

WESTSIDE SCHOOL, ANNEX  
Corner of Washington Avenue and D Street  
Las Vegas  
Clark County  
Nevada

HABS NV-65-A  
*HABS NV-65-A*

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

FIELD RECORDS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240-0001

**HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY  
WESTSIDE SCHOOL ANNEX**

**HABS No. NV-65-A**

**Location:** Corner of Washington Avenue and D Street  
Clark County, Las Vegas, Nevada

**Present Owner:** City of Las Vegas  
400 East Stewart Avenue  
Las Vegas, NV 89101-2942

**Present Use:** Equal Opportunity Board of Clark County offices.

**Significance:** The Westside School Annex was built in 1948 as an addition to the 1922 Westside School. The Annex Building is directly associated with the Westside School site and contributes to the site's significance to the local African-American community as it was the initial exposure to racially integrated education along Westside community of Las Vegas. Westside School's significance to the state and local community is indicated by its listing on the National Register of Historic Places, the Nevada State Register of Historic Places, and the city of Las Vegas Historic Property.

## PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

### A. Physical History

1. Date of erection: 1948<sup>1</sup>
2. Architect: A.L. Worswick
3. Original and subsequent owners and occupants:
  - 1884 Helen J. Stewart
  - 1924 Clark County School District
  - 1967 School closes
  - 1975 City of Las Vegas, Economic Opportunity Board of Clark County
4. Builder, Contractor, Supplier: Lembke Construction
5. Original plans and construction: Original architectural or structural plans have not been located.
6. Alterations and additions:
  - 1960 Room addition to the north wing of the Annex building.
  - 1977 Renovation to the Annex Building
  - 1980 Structural Stabilization

### B. Historical Context

The Westside School site was originally owned by Las Vegas pioneer Helen J. Stewart. The Westside School was constructed in 1922 on land that Helen J. Stewart donated to the Clark County School District.<sup>2</sup> A petition to build the Westside School was circulated early that year in February 1922, bonds sold that spring, and construction began mid-summer. The two-room building was designed by Allison & Allison and was the first grammar school to be erected in the West Las Vegas area.<sup>3</sup> It was modeled after the Kindergarten and Manual Arts Buildings located at the Fourth Street school campus which was built in the Mission Revival style.<sup>4</sup> The Westside School, however, only contained two rooms to accommodate first and second grades.<sup>5</sup> The first principal of the

---

<sup>1</sup> "First Class is to be Graduated from Westside." *Las Vegas Review Journal*. May 24, 1949.

<sup>2</sup> *Las Vegas Age*, September 2, 1922. Also see *Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps* and the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, May 25, 1949 for verification on the construction date even though the National Register of Historic Places nomination form for the Westside School notes 1921 as the construction date and the National Register of Historic Places Plaque on the building states 1923.

<sup>3</sup> Julie Nicoletta, "Las Vegas—Downtown, High School Historic District, Westside." *Buildings of Nevada*. Chicago: Society of Architectural Historians, 2000.

<sup>4</sup> Historic photographs of the old Las Vegas school complex along Fourth Street courtesy of Brenda Williams.

<sup>5</sup> "Old Town School House Presents Fine Appearance." *Las Vegas Age*. March 10, 1923. Also refer to Frank Wright, *Nevada Yesterdays* (Las Vegas: Stephens Press, LLC, 2005), p. 64.

school was Ms. Ruth Fyfe who served from 1924-1935.<sup>6</sup> The first year in which the first African-American students began attending the school was 1926 and would be the first school of attendance for racially integrated classes. By 1928, two additional rooms were added at the north end of the building to accommodate third and fourth graders.<sup>7</sup>

There were two major waves of migrants that entered Las Vegas. The initial wave occurred during the 1930s when thousands of working men moved their families to the valley for the construction of the Hoover Dam. African-Americans were among the first of many pioneers to settle in the Las Vegas valley where they purchased land and in the 1930s they had established businesses. Due to segregation practices, a racial divide was made in a thriving community and forced African-American families and businesses to relocate to West Las Vegas. Despite being segregated, African-American businesses continued to flourish with the new military and defense industries introduced during WWII and in conjunction with the growing tourism and casino industries.

During the 1940s, the Westside School would be utilized for community events including the USO who would show movies on Monday evenings and host game nights on Wednesdays.<sup>8</sup> In 1942, “the old county building” was moved onto the site in order to include a class for fifth graders.<sup>9</sup> By 1947, the Clark County School District developed plans for the expansion of the Westside School. Designed by A.L. Worswick, the cost of the project was estimated at \$104,000. The Annex building would house 11 additional rooms and an administration room for the school campus.<sup>10</sup> The new building would accommodate grades six through eight. According to the *Las Vegas Review Journal*,

The Westside project calls for the construction of concrete block buildings....The new structures will be erected in a quadrangle to the west of the present building. The old CCC buildings, now on the rear of the school yard, will be dismantled and the space used for part of the new classrooms, it was explained.

The classrooms, each provided with ample windows for lighting will be connected by canopies and of single story construction. The buildings will have asphalt shingle roofs. Each classroom will be of 22 by 30 feet in size.

Lavatory facilities for boys and girls are included in the new program. The administration building, which will face south, will contain the principal's office and restrooms for teachers.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Branch No. 1, Las Vegas Grammar School National Register of Historic Places. April 30, 1978.

<sup>8</sup> “New Westside USO Plan Open.” n.d.

<sup>9</sup> “First Class is to be Graduated from Westside.” *Las Vegas Review Journal*. May 24, 1949.

<sup>10</sup> “Disclose Plans for School Improvements: Estimated Cost \$180,000; Bids to be Opened July 9.” *Las Vegas Review Journal*. June 26, 1947.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

Completed in 1948, the new building cost came to approximately \$128,000. By 1949, the Westside School would be the third school in Las Vegas with eight complete grades and an enrollment of 535 students.<sup>12</sup>

By 1955, Nevada's African-American population would rise to approximately 16,000 in the Westside. After years of segregation, civil rights legislation established integration policies in the 1960s. Although African-Americans frequented businesses outside of their Westside community, members of the white population did not return the support. The City's decision to allow construction of I-15 through the district was a further detriment. Without the support from their neighbors, the African-American neighborhoods began an economic decline and parts of the community started to fall into disrepair. By 1967, the school was officially phased out of use. In 1974, the School Board of Trustees declared Westside School to be surplus property and adopted a resolution to sell it.

The following year in 1975, the Economic Opportunity Board of Clark County decided to occupy the building and began the process of renovation. Renovation of the buildings would continue until 1977 and included the exterior wood trellis along the Annex building's inner courtyard. By 1979, the site would be listed on the National Register of Historic Places and in 1980, the buildings underwent structural stabilization.

#### A.L. Worswick, Architect<sup>13</sup>

A.L. Worswick is credited for designing the Westside School Annex in 1948. Mr. Worswick is one of the most prolific and influential architects in Las Vegas during the early years of the twentieth century. Worswick came to Las Vegas around 1929, where his career continued into the 1940s. He was a native of Kansas and a graduate of Kansas State University. Worswick's architectural career began in 1902 in San Francisco, and in 1904, he joined the city's Bureau of Architecture. Presumably, Worswick had a role in rebuilding San Francisco following the 1906 earthquake and fire.

Worswick served on the Las Vegas City Planning Commission and during his tenure advocated city planning and controlled growth. Among numerous others in Las Vegas, Mr. Worswick designed the Henderson House, the Palace Theater, the War Memorial Building, the Chief Hotel Court on Fremont Street, and the old McCarran Airport terminal building. He lived in what is now known as the Las Vegas High School Historic District, and he designed two Las Vegas buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places: the Whitehead House and the Las Vegas Hospital. Unfortunately, they were both destroyed by fire. Mr. Worswick also made a significant impact on the current culture of Las Vegas by designing the Hotel Apache (now the Horseshoe). This was one of the first hotel-casinos in the city, built shortly after gambling was legalized in 1931.

---

<sup>12</sup> "First Class is to be Graduated from Westside." *Las Vegas Review Journal*. May 24, 1949.

<sup>13</sup> Excerpt from "1938 Lincoln County Courthouse, Lincoln County, Nevada National Register of Historic Places."

## **PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION**

### **A. General Statement:**

1. Architectural character: The Annex building contains Mission Revival style influences.
2. Condition of the fabric: Exterior: Good; Interior: Good.

### **B. Description of Exterior:**

#### **1. Overall Dimensions:**

The Annex building was constructed in 1948 in a 24 foot wide “U” shape configuration to house additional classrooms and a north wing for administrative offices. In 1960, a 24'x18' addition was constructed to the east end of the north wing. The building measures approximately 290' long and 90' wide along the southern façade and 99' at the north wing.

#### **2. Foundations:**

It is assumed that the foundations are concrete. There is a walkway up to the building on the exterior and a concrete slab finish floor on the interior. The concrete finish slab extends throughout all wings of the building. There is no existing crawl space.

#### **3. Walls:**

The walls are 4 inch high concrete block units. The most common size of the concrete block unit is 8 inches long. There are courses of 16 inch long block perhaps to serve as a bond course. The block wall thickness is 8 inches. The walls appear to be in good condition.

#### **4. Structural System, Framing:**

The structural system of the one story building includes wood roof trusses set on the concrete block walls. The concrete block walls are supported on concrete foundations. The floor system is a concrete slab on grade. No interior walls appear to be load bearing as the roof system easily spans the 24 foot width of the buildings. The structural system is in good condition.

#### **5. Porch and Trellis:**

A concrete covered porch is located along the south wing that originally included a breezeway leading to the inner courtyard. The porch is supported by metal posts with decorative wood corbels. The breezeway entrance has been infilled with brick and a non-historic ceramic tile mural. The wood grille vent above is extant, however, a portion of the decorative corbels have been cut when infilled. Additional ceramic art panels are located along the inside walls on both ends of the porch. A decorative metal security gate has been placed at the entry to the southern wing breezeway from the inner courtyard.

A decorative security gate is also located at the secondary breezeway along the northwest façade. The breezeway contains its original decorative corbels and wood grille vent above.

A wood trellis extends throughout the interior façades and measures approximately 10 feet wide. The trellis was added during the 1977 remodel. The trellis and supporting posts show some signs of deterioration with some of the trellis boards extensively water damaged from the air conditioning units that are resting above. The trellis is in good to fair condition.

6. Chimneys:

There are several interior brick chimneys located throughout the Annex building; two along the west wing, one on the east wing, one on the north wing, and one on the south wing. Each chimney extends approximately 6 feet above the exterior roof. The chimneys are connected to the boiler rooms which project approximately 5 feet from the outside walls. The chimneys have not been seismically anchored and appear to be in good condition. They are not currently in use.

7. Openings:

a. Doorways and Doors

The classroom and administration doors of the Annex building face the inner courtyard and appear to have been replaced with non-historic solid core wood slab doors. Their original concrete headers are extant. There are two entry doors along the south wing breezeway. Non-historic access doors to the projecting boiler rooms are located along the outside façades. A non-historic exterior hollow metal frame steel door with steel security door is located at the east wing's east façade. In addition, there is evidence of an entry door along the same east façade that has been infilled. All existing doors appear to be in good condition.

b. Windows

Historic steel framed, divided light, awning windows are operable and are located along the south wing's north inner courtyard façade. Non-historic aluminum framed fixed windows are located facing the interior courtyard at all wings. Their original concrete headers are extant. All of the windows have non-historic metal security grilles. All exterior facing façade windows have been infilled but contain their original concrete sill. Windows along the northwest façade of the east wing have been infilled. Their original concrete sills are extant. Original windows along the south façade gabled ends and the windows under the covered porch have been infilled with block and covered with a plaster art panel or decorative tiles. All existing windows appear to be in good condition.

8. Roof:

The Annex building has a hipped roof with asphalt shingles and overhanging eaves with shaped rafter tails. Shed roofs extend at the projecting boiler rooms. The gabled ends have decorative clay tile attic vents at the south and north façades. The east

facing façade along the north wing has a decorative wood cladding detail with louvered vent. Hipped and gable ridge ventilators are located throughout the roof.

The roof construction consists of 3x6 inch rafters at 2'-6" on center. Ceiling joists are 2x6 inch joists also spaced at 2'-6" on center. Diagonals, and a vertical member at the centerline, create the wood truss spaced at approximately 7 ½ feet on center.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor Plans:

The general layout of the Annex building had been heavily renovated for use as offices, conference rooms along the west and south wings; storage and a kitchen area along the east wing; and communication room, storage, and offices at the north wing. The floor plan displays almost no original, historic fabric with the exception of the original exterior and interior masonry walls.

2. Flooring:

In general, the flooring throughout the west wing is carpet with the restrooms containing 1 inch square mosaic floor tiles. The east wing kitchen has 12 inch ceramic square tiles with concrete floors in all the remaining storage areas. The south wing has carpet in the office spaces and maintenance room and vinyl composition tile floors in the restroom spaces. The north wing has carpet throughout with concrete floors in the 1960 addition storage space. All of the floor finish material appears to be in good condition.

3. Walls and Ceiling Finish:

The original interior masonry walls are extant throughout the Annex building. Non-historic wood framed walls have been added during the 1977 interior renovation to subdivide the interior spaces for office and conference rooms. The renovation also included installation of drop ceiling panels throughout.

4. Openings:

a. Doorways and Doors

All of the exterior doors throughout the building have been replaced with non-historic wood solid core slab doors and their hardware is also new. All of the interior doors and hardware are non-historic and are mostly hollow-core wood doors. A non-historic interior wood door with glazing is located at the north wing office.

b. Windows

All of the original steel awning windows at the south wing conference room and maintenance room are extant and operable. The fixed aluminum framed windows are non-historic. The Dispatch room in Room 9 includes metal framed windows mounted to the interior masonry wall. All other interior office windows are along non-historic wood framed walls.

5. **Decorative Features and Trim:**  
With the exception of the interior masonry walls, all decorative features and trim are no longer extant.
6. **Hardware:**  
All of the original door hardware and doors have been replaced. The original steel awning window hardware appears to be extant.
7. **Mechanical Equipment:**  
The building is supplied with retrofitted heating, air condition, and ventilation distributed via ductwork and wall and ceiling grilles.
8. **Lighting:**  
All of the historic lighting fixtures have been replaced. Much of the lighting is now fluorescent box fixtures which are mounted to the drop ceiling panels or surface mounted to the plaster ceilings.
9. **Plumbing:**  
All of the toilets, wall-mounted sinks, plumbing fixtures, and toilet partitions are not original.
10. **Original Furnishing:**  
There is no evidence of original furnishings. Non-original furnishings include interior doors, office windows, partitions, and casework.

D. **Site:**

1. **General Setting and Orientation:**  
The building faces south on West Washington Avenue. The school played an important role as the first school constructed in the Westside area of Las Vegas.
2. **Historic Landscape Design:**  
Ca. late 1960s aerial photograph shows a basketball court and paved playground area at the northeast corner of the site. It appears that most of the area remained unpaved with some trees located at the Westside School entrance.

### PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

1938 Lincoln County Courthouse National Register of Historic Places.

20<sup>th</sup> Century Preservation. "City of Las Vegas Historic Resource Survey and Inventory: West Las Vegas." Prepared for the City of Las Vegas. September 2003.

Branch No. 1, Las Vegas Grammar School National Register of Historic Places.

Charles Hall Page & Associates Inc. "Historic Preservation Inventory & Planning Guidelines City of Las Vegas." Prepared for the City of Las Vegas. May 31, 1978.

City of Las Vegas Department of Public Works. "Conceptual Proposal Westside School & Variety Early Learning Center Ward 5". Revised April 20, 2010.

Clark County Assessor. Parcel Ownership History for 137-27-211-059.  
<http://sandgate.co.clark.nv.us/assrealprop/ParcelHistory.aspx?hdnParcel=13927211059&hdnInstance=pc17>. Accessed 03.28.2011.

Clark County Assessor. Parcel Ownership History for 137-27-211-060.  
<http://sandgate.co.clark.nv.us/assrealprop/ParcelHistory.aspx?hdnParcel=13927211060&hdnInstance=pc17>. Accessed 03.28.2011.

Gottdiener, M., Claudia C. Collins, and David R. Dickens. *Las Vegas: The Social Production of an All-American City*.

Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers Inc., 1999.

Melvyn Green and Associates Structural Engineers. "Westside School Complex Las Vegas, Nevada Structural Condition and Historic Final Report." Prepared for the City of Las Vegas, Public Works Department, Las Vegas, Nevada. September 2010.

Nicoletta, Julie. *Buildings of Nevada*, Chicago: Society of Architectural Historians, 2000.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps. January 1928.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps. March 1943.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps. May 1953.

Seymour, Greg. "Economic Stimulus at the Westside School in the City of Las Vegas."  
*Historic Connection*. Vol. 13. No. 2. Winter 2010

Wright, Frank. *Nevada Yesteryears*. Las Vegas: Stephens Press LLC, 2005.

#### News Articles

- \_\_\_\_\_. “High and Grammar Schools Open Fifth.” *Las Vegas Age*. September 2, 1922.
- \_\_\_\_\_. “Old Town School House Presents Fine Appearance.” *Las Vegas Age*. March 10, 1923.
- \_\_\_\_\_. “Vegas Grammar School News: Improvements at Westside School.” *Las Vegas (Nevada) Evening Review*. March 18, 1938.
- \_\_\_\_\_. “Las Vegas Schools, Staffed By 59 Teachers, Open September 6.” *Las Vegas Evening Review Journal*. August 31, 1938.
- \_\_\_\_\_. “Disclose Plans for School Improvements: Estimated Cost \$180,000; Bids to be Opened July 9.” *Las Vegas Review Journal*. June 26, 1947.
- \_\_\_\_\_. “Westside School Near Completion.” *Las Vegas Review Journal*. January 29, 1948.
- \_\_\_\_\_. “First Class is to be Graduated from Westside.” *Las Vegas Review Journal*. May 24, 1949.

#### Internet Articles

- “A.L. Worswick”. <http://library.nevada.edu/arch/archdb2/index.php/people/view/134>. Accessed 03.30.2011.
- “Allison & Allison.” <http://library.nevada.edu/arch/archdb2/app/webroot/index.php/firms/view/37>. Accessed 04.26.2011.
- “Bruno, Elmo.” [http://library.nevada.edu/speccol/ms\\_subj/arch\\_urban.html](http://library.nevada.edu/speccol/ms_subj/arch_urban.html). Special Collections at UNLV: Architecture/Urban Planning. Accessed 03.30.2011.
- “Henderson House.” <http://www.lasvegasnevada.gov/TextOnly/FactsStatistics/10531.htm>. Accessed 03.30.2011.

#### Historic Photographs

Clark County School District Archive Committee.

“Patriotic exercises at West Side School.” n.d.

“Las Vegas Public Schools.” Four interior classrooms photographs. n.d.

Black and white aerial photograph, ca. late 1960s.

Colored aerial photograph, ca. late 1960s.

Nevada State Museum, Las Vegas

Black and white aerial photograph dated 1938.

Black and white aerial photograph dated February 26, 1973.

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Black and white aerial photograph, ca. late 1960s.

Williams, Brenda.

Photographs of the Las Vegas School campus along Fourth and Fifth Street from the 1931 School Report and the 1935 School Report.

**PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION**

The Las Vegas Centennial Commission recently granted \$550,000 for the historic Westside School Rehabilitation and Master Plan project. The Master Plan will include recommendations for programming and use, improved pedestrian and vehicular access to the site, and improved ADA accessibility to the Westside School site.