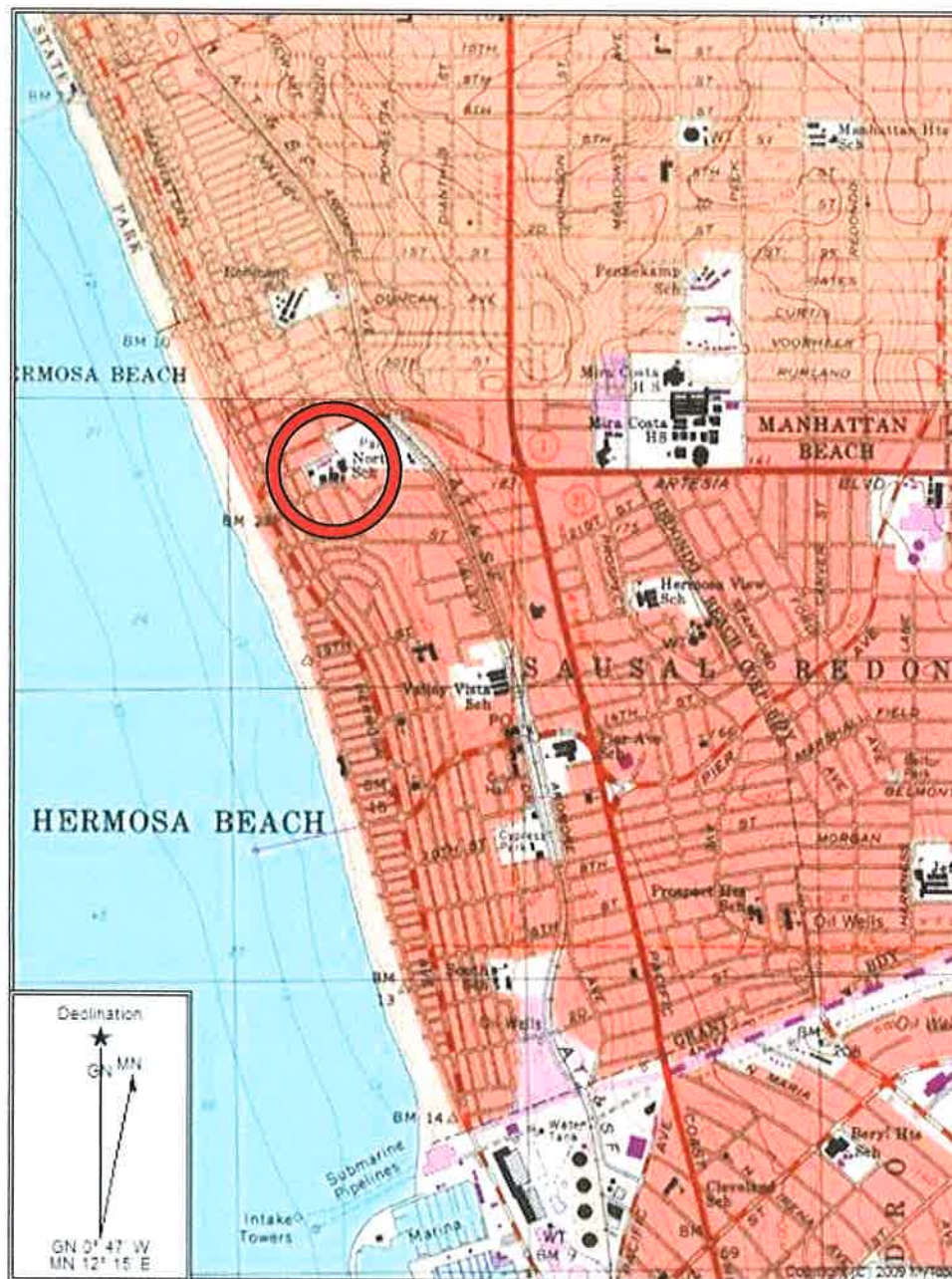


Figure 2:
Project Location
North School Campus
Hermosa Beach, Los Angeles County



Figure 3: Aerial view of North School campus, Hermosa Beach.
(Source: Google Earth, March 2015)

B. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The District has proposed the demolition of the five classroom buildings presently on the North School campus. It is proposed that the 1924/1935 main classroom/administration building, 1939 Kindergarten and 1939 Classroom buildings, and the 1959 Classroom and 1959 Kindergarten buildings be demolished to make room for an elementary school campus that can meet the technological and program needs of students in the twenty-first century.

The North School campus has not been previously surveyed for the investigation and documentation of cultural resources by a qualified architectural historian, nor has the property been evaluated for eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (National Register) or the California Register of Historical Resources (California Register).

The current study was performed to determine if the North School campus should be considered a potential historic district, or if any of the buildings qualify as individual historical resources. Our research revealed that the City had performed a “windshield” survey of potential historic resources within the City in October 2014.¹ The property at 417 25th Street was recorded as appearing to have the potential to be considered a historic resource in the City due to its “WPA Moderne” architecture.

The District is subject to the California Constitution, the California Education Code, and other codes enacted by the state legislature, and Title 5 of the Administrative Code, which contains the rules and regulations of the State Board of Education. As such, the buildings and structures located on the North School campus are not under the jurisdiction of the City of Hermosa Beach Municipal Code or its Historic Resources Preservation Guidelines.

C. METHODOLOGY

This historic resource assessment and evaluation was conducted by Pamela Daly, M.S.H.P., Senior Architectural Historian. In order to identify and evaluate the subject property as a potential historic resource, a multi-step methodology was utilized. An inspection of the property and the existing buildings, combined with a review of original drawings of the North School campus as provided by the District, was performed to document existing conditions and assist in assessing and evaluating the property for significance. Photographs were taken of the individual buildings on the North School campus, including photographs of architectural details, surrounding buildings, or other points of interest, during the intensive-level survey.

The National Register and California Register criteria were employed to evaluate the significance of the property. In addition, the following tasks were performed for the study:

- The National Register and California Register inventories were searched.
- Site-specific research was conducted on the subject property utilizing maps, city directories, historical newspaper articles, historical photographs, and other published sources.
- Background research was performed at the City of Hermosa Library, Hermosa Beach Historical Museum, and through internet resources.
- Ordinances, statutes, regulations, bulletins, and technical materials relating to federal, state, and local historic preservation, designation assessment processes, and related programs were reviewed and analyzed.

¹ City of Hermosa Beach. “Hermosa Beach Windshield Survey Results Potential Historic Resources, October 2014”. Accessed January 6, 2015: <http://www.hermosabch.org/modules/showdocument.aspx?documentid=6625>

II. REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Historic resources fall within the jurisdiction of several levels of government. Federal laws provide the framework for the identification, and in certain instances, protection of historic resources. Additionally, states and local jurisdictions have active roles in the identification, documentation, and protection of such resources within their communities. The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, as amended, and the California Environment Quality Act (CEQA) are the primary federal and state regulations governing the evaluation and significance of historic resources of national, state, regional, and local importance. A description of these relevant regulations is presented below.

In analyzing the historic significance of the subject property, criteria for designation under federal and state landmark programs were considered. Additionally, the California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) survey methodology was used to survey and rate the relative significance of the property.

A. FEDERAL LEVEL

1. National Register of Historic Places

First authorized by the Historic Sites Act of 1935, the National Register was established by the NHPA as “an authoritative guide to be used by Federal, State, and local governments, private groups and citizens to identify the Nation’s cultural resources and to indicate what properties should be considered for protection from destruction or impairment.”² The National Register recognizes properties that are significant at the national, state, and local levels.

To be eligible for listing in the National Register as a “historic property,” the quality of significance in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, or culture must be in a district, site, building, structure, or object that possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association, and:³

- A. is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- B. is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or

² Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), 36 § 60.2.

³ Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms, *National Register Bulletin 16*, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1997 (“National Register Bulletin 16”). This bulletin contains technical information on comprehensive planning, survey of cultural resources, and registration in the National Register.

- C. embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or that represents the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- D. yields, or may be likely to yield, information important to prehistory or history.

A property eligible for listing in the National Register must meet one or more of the four criteria (A-D) defined above. In addition, unless the property possesses exceptional significance, it must be at least 50 years old to be eligible for National Register listing.

In addition to meeting the criteria of significance, a property must have integrity. "Integrity is the ability of a property to convey its significance."⁴ According to *National Register Bulletin 15*, within the concept of integrity, the National Register criteria recognize seven aspects or qualities that, in various combinations, define integrity. To retain historic integrity a property will always possess several, and usually most, of these seven aspects. The retention of specific aspects of integrity is paramount for a property to convey its significance.⁵ The seven factors that define integrity are location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The following is excerpted from *National Register Bulletin 15*, which provides guidance on the interpretation and application of these factors.

- Location is the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred.⁶
- Design is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of the property.⁷
- Setting is the physical environment of a historic property.⁸
- Materials are the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property.⁹

⁴ How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation, *National Register Bulletin 15*, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1997 ("National Register Bulletin 15"), page 44.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ "The relationship between the property and its location is often important to understanding why the property was created or why something happened. The actual location of historic property, complemented by its setting is particularly important in recapturing the sense of historic events and persons. Except in rare cases, the relationship between a property and its historic associations is destroyed if the property is moved." Ibid.

⁷ "A property's design reflects historic functions and technologies as well as aesthetics. It includes such considerations as the structural system; massing; arrangement of spaces; pattern of fenestration; textures and colors of surface materials; type, amount, and style of ornamental detailing; and arrangement and type of plantings in a designed landscape." Ibid.

⁸ *National Register Bulletin 15*, page 45.

⁹ "The choice and combination of materials reveals the preferences of those who created the property and indicated the availability of particular types of materials and technologies. Indigenous materials are often the focus of regional building traditions and thereby help define an area's sense of time and place." Ibid.

- Workmanship is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory.¹⁰
- Feeling is a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time.¹¹
- Association is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property.¹²

In assessing a property's integrity, the National Register criteria recognize that properties change over time; therefore, it is not necessary for a property to retain all its historic physical features or characteristics. The property must, however, retain the essential physical features that enable it to convey its historic identity.¹³

For properties that are considered significant under National Register Criteria A and B, *National Register Bulletin 15* states that a property that is significant for its historic association is eligible if it retains the essential physical features that made up its character or appearance during the period of its association with the important event, historical pattern, or person(s).¹⁴

In assessing the integrity of properties that are considered significant under National Register Criterion C, *National Register Bulletin 15* provides that a property important for illustrating a particular architectural style or construction technique must retain most of the physical features that constitute that style or technique.¹⁵

The primary effects of listing in the National Register on private property owners of historic buildings is the availability of financial and tax incentives.¹⁶ In addition, for projects that receive federal funding, require federal permits, or are located on federal land, the NHPA

¹⁰ "Workmanship can apply to the property as a whole or to its individual components. It can be expressed in vernacular methods of construction and plain finishes or in highly sophisticated configurations and ornamental detailing. It can be based on common traditions or innovative period techniques." Ibid.

¹¹ "It results from the presence of physical features that, taken together, convey the property's historic character." Ibid.

¹² "A property retains association if it is the place where the event or activity occurred and is sufficiently intact to convey that relationship to the observer. Like feeling, association requires the presence of physical features that convey a property's historic character.... Because feeling and association depend on individual perceptions, their retention *alone* is never sufficient to support eligibility of a property for the National Register." Ibid.

¹³ *National Register Bulletin 15*, page 46.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ "A property that has lost some historic materials or details can be eligible *if* it retains the majority of the features that illustrate its style in terms of the massing, spatial relationships, proportion, pattern of windows and doors, texture of materials, and ornamentation. The property is not eligible, however, if it retains some basic features conveying massing but has lost the majority of the features that once characterized its style." Ibid.

¹⁶ See 36 CFR 60.2(b) and (c).

Section 106 consultation process must be completed (published at 36 CFR Part 800). State and local laws and regulations may apply to properties listed in the National Register. For example, demolition or inappropriate alteration of National Register eligible or listed properties may be subject to CEQA.

B. STATE LEVEL

The California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP), as an office of the California Department of Parks and Recreation, implements the policies of the NHPA on a statewide level. The OHP also carries out the duties as set forth in the Public Resources Code (PRC) and maintains the California Historic Resources Inventory. The State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) is an appointed official who implements historic preservation programs within the state's jurisdiction.

1. California Register of Historical Resources

Created by Assembly Bill 2881, which was signed into law on September 27, 1992, the California Register is "an authoritative guide in California to be used by state and local agencies, private groups, and citizens to identify the state's historical resources and to indicate what properties are to be protected, to the extent prudent and feasible, from substantial adverse change."¹⁷ The criteria for eligibility for the California Register are based upon National Register criteria.¹⁸ Certain resources are determined by the statute to be automatically included in the California Register, including California properties formally determined eligible for, or listed in, the National Register.¹⁹

The California Register consists of resources that are listed automatically and those that must be nominated through an application and public hearing process. The California Register automatically includes the following:

- California properties listed in the National Register and those formally determined eligible for the National Register;
- California Registered Historical Landmarks from No. 770 onward;
- Those California Points of Historical Interest that have been evaluated by OHP and have been recommended by the State Historical Resources Commission for inclusion in the California Register.²⁰

Other resources that may be nominated to the California Register include:

¹⁷ California Public Resources Code § 5024.1(a).

¹⁸ California Public Resources Code § 5024.1(b).

¹⁹ California Public Resources Code § 5024.1(d).

²⁰ California Public Resources Code § 5024.1(d).

- Individual historical resources;
- Historical resources contributing to historic districts;
- Historical resources identified as significant in historical resources surveys with significance ratings of Category 1 through 5;
- Historical resources designated or listed as local landmarks, or designated under any local ordinance, such as a historic preservation overlay zone.²¹

To be eligible for the California Register as a “historical resource,” a historic resource must be significant at the local, state, or national level under one or more of the following four criteria:

1. Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California’s history and cultural heritage;
2. Is associated with the lives of persons important in our past;
3. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of an important creative individual, or possesses high artistic values; or
4. Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Additionally, a historic resource eligible for listing in the California Register must meet one or more of the criteria of significance described above and retain enough of its historic character or appearance to be recognizable as a historic resource and to convey the reasons for its significance. Historical resources that have been rehabilitated or restored may be evaluated for listing.²²

Integrity under the California Register is evaluated with regard to the retention of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The resource must also be judged with reference to the particular criteria under which it is proposed for eligibility. It is possible that a historic resource may not retain sufficient integrity to meet criteria for listing in the National Register, but it may still be eligible for listing in the California Register.²³

2. California Office of Historical Preservation Survey Methodology

The evaluation instructions and classification system prescribed by the California OHP in its Instructions for Recording Historical Resources provide a three-digit evaluation rating code for use in classifying potential historic resources. The first digit indicates one of the following general evaluation categories for use in conducting cultural resources surveys:

²¹ California Public Resources Code § 5024.1(e) and (g).

²² California Code of Regulations, California Register of Historical Resources (Title 14, Chapter 11.5), Section 4852(c).

²³ Ibid.

1. Listed in the National Register or the California Register;
2. Determined eligible for listing in the National Register or the California Register;
3. Appears eligible for the National Register or the California Register through survey evaluation;
4. Appears eligible for the National Register or the California Register through other evaluation;
5. Recognized as historically significant by local government;
6. Not eligible for any listing or designation; and
7. Not evaluated for the National Register or California Register or needs re-evaluation.

The second digit of the evaluation status code is a letter code indicating whether the resource is separately eligible (S), eligible as part of a district (D), or both (B). The third digit is a number that is used to further specify significance and refine the relationship of the property to the National Register and/or California Register. Under this evaluation system, categories 1 through 4 pertain to various levels of National Register eligibility. The California Register, however, may include surveyed resources with evaluation rating codes through level 5. In addition, properties found ineligible for listing in the National Register, California Register, or for designation under a local ordinance are given an evaluation status code of 6.

III. EVALUATION

A. HISTORIC CONTEXT

1. Hermosa Beach

Hermosa Beach is situated on land that was once part of the 22,459-acre Rancho Sausal Redondo. The land of the rancho was used for grazing livestock, and growing hay and grains. A tract of 1,500 acres was purchased by the Hermosa Beach Land and Water Company in 1900. Plans were immediately put into place for the construction of a 16-foot wide, two-and-one-half-mile long wood-plank boardwalk, a municipal pier, and sidewalks.²⁴ By 1902, the Atchison Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad, and its local subsidiaries, began planning for increased traffic on its route to Playa del Rey, Hermosa Beach, and Redondo Beach with an order of 50 new excursion rail cars from a manufacturer in St. Louis, Missouri.²⁵

With all the new improvements to the Hermosa Beach community, a census conducted by the Los Angeles County Superintendent of Schools in 1904 counted 44 children between the ages of 5 and 17 were now living in the beach town.²⁶ In 1904, the first grammar school in Hermosa Beach, the Ocean View School on Monterey Boulevard, was opened.²⁷ The high school district composed of Redondo Beach and Hermosa Beach joined forces in 1906 and purchased the abandoned Chautauqua building in Redondo Beach for use as a school building.²⁸

In 1907, the community of Hermosa Beach felt confident about its future and decided to incorporate and become a city. Immediate future plans included the construction of a municipal pavilion, a city hall building, and an electric lighting plant.²⁹ Unfortunately, the wood trestle pier that had just been constructed by the community in 1904 was destroyed by a storm event in December of 1907.³⁰ The City planned to rebuild a new pier immediately, as the pier was important as a tourist attraction for visitors and to local fishermen.

The Pacific Electric Railway (PE) established a trolley line in 1911 through Hermosa Beach, on the line that ran between Culver City and Redondo Beach. The trolley system provided a short rail system that connected Hermosa Beach with all of Los Angeles County and cities to the east. A new grammar school ("Old" Pier Avenue School) was constructed at the

²⁴ *Los Angeles Times*. "Throwing Dirt for Redondo Trolley", March 6, 1902.

²⁵ *Los Angeles Times*. "Early Rush to Seaside", April 19, 1902.

²⁶ *Los Angeles Times*. "County School Census", May 15, 1904.

²⁷ Hermosa Beach City School District. "Board of Trustee Minutes, Volume 1(1924-1928)", page 294.

²⁸ *Los Angeles Times*. "Old Hall for New Purpose", March 10, 1906.

²⁹ *Los Angeles Times*. "Hermosa Shy as a Joiner", November 10, 1907.

³⁰ *Los Angeles Times*. "Stack Wrecked Pier on Shore", December 6, 1907.

corner of Santa Fe Avenue and Highway 1, on land that would hopefully become the civic center.³¹ Paved roads began to be planned along with a sewer system in 1913, which was the same time that the Hermosa Beach Land and Water Company sold their last 320 lots to the Bancroft Realty Company.³²

In 1921, the new 1,000-foot long concrete pier, built to replace the wood pier lost in 1907, was completed as planned, to attract sport fishermen and tourists. The *Los Angeles Times* reported that in just the first six months of the year, 273 new homes and four business buildings had been constructed in Hermosa Beach, and the town now had almost 4,000 full-time residents.³³ About this same time, the Torrance Oil Field began to be explored for the extraction of crude oil. Hermosa Beach is situated at the northern end of the Torrance-Wilmington Oil Fields, and map records of oil exploration from the California Department of Oil, Gas, and Geothermal Resources (DOGGR) show that oil wells were sunk in the southern region of the City.³⁴

By 1923, Hermosa Beach set forth a proposition to issue a bond to raise money for the building of additional grammar schools to accommodate the growing community. The proposition passed in November of 1923.³⁵ The North School (Richard D. King, architect) located on 25th Street, and South School (Herbert Howard, architect) formally located at 446 Monterey Boulevard), were constructed and opened for students in 1924.^{36/37} (Figure 4) The following year, the Prospect Avenue School (Richard D. King, architect) was constructed and opened for students.³⁸

³¹ *Los Angeles Times*. "Like Civic Center Idea", July 30, 1911.

³² *Los Angeles Times*. "New Promenade Along Strand", August 23, 1913.

³³ *Los Angeles Times*. "Hermosa is Called Ideal", August 14, 1921.

³⁴ California Department of Oil, Gas, and Geothermal Resources Well Finder:
<http://maps.conservation.ca.gov/doggr/#close>. Accessed December 15, 2015.

³⁵ *Los Angeles Times*. "Hermosa Beach Vote for School Bonds is Heavy", November 15, 1923.

³⁶ *Los Angeles Times*. "Los Angeles County, First in America", January 1, 1925.

³⁷ Hermosa Beach City School District. "Board of Trustee Minutes, Volume 1(1924-1928)", page 117.

³⁸ *Ibid*, page 145.

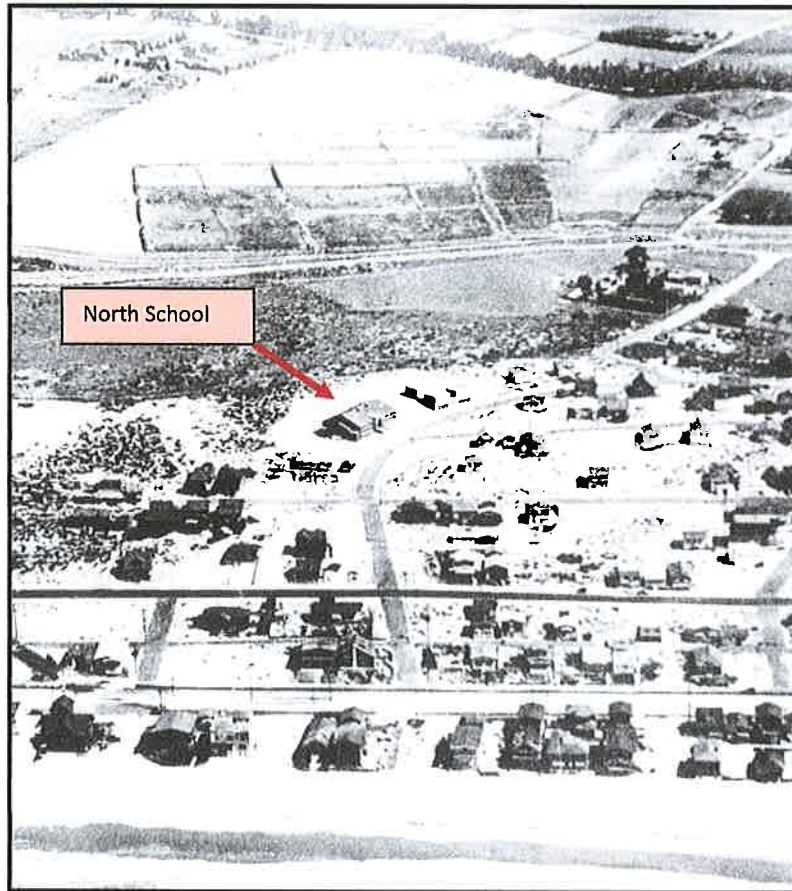


Figure 4: Aerial view of North School before 1933 Long Beach earthquake.
(Photograph courtesy of Hermosa Beach Historical Museum)

2. North Grammar School

Going into 1926, it was reported that Hermosa Beach was a thriving city of 6,500 inhabitants and “within the past year three new and modern grammar schools were completed, giving the city a \$3,000,000 educational system”.³⁹

At almost 6 p.m. on March 10, 1933, an earthquake with its epicenter in Long Beach occurred. The earthquake caused extensive damage to buildings in Compton, Huntington Beach, Hermosa Beach, and throughout Southern California. Most of the worst damage was done to buildings constructed on landfill, on deep water-soaked alluvium or sand, and to buildings that had been poorly designed or constructed. Along the shore between Long Beach and Newport Beach, the settling or lateral movement of road fills across marshy land caused severe damage to the concrete highway surfaces, approaches to highway bridges, and to the railroad and trolley systems. Within a month of the earthquake, the California Legislature

³⁹ *Los Angeles Times*. “Hermosa Ready for Expansion”, February 7, 1926.

passed the Field Act, which called for school buildings to thereafter be constructed of reinforced concrete and include other safety designs.

In Hermosa Beach, both the Pier Avenue Junior High School and North Grammar School buildings had suffered substantial damage. As the earthquake occurred during the fourth year of the Great Depression, the federal government immediately stepped in to financially assist the local governments in the restoration of their schools and communities. The Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC), an independent federal agency assigned the duties of dispersing emergency funds made available by Congress following the earthquake, granted Hermosa Beach the sum of \$117,000 in November of 1933 for the repair and rebuilding of the City's schools.⁴⁰ In September of 1934, with a loan from the Board of Public Building Reconstruction, a division under the RFC, the construction company of Johnson and Hansen was awarded a contract to reconstruct the sole building of North School for \$9,066.⁴¹ According to architectural drawings on file with the Hermosa Beach City School District, the rebuilding of North School was designed by the architectural firm of Marsh, Smith & Powell (MSP).

In 1938/1939, under a New Deal Program, the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works (later renamed the Public Works Administration) (PWA) granted monies to Hermosa Beach for the construction of a new Kindergarten Building and Classroom Building to be constructed on the campus of North School. Based on the commemorative plaques on the exterior hallway wall of the 1939 Classroom Building at North School, the two new buildings were also designed by the architectural firm of MSP (David D. Smith, architect), and were constructed by F. H. Strohecker.⁴² (Figure 5)

More than any other New Deal program, the PWA epitomized the Rooseveltian notion of "priming the pump" to encourage economic growth. Between July 1933 and March 1939, the PWA funded the construction of more than 34,000 projects, including airports, electricity-generating dams, and aircraft carriers; and seventy percent of the new schools and one third of the hospitals built during that time.⁴³

⁴⁰ *Los Angeles Times*. "Quake School Sums Allotted", November 29, 1933.

⁴¹ *Los Angeles Times*. "Awards Made of Contracts for New Work". September 2, 1934.

⁴² Hermosa Beach City School District. "Board of Trustee Minutes, Volume 3 (1934-1942)", page 42.

⁴³ George Washington University. "Public Works Administration"; *The Eleanor Roosevelt Papers Project*. Accessed March 25, 2016: <http://www.gwu.edu/~erpapers/teaching/glossary/pwa.cfm>



Figure 5: Commemorative plaque on the hallway wall at North School.

To address the expanding enrollment of “Baby Boom” children, in 1958 the Hermosa Beach City School Board approved the construction on the North School campus of “a new kindergarten and a five-classroom building.” Alterations would also be made to the interior of the existing kindergarten building and a classroom in the main building.⁴⁴ The two new buildings were designed by the architectural firm of Kistner, Wright & Wright (KWW).

Just fifteen years later, in 1973, the Hermosa Beach City School Board would be contemplating the closure of two of the district’s six schools due to declining enrollment figures. The Board hired John Stallings, a professor of education at University of Southern California (USC) to conduct a study of how best to address the declining number of students in Hermosa Beach schools.⁴⁵ Stallings’ study recommended the closing of Pier Avenue Junior High and Prospect Heights School.

Stallings was called upon in 1980, to once again look at how best to reduce the number of public schools in Hermosa Beach because of declining enrollment numbers. The District had 1,500 students in 1973, and in just seven years, the total had declined 30 percent to only 994 students. The North School was put on the list to be closed, particularly because of its age and size of play area. In an interview with the *Los Angeles Times* about the proposed closures, Superintendent Marilyn Harris stated that the North School had been inspected by a structural engineer in 1967 after concerns had been raised that the school dated from before the Long

⁴⁴ *Los Angeles Times*. “Trustees OK Building Plan”, July 13, 1958.

⁴⁵ *Los Angeles Times*. “Parents’ Views Sought on Plan to Close Schools”, March 25, 1973.

Beach earthquake, but had been found to be up to code.⁴⁶ After working closely with the community, the School Board decided to close both North and South Schools. Today, the District is comprised of just two operating schools: Hermosa View School and Hermosa Valley School for kindergarten through the 8th grade.

B. HISTORIC RESOURCES IDENTIFIED

Pamela Daly, Principal Architectural Historian, conducted a pedestrian-level survey of the North School campus on November 17, 2015. (Figure 6) The property was accessed, with permission, from a driveway running off of 25th Street along the east boundary of the property. The campus currently consists of five permanent buildings and associated support services structures, and is operated by a privately-owned organization.

The aerial photograph of North School campus as it is today (Figure 6), and the historic aerial photographs of the campus from 1953 and 1963 (Figures 7 and 8), aid in understanding the evolution of the growth of, and changes to, the campus over time. The photographs reveal that not only were the new kindergarten and classroom buildings added to the campus in 1958, but that the District had also purchased and demolished adjacent properties on Myrtle Avenue to create additional playground space for the campus.

⁴⁶ *Los Angeles Times*. "Hard Times Shake Hermosa School District", March 23, 1980.

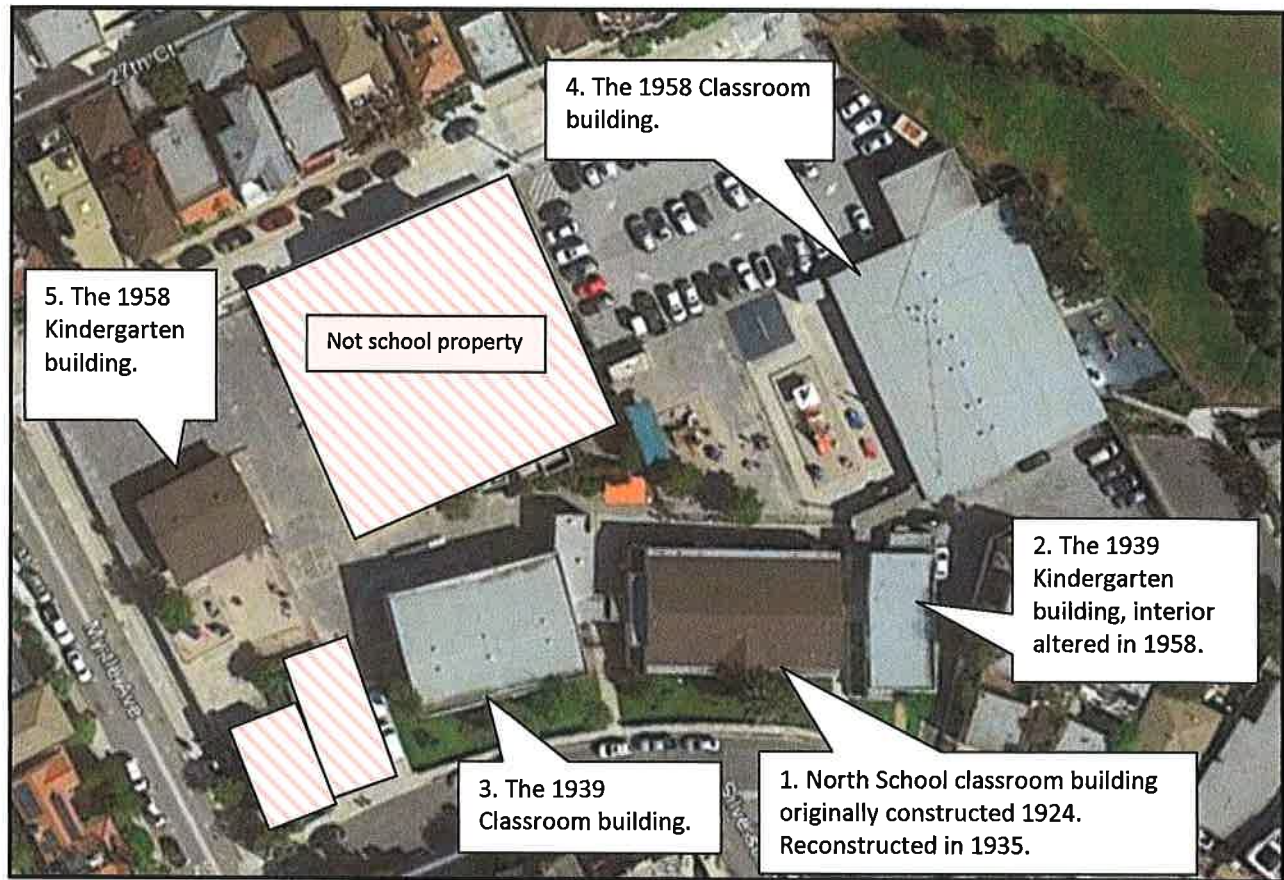


Figure 6: North School campus, 2015.

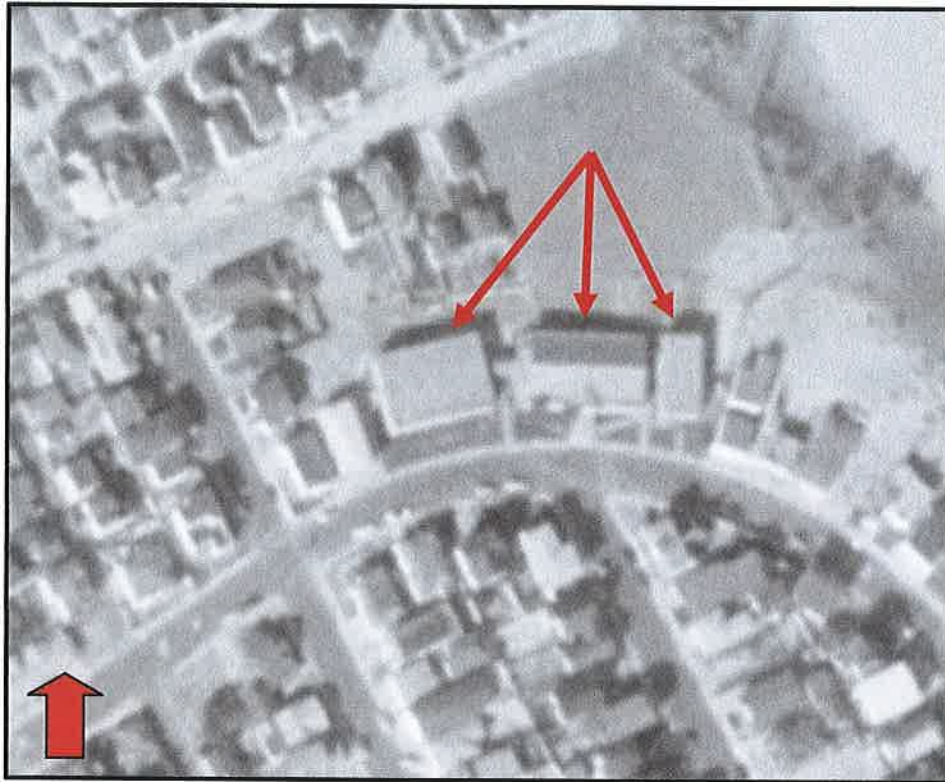


Figure 7: Aerial view of North School campus in 1953 with the three buildings constructed in the 1930s.
(Source: NETR Historic Aerials)

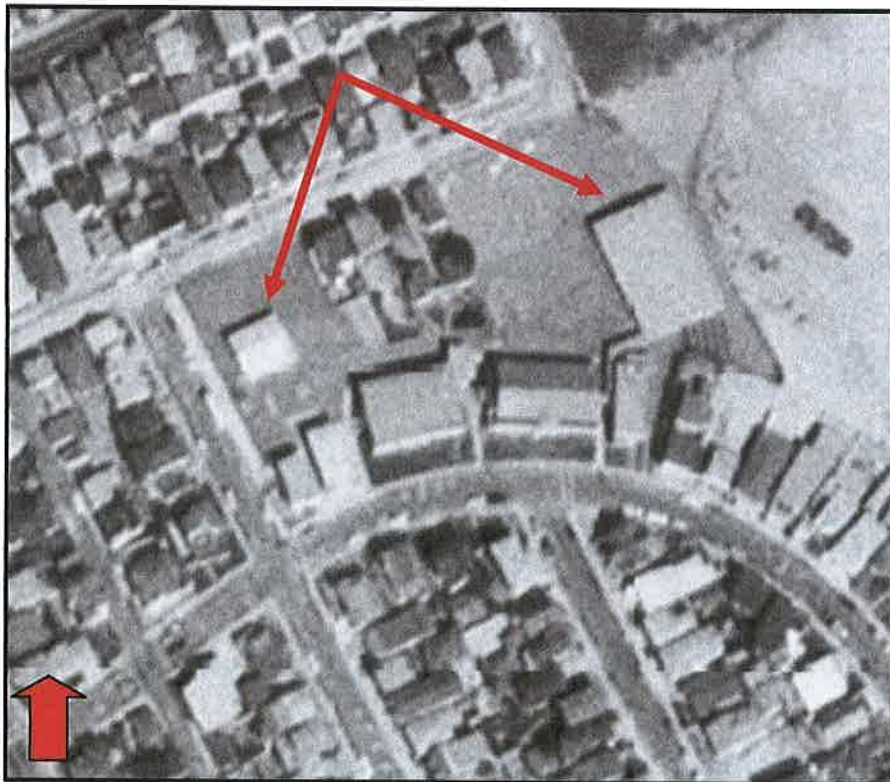
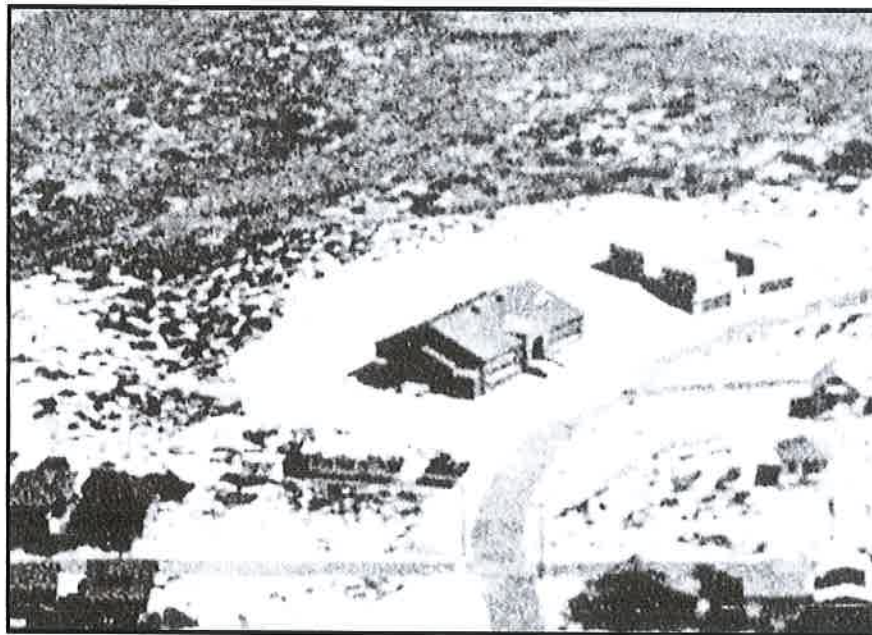


Figure 8: Aerial view of North School campus in 1963 with the two additional buildings of 1958.
(Source: NETR Historic Aerials)

1930s Main, Kindergarten, and Classroom Buildings

Possibly due to the studies initiated by the District in 1967 and again in 1980, the original architectural drawings of the first North School building dating from 1924 have been misplaced. The photograph of North School (below) shows that it was originally a red brick clad building designed in a modest Neoclassical style of architecture, similar in design to the original Pier Avenue School building. (Figures 9 and 10)

When the North School building was badly damaged from the Long Beach earthquake in 1933, the firm of MSP was retained by the District to rehabilitate the existing North School building. Five years later, in 1938, MSP was retained to design two additional stand-alone classroom buildings on the campus to expand the enrollment capacity of the school.



**Figure 9: Close-up view of North School as it appeared before the Long Beach Earthquake. The building was designed in a Neoclassical style with steps leading up to a center hallway facing 25th Street.
(Photograph courtesy of Hermosa Beach Historical Museum)**



Figure 10: Postcard of Pier Avenue School, Hermosa Beach, before 1933.
(Postcard courtesy of The Daily Breeze Blog, January 16, 2016)

The principal architect of MSP, Norman Foote Marsh, had established a practice in Los Angeles in the 1910s based on his expertise designing public buildings, churches, schools, and libraries. He was recruited by USC in the late 1920s to head their office of campus architect. It appears that while at USC Marsh teamed up with David Drake Smith and Herbert James Powell to create the firm of MSP in 1927. MSP quickly became known for their designs of schools, churches, and large public buildings. Among their many California projects are Pasadena High School, First Methodist Church of Oakland, First Methodist Church in Long Beach, First Baptist Church in Pomona, and a group of campus buildings at Redlands University in Redlands. Many of the school projects they undertook in the 1930s were an outgrowth of the 1933 Long Beach earthquake that had damaged and destroyed many schools in the greater Los Angeles area. MSP also designed and engineered the retrofitting of existing school buildings to meet new seismic guidelines. At the highpoint of the firm, they engaged over 50 draftsmen to work on projects. In 1955, the principals were quoted as estimating that since Marsh had started this firm in 1927, MSP had “designed more than 500 Southern California school projects.”⁴⁷

1. **North School Main Building.** The single, original building of North School was constructed in 1924. During the Long Beach earthquake of 1933 the building was substantially damaged and the District was required to have the building repaired and reconstructed. The architectural firm of MSP (David D. Smith, architect) was responsible for the design and reconstruction of the building.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ *Los Angeles Times*. “Architectural and Engineering Firm Changes Name”, January 16 1955.

⁴⁸ Hermosa Beach City School District. “Board of Trustee, Volume 2 (1928-1934)”, page 44.

The Pier Avenue School had also been severely damaged from the earthquake, and one of its original architects, Samuel Lunden, was given the job of rebuilding that school building. Lunden had chosen to rehabilitate the Pier Avenue School in a Moderne style.⁴⁹ MSP may have been asked by the District to use the Moderne style of architecture for the rebuilding of North School, so that it reflected the style of architecture used on Hermosa Beach's most prominent school building.

The Main Building is a rectangular-massed, one-story building that measures approximately 88 feet long by 56 feet wide. (Figures 11 and 12) The building has a medium-pitched gable roof that is set on an east-west axis. As a gable roof is not an identifying feature of a building of the Moderne style, we put forth the theory that the original North School building was designed in a Neoclassical style as seen in Figure 9, and that MSP referenced the original design when designing the reconstruction of the building in 1934. The building was rebuilt in 1935.

The original North School building may have been constructed of wood-frame and brick construction. It appears that when the structure was rebuilt, the north and south elevations of the old building were encased in thick, reinforced, poured concrete walls. Where the original front entrance to the building was situated on the front (south) elevation, there is now a solid 22-foot wide, cross-gable roofed section of the building. There no longer is a formal front entrance to the building, as the interior classrooms are now accessed by the auxiliary entrance doors at each end of the building. The section of the front façade where the formal entrance portal had been located extends beyond the main body of the building by approximately 18 inches, and a window unit is set in center of the wall. Above the window unit, in the gable end, is the only decorative feature of the building. It is a cast of the lamp of knowledge sitting atop of three books, with the Greek letters of alpha and omega on either side of the lamp. (Figure 13)

The building extends from each side of the center section for 32 feet, and situated in each flanking concrete wall are five, steel-frame window units, approximately 4 feet wide, set in a row. Each unit is comprised of three sashes, with four equal-sized lights in each sash, set in a horizontal column within a wood casing. The top and bottom sash are fixed, while the middle sash is an awning type window. The same style of window sash is found on the rear (north) elevation, in groupings of four, three sash-tall units, with two, two-sash tall units in one combined unit at the east end of the building; single-wide fixed units set in the concrete wall at the middle of the façade; and a six-wide, three-sash tall unit at the west end of the façade. With the original front entrance to the building permanently closed, the interior of the building is now accessed by doorways in each gable end. To provide added structural support to the building, and possibly some additional interior storage

⁴⁹ Gnerre, Sam. "Pier Avenue School in Hermosa Beach becomes city's community center". *The Daily Breeze Blog*, January 16, 2016.

space, the building was extended approximately 5 feet from the original west exterior wall, with new poured concrete walls built around the entrance way.



Figure 11: Front (south) façade main North School building, as reconstructed in 1935 after the Long Beach earthquake. View looking north.



Figure 12: Rear (north) façade of the main North School building. Its original gable roof is easily viewed from this direction. View looking southwest.

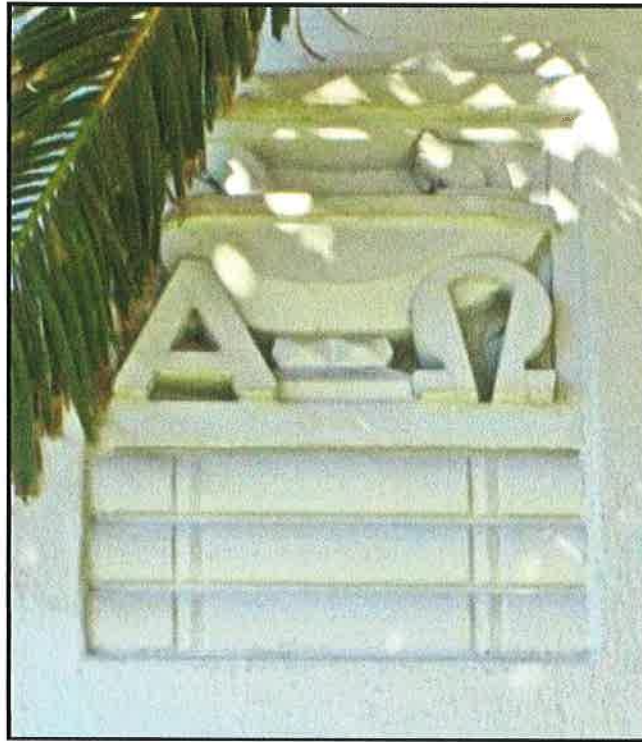


Figure 13: The decorative inset panel in the gable end of the front façade of the main North School building. The panel signifies the lamp of knowledge sitting on a stack of books between the Greek alphabet letters alpha and omega representing learning subjects “from A to Z.” View looking north.

2. **1939 Kindergarten Building.** This building was constructed in 1939 immediately to the east of the main North School building. It is a one-story building, constructed of poured and reinforced concrete wall, with a rectangular mass that measures approximately 28 feet wide by 62 feet long, and has a flat roof system. (Figure 14) The building is orientated on the lot with the narrow width of the building facing 25th Street.

The building, designed by MSP, appears to be an early example of Le Corbusier influenced International style architecture. Le Corbusier pioneered the puritanical style of which Cubist shapes were favored and “horizontally emphasized windows turning round corners were favored.”⁵⁰ The International style of architecture spanned from the early 1920s into the late 1960s. The early years of the International style of architecture represented an offshoot of Bauhaus modern design and Cubist art that turned its back on the heavily ornamented buildings of the Beaux Arts and Revival styles that spanned from the 1890s to the 1930s. The early International style houses and buildings were designed by Le Corbusier, Mies van

⁵⁰ Burden, Ernest. *Elements of Architectural Design: A Photographic Source Book*. New York: John Wiley & Sons; 2000.

der Rohe, and Walter Gropius with severe geometric lines and shapes, with no exterior ornamentation. Steel window frame units were favored for their narrow sash, yet they could hold large individual panes. Further characteristics of early International style buildings were un-ornamented wall surfaces with no decorative detailing at windows or doors, blank expanses of exterior wall, and the roof-wall junction meeting at a ledge at the roof line. The International style would evolve into using dominant horizontal lines and large spans of glass in the post-World War II interpretations used for both residential and commercial, one-story building applications, which are found throughout Southern California.

The window units that wrap around the southeast corner of the 1939 Kindergarten building are the same, three-sash tall, metal-frame style units as were used in the Main Building. At the southwest corner of the Kindergarten building, the original entrance door is reached by a poured concrete porch and steps that extend approximately six feet from the body of the building. The porch was given a flat roof, which is supported by a simple, modern, square-framed, screen that spans between the solid porch railing and the porch roof. On the east elevation is a band window comprised of five, two-sash tall units set in the casing. On the west elevation, there are two window units set apart from each other, in the upper portion of the wall, which are comprised of three, four-light sash tall units set next to each other in the casing.



Figure 14: The 1939 Kindergarten building. View looking northwest.

3. **1939 Classroom Building.** This building was constructed in 1939 immediately to the west of the main North School building. It is a one-story building with a rectangular mass that measures approximately 81 feet long by 58 feet wide. (Figure 15) The building is orientated on the lot with the length of the building facing 25th Street. This building was also designed by MSP in a Le Corbusier-influenced International style of architecture, yet with even a more utilitarian approach to its design. Except for a hyper-extended lintel projecting out over each of the two, symmetrically set windows comprised of five, three-sash tall units, the front façade would be just an expanse of poured concrete wall. The rear elevation of the building is the same, with just two large window units. At some point in time, a bathroom building measuring approximately 12 feet by 20 feet was added onto the northeast corner of this building.



Figure 15: The 1939 Classroom building. View looking northeast.

1958 Classroom and Kindergarten Buildings

The two classroom buildings constructed in 1958 on the North School campus were designed by KWW. KWW was an architectural firm primarily located in Los Angeles, with a satellite office in San Diego. Theodore C. Kistner was the principal architect of the firm, and he was joined by architect Henry Lyman Wright and civil engineer William Theodore Wright. Early in his career, Kistner had developed a specialty designing school buildings. The firm KWW was founded circa 1952 and dissolved in 1973, when Kistner died. KWW's better known projects include: the Cerritos College Gymnasium building (Cerritos, California) and the Norwalk County

building (Norwalk, California). The firm specialized in schools, colleges, and other public buildings in Southern California. The firm had also been a consultant to school districts in New Orleans and Tucson, and has been a consultant on the design of state college facilities in Colorado.⁵¹

4. **1958 Classroom Building.** This building was constructed in 1958 to the north of the 1939 Kindergarten building. It is a one-story building with a rectangular mass that measures approximately 94 feet long by 62 feet wide, which was designed in the Contemporary style of architecture. (Figures 16 and 17) The style is expressed by a long and low profile, very low-pitched gable roof, and wide overhanging eaves supported by slender, steel columns that create covered walkways around the circumference of the building. Commercial buildings of this style were frequently constructed with steel beams that would allow for large, unsupported, interior spaces.

The 1958 Classroom building's roof is set on a north-south axis and has overhanging eaves, extending approximately 8 feet wide, around the circumference of the building. The eaves on the west, north, and south elevations are cantilevered, while the east eave is supported by a round steel post. The extended eaves create an exterior hallway for the building, as the building is designed with the classrooms accessed by doors on the exterior walls. On the east side of the building, an additional 12 feet of overhang has been constructed to create a wood-frame porch that spans along the length of the façade. The exterior walls of the building are clad with a decorative, red brick façade, set in a running bond pattern. On the east and west walls of the building are access doors to the classrooms and units of steel framed windows. A window unit is comprised of eight lights measuring approximately 12 inches tall by 18 inches wide, set fixed, side-by-side, in a steel frame. The frame of eight fixed lights is headed by a unit of four lights, of the same size and alignment, set in a steel frame that operates as a pivot window on a horizontal axis. In each classroom, there are five complete window units set side-by-side above a brick kneewall, and a four-light pivot unit over the classroom door. According to historic photographs, between 1963 and 1972, an additional support building that measures approximately 29 feet long by 38 feet wide was constructed immediately to the north of the 1958 Classroom building.

⁵¹ Pacific Coast Architecture Database. "Kistner, Wright & Wright"; "Theodore C. Kistner"; "Henry Lyman Wright". Accessed December 16, 2015. <http://pcad.lib.washington.edu/>



**Figure 16: West façade of the 1958 Classroom building facing the inner courtyard.
View looking north.**



**Figure 17: South elevation of the 1958 Classroom building.
View looking north.**

5. **1958 Kindergarten Building.** This building was constructed in 1958 to the north and west of the 1939 Classroom building and it shares the same Contemporary style of architecture as the 1958 Classroom building. The 1958 Kindergarten building has a low-pitched gable roof, set on an east-west axis, and rectangular massing, measuring approximately 33 feet wide by 43 feet long. (Figure 18) This building was designed with the large, fixed light, steel-frame window units installed only on the south elevation. The eave on this elevation extends 12 feet from the body of the building, to create a covered outdoor seating area. The eave is supported by an extension of the east façade of the building. The building is clad in the same decorative red brick as the 1958 Classroom building. The north roof slope extends only a short span of approximately 4 feet over the north facade.



Figure 18: 1958 Kindergarten building. View looking northwest.

C. SIGNIFICANCE

The subject property consists of the North School campus, which was comprised of a single building when it was opened for students in 1924. The main building was badly damaged from the effects of the Long Beach earthquake in 1933, and was extensively rebuilt in a Moderne style of architecture to complement the rehabilitated Pier Avenue School, with federal funds from the Board of Public Building Reconstruction Program in 1935. The North School was not rebuilt with funds from a New Deal program.

With New Deal program funds received by the School District from the PWA in 1939, two additional buildings were constructed on the North School campus designed in a late-1930s interpretation of the International style of architecture. In 1958, two more buildings were to the North School campus to hold kindergarten and classroom space, and these were designed in the Contemporary style of architecture.

The North School campus is presently comprised of five buildings. The five buildings do not represent a cohesive set of buildings united by an intentional plan, which is a requirement to form a historic building district. While related by function and use as school buildings, the structures were designed using three distinct styles of architecture that reflect different time periods. The original North School building was rehabilitated in the Moderne style of architecture, while the two buildings constructed in 1939 were designed in an early International style of architecture, and the 1958 building in the Contemporary style of design.

The main building was originally constructed with local monies, and funds provided by a Federal agency *specifically* for the repair and rehabilitation of schools damaged by the Long Beach earthquake. The 1939 school buildings were constructed with funds from Federal programs during the Great Depression collectively known as "The New Deal". The remaining two buildings were both designed and constructed in the Contemporary style of architecture in 1958, almost twenty years after the first group of buildings, and paid for with local school district funding.

1924/1935 Main Classroom Building

When North School was first established, there was only one building on the campus. That first building continues to serve as the main building of the North School, and holds the administration offices and classrooms. The North School Main Building was heavily damaged during the Long Beach earthquake of 1933, and reconstructed in 1935 with emergency federal funds from the Board of Public Building Reconstruction Program.

The North School Main Building does not appear to be eligible for listing in the National Register or California Register under Criterion A/1. The North School was one of two schools built in Hermosa Beach in 1924, and the North School and South School were constructed to address the growing student population after the Pier Avenue School had been erected in 1911/1913. The North School building was rebuilt with funds that were not directly associated with a New Deal program, but rather with federal funds issued for emergency public works projects resulting from the 1933 Long Beach earthquake. The North School was not the first school constructed in Hermosa Beach, nor does it appear to have made a significant contribution to the education of children during its existence above what would be expected of a neighborhood elementary school. We were unable to find any evidence that the North School made an unprecedented contribution to the quality of grammar school education in Hermosa Beach, or to the instructional needs of its students.

Under the criterion for evaluating properties for listing in the National Register or California Register for their *direct* association with the lives of persons important to the history of Hermosa Beach, Los Angeles County, California, or the nation, we did not find that the North School Main Building could be considered eligible for listing in the National Register or California Register under Criterion B/2. Our research did not reveal that any educators of importance taught at North School, or methods of education were developed by teachers or administrators while employed at North School.

The main building on the North School campus does not appear to be eligible for listing in the National Register or California Register under Criterion C/3 as an example of Moderne style school architecture. The Main Building, the first building on the North School campus, was rebuilt/rehabilitated in 1935 after it had been severely damaged by the Long Beach earthquake of 1933. It appears that the original building may have been designed in a Neoclassical style of architecture, and the Neoclassical style was referenced by MSP when they designed the restoration of the damaged building in 1934. MSP used the Moderne style of architecture on the North School, most probably to complement the style used on the rehabilitated Pier Avenue School. MSP designed a new building envelope, of poured concrete walls, to be constructed around the damaged structure. Out of character for a Moderne building, is the existence of the gable roof of the original building, instead of a flat roof system usually found on Moderne buildings.

The North School Main Building does not appear to be a significant example of Moderne school architecture. Popular throughout the 1930s, Art Moderne design looked to the modern machine age for inspiration, especially the beginning of streamlined industrial design for ships, airplanes, and automobiles. The main North School building does not display the identifying architectural detailing that is commonly found on Moderne buildings and used to emphasize a building's horizontal design, such as a flat roof system, nor does it possess architectural details, such as geometric or other stylized motifs, on its façades.

Additionally, when the Main Building was rehabilitated, the original, centrally-located, formal front entrance portal was filled-in and covered over with a small window unit. This resulted in the building losing one of the most character-defining architectural features of a 1930s school building. To not have a center hall entrance in a pre- World War II school goes against the commonly accepted school building layout of that period, and even of today's schools. We do not believe the Main Building possesses the necessary architectural attributes to have been an influence on the work of subsequent school designers in California or the United States, and the building does not appear to be important example of this style of architecture on a local, state, or national level.

The Main Building of North School does not appear to have the capacity to yield information important to the history of education in Hermosa Beach, Los Angeles County, or California. The subject building does not appear to be eligible for listing in the National Register or California Register under Criterion D/4.

The Main Building of North School has retained the levels of integrity, of location and setting, necessary to convey it as an elementary school building located in Hermosa Beach. Due to the reconstruction of the building in 1935 after the Long Beach earthquake, the main North School building lost the architectural elements and features of design, materials, workmanship, and feeling that would have conveyed the building's original appearance and its association with Hermosa Beach of the mid-1920s.

1939 Kindergarten and Classroom Buildings

The two buildings on the North School campus constructed in 1939 were financed with funds from a federal program signed into law by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1933, and were part of his "New Deal" platform. Both the PWA and Works Progress Administration (WPA) New Deal programs were responsible for investing over \$540 million for the erection of new school buildings and extensions/additions and repairs to existing school buildings in the United States. The PWA alone was responsible for the construction of 70% of the 5,584 new school buildings, and the expansion or repair of 31,629 additional schools across the country.⁵²

"Educational buildings are a ubiquitous New Deal building type. New Deal school buildings and gymnasiums are located in nearly every county, in every state, across the nation..."⁵³

The two buildings on the North School campus constructed in 1939 do not appear eligible for listing in the National Register or California Register under Criterion A/1. The PWA was an important program of President Roosevelt's New Deal administration, but mere association with historic events is not enough to qualify the 1939 North School buildings as significant historic resources. The buildings themselves must be shown to have made, or be associated with, a significant contribution to the education of children during the Great Depression. For instance, were the two 1939 North School buildings the only school buildings in Hermosa Beach when they were erected? Did the education of children in Hermosa Beach or Los Angeles County depend on the construction of these two buildings? Were the two 1939 North School buildings presented to the residents of Hermosa Beach, California or the United States as important examples of the benefits of the federal New Deal projects to the education of children? The answer to these questions is "no," as the 1939 North School buildings had been built after construction in Hermosa Beach of the Pier Avenue Grammar/Junior High School, the North School Main Building, and the South School. The PWA funds spent on the two buildings at North School did not begin to match the importance of funding such large scale projects as Boulder Dam or the aircraft carrier *Yorktown*, or the construction of a teacherage in rural Mississippi where no schools had previously existed.⁵⁴ There were no articles in the local

⁵² Kennedy, Rachel and Cynthia Johnson. "The New Deal Builds: A Historic Context of the New Deal in East Kentucky, 1933 to 1943". Pages 127-128. Kentucky Heritage Council and Kentucky Transportation Cabinet.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ A teacherage is a small building that serves as a combination teacher's residence and schoolhouse.

press regarding any contribution the new North School buildings would make to the educational quality of life in Hermosa Beach, except to relieve overcrowding in the existing classrooms. The 1939 Kindergarten and Classroom buildings on the North School campus have not been found to be important in the history of education in the United States, r California, or Hermosa Beach.

Under the criterion for evaluating properties for listing in the National Register or California Register for their *direct* association with the lives of persons important to the history of Hermosa Beach, Los Angeles County, California, or the nation, we did not find that the two 1939 Kindergarten and Classroom buildings constructed on the North School campus were eligible for listing in the National Register or California Register under Criterion B/2.

The two buildings constructed in 1939 to house additional classroom space and a kindergarten do not appear eligible for listing in the National Register or California Register under Criterion C/3 as examples of early (pre-World War II) International style architecture. MSP chose to use an extremely modern style of architecture in a beach town of 7,000 residents, who themselves were mostly living in small bungalow houses. Unlike Los Angeles or Beverly Hills, Hermosa Beach in the 1930s was not known as an incubator of radical and new architectural styles. It appears the International style was chosen for the new North School buildings because of the style's complete lack of artistic and stylistic details that could add cost to a building's construction. While the Kindergarten building does present some conservative design features to create tension on the rectangular building mass, the associated Classroom building is a utilitarian structure almost devoid of style. We do not believe the buildings possess the necessary architectural attributes to have been an influence on subsequent architects work in California or the United States, and the buildings do not appear to be important examples of this style of architecture on a state or national level.

The 1939 Kindergarten and Classroom buildings at North School do not appear to have the capacity to yield information important to the history of Hermosa Beach, Los Angeles County, or beach-front communities. The subject buildings do not appear eligible for listing in the National Register or California Register under Criterion D/4.

Although the 1939 classroom buildings have been found not to meet the criteria to be determined historic resources, the buildings have retained sufficient levels of integrity to convey their original appearance. The buildings have retained the levels of integrity of location, materials, setting, design, feeling, and association.

1958 Classroom and Kindergarten Buildings

Under the criterion for evaluating the two North School buildings constructed in 1958 for their association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad pattern of history in Hermosa Beach, Los Angeles County, or to the cultural heritage of the United States, it does not appear that the buildings are eligible individually or collectively for listing in the National Register or California Register under Criterion A/1. We did not find that the two

1958 buildings were associated with any events important to the history of the education of children outside of their primary goal of providing an enclosed space for the instruction and activities of grammar school children.

It does not appear that the two 1958 buildings have any direct association with the lives of persons important to the history of Hermosa Beach, Los Angeles County, California, or the nation. We did not find any evidence that the buildings meet the guidelines to be listed in the National Register or California Register under Criterion B/2.

The two 1958 buildings do not appear to be eligible for listing in the National Register or California Register as examples of classroom buildings constructed in 1958 and designed in the Contemporary style of architecture. The Contemporary style of architecture was widely used in the 1950s and 1960s for the design of residential, commercial, and institutional buildings, as the structural design of these modest buildings allowed for floor plans that needed large, open, interior spaces. The two 1958 buildings on the North School campus are not significant examples of school building architecture in California or the United States, nor have they been found to be important examples of the work of the architectural firm of KWW. The 1958 classroom and kindergarten buildings do not appear eligible for listing in the National Register or California Register under Criterion C/3.

The two 1958 buildings have not yielded, nor do they appear to have the potential to yield, information important about the history of the local area, California or the nation. The buildings do not appear to be eligible for listing in the National Register or California Register under Criterion D/4.

The 1958 classroom buildings on the North School campus have retained all of the aspects of integrity that are considered important when evaluating under National Register and California Register criteria. The buildings have retained the aspects of location, design, setting, feeling, association, materials, and workmanship.

Summary

In summation, the Main Building of North School (1924/1935), the 1939 Kindergarten and Classroom buildings, and the 1958 Kindergarten and Classroom buildings, do not appear to meet the criteria for being determined significant resources, individually or collectively, on a statewide or national level, and therefore are ineligible for listing in the National Register or California Register and do not qualify as historic properties or historical resources.

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APPENDIX A – DPR Inventory Site Forms
