

University High School Administration Building
Name of Property

Los Angeles, California
County and State

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
 determined eligible for the National Register
 determined not eligible for the National Register
 removed from the National Register
 other (explain:) _____

Paul R. Lusignan
Signature of the Keeper

07/15/2025
Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
Public – Local
Public – State
Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
District
Site
Structure
Object

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE VICTORIAN:

Romanesque Revival

Renaissance Revival

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Brick, terracotta tile, concrete, cast stone

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The University High School Administration Building is two stories with a hip roof and irregular plan, designed in a combination of Late Victorian architectural styles, Romanesque Revival and Renaissance Revival. The walls are finished with brick and the foundation is concrete. The cross hipped roof is finished with terracotta clay tile. Above the primary entrance is a round arch surrounded by rope molding. The flagship and last remaining original building of a campus that opened in 1924 as Warren G. Harding High School, the building houses the administrative offices, library, and classrooms. By 1929, the school changed its name to University High School, recognizing the school's proximity to multiple colleges and universities. Located in a residential neighborhood in West Los Angeles, the building fronts Texas Avenue and Westgate Avenue, and is set behind a lawn with mature trees. The rear of the building overlooks a hill with lawns, mature trees, and concrete walkways. The property is in good condition and retains integrity of design, materials, location, workmanship, feeling and association.

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Narrative Description

Overview

The building is located at the crest of a hill on the northwest corner of the high school campus in West Los Angeles (**Figure 1**). Occupying approximately 1.3 acres, the Administration Building features an irregular plan, consisting of the original rectangular main building constructed in 1924 and an L-shaped addition connected to the main building in 1925 (**Sketch Map**). The overall program consists of classrooms, a library, and administrative offices off a central hallway. The original main building is set at 45 degrees to the street while the addition is aligned with the street grid (**Figure 2**).

The Administration Building is the only remaining building of the original 1920s campus in what was known as Sawtelle at the time.¹ The other original buildings were demolished and replaced over time. Building replacement is a common pattern found among Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) campuses that pre-date the 1933 Long Beach Earthquake.² Later campus buildings, outside the nominated boundary, include the East Gym (1937), Shop Building and Classroom Building (late 1950s), Stivelman Theatre and Cafeteria complex and Classroom Building (1970s), South Gym (2010s), and several bungalows, utility sheds, the boiler building, and various other minor buildings (**Figure 3**).³

In 1929, the school changed its name from Warren G. Harding High School to University High School because the school was “located near the center of five leading colleges and universities.”⁴ The name became official on July 1, 1929.⁵ As early as 1925, Sawtelle itself had wished to be known as the “University Center” in order to identify “itself in the public mind as contiguous to the location of the Southern Branch of the state university, when it moves to its Westwood site,” referring to the southern branch of the University of California (later UCLA). University High School’s first principal, A.L. Cavanagh, urged a yes vote on Proposition No. 2 to establish UCLA.⁶ A 1926 map showed “The University Center” with several educational institutions in the vicinity such as the future UCLA, St. John’s Military Academy, Westlake

¹ Sawtelle became known as West Los Angeles – *West Los Angeles Branch Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce 1929 Annual Report*, pamphlet, Box: 63, California Historical Society collection of Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce records and photographs, 0245-1, USC Libraries Special Collections, 5.

² Sapphos Environmental Inc., *Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), Historic Context Statement 1870 to 1969* (Los Angeles Unified School District Office of Environmental Health and Safety, March 2014), 136.

³ For east gym, see *The Chieftain, 1938* (University High School, 1938) 9; *The Chieftain, 1939* (University High School, 1939), 17. See Bibliography for building permits and list “AB 300: Seismic Building Evaluation Status.”

⁴ Katherine Wilson, President of W.G. Harding High School Girls’ League, to Pennsylvania State College Head of Student Body Government, 12 March 1929, Historical Files, University High School Charter Library.

⁵ “Harding High Name Becomes ‘University,’” *Sunday Morning Outlook*, June 30, 1929, <https://digital.smpl.org/digital/collection/sanmonnp10/id/25606/rec/1458>, 1. *The Chieftain, 1929*, (Warren G. Harding High School, 1929), 25, 86.

⁶ “Sawtelle Asks to be ‘University Center,’” *Santa Monica Evening Outlook*, October 22, 1925, 1. “Facts Compiled for Sawtellans,” *West Los Angeles Tribune*, August 10, 1926, 1. James R. Martin, *The University of California (in Los Angeles): A Resume Of The Selection And Acquisition of the Westwood Site* (1925), 242.

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School for Girls, and a proposed satellite location for Occidental College (never built).⁷ By 1928, the Sawtelle Chamber of Commerce also became known as the “University Branch.”⁸

Setting

The school campus features mature landscaping with turf, concrete walkways, and mature trees. As documented in school yearbooks, landscaping was planted following the school opening in 1924. Extant trees include deodars and jacarandas. A five-landing, double-wide exterior staircase leads to the Administration Building from the upper athletic field. At the top of the staircase is a flagpole in an oval landing. The staircase is aligned with the 45-degree axis of the original main building. The hill on either side of the staircase features mature trees. These landscape features are part of the original grading plan for the campus.⁹

Administration Building

Main Façade (West Elevation)

The main façade, facing approximately west, is at the corner of Texas Avenue and Westgate Avenue. Set back from the street at a 45-degree angle, the school entrance is accessed by a concrete walkway framed by lamp posts, turf, and mature trees (**Photo 1**). The entire façade is clad in brick of varying orange hues set with a common bond. Some of the bricks have been replaced with bricks that generally match the original colors. The mortar between the bricks has deteriorated in several places. The symmetrical Renaissance Revival composition with a shallow, centrally located entry bay is flanked by banks of windows. The main façade reflects the appearance following repairs and seismic reinforcement due to damage from and safety requirements after the 1933 Long Beach Earthquake (**Figure 4**).¹⁰ Non-original light fixtures are located at the corners and at the top of two double-height pilasters.

The dominant element of the façade is the main entrance, defined as a central entry bay with a large, recessed compound arch within an architrave on a plinth. The compound arch is articulated with decorative cast stone rope molding, alternating brick and cast stone, and other decorative molding. Within the arch is the main entrance, accessed by three concrete steps leading to a set of wood double doors. There is a concrete handicap access ramp to the left. Each door has a single pane of windows covered by metal grates. These doors are not original. To the left of the

⁷ Hosking Co., *Map of Sawtelle and Vicinity* 1926, map and brochure, University of California, Los Angeles Library, Henry J. Bruman Map Collection, <https://digital.library.ucla.edu/catalog/ark:/21198/zz002c21wg>.

⁸ “University Branch Plans Annual Banquet,” *Sawtelle Evening Tribune*, *The Santa Monica Evening Outlook*, January 26, 1928, 1. See also Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce sources in Bibliography.

⁹ Sapphos Environmental Inc., *Los Angeles Unified School District, Historic Context Statement 1870 to 1969*, 134. *The Grading Plan for Warren G. Harding High School, dated September 10, 1925*, drawing, Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA, University High School architectural drawings, UCLA Catalog Record ID: 6362785, Collection 443: Box 15. For never implemented landscape plan, see Bibliography Mark Daniels entry.

¹⁰ “Campus Views,” *The Chieftain*, 1937 (University High School, 1937), 14. *University High School in 1936*, November 12, 1936, photograph, Santa Monica History Museum, Object Id: 3.2.655, <https://santamonicahistory.catalogaccess.com/photos/6969>.

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doors in the architrave are bronze numerals with the school address, “11800.” To either side of the doors are non-original light fixtures. A transom window covered by a metal grate is located above the doorway. Above that are dentils and a cast stone cartouche. Within the cast stone tympanum of the compound arch is a medallion. Above the arch are bronze letters that spell “University High School” (**Photo 2**). The bay features cast stone quoins.

To either side of the central bay are three banks of classroom windows framed by two double height pilasters with capitals decorated with rosettes and simplified double-height pilasters set on a plinth. The overall façade consists of two stories of classrooms and administrative offices, expressed with 6-over-6, single hung windows with hopper windows. The lintels at the top of the window frames feature vertical sided brick fenestration, while the windowsills feature half brick fenestration. The northern and southern corners feature wings that jut out at 45 degrees from the main rectangular footprint of the building. At the ground level of the northern wing is a concrete balustrade with interwoven stylized flat balusters (**Photo 3**). The façade is capped with a red-tile, hipped roof. The numbers “11800” are painted in white on the roof above the central bay. The roof features three non-original venting stacks added in 2019 at the southwest corner above the chemistry classroom lab.¹¹

The original appearance of the façade before the 1933 Long Beach Earthquake featured a distinctive Northern Italian Romanesque Revival style, with an arched portico at the main entrance, consisting of ornate stone ornament and columns with a terra cotta roof, reminiscent of a Northern Italian Romanesque cathedral entry portico.¹² Above this portico was a rosette window featuring alternating brick and stone, with a gable above. The central entry bay was capped by an octagonal dome with alternating brick and stone bands and tripled-arched openings. The dome was topped by a hipped clay tile roof and stone lantern (**Figure 5**) and the original floor plan shows a square skylight on the second floor under the dome.¹³ After the 1933 Long Beach Earthquake, the portico, rosette window, and dome were removed. These modifications were part of a larger repair and seismic reinforcement of the Administration Building following the earthquake. With these modifications, the Administration Building was left with a Renaissance Revival style appearance.¹⁴

East Elevation

The rear of the building is two or three stories depending on the site topography, featuring a similar level of architectural detail and the same materials as the main façade. Like the main

¹¹ As seen in Google Street View, dated May 2019.

¹² *The Chieftain*, 1926 (Warren G. Harding High School, 1926), 63; *The Chieftain*, 1929, 11. *The Chieftain*, 1937, 52 identified the architectural style as Italian Romanesque.

¹³ Clarence H. Russell and Norman W. Alpaugh, *Administration Building – Sawtelle High School 1923 & no date*, blueprints, Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA, University High School architectural drawings, UCLA Catalog Record ID: 6362785, Collection 443, Box 12.

¹⁴ Sapphos Environmental Inc., *Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), Historic Context Statement 1870 to 1969*, 120, 130. Leslie Heumann with Anne Doehne, *Historic Schools of the Los Angeles Unified School District* (Los Angeles Unified School District Facilities Services Division, 2002), 8.

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façade, the east elevation features a central bay with a double-arched portico.¹⁵ A grand exterior staircase surrounded by solid brick wall balustrades capped with curved cast stone leads to the portico. The double arch is expressed in stone and features elaborate decorative molding and alternative brick and stone set on a plinth. Green man/foliate heads are sculpted into the capitals of the pilasters surrounding the center post. Two non-original light fixtures are located on either side of the arches. The portico leads to two doorways with lunette windows above the doors. In between the doorways is a 12-light window with a lunette window above. Each arched opening is articulated with vertical brick with a cast stone voussoir surrounded by brick and alternating stone. The lunette windows are covered with ornate wrought iron grilles. On either side of the portico are two rectangular 4-over-4 double hung windows. The rectangular portico is capped by a clay tile shed roof with a flagpole extending horizontally. Above the portico, the second story is articulated with five window arches in cast stone, featuring Romanesque cushion capitals and capped by stringcourses of vertical brick. Set within the arches are 4-over-4 double-hung windows set on a cast stone sill and apron (**Photo 4**). The combination roof above features a box gable with vents, painted red, to match the clay tile of the roof.

The rest of this elevation is recessed from the central bay and features the same two-level classroom window articulation as the façade: from the center, bays of 4-over-4 double-hung wood windows painted blue with hopper windows and vertical brick fenestration above. Non-original metal grates were added over the first story windows. An elevator was added to this elevation to the left of the central bay, between 1992 and 1993, as part of a renovation of the Administration Building.¹⁶ The elevator is constructed in the same architectural language, clad in brick, and is capped with a box gable roof. It is a sympathetic addition that does not alter the integrity of the building. A stringcourse articulated with vertical bricks separates the basement from the first and second stories on this elevation. The southern corner contains an entry porch with a clay tile shed roof with four bays of windows on the second and third stories. Due to the varying topography, this entry porch leads to the basement. An original fire escape is located at this corner. Fronting Westgate Avenue is a three-story elevation with a bank of windows in the basement with 4-over-4 wood windows, and three bays of classroom windows on the first and second stories. The basement and first story windows are all covered with metal gates (**Photo 5**).

As constructed in 1924, the central bay was gabled and above the 5-arched window was a rosette with alternating brick and stone bands. Above this was the octagonal dome. As previously noted, the dome was removed after the 1933 Long Beach Earthquake. The gabled roof and the rosette were also removed. The modification resulted in a shorter bay with the vented gable roof, set back from the central bay. The original external staircase appears to have been shorter. Grading of the hill below might have necessitated additional concrete steps.¹⁷ Originally, this elevation featured single light windows. The southern corner originally featured a gable roof with a rosette

¹⁵ *La Estrella, Summer 1925* (Warren G. Harding High School, 1925), 6, shows the main façade and east elevation reversed in an unattributed, alternative design.

¹⁶ *The Chieftain, 1992*, (University High School, 1992), 4.

¹⁷ "Needed New Buildings for Harding Promised Soon," *The Harding Warrior*, October 1, 1925, 1.

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at the top (**Figure 6**). Despite these alterations, this elevation retains its appearance from 1936, following changes made after the 1933 Long Beach Earthquake.¹⁸

Building Addition

In 1925, an L-shaped addition was designed, using the same architectural language as the original main building. The elevation fronts Texas Avenue and is two stories of classrooms, expressed by 6-over-6 single-hung windows with 3-light transom windows, capped by a hip roof (**Photo 6**). The addition continues the double loaded corridor plan of the original main building. The 1923 architectural plans show that future additions were always conceived as being connected to the ends of the original main building, with subsequent plans showing different configurations such as a southern wing connecting to a future auditorium. This south wing was never built due to the 1933 Long Beach Earthquake.¹⁹ A corner wing with a balustrade on the ground level replicates the wing at the northwest corner of the original main building. This balustrade has deteriorated (**Photo 7**).

The rear of the addition continues the same fenestration pattern of the original main building (**Photo 8**). The architects created another wing that extends perpendicularly from the rear elevation, highlighted by a monumental cast stone Venetian window (**Photo 9**). Due to the varying topography, the basement is accessible at this wing. On the first story is a double doorway with non-original wood doors set within an architrave of alternating brick and cast stone. This doorway leads to an internal staircase and the Leadership Room, which used to be an armory and rifle range for Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) students. A shallow hood roof supported by wood brackets is located over the doorway. Above is an entablature decorated with a cartouche in the middle with a double arch above, all set within the monumental Venetian window. A Corinthian engaged column is at the center of the two arches, with Corinthian pilasters on either end of the arches. Above is a giant medallion. Inset within the double arches are two double-hung, 3-over-3 wood windows. A hipped roof caps this elevation. A brick-clad chimney stack is located on the southeast corner of this elevation. At the bottom of the stack is a small brick shed set on a concrete base, capped by a clay tile gable roof. The shed with cast iron doors was used as an incinerator. Originally, the Venetian window and medallion were open-air surrounded by an alternating brick and stone pattern. The elevation was also originally capped

¹⁸ *The Chieftain*, 1937, 16.

¹⁹ *Application for the Erection of Buildings, Permit No. 32768 for "Public High School Addition Class Rooms"* (sic) (City of Los Angeles Board of Public Works Department of Buildings, September 23, 1925). *Sanborn Map*, April 1928, ProQuest Digital Sanborn Maps, 1867-1970, Sheet 21: City of Los Angeles, Sawtelle District, California, https://digitalsanbornmaps-proquest-com.ezproxy.lapl.org/browse_maps/5/843/3606/3857/60844?accountid=6749. Russell and Alpaugh, *Administration Building – Sawtelle High School 1923 & no date. Second Floor Plan, Proposed Addition, University High School, Scheme #2*, blueprints, Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA, University High School architectural drawings, UCLA Catalog Record ID: 6362785, Collection 443, Box 31. C.F. Helman, *Plot Plan, University High School*, June 1932, drawing, Los Angeles Unified School District Art & Artifact Collection/Archive and Museum. A.L. Cavanagh, "University High School—How It Happened," 10 June 1945, University High School Library Historical Papers, 3.

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with a gable roof. By 1973, the double arches within the monumental Venetian window were filled in.²⁰

The west elevation of the addition features a partial basement with 6-light windows covered with metal grates and three double arches on the first story. Each double arch is set within a larger arch, with an engaged column in the middle and a roundel in brick above each engaged column. On either side of the engaged columns are 6-over-6 wood windows set in a stucco wall. Roundels outlined in brick with stucco are located between each double arch. The second story features three bays of 6-over-6 wood windows set within an architrave with vertical brick at the top and a cast stone sill. Pilasters with alternating brick and cast stone bands are located between each bay of windows (**Photo 10**). Originally, the first and second stories were open-air, with open archways on the first story.²¹ The archways featured iron decorative grilles with the letter “H” at the top, a reminder of the original school name.²²

The east elevation features an entry bay accessed via concrete steps capped by a clay tile shed roof, supported by wood brackets. Above this entry portico, the second story features arched windows with a central engaged column with a Romanesque cushion capital. This bay is capped by a clay tile hip roof (**Photo 11**). A student drawing from 1931 showed that the bay was originally capped by a gable roof with a round gable vent with keystones.²³ These features were removed as part of the larger repair and seismic reinforcement construction work after the 1933 Long Beach Earthquake. To either side of this bay are classroom windows, with 6-over-6 single hung windows with 3-light transom windows. There is also a small arch with an inset window at the southeast corner, which was originally open-air.²⁴

Interior

The interior does not feature any significant decorative elements except for the lunette windows in the central bay (**Photo 12**). The double-loaded corridor has linoleum flooring. Ceilings have decorative molding and fiber acoustic tile, fluorescent lighting, and pipes suspended from the ceiling (**Photo 13**). The walls are plaster with metal lockers. Classrooms and administrative offices contain plaster walls, a mix of wood and other types of flooring materials, accessible by wood doors. The original 1923-1924 floorplan showed the stairs as concrete and the walls as tile (hollow clay tile block).²⁵ The post-1933 Long Beach Earthquake’s requirements for strengthening schools resulted in changes to the floor plans of the classrooms and administrative

²⁰ Perhaps the double arch was filled in after/due to the February 9, 1971 San Fernando Earthquake – *The Chieftain*, 1973 (University High School, 1973), 78-79. The medallion was filled in circa 1937: *The Chieftain*, 1937, 98.

²¹ *The Chieftain*, 1927, (Warren G. Harding High School, 1929), 48.

²² *The Chieftain*, 1930, (University High School, 1930), 142; *The Chieftain*, 1935, (University High School, 1935), 10.

²³ *The Chieftain*, 1931, (University High School, 1931), 12.

²⁴ *The Chieftain*, 1952, (University High School, 1952), 6-7.

²⁵ *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map*, October 1924, Library of Congress, Sheet/Image 4: Sawtelle, Los Angeles County, California.

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offices, as well as replacement of the interior walls with plaster and gunite.²⁶ Other interior elements that have not been substantially altered are archways from the once open-air arcade and the original ROTC armory and rifle range, since used as the Leadership classroom and storage (**Photos 14, 15**).

Integrity

The University High School Administration Building retains integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The overall plan and exterior architectural features remain, dating to the post-1933 Long Beach Earthquake repair and seismic reinforcement.²⁷

The building remains in its original *location*, at the crest of a hill overlooking West Los Angeles.

Although integrity of *setting* is lost due to the construction of replacement buildings to the east and south, the newer buildings are buffered by open space, walkways, and landscape features around the Administration Building, which remains the focal point of the school campus.

There have been no substantial changes to the overall architectural form and *design, materials, and workmanship*. The building exterior retains a high level of integrity through its largely intact materials, aside from replacement of some of the brick, windows, cast stone decorative work, and doors. The replacement windows are set within the original wood window frames. While the building underwent repair and seismic reinforcement after the 1933 Long Beach Earthquake, its Romanesque and Renaissance Revival architectural design remains. The interior has maintained its overall plan of a double loaded corridor, with the exception of the reconfiguration of some rooms and the removal of staircases and change in materials to walls, flooring and ceilings.²⁸ The rifle range included in the addition as part of the ROTC headquarters is still extant.²⁹ Both the form and defining Romanesque and Renaissance Revival decorative motifs remain, including the brick façade with cast stone decorative work, speaking to the workmanship common among public school buildings in the early twentieth century.

²⁶ Claud Beelman, *Administration Building Reconstruction – University High School*, 1935, scanned blueprints, Los Angeles Unified School District Drawing Archives, Drawing Set # 8886.09.000 - RECONSTRUCTION OF MAIN BUILDING.

²⁷ *Historic Resources L.A. Resource Report for Sawtelle High School/Warren G. Harding High School/University High School Administration Building* (Office of Historic Resources, City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning, Date Evaluated: April 17, 2012), <http://historicplacesla.org/reports/78ad961f-e449-43ae-944f-7f589ded7e9c>.

²⁸ *First Floor Plan, Proposed Addition, University High School, Scheme #2*, blueprints, Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA, University High School architectural drawings, UCLA Catalog Record ID: 6362785, Collection 443, Box 31. Beelman, *Administration Building Reconstruction – University High School*.

²⁹ *Basement Floor Plan, Proposed Addition, University High School, Scheme #2*, blueprints, Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA, University High School architectural drawings, UCLA Catalog Record ID: 6362785, Collection 443, Box 31.

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The Administration Building continues to serve the school as it was originally constructed and therefore retains integrity of *feeling and association*. The building continues to operate as an educational facility with administrative offices, school library, and classrooms, and continues to represent 1920s public school architecture in Los Angeles.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

ETHNIC HERITAGE: Asian (Japanese)

EDUCATION

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1924-1942

Significant Dates

1924

1925

1933

1942

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Russell & Alpaugh

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The University High School Administration Building is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criteria A and C. Under Criterion A, in the areas of Community Planning and Development and Ethnic Heritage: Asian (Japanese), the building reflects the growth of the formerly independent city of Sawtelle and its subsequent consolidation with the City of Los Angeles and the development of the Sawtelle community, including its Japanese American population. Under Criterion A in the area of Education, the school is associated with expansion of the Los Angeles City High School District, later Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). The school building represents the physical need to provide public school facilities to address the growing demands of the City of Los Angeles and an educated society. The school was also important in the area of Education as a training center for secondary school teachers and offered ROTC courses that were popular at the time. Under Criterion C in the area of Architecture, the work of the locally prominent architectural partnership Russell and Alpaugh is significant as an excellent example of one of the last remaining schools in the school district that retains the planning and design principles from the pre-1933 Long Beach Earthquake era. The 1924 to 1942 period of significance encompasses construction of the original building, its addition in 1925, alterations necessitated by the 1933 Long Beach Earthquake, and the forced removal of Japanese Americans from the Sawtelle community and University High School during World War II. As a property associated with Migration and Community Formation, the Administration Building meets the registration requirements of the *Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in California, 1850-1995* Multiple Property Submission.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Criterion A: Community Planning and Development

The University High School Administration Building reflects the growth of the city of Sawtelle, and Sawtelle's subsequent consolidation with the City of Los Angeles that occurred during its rapid urbanization in the first two decades of the twentieth century. With the aid of train and automobile travel, the western edge of the City of Los Angeles kept expanding westward, with the consolidation of many independent towns with the City. As Sawtelle grew and was consolidated into Los Angeles in 1922, public institutions, including a high school, were needed to meet the educational demands of the growing population. The Administration Building has served as the heart of University High School in the Sawtelle community for one hundred years.

Sawtelle Development and Consolidation

Real estate developers R. F. Jones and R. C. Gillis laid the foundation for the future city of Sawtelle when they created the Pacific Land Company in 1896 and purchased 225 acres of land south of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers (National Home) opened in 1888,

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creating a small settlement featuring a store, houses, and a sales office. Shortly thereafter, Sawtelle Boulevard was laid out, connecting the new town to the National Home and to the Sawtelle rail station. In an arrangement with the federal government, the Pacific Land Company obtained permission for veterans to live outside the grounds of the National Home. The town was named after William Edward Sawtelle, who became the president of the Pacific Land Company in 1899. Under his tenure, Sawtelle saw the construction of a schoolhouse, a church, and a meeting hall.³⁰ With time, the new settlement in Sawtelle drew hospital workers, more veterans, and families to affordable lots.³¹ An interurban rail line that connected Sawtelle to the cities of Santa Monica and Hollywood started running circa 1896.³²

A sightseeing train route called the Balloon Route Trolley opened circa 1903, passing through Sawtelle, attracting more businesses and residents.³³ At the same time, the existing rail line was improved, allowing for larger train cars and increased service, and eventually a new route that headed north was opened in 1905 with standard railroad-gauge tracks. The increased service in turn led to more growth in Sawtelle, with the area expanding west toward incorporated Santa Monica, resulting in a population increase from around 640 in 1902 to 1,200 in 1905.³⁴ The following year, 1906, saw the incorporation of Sawtelle as its own city.³⁵

Sawtelle's southern bounds were known for agricultural fields, which became a key industry in this small city.³⁶ These fields were also a focal point for first generation Issei Japanese American farmers who worked there, beginning between 1900 and 1910. Crops grown in the Sawtelle fields were later transported across the region via a railroad spur line of the Los Angeles-Pacific Railroad at the eastern edge of the city.³⁷ As a result, Sawtelle saw increased development between the early 1900s and the 1920s. Historical topographic maps show the change in development between 1894 and 1920.³⁸ With the community transforming from a small rural and veteran settlement to a more established community with a Woman's Club, fraternal lodges, and churches, the population correspondingly grew from 1,200-1,500 in 1906 to 3,500 in 1915. The

³⁰ Daniel Prosser, *Los Angeles Citywide Historic Context Statement: Pre-Consolidation Communities of Los Angeles, 1862-1932* (City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning Office of Historic Resources, July 2016), 85-86.

³¹ Chattel, Inc., *West Los Angeles Veterans Affairs Historic District, Los Angeles, CA* (National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, 2014), Section 8, 38, 42-43, 45.

³² Cheryl L. Wilkinson, "The Soldiers' City: Sawtelle, California, 1897-1922," *Southern California Quarterly*, Vol. 95, No. 2 (Summer 2013): 200-212.

³³ *Map of the Los Angeles Pacific Company Electric lines around Los Angeles, 1910*, map, California Historical Society Collection, Title Insurance and Trust and C.C. Pierce Photography Collection 1860-1960, University of Southern California Libraries, USC Digital Library, <https://digitallibrary.usc.edu/asset-management/2A3BF103M6L>.

³⁴ Depending on the source, population numbers for 1902 ranged between 500 and 780.

³⁵ Prosser, *Los Angeles Citywide Historic Context Statement: Pre-Consolidation Communities*, 87, 89, 94.

³⁶ SWCA Environmental Consultants, *Archaeological and Historical Resources Assessment for the West Los Angeles Sewer Maintenance Yard Project, Los Angeles, Los Angeles County, California* (City of Los Angeles Department of Public Works, Environmental Management Group, December 2021), 26-28.

³⁷ Prosser, *Los Angeles Citywide Historic Context Statement: Pre-Consolidation Communities*, 16, 98.

³⁸ SWCA Environmental Consultants, *Archaeological and Historical Resources Assessment*, 38-39, Figure 10 and Figure 11.

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new city added basic city services like electricity and gas. By 1906, Santa Monica Boulevard was fully paved, resulting in a business district with office buildings and banks along the boulevard and, by 1912, various commercial buildings and grocery stores. Modest bungalows and working-class cottages were built, with more middle-class housing eventually built in the late 1910s.³⁹ When automobile use became more widespread, the route on Oregon Avenue (later Santa Monica Boulevard) was advertised as a route passing through Sawtelle.⁴⁰

While a business district formed in the center of the city, and agricultural fields were located at the southern edge, to the southwest was a third important component of Sawtelle's economic productivity, plant nurseries. Especially important was the plant nursery of Walter Armacost, a pivotal player in the development of the future Warren G. Harding High School as University High School was originally known. Mr. Armacost owned and operated one of the largest plant nurseries at the time.⁴¹ In 1912, his business Armacost and Company hired Issei employees to meet the demand for plants for the neighboring communities of Westwood, Beverly Hills, and Brentwood. The Issei employees eventually established their own plant nurseries in Sawtelle.⁴² Thus, Sawtelle became an important employment center for Japanese Americans.

Meanwhile, the City of Los Angeles expanded rapidly, by annexing land and cities during the 1910s and 1920s.⁴³ With the 1913 opening of the Owens River aqueduct by the City of Los Angeles, independent cities sought to tap into this water source. The City of Santa Monica to the west of Sawtelle maintained its independence because it had its own water purveyor.⁴⁴ Sawtelle also had its own water system run by the Sawtelle Water Company and a secondary operator. The two water companies relied on local wells, and the growth of Sawtelle meant that the demand outstripped the local water supply in 1912. Thus, initiatives to consolidate with Los Angeles began in 1913, followed by two elections in 1917 and 1922. The 1917 election was disputed, with one group insisting on staying an independent city and an opposition ticket led by Walter Armacost and Angus L. (A.L.) Cavanagh calling for another annexation vote. Armacost was voted in by a majority as the last Mayor of Sawtelle.⁴⁵ Cavanagh, who moved to Sawtelle in 1920, later became the first principal of University High School. Subsequently, a second election was called in 1922, which resulted in Sawtelle voting to consolidate with the City of Los Angeles. In July that year, Sawtelle finally became part of Los Angeles.⁴⁶ After consolidation, Sawtelle continued to grow, such that local city staff felt they were inadequately compensated

³⁹ Prosser, *Los Angeles Citywide Historic Context Statement: Pre-Consolidation Communities*, 90-92, 95-97, 99.

⁴⁰ Brown, *Map Showing Automobile Routes From Los Angeles & Pasadena to Santa Monica, Ocean Park & Venice, 1919*, drawing, USC Digital Library, Automobile Club of Southern California Collection, 1892-1963, SMC Box 17 (3430).

⁴¹ Prosser, *Los Angeles Citywide Historic Context Statement: Pre-Consolidation Communities*, 98.

⁴² Colleen Patricia Horn, "Sawtelle Reexamined: A Preservation Study for a Historic California Japantown," (Master thesis, University of Southern California, August 2013), 27, 30.

⁴³ "City Annexations Within the County of Los Angeles," County of Los Angeles, Public Works, accessed September 18, 2024, <https://pw.lacounty.gov/mpm/cityannexations/>.

⁴⁴ EDAW, Inc., *Final Historical Resources Evaluation Report for the Exposition Corridor Transit Project*, 19.

⁴⁵ A.L. Cavanagh, 10 June 1945, University High School Library Historical Papers, 1.

⁴⁶ Prosser, *Los Angeles Citywide Historic Context Statement: Pre-Consolidation Communities of Los Angeles*, 90, 101, 103.

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“especially so in view of the increased population at Sawtelle.”⁴⁷ This increase in the local population in turn reflected the overall trend of the rapid growth of the City of Los Angeles in the 1920s. In 1920, the population of the City of Los Angeles reached over 576,000. By 1930, the population of Los Angeles was 1,238,048.⁴⁸

With consolidation, the Sawtelle Chamber of Commerce promoted various campaigns to improve the community, including support for a water bond issue, construction of government buildings, and purchase of public playgrounds. Shortly, Sawtelle was being served by aqueduct water, and storm drains were added.⁴⁹ A local, branch city hall was constructed, for a cost of \$125,000, that housed branches of the fire department, police department, among other departments.⁵⁰ Other improvements included sewerage the Sawtelle district, and pavement of roads, as well as construction of a municipal park.⁵¹ The only major institution that was missing was a high school. Walter Armacost and the Sawtelle Chamber of Commerce advocated for the purchase of a location for a new high school.⁵² Armacost, according to Cavanagh, was instrumental in getting LAUSD Superintendent Susan Dorsey and the Board of Education to purchase the tract upon which the school campus would be built.⁵³

The campus location was owned by the Santa Monica Water Company. According to a University High School teacher’s account, the Bank of Santa Monica sold the land in 1923 to the Soldiers’ and Sailors’ Widows’ Home Association, before it was sold to the Board of Education. The Hill Side Dairy Company used the land for pasturing. Another anecdote claims that a certain Mr. A. Moynier originally purchased the land from the Sepulveda estate.⁵⁴ A *Los Angeles Times* article from 1922 states that the Board of Education bought the land, “one of the historic old camping grounds used by the *padres* in the mission times,” from the City of Santa Monica for \$51,500. The property was undeveloped, and the land was used as a source of water supply and for an orchard of pear and apple trees.⁵⁵

Mr. Armacost convinced the school district to budget for the construction of the school in 1923. The architects and principal were appointed in November 1923 for what was initially described

⁴⁷ “City of Los Angeles Council Files, Council Minutes (1850-1979), Tuesday, January 27, 1925, No. 517 (1925),” City of Los Angeles, accessed January 7, 2024, <https://clerkapps.lacity.org/oldcfidocs/>, 117.

⁴⁸ “General Population by City: Los Angeles County, 1910-1950 U.S. Census,” Los Angeles Almanac, accessed January 12, 2024, <https://www.laalmanac.com/population/po26.php>.

⁴⁹ A.L. Cavanagh, 10 June 1945, University High School Library Historical Papers, 1.

⁵⁰ “Sawtelle City Hall Launched,” *Los Angeles Times*, June 20, 1924, A2. This branch city hall was demolished.

⁵¹ “Facts Compiled for Sawtellans,” *West Los Angeles Tribune*, August 10, 1926, 1.

⁵² Charles S Warren, “Intimate Biographies of Bay District Personalities: Walter Armacost,” *Santa Monica Evening Outlook*, May 9, 1923, 2, <https://digital.smpl.org/digital/collection/outlook/id/74317/rec/1>, accessed December 30, 2023.

⁵³ A.L. Cavanagh, 10 June 1945, University High School Library Historical Papers, 2.

⁵⁴ Thomas Henley, “A History of University High Campus,” 1950, University High School Library Historical Papers, 3. Roper Klein, “History of the Warren G. Harding High School Campus,” March 1925, University High School Library Historical Papers, 3.

⁵⁵ “Historic Lands are Purchased: Old Sawtelle Camp Ground Acquired for New High School Building,” *Los Angeles Times*, September 22, 1922, III.

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as Sawtelle High School.⁵⁶ Cavanagh was vice principal at Los Angeles High School.⁵⁷ Construction of the school occurred in 1924. Dedicated on November 21, 1924, to honor the memory of late President Warren G. Harding, more than 1,000 attended the ceremonies, including the superintendent, the principal, and secretary of the Sawtelle Chamber of Commerce. Frances Wyant, aunt of President Harding, who lived in Beverly Hills, presented the school with a large picture of President Harding. The dedication services were unfortunately held while the nation mourned Mrs. Harding's death. The *Los Angeles Times* reported that, at a cost of \$450,000, the original campus consisted of the main building (the Administration Building), a gymnasium, shops, and a cafeteria.⁵⁸ Warren G. Harding High School was the first public high school institution to exclusively serve the Sawtelle community.⁵⁹ The school played a significant role in educating junior high and high school students from Sawtelle and surrounding areas. The 1929 alumni directory shows the majority of students came from Sawtelle and neighboring communities of Pacific Palisades, Brentwood, Westwood, and Palms.⁶⁰

Japanese American Community in Sawtelle

University High School, while not a uniquely Japanese school, was the location for Japanese American youth to receive an education near their homes in Sawtelle. The Administration Building represents the school's association with the Japanese American settlement and community formation in Sawtelle and remains as a reminder of when Japanese American students and their families were forcibly removed during World War II.

The *Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in California, 1850-1995* Multiple Property Documentation Form describes Japanese immigration to California. In the early twentieth century, because of restricted employment opportunities, Issei became farmers and operated small businesses in Japantowns throughout California.⁶¹ This period best defines the context for the Japanese American community that settled in Sawtelle. As early as the 1910s, Japanese immigrants were drawn to Sawtelle's proximity to the ocean, mild climate, and rich soil. They worked in the agricultural fields in the area, and also worked at the soldiers' home.⁶² By the 1920s, an established Japanese American community developed to the southeast of the high

⁵⁶ "New Junior High and Senior High School Principals," *Los Angeles School Journal* vol. VII, no. 10 (1923): 18, https://www.google.com/books/edition/Los_Angeles_School_Journal/jh4rAQAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=A.L.+Cavanagh+sawtelle&pg=RA10-PA18&printsec=frontcover.

⁵⁷ M.W. Chandler, "Principals' Club News," *Educational Journal* volume 1, no. 7 (1918): 127, https://www.google.com/books/edition/Los_Angeles_School_Journal/K2QvAQAAMAAJ?q=A.L.+Cavanaugh+los+angeles&gbpv=1#f=false.

⁵⁸ "Harding School Has Dedication," *Los Angeles Times*, November 22, 1924, A16. "Harding Kin Dies," *The Newark Advocate*, April 6, 1935, 1. A Western Union Telegram, received in Sawtelle, announced Mrs. Harding's death – Geo B. Christian Jr. to Mrs. Frances Wyant, telegram, 21 November 1924, Historical Files, University High School Charter Library.

⁵⁹ Prosser, *Los Angeles Citywide Historic Context Statement: Pre-Consolidation Communities of Los Angeles*, 94.

⁶⁰ *The Chieftain*, 1929, 56-57, 141.

⁶¹ Page & Turnbull with Donna Graves, *Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in California, 1850-1995*, E-38.

⁶² Architectural Resources Group with Historic Resources Group, Page & Turnbull and Rosalind Sagara, *Asian Americans in Los Angeles, 1850-1980* National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form (National Park Service, June 2018), E-51, 70.

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school campus.⁶³ Issei who came to the United States between 1890 and 1924 worked in farming, gardening, and plant nursery work.⁶⁴ Sawtelle's plant nurseries provided employment opportunities for the immigrants, and, by the 1920s, a Japanese commercial district formed in Sawtelle.⁶⁵

Little Tokyo in downtown Los Angeles was the commercial, social, and entertainment center for Japanese Americans; families moved to suburban communities like Sawtelle. As families grew, the Japanese American population grew between the 1920s and 1930s at a rate of ten percent.⁶⁶ Other factors brought more population into Los Angeles like the relocation of the film industry from the East Coast to the West Coast. Locally, the neighboring communities of Westwood, Bel Air, and Brentwood were established and grew, increasing the demand for second generation Nisei gardeners, nursery staff and domestic workers from Sawtelle.⁶⁷ Gardeners from Sawtelle were especially important and formed more than a third of the members of the League of Southern California Japanese Gardeners by 1940.⁶⁸

Prohibited from being able to own land, Japanese Americans settled in Sawtelle and established a community there because they could find work and rental housing.⁶⁹ This was in contrast to other areas in Los Angeles where Japanese Americans were unable to rent because of racist renting practices.⁷⁰ Sawtelle was also relatively unpopulated, so that made it easier for Japanese Americans to rent.⁷¹ Japanese Americans in Sawtelle eventually founded the Japanese language school Sawtelle Gakuen and Japanese Institute of Sawtelle in 1925, a Buddhist Temple in 1925, and boarding houses.⁷²

The establishment of this Japanese American community in Sawtelle meant that students attended local schools. By 1927, the estimated Japanese population in Sawtelle was 400.⁷³ The Nisei generation—born between 1910 and 1940—started attending University High School by

⁶³ Historic Resources Group, *Los Angeles Citywide Historic Context Statement, Japanese Americans in Los Angeles, 1869-1970* (City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning Office of Historic Resources, August 2018), 40.

⁶⁴ Page & Turnbull, *Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in California, 1850-1995*, E-8; Sapphos Environmental, Inc., *Historic Resources Survey Report: West Los Angeles Community Plan Area* (City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning Office of Historic Resources, August 15, 2012), 7.

⁶⁵ Prosser, *Los Angeles Citywide Historic Context Statement: Pre-Consolidation Communities of Los Angeles*, 98.

⁶⁶ Historic Resources Group, *Los Angeles Citywide Historic Context Statement, Japanese Americans in Los Angeles*, 38.

⁶⁷ "Sawtelle," California Japantowns, accessed July 7, 2024, <https://www.californiajapantowns.org/sawtelle.html>.

⁶⁸ Horn, "Sawtelle Reexamined," 23.

⁶⁹ Takeshi Nakayama, "Sawtelle recognized by Los Angeles as Japantown," *Nichi Bei News*, June 11, 2015, <https://www.nichibeil.org/2015/06/sawtelle-recognized-by-los-angeles-as-japantown/>.

⁷⁰ "Thinking L.A.: How West L.A. became a haven for Japanese Americans," UCLA Newsroom, accessed July 7, 2024, <https://newsroom.ucla.edu/stories/thinking-l-a-how-west-l-a-became-a-haven-for-japanese-americans#:~:text=The%20Japanese%2DAmerican%20community%20around,growing%20flower%20seedlings%20and%20cucumbers.>

⁷¹ Jack Fujimoto, *Sawtelle: West Los Angeles's Japantown* (Arcadia Publishing, 2007), 9.

⁷² Historic Resources Group, *Los Angeles Citywide Historic Context Statement, Japanese Americans in Los Angeles*, 39, 40, Appendix A: Japanese American Known and Designated Resources 17. California Japantowns, "Sawtelle."

⁷³ Architectural Resources Group, *Asian Americans in Los Angeles, 1850-1980 National Register of Historic Places*, E-69.

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the late 1920s. The University High School alumni directory lists Tatsuo Miyakawa as a graduate of the Class of 1929.⁷⁴ This generation attended public schools in Los Angeles through the Great Depression and were in their teenage years during World War II.⁷⁵ Japanese American students were not segregated in schools or excluded from attending school, which allowed them to attend local schools like University High School.⁷⁶ Oral histories highlight how Japanese American students, such as Tom Ikkanda, born in 1917, attended the local elementary school and University High School.⁷⁷ His father was treasurer for the Japanese Institute of Sawtelle and founder of the Sawtelle Buddhist branch Nishi Hongwanji Betsuin in Los Angeles. Mr. Ikkanda eventually became a community leader in the Sawtelle Japantown.⁷⁸ Japanese American students formed a club that was featured in the University High School yearbooks of the early 1940s until World War II. Started in 1940, the Japanese Club's main purpose was "to create better friendship... and to serve the school." Club members gave presentations on Japanese cultural traditions at University High School and nearby Emerson Junior High School.⁷⁹

In 1942, President Roosevelt's Executive Order 9066 ordered the forced removal and incarceration of Japanese Americans. The Evacuation Order affecting the Sawtelle area—Exclusion Order No. 8—directed Japanese Americans to report to 2110 Corinth Street (later Avenue), West Los Angeles, for their removal to the Manzanar Reception Center.⁸⁰ There are multiple oral histories of Sawtelle Japanese Americans forced to leave, including a local gardener, who commuted to work from Sawtelle to Beverly Hills between 1930 and 1942, who was sent to the Manzanar concentration camp.⁸¹ University High School Japanese American students were also sent to Manzanar and other camps. Eighty-five percent of all students at Manzanar came from the Los Angeles area.⁸² The 1942 University High School yearbook reported that the student newspaper was being sent to former students in Utah (Topaz).⁸³

⁷⁴ Page & Turnbull, *Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in California, 1850-1995*, E-8; *The Chieftain, 1929*, 36, 56-57, 141.

⁷⁵ Historic Resources Group, *Los Angeles Citywide Historic Context Statement, Japanese Americans in Los Angeles*, 11.

⁷⁶ Page & Turnbull, *Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in California, 1850-1995*, E-286, 287.

⁷⁷ Tom Ikkanda, interview by Richard Potashin, *Manzanar National Historic Site Collection*, Denso Digital Archive, July 18, 2008, <https://ddr.densho.org/media/ddr-manz-1/ddr-manz-1-41-transcript-abdbf22fc1.htm>. Another example: Karlene Koketsu, interview by Richard Potashin, *Manzanar National Historic Site Collection*, Denso Digital Archive, April 15, 2019, <https://ddr.densho.org/media/ddr-manz-1/ddr-manz-1-95-transcript-39a314e291.htm>.

⁷⁸ Fujimoto, *Sawtelle: West Los Angeles's Japantown*, 57.

⁷⁹ *The Chieftain, 1940* (University High School, 1940), 59; *The Chieftain, 1941* (University High School, 1941), 91.

⁸⁰ Page & Turnbull, *Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in California, 1850-1995*, E-40. Evacuation Order Issued for Three Areas in Los Angeles, Exclusion Order No. 8, Joseph R. Goodman Papers on Japanese American Incarceration, MS-840, California Historical Society, Digital Library, Islandora Repository.

⁸¹ Ted Tetsudo Tanaka, interview, Santa Monica History Museum Center for Oral History, May 25, 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SRuIqYy7oXc>.

⁸² "Chapter Ten: Operation of Manzanar War Relocation Center March-December 1942," National Park Service, https://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/manz/hrs10j.htm.

⁸³ *The Chieftain, 1942* (University High School, 1942), 64.

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George Odahara was a University High School student who was sent to Manzanar.⁸⁴ While at Manzanar High School, Odahara wrote a term paper discussing the classes he took at University High School, and how he aspired to go into printing as a profession, when the war disrupted those plans. He wrote, “after the out break (sic) [of the war] I only attended school a short time” because “[my father] was not permitted to enter into certain parts of the city so I quite (sic) school.” Odahara feared that he “would lose all of my opportunity of being a printer.” He had a backup plan, however: “my next best ambition... is to be a farmer. During my years at University High School I have taken the course of floriculture for two years.”⁸⁵

Odahara wrote another paper in which he speculated that “after the war... everyone will receive their old jobs back.”⁸⁶ Odahara graduated from Manzanar High School, bringing “to a close one of the most unusual school experiences for each of the graduates who a year ago were scattered all over the broad state of California.”⁸⁷ After the war, Japanese American families returned to Sawtelle to resettle, establishing Japanese-owned stores and business.⁸⁸ By 1946, students had returned to University High School, as shown by the student body in yearbooks and by oral histories.⁸⁹ Japanese American youth social groups were created in the post-war era, including the Capris, an organization of women formed in the late 1940s through their association at University High School.⁹⁰ A composite photograph from the late 1940s shows University High School once again was a center for Japanese American students (**Figure 7**). The students are shown in their neighborhood and around the Administration Building, a reminder of its importance as a community center for the Japanese American community of Sawtelle both before and after the war.

Criterion A: Education

The property represents the LAUSD school construction boom during the early twentieth century and played a significant role in educating junior high and high school students from Sawtelle and

⁸⁴ *The Chieftain*, 1941, 48; “Full Record for George Odahara, Japanese-American Internee Data File, 1942-1946,” The National Archives, accessed September 21, 2024, https://aad.archives.gov/aad/record-detail.jsp?dt=3099&mtch=1&cat=WR26&tf=F&sc=30043,30012,30013,30014,30042,30038,30028,30040&bc=.sl.f&txt_30043=Odahara&op_30043=0&nfo_30043=V,10,1900&txt_30012=George&op_30012=0&nfo_30012=V,8,1900&rpp=10&pg=1&rid=64314.

⁸⁵ George Odahara, “Term Report: What Will My Future Ambition Be?” (1943), <https://cdm16855.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16855coll4/id/36227>.

⁸⁶ George Odahara, “Social Problems” (1943), <https://californiarevealed.org/do/ccae4f1d-fe0d-49d9-b728-fa8b67668286>.

⁸⁷ “Manzanar Holds Graduation Exercises,” *Manzanar Free Press*, September 10, 1943, 13 – graduation photo.

⁸⁸ Architectural Resources Group, *Asian Americans in Los Angeles, 1850-1980 National Register*, E-81. Horn, “Sawtelle Reexamined,” 35. Jack and Grace Fujimoto, interview, Tessaku, November 27, 2018, booklet, https://archive.org/details/calatess_000008/mode/2up. Martha Groves, “West L.A. neighborhood to be recognized as ‘Sawtelle Japantown’,” *Los Angeles Times*, March 28, 2015, <https://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-west-los-angeles-neighborhood-to-be-recognized-as-sawtelle-japantown-20150328-story.html>.

⁸⁹ *The Chieftain*, 1946 (University High School, 1946), 23. Rose Honda, interview by James Gatewood, *REgenerations Oral History Project: Rebuilding Japanese American Families, Communities, and Civil Rights in the Resettlement Era: Los Angeles Region: Volume II*, March 17 and April 5, 1998, audio, 109, https://oac.cdlib.org/view?docId=ft358003z1&chunk.id=d0e1014&brand=calisphere&doc.view=entire_text.

⁹⁰ Fujimoto, *Sawtelle: West Los Angeles’s Japantown*, 88.

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surrounding areas, offered a standard curriculum in addition to ROTC, and was an important location for teacher training for secondary school teachers. Just as the City of Los Angeles expanded rapidly in the early twentieth century, so did the Los Angeles public school system. The Los Angeles City School District was created in 1872, with the passage of the Act to Enforce the Educational Rights of Children, which made education compulsory. Central School, the first high school in Los Angeles, was built in 1873. Beginning in 1896, the Los Angeles City School District began to annex other school districts, with the greatest number of annexations occurring in the 1920s and 1930s. Rapid expansion of the school district is evidenced by the fact that, by 1916, the district served 112 more square miles than the City of Los Angeles itself. The State's repeal of the annual census in 1911 meant that the school district could not accurately estimate enrollment. School construction could not keep up with enrollment and the school district undertook a new school construction campaign during the 1920s.⁹¹

Sawtelle, as an independent, incorporated city, had its own schools. In 1903, Sawtelle built its first school. While this first school was destroyed in a fire, two subsequent schools were built by 1913. As early as 1918, the Los Angeles City School District had tried to annex the Sawtelle School District, with the school boarding asking, "an opinion [from County Counsel] as to whether or not the Sawtelle School District has now become merged in Los Angeles City School District." It wasn't until October 27, 1921, that the Sawtelle district was officially annexed.⁹² Leading up to the 1920s, the Los Angeles City School District expanded significantly, with enrollment doubling from 1910 to 1916 to 78,000 students across 400 square miles, in part due to annexation. At around the same time, California law made part-time school compulsory for teenagers. In addition, State legislation made high school mandatory in 1919. The school district expanded exponentially during Superintendent Susan Dorsey's tenure, with enrollment increasing 275 percent.⁹³ In 1925, enrollment again exceeded school capacity.⁹⁴ By 1933, the Los Angeles City School District had a student population of 300,000.⁹⁵

Prior to opening University High School, the only public high schools in the west Los Angeles area were Santa Monica High School in the incorporated City of Santa Monica to the west and Venice Union High School to the southwest.⁹⁶ Sawtelle students attended Santa Monica High

⁹¹ Science Applications International Corporation, *Historic Context Statement Los Angeles Unified School District* (March 2002), 4-8.

⁹² *Minutes of Regular Meeting Board of Education of Los Angeles City School District Volume 22 L.A. City School District Minutes 1918 March 25-1918 July 22*, March 25, 1918, typewritten minutes, Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA, Los Angeles Unified School District Board of Education records, UCLA Catalog Record ID: 9969119863606533, Collection 1923, Box 22. "Los Angeles City School District," LAUSD, <https://web.archive.org/web/19980524182837/http://www.lausd.k12.ca.us/lausd/history/schoollist.html>.

⁹³ Cecilia Rasmussen, "Dorsey devotee the picture of determination," *Los Angeles Times*, May 13, 2007.

⁹⁴ PlaceWorks, *School Upgrade Program EIR, Los Angeles Unified School District* (Los Angeles Unified School District, June 2014), 5.5-19.

⁹⁵ Sapphos Environmental Inc., *Los Angeles Unified School District, Historic Context Statement 1870 to 1969*, 43, 44, 46.

⁹⁶ LAUSD, "Los Angeles City School District." The Venice Union high school district was annexed in 1925.

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School.⁹⁷ When it opened in fall 1924, University High School was the first new Los Angeles city school to be built on the westside of Los Angeles.⁹⁸ In the school's first yearbook published in 1925, the principal said, "The boys and girls here today are Pioneers in the westward growth of a great city and in the establishing of a new school."⁹⁹ Initially a six-year high school, the school filled a gap in secondary high school education in Sawtelle and West Los Angeles.¹⁰⁰ In its first decade, the school's enrollment increased, necessitating an addition to the main building at a cost of \$115,000. The addition included ROTC headquarters consisting of an armory, a store, and a rifle range in the basement, reflecting the importance of ROTC in the LAUSD at the time.¹⁰¹ Created by the National Defense Act of 1916 to provide students military training, the LAUSD school board authorized ROTC at fourteen high schools. Students were taught map reading, use of small arms and rifle marksmanship.¹⁰² After its first year, University High School was selected to be a full-fledged unit of the ROTC.¹⁰³

In the 1930s, University High School established a formal teacher training relationship with UCLA. It was common practice for schoolteachers to serve as training teachers at schools. Several University High School faculty, including the principal, were listed as staff at the UCLA teacher Training Department.¹⁰⁴ University High School, along with the nearby Emerson Junior High School, became an officially designated teacher training center for secondary school teachers, as part of an agreement with UCLA, in 1935.¹⁰⁵ The 1936 high school yearbook states, "Marking the advent of new era in teacher training, University high school (sic)... has been chosen to become the training base for the students of the teacher education department at the University of California at Los Angeles."¹⁰⁶ As part of this agreement, there were coordinators from UCLA at the high school and junior high school. The staff in charge of training at UCLA had an office at University High School, indicated as "University Supervising Offices" on 1935 architectural plans of the Administration Building.¹⁰⁷ By 1937, there were 108 student teachers at the high school, which were "allocated in every department of the school, under the supervision

⁹⁷ Prosser, *Los Angeles Citywide Historic Context Statement: Pre-Consolidation Communities of Los Angeles*, 94. *Revista*, 1924 (Wilson Junior High School, 1924), 25.

⁹⁸ *Los Angeles Unified School District, History of Schools (Chronology) 1855-1972* (Educational Housing Branch, School Planning Division January 1973), 78.

⁹⁹ *La Estrella*, 1925, 10.

¹⁰⁰ Arthur Gould, "When You Visit a High School," *Los Angeles School Journal*, Vol. VIII, No. 7 (October 20, 1924): 11,

https://www.google.com/books/edition/Los_Angeles_School_Journal/_x9fN4q19oEC?hl=en#v=onepage&q=los%20angeles%20school%20journal%20warren%20harding%20senior%20high%20school&f=false.

¹⁰¹ "Needed New Buildings for Harding Promised Soon," 1.

¹⁰² "Finding Aid for the Los Angeles Unified School District Board of Education Records LSC.1923," Online Archive of California, https://oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/c80r9nr7/entire_text/?query=r.o.t.c.#hitNum11, Box 1729, Folder 2-8 – Reserve Officers' Training Corps 1935 July 18 – 2000 January 11.

¹⁰³ *La Estrella*, 1925, 37.

¹⁰⁴ "Staff in City Training Schools," *University of California Bulletin Third Series*, Vol. XXIV, No. 4 (September 1930): 105, <https://registrar.ucla.edu/file/c5040f47-bcbc-4e9b-8aee-6bd3b97552af>.

¹⁰⁵ *Los Angeles School Board Reports 1935 October 3-1935 October 31*, October 3, 1935, report, Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA, Los Angeles Unified School District Board of Education records, UCLA Catalog Record ID: 9969119863606533, Collection 1923, Box 139.

¹⁰⁶ *The Chieftain*, 1936 (University High School, 1936), 22.

¹⁰⁷ Beelman, *Administration Building Reconstruction – University High School*.

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of the department heads.”¹⁰⁸ The 1938 yearbook reported that students “like the apprentices for their youth and enthusiasm and appreciate their regular teachers for their method and skill.”¹⁰⁹ Enrollment at University High School in 1926 was at 874, went up to 1,230 students by 1930, and by 1933, was at 2,000.¹¹⁰ Eventually, the school added more buildings to accommodate increased enrollment. As the only remaining campus building of the 1920s, the Administration Building is important in the area of Education for exclusively serving the local community and teachers in training. Since opening its doors in 1924 to the pioneer class of students, the Administration Building has served as the focal point for education at University High School.

Criterion C: Architecture

Part of the original campus plan, the Administration Building was designed by the architectural partnership of Clarence H. Russell and Norman W. Alpaugh of Los Angeles.¹¹¹ The building embodies the distinguishing characteristics of brick and concrete secondary high school architecture designed in a 1920s Period Revival Style in Los Angeles.

Russell and Alpaugh Architectural Practice

In the 1920s, Russell and Alpaugh designed many prominent Los Angeles buildings, including several mid-rise residential buildings such as the 1923 Park Wilshire and an auto garage in the Spring Street Financial District; the Kroehler Manufacturing Company’s Inglewood headquarters; and the Chamberlain & Procter Building in Hollywood.¹¹² They also designed the National Register-listed 1924 Charles Edward Toberman House (NR #83001205) and the 1924-1925 Emanu-El Synagogue (later Christ Church).¹¹³

Alpaugh (1885-1954) was a Canadian-born architect who worked on residential design in Canada until he moved to Los Angeles in 1912. Once in Los Angeles, his partnerships included Rasche & Alpaugh, Sedwick & Alpaugh, and Russell & Alpaugh.¹¹⁴ He also collaborated with the prolific theater architect, S. Charles Lee, on over 300 theatres for the Fox West Coast chain of theatres.¹¹⁵ He designed the Art Deco style El Miro Theater in Santa Monica, built in 1933,

¹⁰⁸ *The Chieftain*, 1937, 24, 27.

¹⁰⁹ *The Chieftain*, 1938, 24.

¹¹⁰ Frank A. Bouelle to all principals, 15 May 1930, “Los Angeles City School District Office of the Superintendent to All Principals,” University High School Library Historical Papers; *The Chieftain*, 1932 (University High School, 1932), 66.

¹¹¹ *The Architect & Engineer* (October 1925): 113.

¹¹² Christy McAvoy and Jessica Ritz, *City of Los Angeles: Historic-Cultural Monument Nomination, Application, Attachments and Photographs, The Park Wilshire* (Historic Resources Group, March 20, 2008), 10-11, https://clkrep.lacity.org/online/docs/2008/08-1926_rpt_plan_7-18-08.pdf.

¹¹³ “C.E. Toberman House, Hollywood,” *The Architectural Digest* (January 1925): 62-65. Christy Johnson McAvoy, *National Register of Historic Places Inventory – Nomination Form for C.E. Toberman Estate* (United States Department of the Interior, February 23, 1983); Teresa Grimes, Allison Lyons, Elysha Paluszek, Amanda Duane, Jonathan Kaplan and Becky Nicolaidis, *Los Angeles Citywide Historic Context Statement – Context: Jewish History* (City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning Office of Historic Resources, December 2016), 50.

¹¹⁴ “Alpaugh, Norman Walton,” *Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Canada, 1800-1950*, accessed September 22, 2024, <http://dictionaryofarchitectsincanada.org/node/35>.

¹¹⁵ McAvoy and Ritz, *City of Los Angeles: Historic-Cultural Monument Nomination, The Park Wilshire*, 10-11.

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and was also involved in residential design and bank design with other architects.¹¹⁶ He also designed his own house and those of other family members.¹¹⁷ In addition to his architectural work, Alpaugh was an artist and composed music.¹¹⁸ Starting in 1928, he worked on his own.¹¹⁹ Alpaugh is credited for the design of the 1926 Asbury apartments, a high-rise residential building, and the National Register-listed 1928-1929 Town House (NR #96000821), a distinguished high-rise apartment hotel.¹²⁰

Russell (1874-1942) worked at the turn of the twentieth century in the Pacific Northwest and then in Southern California.¹²¹ He designed churches, schools, houses, and libraries.¹²² He partnered with architect Norman Foote Marsh from 1902 to 1909 on many churches, libraries, and the master planning for Abbot Kinney's 1905 Venice of America coastal development.¹²³ Russell subsequently partnered with Fielder Slingluff, Jr. in 1913 before forming the partnership with Alpaugh in the 1920s.¹²⁴ Russell's extant buildings include the Elks Lodge building (later Whittier College's Mendenhall administrative building),¹²⁵ and Ventura Elks Lodge #1430 (1928).¹²⁶ In 1913-1914, Russell was the architect of the Venice Union Polytechnic High School, demolished following the 1933 Long Beach Earthquake. Russell may have borrowed from that school's "Lombardic Italian" style for the Romanesque and Renaissance Period Revival style of the University High School Administration Building.¹²⁷

¹¹⁶ *Cine Latino (Originally the El Miro Theater)*, 1983, photograph, Santa Monica Public Library Image Archives, A787 Digital object 4831 img0029, <https://calisphere.org/item/c6dc72894877e89b599ecb917184e18b/>, accessed January 5, 2024. "Norman Walton Alpaugh (Architect)," Pacific Coast Architecture Database, <https://pcad.lib.washington.edu/person/1913/>.

¹¹⁷ Micah Alpaugh, email to author, January 2, 2024. Mr. M. Alpaugh is a great grandson of Norman W. Alpaugh.

¹¹⁸ Norman Reddick, email to author, January 23 and 25, 2024. Mr. Reddick is a grandson of Norman W. Alpaugh.

¹¹⁹ Pacific Coast Architecture Database, "Norman Walton Alpaugh (Architect)."

¹²⁰ LSA Associates, Inc., *Intensive Survey, Westlake Recovery Redevelopment Area, City of Los Angeles, Los Angeles County* (City of Los Angeles Community Redevelopment Agency, June 15, 2009), 33. Carson A. Anderson, et. al., *National Register of Historic Places Registration Form for The Town House* (United States Department of the Interior, December 15, 1997), 8-10, 11, 13.

¹²¹ "Clarence H. Russell (Architect)," Pacific Coast Architecture Database, <https://pcad.lib.washington.edu/person/1914/>.

¹²² *National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination Form Continuation Sheet for Branch Libraries, Los Angeles, CA #3, Cahuenga Branch Library* (United States Department of the Interior, August 14, 1985), Item number 8, 3.

¹²³ LSA Associates, Inc., *Intensive Survey, Westlake Recovery Redevelopment Area*, 33.

¹²⁴ Historic Resources Group, *City of Buenaventura Revised Draft for Historic Preservation Committee Review Historic Context Statement* (City of Buenaventura Community Development Department, March 2022), 319.

¹²⁵ Chattel Architecture, Planning & Preservation, Inc., *Residential Historic Resources Survey City of Whittier* (City of Whittier, May 9, 2013), Appendix 1: Architects, Contractors, and Developers in Whittier.

¹²⁶ Historic Resources Group, *Historic Resources Survey Update, City of Ventura, California, Downtown Specific Plan Area* (City of Ventura, April 2007), Appendix D-2.

¹²⁷ "A Group High School: The Venice Union Polytechnic High School," *School Board Journal* Volume LI, Number 2 (August 1915): 19-22, https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_American_School_Board_Journal/IqDUAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=ch+russell+architects+venice+union+polytechnic+high+school&pg=RA1-PA20&printsec=frontcover. For more, see Bibliography entries, *High School Buildings Vol. II* and *Initial Study and Negative Declaration for Venice High School Comprehensive Modernization Project*.

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High School Planning

Sited at the crest of a hill, the Administration Building overlooks Gabrielino-Tongva tribal lands. For over 5,000 years, the Gabrielino-Tongva people inhabited the Los Angeles Basin, in a village called Kuruvungna.¹²⁸ Springs on the corner of the school campus later renamed Kuruvungna Springs were registered as California Historical Landmark (CHL) No. 522, Serra Springs, on November 1, 1954. The springs are said to have been a fresh water source of the Tongva since 400 CE.¹²⁹ The CHL commemorates where Spanish colonizers and missionaries camped in this area.¹³⁰ After the secularization of the Spanish colonial missions in 1833, the area was divided into Spanish and Mexican land grants. Sawtelle was part of the San Vicente grant.¹³¹ The January 1912 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map shows the high school campus location as “Spring Grounds” with an orchard on the south end.¹³² A decade later, a real estate atlas showed the future school location as a park.¹³³

In May 1923, School District Superintendent Susan Dorsey, other school board members, the architectural team of Russell and Alpaugh, and members of the Sawtelle Chamber of Commerce visited the future school site. A newspaper article described the scene as a “landscape park on the hillside and in the ravine which will stamp the Sawtelle high school as one of the beauty spots of Southern California.” The architects are reported to have convinced the Superintendent to locate the Administration Building on the hill, instead of the opposite street, where the ground was more level.¹³⁴ A Plot Plan from May 1923 titled “Sawtelle High School” shows the Block 62, Artesian Tract covered with an old orchard, walnut grove, and a reservoir. The Plot Plan outlines the future Administration Building, Auditorium and Cafeteria/Shop building.¹³⁵ Plans called for the main building, cafeteria, and combination gymnasium/auditorium to cost \$350,000, and other future projects including a 1,000-seat auditorium.¹³⁶

¹²⁸ PlaceWorks, *School Upgrade Program EIR*, 5.5-16, 5.5-17 and Appendix E.1, Historic Context Statements, E.1-1, E-1.2. For more, see Bibliography entries, *Draft Subsequent Environmental Impact Report School Upgrade Program, Los Angeles Unified School District, Volume I*; “The Enduring Evolution of Kuruvungna: A Place Where We Are In The Sun,” *Draft Environmental Impact Report, Westside YMCA Facility at University High School and Tribal Cultural Resources Report, Belmont Village – Westwood Senior Living Assisted Living Facility*.

¹²⁹ Cindy Miscikowski, *Motion The “Sacred Springs”* (City of Los Angeles, May 17, 2005).

¹³⁰ “Los Angeles,” California Historic Landmarks, Office of Historic Preservation, accessed December 28, 2023, https://ohp.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=21427.

¹³¹ Luther A. Ingersoll, *Ingersoll’s Century History of the Santa Monica Bay Cities* (Luther A. Ingersoll, 1908), Chapter XIII, 345-352. See also Bibliography entry, *Brentwood School Education Master Plan Draft EIR*.

¹³² *Sanborn Map*, Jan. 1912, Sawtelle, Los Angeles County, https://www.loc.gov/resource/g4364sm.g4364sm_g008441912/?sp=1&st=image&r=-0.098,-0.167,1.272,0.797,0 and https://www.loc.gov/resource/g4364sm.g4364sm_g008441912/?sp=5&st=image.

¹³³ G. William Baist, *Baist’s real estate atlas of surveys of Los Angeles, California, 1921* (University of Southern California Libraries Special Collections, USC Digital Library, 1921), [Plate 45 verso], <https://digitallibrary.usc.edu/asset-management/2A3BF1M19TGX8?&WS=SearchResults>.

¹³⁴ A.L. Cavanagh, “University High School – How It Happened,” 2.

¹³⁵ *Plot Plan, Sawtelle High School*, May 1923, drawing, Los Angeles Unified School District Art & Artifact Collection/Archive and Museum.

¹³⁶ “Institution To Be Finest in Los Angeles: Officials on Visit to Site Make Promise of Beautiful Campus,” *Santa Monica Evening Outlook*, May 25, 1923, front page, Section Two. “Buildings – Proposed Work,” *Engineering News-Record* Vol. 91, No. 2 (July 12, 1923): 25.

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Russell and Alpaugh drafted the plans for the Sawtelle High School Administration Building at the corner of 114th Street/Bonneville Street (later renamed Westgate) and Texas Avenue. The plans were prepared for the Board of Education of the L.A. City High School District and approved by Superintendent Dorsey.¹³⁷ Bids for construction for the Sawtelle high school were due February 9, 1924; Salih Bros were the low bidders at \$245,451 and were awarded the general contract at \$237,751.¹³⁸ Construction broke ground in March 1924. The cornerstone was laid April 5, 1924, with a welcoming address by Sawtelle Chamber of Commerce President Walter Armacost. Attendees included the Superintendent and members of the City Council, Board of Supervisors, Board of Education, and the Knights Templar, Grand Council and Grand Chapter.¹³⁹ The call for applicants for faculty and staff positions at the new school was posted only two days later, with interested applicants to report to the first principal, Angus L. Cavanagh.¹⁴⁰ The building used brick for the façade and clay tile from the Simons Brick Company in Los Angeles. The roof tile contractor was J.A. Drummond.¹⁴¹ The school opened on September 8, 1924, and 600 pupils started classes on September 17, 1924, using the newly built Administration Building, a cafeteria with shops, and the gymnasium/auditorium.¹⁴² The school was the nineteenth secondary school institution in the Los Angeles school district.¹⁴³

Los Angeles Campus Planning in the 1920s

By the early 1920s, the Progressive Education Movement was in full swing, bringing new teaching methods and school curricula focused on environments for learning. Schools were symbols of progressive education ideas as well as symbols of the city's growth and economic success. In addition to the pedagogical changes, this period of school architecture in the Los Angeles City School District from 1910 to 1933 saw the end of monumental, big-block schools that were popular earlier in the twentieth century. With \$60,000,000 in bond issues sold, new schools were built as well as additions to existing facilities, with more than 200 permanent facilities built in a six-year period ending in 1927. These school facilities elicited much civic pride.¹⁴⁴

Campus planning was a practice that influenced school design during this time, especially for high schools. Expansive site plans characterized by groups of buildings with lower massing and open site plans became the standard. These types of campus plans required larger acreages on

¹³⁷ Russell and Alpaugh, *Administration Building – Sawtelle High School 1923 & no date*, Sheet 3, 4, 6, Job No. 320 .

¹³⁸ "Building News Section - Schools," *Building and Engineering News*, No. 6 (February 9, 1924): 14; No. 8 (March 1, 1924): 17; No. 9 (March 8, 1924): 16.

¹³⁹ "Corner Stone Laying of the Warren G. Harding High School, Sawtelle, Calif. April 5, 1924," program, University High School Library Historical Papers. The ceremonial trowel is at the library.

¹⁴⁰ "Los Angeles City School District Office of the Superintendent General Circular No. 22," *Los Angeles School Journal* Vol. VII, No. 30 (April 7, 1924): 15.

¹⁴¹ "The New \$300,000 Sawtelle High School," *Pacific Coast Architect* Volume XXVII, Number Four (April 1925): 22.

¹⁴² "Warren G. Harding High School, September 1924," typewritten notes, University High School Library Historical Papers. *La Estrella*, 1925, 70. *The Chieftain*, 1929, 15. A.L. Cavanagh, "University High School—How It Happened," 2.

¹⁴³ "Salutation," *Springs of Youth* Vol. 1, No. 1 (March, 1925): 2. <https://folsoi.weebly.com/uni-history.html>.

¹⁴⁴ Sapphos Environmental Inc., *Los Angeles Unified School District, Historic Context Statement*, 42, 43.

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sites on the periphery of the city. University High School reflects this type of campus plan, with its buildings spread out over a large, 23-acre site in what was at the time a community on the periphery of the city.¹⁴⁵ The campus plan was drafted in January 1925 by C.L. Flint, an instructor in Landscape Gardening and Floriculture at UC Berkeley.¹⁴⁶ Mr. Flint is also mentioned as drawing the plans for the landscaping of the grounds.¹⁴⁷ In his “General Plan” for “Sawtelle High School,” Mr. Flint showed the Administration Building, with hypothetical additions, the cafeteria, original gymnasium/auditorium, and a grading plan with an upper field with a circular pathway and a track and field and bleachers at the lowest elevation of the campus. This campus plan reflects the final plan that was implemented and is still evident.¹⁴⁸

During this period, architects and designers included grand entrances to reflect the public nature of education and they also differentiated school buildings according to their functions. Russell and Alpaugh designed a grand entrance, with an ornate, centrally located entry. During the 1920s in the Los Angeles City School District, the common building plan for schools was a rectilinear plan with perpendicular wings in T, H, or U configurations, with courtyards or outdoor spaces in between the wings.¹⁴⁹ Russell and Alpaugh could not do this because of the sloping topography of the site. They created an outdoor space in front of the Administration Building by rotating the building forty-five degrees. The architects also included an east-facing portal that could be seen from the flatlands, connecting the building visually to the Sawtelle community.

The Administration Building was the flagship building on the campus and contained both administrative offices and classrooms. As enrollment increased, other buildings followed, including a shop building and a large, ornate auditorium building, consistent with the phased construction of schools during the 1910s through 1930s.¹⁵⁰ All the original buildings except the Administration Building were demolished over time, including greenhouses for floriculture courses.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁵ Sapphos Environmental Inc., *Los Angeles Unified School District, Historic Context Statement*, 37, 38.

¹⁴⁶ *Officers and Students 1923-24 Section I* (University of California Press, February 1924), 30.

¹⁴⁷ Evelyn Clayton, “Harding High School, a Center for Floriculture,” *Springs of Youth* Vol. I, No. 2 (April 1925): 2.

¹⁴⁸ *The Grading Plan for Warren G. Harding High School*.

¹⁴⁹ Sapphos Environmental Inc., *Los Angeles Unified School District, Historic Context Statement*, 10, 35, 39.

¹⁵⁰ Sapphos Environmental Inc., *Los Angeles Unified School District, Historic Context Statement*, 30, 38, 41. *New Auditorium, 1930*, blueprints, Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA, University High School architectural drawings, UCLA Catalog Record ID: 6362785, Collection 443, Box 31. *The Chieftain, 1932*, 8-11; *The Chieftain, 1934* (University High School, 1934), 35. The ornate auditorium was demolished after the 1971 San Fernando Earthquake – “Auditorium Falls,” *Evening Outlook*, May 21, 1976.

¹⁵¹ “Floriculture Course Unique, Harding Has One of the Best Known Instructors in the United States,” *The Harding Warrior*, October 1, 1925, 1. For more, see Bibliography entries, “A New Department in Secondary Education,” and “The Teaching of Floriculture as a Vocation in the California High School.”

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Architectural Style

The architecture at University High School reflects the use of Period Revival architectural styles in school architecture during the 1920s. Paired with the use of these styles, brick was often used as either a structural or decorative cladding material alongside concrete.¹⁵² Russell and Alpaugh chose the Romanesque Revival style. The Romanesque Revival of the 1920s in Los Angeles was influenced by the Romanesque of northern Italy—with brick instead of solid stone as the primary construction material—and featured round arches for door and window openings. The style was used for religious buildings and some commercial buildings and educational institutions. The two major universities in Los Angeles, UCLA and USC, adopted this architectural style for their campuses in the 1920s. A Public Works Administration photograph stated that the “University High School at Los Angeles follows the same architectural pattern as the buildings of the University of California at Los Angeles.”¹⁵³ Another feature of school architecture at the time was the emphasis on natural light and fresh air, seen in the bays of windows spanning each floor.¹⁵⁴

Character defining features of the University High School Administration Building include:

- Pitched red clay tile roof
- Cushion capitals
- Archways
- Bays of classroom windows
- Brick exteriors
- Cast stone trim
- Symmetrical massing
- Arched openings for window and door openings
- Rounded arches for arcades
- Rope molding

Other Romanesque Revival extant Los Angeles school buildings from the 1920s include John Burroughs Junior High (Middle) School (1922) and Dorris Place School (1925-1927), clad in brick with similar architectural fenestration consisting of arches and rosettes.¹⁵⁵ The John C. Fremont High School auditorium from 1923-1924 also survives.¹⁵⁶ Santa Monica High School

¹⁵² Sapphos Environmental Inc., *Los Angeles Unified School District, Historic Context Statement*, 9, 39.

¹⁵³ “University High School Charter Renovation – Los Angeles CA,” Living New Deal, accessed January 21, 2025, <https://livingnewdeal.org/sites/university-high-school-charter-renovation-los-angeles-ca/#lg=1&slide=5>. Daniel Prosser, *Los Angeles Citywide Historic Context Statement, Architecture and Engineering, 1850-1980, Mediterranean & Indigenous Revival Architecture, 1893-1948* (City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning Office of Historic Resources, November 2018), 50-58.

¹⁵⁴ Sapphos Environmental Inc., *Los Angeles Unified School District, Historic Context Statement*, 31.

¹⁵⁵ Sapphos Environmental Inc., *Los Angeles Unified School District, Historic Context Statement*, 40-41. Margarita Jerabek, Amanda Kainer and Virginia Harness, *Character-Defining Features Memorandum for John Burroughs Middle School, 600 South McCadden Place, Los Angeles, California, 90005* (Los Angeles Unified School District, July 28, 2015).

¹⁵⁶ Leslie Heumann with Anne Doehne, *Historic Schools of the Los Angeles Unified School District*, 21, 27, 31.

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(demolished) designed by Allison and Allison was a similar brick-clad Romanesque building with a pedimented portico entrance and central tower.¹⁵⁷ The University High School Administration Building is therefore one of the few surviving Period Revival school administration buildings from the 1920s in Los Angeles.

Building Addition

Shortly after the school opened, an addition was needed because the main building could no longer accommodate all the students, with enrollment increasing from 740 in 1924 to 825 in 1925. The student newspaper reported that classes were being held in the gymnasium/auditorium and in the basement of the main building. In 1925, Russell and Alpaugh designed an L-shaped addition to the original main building with sixteen classrooms, four music classrooms, four art rooms, a textbook room, a large study hall, and four conference rooms.¹⁵⁸ At a cost of \$114,000, the addition used the same architectural language as the main building and was constructed of the same materials. The permit lists the addition as a “Class D Brick” building with concrete and brick as the foundation material. The materials for the interior construction included reinforced concrete columns and beams for floor and roof supports, and gypsum block. The permit specifies 5 ½ tons of steel and 100 barrels of cement, and reinforced concrete and brick for the exterior.¹⁵⁹ The addition extended the double loaded corridor plan of the original main building. At the end of the corridor, Russell and Alpaugh included a perpendicular wing with some features unique to the time, open-air corridors and ROTC headquarters. The addition used the same architectural language as the original main building. Russell and Alpaugh also created a dramatic Renaissance Revival venetian window on the back side of the building.

1933 Long Beach Earthquake Changes

On March 10, 1933, a 6.4 magnitude earthquake struck in the Long Beach area, causing extensive damage to unreinforced brick buildings, including 120 schools. Los Angeles schools were also damaged; forty unreinforced masonry school buildings were destroyed.¹⁶⁰ In response to this construction failure, the Field Act created by the State Legislature oversaw review and approval of all public school plans.¹⁶¹ The Field Act established State oversight of building codes to ensure earthquake-resistant buildings. After the Long Beach Earthquake, the Los Angeles School Board also revised school building codes for new construction to make them more earthquake resistant and at the same time reinforced existing school buildings that suffered damage.¹⁶² While the earthquake closed classes at University High School for one week, the

¹⁵⁷ John J. Donovan, *School Architecture: Principles and Practices* (The MacMillan Company, 1921), 676-680, Figures 627-633.

¹⁵⁸ Frank A. Bouelle to all principals, 15 May 1930, “Los Angeles City School District Office of the Superintendent to All Principals,” Section: II. Buildings.

¹⁵⁹ *Application for the Erection of Buildings, Permit No. 32768 for “Public High School Addition Class Rooms [sic].”* “Construction News,” *Engineering News-Record*, vol. 94, no. 21 (May 21, 1925): 297, https://www.google.com/books/edition/Engineering_News_record/btxJAQAIAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=sawtelle+harding+high+school&pg=RA1-PA297&printsec=frontcover.

¹⁶⁰ Sapphos Environmental Inc., *Los Angeles Unified School District, Historic Context Statement*, 62.

¹⁶¹ “The 1933 Long Beach Earthquake,” California Department of Conservation, <https://www.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/earthquakes/long-beach>.

¹⁶² Sapphos Environmental Inc., *Los Angeles Unified School District, Historic Context Statement*, 63.

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Administration Building had to undergo repairs to meet the new earthquake safety standards. Other buildings on campus were also damaged. The gymnasium/auditorium had to be extensively repaired by replacing its brick façade with stucco.¹⁶³ Damaged chimneys, parapets, fire walls, and ornamentation were ordered to be removed in all schools. According to photographs, the octagonal dome and entry portico of the Administration Building survived the earthquake; these along with some of the roof parapets were eliminated to fulfill the new safety mandates.¹⁶⁴

Part of the New Deal, the Public Works Administration (PWA) helped to fund school construction during the Great Depression, and included funding for school repairs and seismic reinforcement, construction of temporary classrooms and new construction after the 1933 Long Beach Earthquake. In total, over \$34,000,000 in PWA funds contributed to the LAUSD rebuilding campaign.¹⁶⁵ The Administration Building was included in this repair and seismic reinforcement campaign, with portions of its masonry walls strengthened with structural steel frames, gunite, and reinforcing steel, as well as damaged portions of the tile roof being rebuilt.¹⁶⁶ A particular focus of the seismic reinforcement efforts was the east-facing elevation with the Venetian window.¹⁶⁷ Records indicate that this elevation was seismically reinforced using funding from the PWA. The changes included removing the brick and stone and replacing the decorative work with new cast stone, adding an alternating brick and cast stone pattern around the monumental arch, and opening up the medallion above the archway to the elements (**Figure 8**).¹⁶⁸ Altogether, \$135,418 was spent on the repairs and seismic reinforcement of the University High School Administration Building, overseen by the general contractor, H.M. Baruch Corporation from 1935 to 1936.¹⁶⁹ During this time when the school buildings were being repaired, students were relocated to tents. After several years of construction, the 1937 *Chieftain* yearbook exclaimed, “Good-bye (sic) Tent City! Warriors [the school mascot] move into remodeled building.”¹⁷⁰

Many schools in the LAUSD that were damaged by the 1933 Long Beach Earthquake were remodeled with 1930s Moderne and Streamline Moderne architectural styles. The University High School Administration Building is one of the rare examples whose architectural style was *not* significantly altered.¹⁷¹ In other schools that were reconstructed after the 1933 Long Beach Earthquake, architects replaced brick veneers with stucco. The brick walls and most of the planar

¹⁶³ *The Chieftain, 1933* (University High School, 1933), 69, 99.

¹⁶⁴ *The Chieftain, 1935*, 9. *Flight C_3060, Frame 1 Aerial*, June 18, 1934, photograph, FrameFinder, UCSB Library. Beelman, *Administration Building Reconstruction – University High School*.

¹⁶⁵ Sapphos Environmental Inc., *Los Angeles Unified School District, Historic Context Statement*, 51, 62, 64.

¹⁶⁶ *Application to Alter, Repair, Move or Demolish, Permit No. 19517* (City of Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety Building Division, October 23, 1935).

¹⁶⁷ See ROTC photographs with the Administration Building in the background. Historical Files, University High School Charter Library.

¹⁶⁸ Beelman, *Administration Building Reconstruction – University High School*.

¹⁶⁹ Living New Deal, “University High School Charter Renovation,” Negative (P)-67. *The Chieftain, 1936*, 114 shows the repair efforts underway.

¹⁷⁰ *The Chieftain, 1937*, 118.

¹⁷¹ Sapphos Environmental Inc., *Los Angeles Unified School District, Historic Context Statement*, 10.

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architectural decorative motifs were kept on the Administration Building. The architect listed on the building permit for the post-earthquake changes to the Administration Building was Claud Beelman, who is best known for his Art Deco and Moderne style buildings in downtown Los Angeles from the 1930s.¹⁷² He was responsible for other school repairs after the Long Beach earthquake, and in those other examples, as at Utah Street Elementary School, Beelman completely redid the school buildings with a Moderne Style.¹⁷³ With its original Romanesque and Renaissance Revival motifs, the Administration Building remains as an excellent representative example of 1920s Period Revival school architecture. The Administration Building also serves as a record of the history of the repair and seismic reinforcement efforts of schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District following the 1933 Long Beach Earthquake.

Prior Evaluations

Following the 1994 Northridge Earthquake, the building was determined eligible for listing in the National Register for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to satisfy FEMA's obligations under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act following the earthquake.¹⁷⁴ Ten years later, a LAUSD Historic Context Statement included National Register eligibility under Criterion A.¹⁷⁵

Conclusion

The University High School Administration Building is eligible under Criteria A and C for its association with the growth and consolidation of Sawtelle into the City of Los Angeles, including the need to build a new high school to serve the Sawtelle and West Los Angeles community. In partnership with UCLA, the school also served as a teacher training center. The Administration Building is associated with school planning and Period Revival architectural principles of the 1920s and with the post-1933 Long Beach Earthquake repair and seismic reinforcement construction program in the LAUSD. As a property type directly associated with the development and continuity of the Japanese American community of Sawtelle, the Administration Building as the extant representation of University High School meets the *Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in California, 1850-1995* Multiple Property Submission Registration Requirements for Property Types Associated with Migration and Community Formation. For over one hundred years, the University High School Administration Building has served and continues to serve as a gateway for thousands of public high school students seeking a secondary education.

¹⁷² *Application to Alter, Repair, Move or Demolish, Permit No. 19517*. "Claud W. Beelman architectural drawings 0000372," Online Archive of California, accessed August 11, 2024, https://oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/c8959qbm/entire_text/.

¹⁷³ "Historic District – Utah Street Elementary School," Historic Places LA, <https://hpla.lacity.org/report/3bd61dec-21be-46a9-ad9d-1cc85bf22596>. Laura Gallegos and Rebecca L Smith, *Glassell Park Elementary School Los Angeles County* (National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet, April 13, 2007, and National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, March 9, 2007), E-3, 7 and 8-6, 7.

¹⁷⁴ Leslie Heumann, *Final Memo, Historic Schools in LAUSD* (Aspen Environmental Group, July 14, 2004), 6.

¹⁷⁵ Sapphos Environmental Inc., *Los Angeles Unified School District, Historic Context Statement 1870 to 1969*, 134-136.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ___ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ___ previously listed in the National Register
- ___ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ___ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ___ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- ___ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- ___ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

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Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other

Name of repository: Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA. Historical Files, University High School Charter Library

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.3 acres

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 34.045468

Longitude: -118.460976

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Beginning at the southeast corner of Texas Avenue and Westgate Avenue, proceed 40' east along the front property line on Texas Avenue. Then proceed 172' to the rear of the Administration Building, turning west 408' to Westgate Avenue. Then proceed 248' north along Westgate Avenue to the point of origin.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary includes the Administration Building footprint, consisting of the original main building and its addition, which maintains historic integrity.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Alejandro A. Huerta

organization: _____

street & number: 735 North Orange Grove Boulevard, Unit 207

city or town: Pasadena state: California zip code: 91103

e-mail: alejandroahuerta@gmail.com

telephone: (310) 994-1918

date: October 2024; Revised December 2024, February 2025

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Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps: USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: University High School Administration Building
City or Vicinity: Los Angeles
County: Los Angeles
State: California
Photographer: Alejandro A. Huerta and Tascha Folsoi
Date Photographed: August 26, 2024; October 30, 2024; January 5, 22, 23, 2025

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 15 Main façade, camera facing east (Huerta, January 5, 2025)
- 2 of 15 Main façade detail, camera facing east (Huerta, January 5, 2025)
- 3 of 15 Northern corner of the main façade, camera facing south (Huerta, January 5, 2025)
- 4 of 15 East elevation, camera facing west (Folsoi, October 30, 2024)
- 5 of 15 Elevation fronting Westgate Avenue, camera facing east (Huerta, January 5, 2025)
- 6 of 15 North elevation of addition, fronting Texas Avenue, camera facing south (Huerta, January 5, 2025)

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- 7 of 15 Northern wing of addition, camera facing south (Huerta, January 5, 2025)
- 8 of 15 East elevation of addition, camera facing west (Folsoi, August 26, 2024)
- 9 of 15 South elevation of addition, detail of Venetian window, camera facing north (Folsoi, October 30, 2024)
- 10 of 15 West elevation of originally open-air arcade, camera facing east (Folsoi, August 26, 2024)
- 11 of 15 East elevation of addition, camera facing west (Folsoi, October 30, 2024)
- 12 of 15 Entry vestibule, camera facing west (Folsoi, January 23, 2025)
- 13 of 15 Hallway, camera facing south (Folsoi, January 22, 2025)
- 14 of 15 Detail of former open-air arcade corridor, camera facing west (Folsoi, January 22, 2025)
- 15 of 15 Former ROTC rifle range, camera facing west (Folsoi, January 23, 2025)

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- Figure 3** Administration Building at top left of campus map; “Prospective Family Tours,” LAUSD, University High School Charter, <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1w9J1Lq3lCQimnxHRWnATdpSQLOKXpb6g/view>, accessed September 29, 2024
- Figure 4** Main façade, 1936, appearance dates to changes made after the 1933 Long Beach Earthquake completed in 1936; *University High School in 1936*, November 12, 1936, photograph, Santa Monica History Museum, Object ID: 3.2.655
- Figure 5** Main façade, 1925; Harding High School, printed, Los Angeles Public Library, Order Number 00024995, <https://tessa2.lapl.org/digital/collection/photos/id/93974/rec/5>, accessed January 21, 2025

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- Figure 6** East elevation, 1925, before addition was built to the north; Harding High School, printed, Los Angeles Public Library, Order Number 00024996, <https://tessa2.lapl.org/digital/collection/photos/id/93976/rec/2>, accessed January 21, 2025
- Figure 7** Japanese American students on campus and in neighborhood, circa 1949; Friends at University High School, printed, Los Angeles Public Library, Order Number 00004464, <https://tessa2.lapl.org/digital/collection/photos/id/78611/rec/1>, accessed January 21, 2025
- Figure 8** Venetian window after repairs following 1933 Long Beach Earthquake, note open-air staircase, circa 1936, Courtesy National Archives, photo no. 69-PWA-67

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

- Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
- Tier 2 – 120 hours
- Tier 3 – 230 hours
- Tier 4 – 280 hours

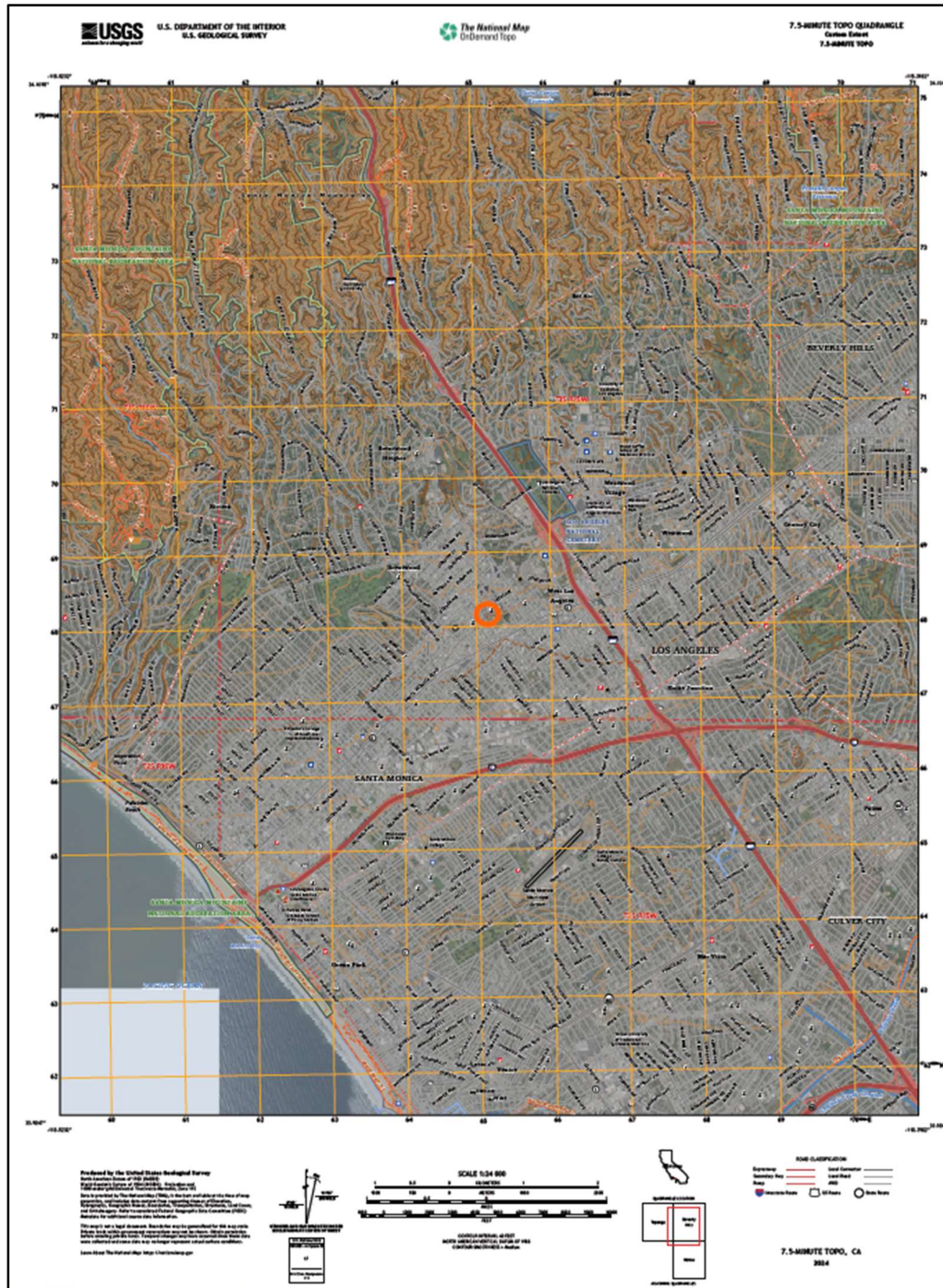
The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.

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USGS Map

7.5-Minute Topo Quadrangle with Administration Building location circled in orange; National Map OnDemand Topo, 2024

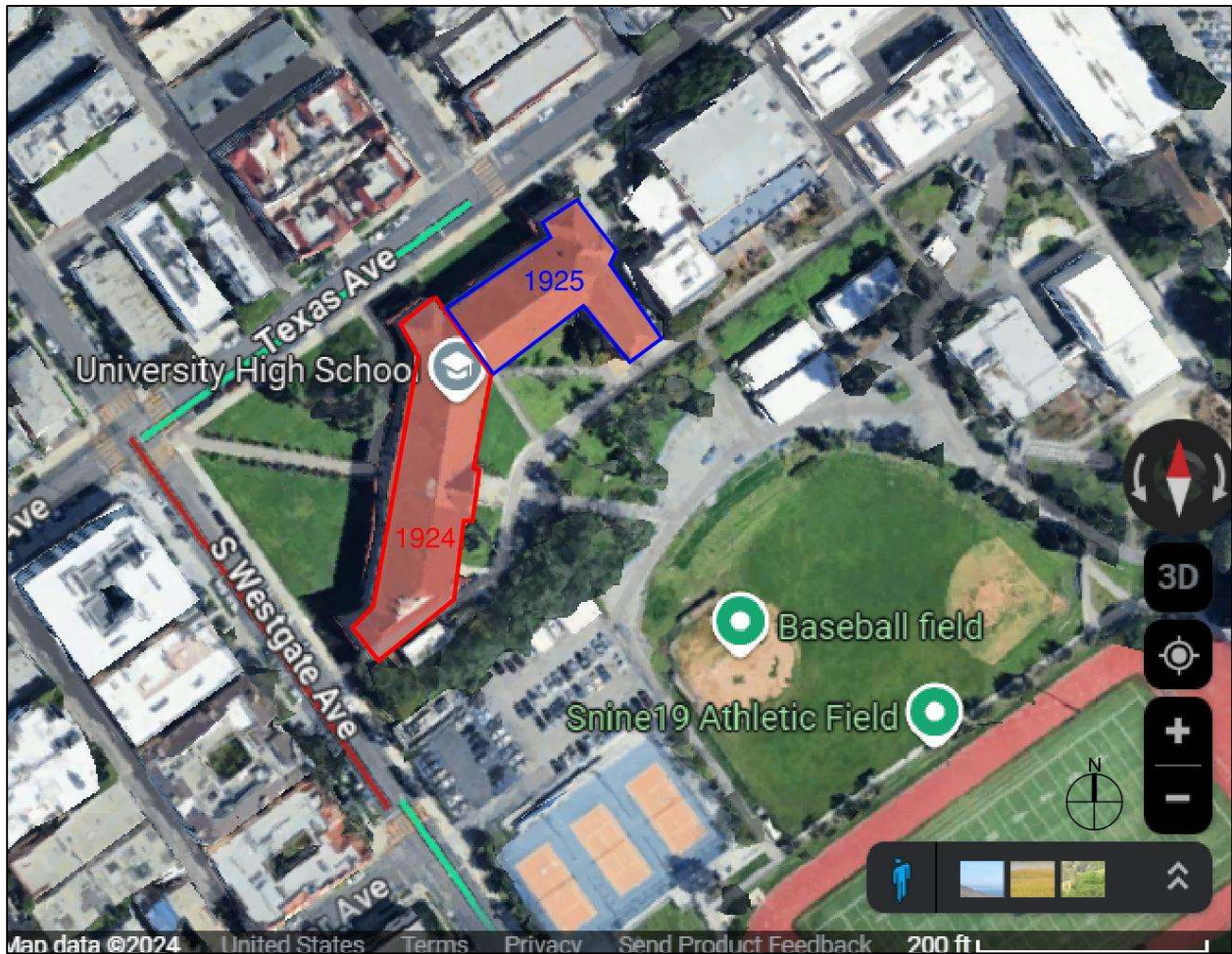


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Sketch Map

Original 1924 building outlined in red, and 1925 addition outlined in blue; Google Imagery, 2024, annotated by Marco Huerta

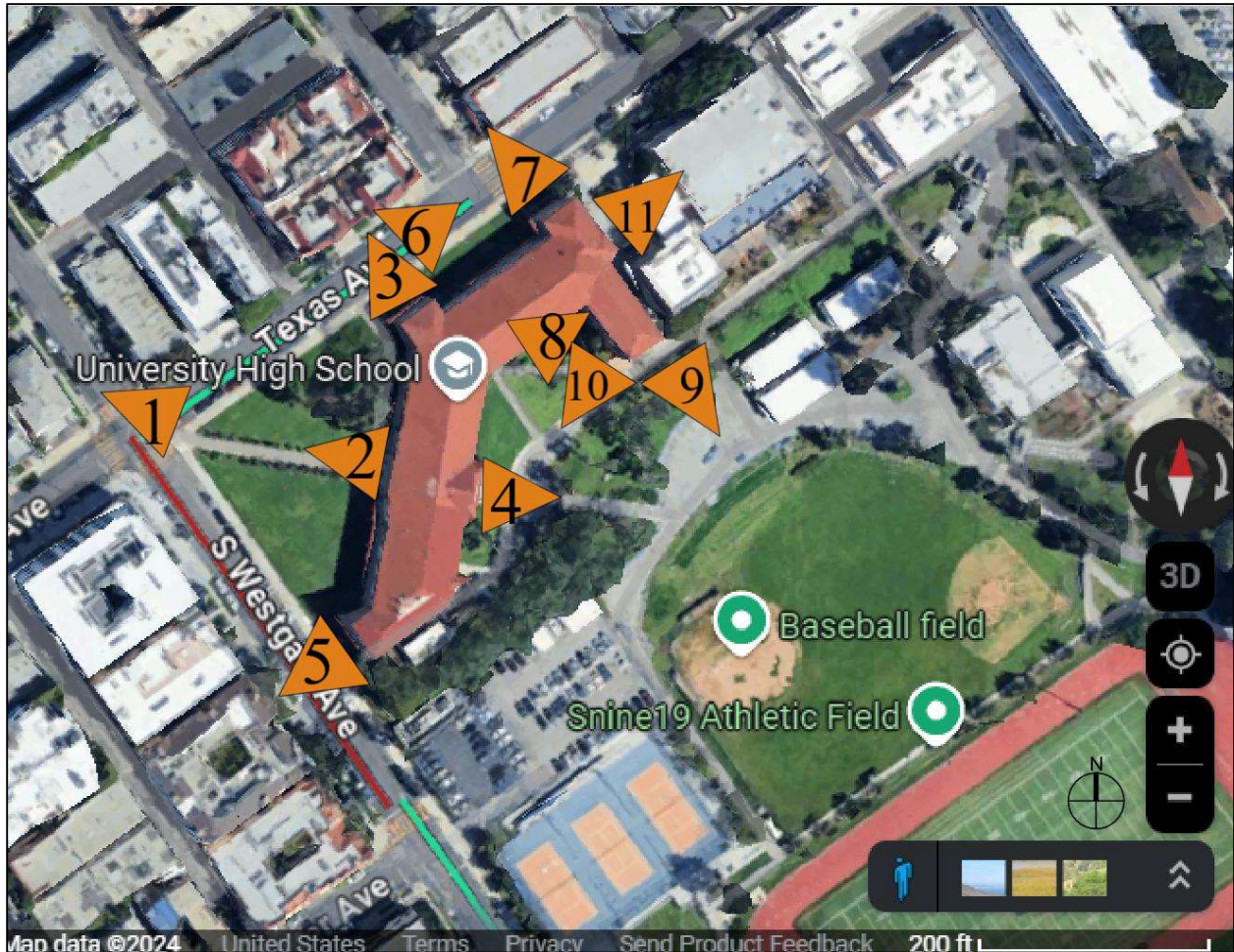


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Photo Key—EXTERIOR

Google Imagery, 2024, annotated by author



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Photo Key—INTERIOR

Administration Building Basement and First Floor Plan, 2010, annotated by author



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Figure 1 Administration Building shown with orange pin

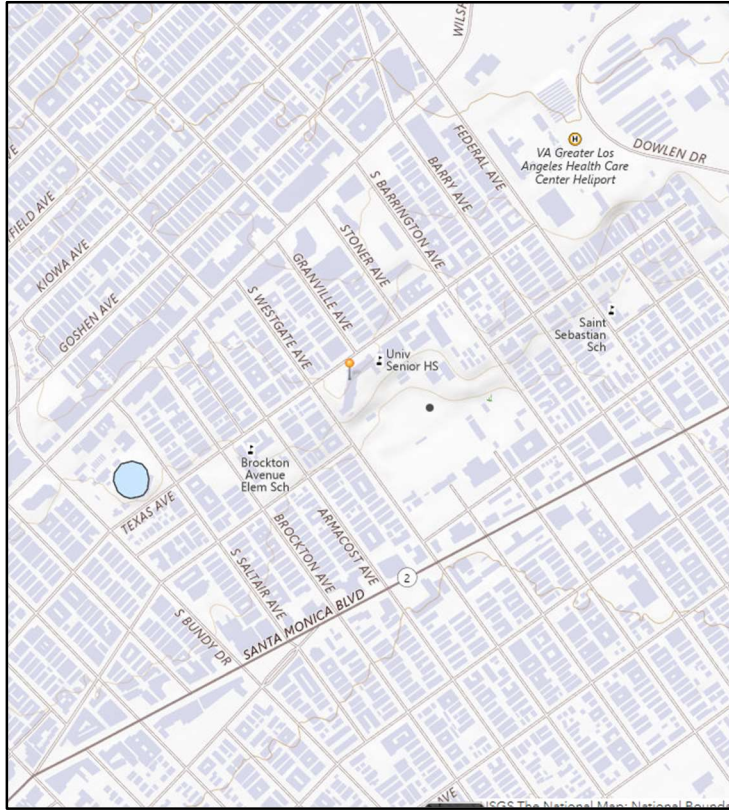
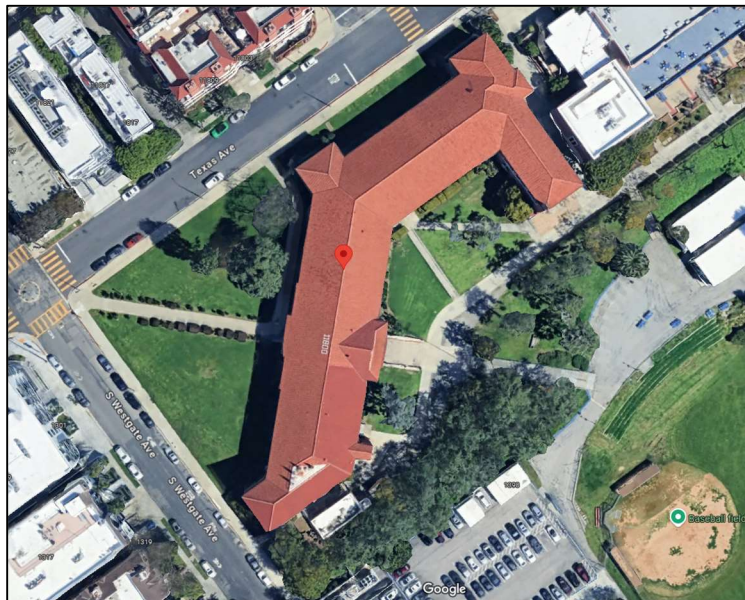


Figure 2 Aerial showing Administration Building



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Figure 3 Administration Building shown at top left of campus map



Figure 4 Main façade, 1936



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Figure 5 Main façade, 1925



Figure 6 East elevation, 1925



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Figure 7 Japanese American students on campus and in neighborhood, circa 1949



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Figure 8 Venetian window after repairs following 1933 Long Beach Earthquake, circa 1936



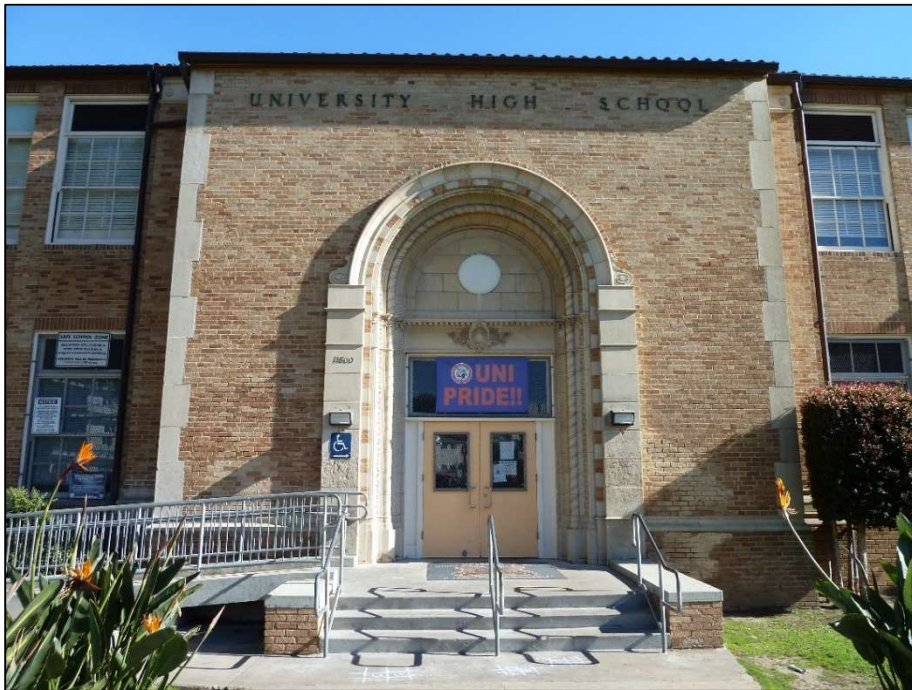
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Photo 1 Main façade, camera facing east



Photo 2 Main façade detail, camera facing east



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Photo 3 Northern corner of the main façade, camera facing south



Photo 4 East elevation, camera facing west



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Photo 5 Elevation fronting Westgate Avenue, camera facing east



Photo 6 North elevation of addition, fronting Texas Avenue, camera facing south



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Photo 7 Northern wing of addition, camera facing south



Photo 8 East elevation of addition, camera facing west



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Photo 9 South elevation of addition, detail of Venetian window, camera facing north



Photo 10 West elevation of originally open-air arcade, camera facing east



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Photo 11 East elevation of addition, camera facing west



Photo 12 Entry vestibule, camera facing west



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Photo 13 Hallway, camera facing south

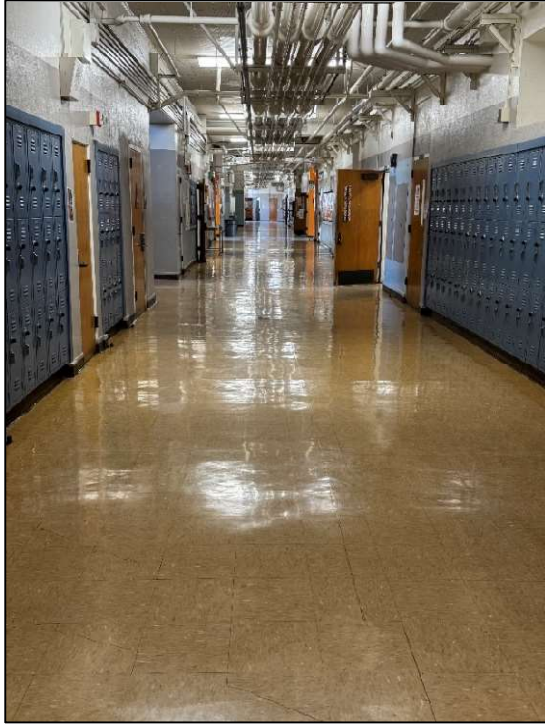
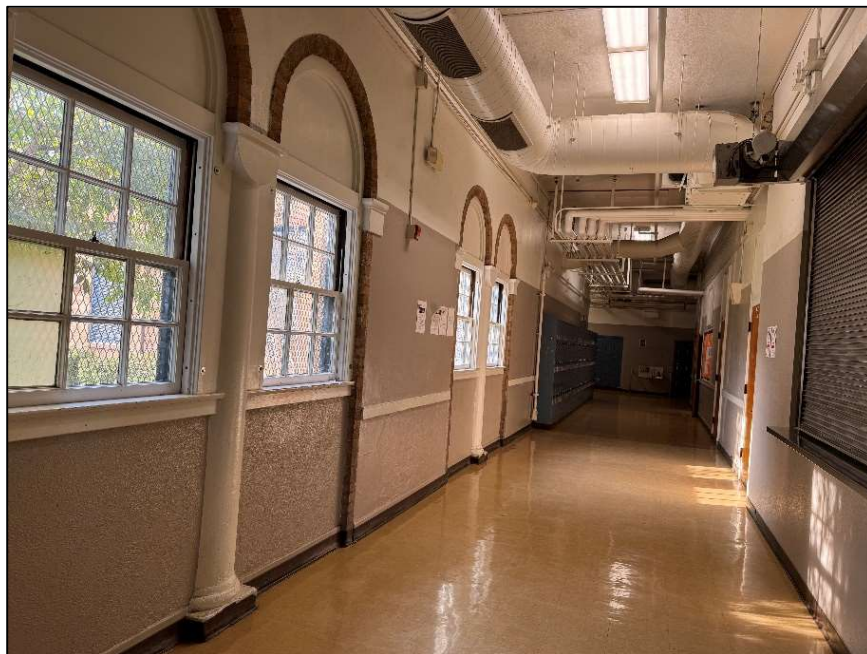


Photo 14 Detail of former open-air arcade corridor, camera facing west



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Photo 15 Former ROTC rifle range in basement, camera facing west

