

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

JAN 16 1996

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being nominated, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Laveen School Auditorium

other name/site number Building A, Laveen School

2. Location

street & number: 5001 West Dobbins Road  not for publication  
city/town: Laveen  vicinity  
state: Arizona code: AZ county: Maricopa code: 013 zip code: 85339

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments).

JAMES W. GUNN ARIZONA STATE PARKS 11/27/95  
Signature of certifying official Date

ARIZONA STATE PARKS  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments).

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register  
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register  
 See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Edson A. Beall 2/16/96  
Signature of the Keeper 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

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing).

Not Applicable

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

None

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION & CULTURE - Auditorium  
EDUCATION-RELATED - Grammar School Cafeteria  
EDUCATION - Grammar School Shop & Home Economics

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER - Storage

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

Late 19th & Early 20th Century American  
Movements

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete  
walls Adobe with stucco  
roof Old wood shingles w/asphalt shingles over

other \_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**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.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or a grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

A - Social History

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**Period of Significance**

1940

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**Significant Dates**

1940

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**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

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**Architect/Builder**

Works Projects Administration (WPA)

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**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**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  
# \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary Location of Additional Data:**

- State historic preservation office
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of Repository:

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**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property < 1 acre

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u>12</u>	<u>391380</u>	<u>3691900</u>	3	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Douglas E. Kupel, Ph.D./Historian

organization Laveen Elementary School Dist. No. 59 date July 31, 1995; revised September 16, 1995

street & number 9401 S. 51st Ave., P.O. Box 29 telephone 602/237-9100

city or town Laveen state: AZ zip code 85339

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative Black and White photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO)

name \_\_\_\_\_

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

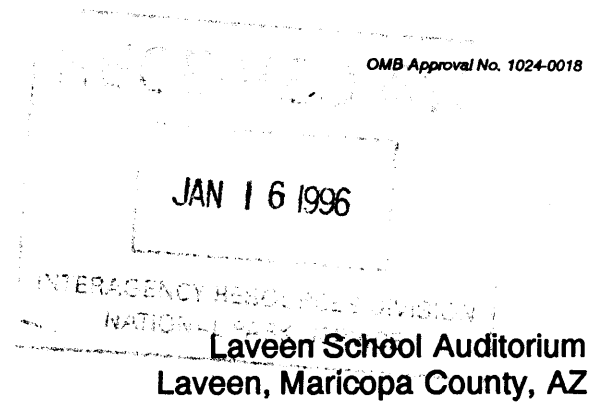
**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instruction, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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**NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION**

**SUMMARY**

The Laveen School Auditorium, located in the unincorporated rural Maricopa County community of Laveen, is a one-story adobe building with a full basement. The Auditorium was constructed by the Federal Works Projects Administration (WPA) in 1940. The building is simple in its ornamentation, with elements of Craftsman style features. It is situated on the campus of the Laveen School and is the only remaining building from the school's historic period. The building retains its appearance from the historic period, and retains its historic setting in a corner of the campus somewhat removed from the more modern buildings which comprise the present Laveen School complex.

**DESCRIPTION**

The unincorporated community of Laveen is a rural agricultural settlement in Maricopa County, about fifteen miles southwest of the Phoenix city center. When constructed in 1940, the Laveen School Auditorium was the third building constructed on the Laveen School campus. The original school building, constructed ca. 1908, was a one-room schoolhouse. In 1924 residents of Laveen replaced this building with an eight-room school building. Using WPA funds, Laveen residents added the auditorium to the north and west of the eight-room school building. The basement of the building served as the school's cafeteria. After 1960, corresponding with an increase in population in the Maricopa County area, several additional classroom and ancillary buildings were constructed on the campus of the Laveen School.

The auditorium is a defining element of the northwest corner of the Laveen School campus, visible from several vantage points along Dobbins Road and 51st Avenue (this intersection forms the center of historic Laveen). It is isolated by an expanse of grass dotted with old ash trees from the rest of the campus, and thus stands apart as a lone survivor of bygone days. These old trees are considered an important part of the historic setting of the building. The immediate vicinity of the Auditorium is covered with concrete and asphalt surfaces which run to and from the building in an uncoordinated and almost haphazard manner. Although some of these sidewalks date to the period of construction as evidenced by WPA markings in the concrete, others were added later.

The building is rectangular in shape, with the long axis running north/south. It is constructed of stacked adobe blocks on cast concrete stem walls. Interior and exterior surfaces are covered with cement plaster over wire lath. Condition of the foundation and walls is good with no major cracks apparent. The front elevation faces east and contains the main entrance which is interrupted by a rather inconspicuous hipped gable porch roof over the main entrance. This is the elevation that faces the campus of the Laveen School. None of the original doors survive. Replacement doors at the south and north ends are solid core wood. The main entrance door has been replaced by a single hollow metal door set in a metal frame. This main entrance originally consisted of double wood and glass doors with a glass transom above.

Although only a single story of the building rises above ground level, the auditorium contains a full basement. Entrance to the basement is gained through two concrete stairwells, one each on the north and east elevations. The basement floor is a concrete slab. The basement floor

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Laveen School Auditorium  
Laveen, Maricopa County, AZ

plan is punctuated by six concrete columns which support the auditorium floor above. Basement windows open to window wells which allow light into the area. The basement windows are casement units. Four of the original eight wooden casement windows have been replaced with metal casements. This change in material has had no effect on the integrity of the building as the replacement units maintain the same style as the originals. The basement ceiling consists of pressed fiberboard attached to 2x4 wood joists. A small restroom, consisting of a toilet and sink, has been constructed by taking advantage of a window well on the north elevation. This is a later modification to the building. The northwest and southeast corners of the basement have been converted to offices by the construction of partition walls, another later modification. In the southwest corner of the basement a metal cage has been constructed so that property may be locked up. The basement originally served as the cafeteria for the school. It was converted into a shop in 1980. This resulted in the addition of dust collection equipment which still remains. The northeast corner of the basement contains a brick chimney, all that remains from the original heating system.

The ground floor of the building once housed the school's auditorium. A large stage which accounted for approximately one-third of the ground floor plan once covered the south end of the building. It was flanked by a stage arch and side walls. The stage was removed in 1980 when the ground level of the building was converted into a home economics classroom. This change resulted in retrofitting the building with additional plumbing and electrical conduits, as well as covering approximately one-quarter of the interior walls of the ground floor with prefinished wood paneling. It also resulted in the removal of a loading dock at the south end of the building which

provided access to the stage door. The original wood floor of the ground level remains, although it has been covered with carpet in some areas and vinyl tile in others. The original wood beadboard ceiling also remains, although it has been covered over by suspended acoustical tile to accommodate the retrofitting of a forced air heating and cooling system. Original wood door and window frames survive and are in good condition.

The building is topped with a modified-hip, gabled roof with exposed rafter ends. It is covered with diamond pattern, mineral composite board shingles. The wood-sided gable ends are modestly embellished with decorative outriggers which support overhanging bargeboards. The smooth expanse of the west elevation of the roof is broken by four hipped eyebrow dormers. These dormers work in conjunction with north and south end gable vents to allow attic venting. The main roof ridge and modified gable hips are decorated with semi-cylindrical Spanish tile. A single tall brick chimney rises from the northeast corner of the roof.

Window placement is asymmetrical. The east elevation has four window openings, with the off-center main entrance flanked by one window to the south and three to the north. The west elevation has five window openings. Two windows are present at the north elevation. The south elevation has no window openings, although it does have a door which once opened to the back of the interior stage. Ground level windows are double hung wood sash, 4 over 4 light. In addition to the main entrance and stage door, a third door is located on the north elevation.

Although the simple decorative elements of the building are typical of plain Depression-era government architecture, the Auditorium does contain elements of the

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Laveen School Auditorium  
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Craftsman style. The dormers, gable outriggers, bargeboards, and Spanish roof tile all represent the Craftsman style. The asymmetrical and therefore casual appearance of the building also is evidence of Craftsman influence. The massing and form of the building itself show elements of Craftsman influence, with its low hipped gable roof atop an elongated plan. The use of adobe and concrete for building materials testify to the utilitarian nature of the building's construction history as a Depression-era WPA project that utilized economical materials available in the local area.

The integrity of the Laveen School Auditorium is good. It retains its integrity from the historic period. Its immediate site and setting are essentially unchanged. The newer buildings constructed on campus are some distance from the Laveen School Auditorium. Although the building has suffered from some modifications over the years, most of which date to its 1980 conversion from an auditorium and cafeteria into a shop and home economics building, these changes are easily reversible. The building has also suffered from neglect caused by a lack of funds for maintenance in this low property tax base rural area. However, most of the deteriorated conditions can be easily remedied and do not represent the loss of any historic fabric. The building is presently used for storage. Windows have been boarded up as a security measure. Although the boarded windows detract from the present appearance of the building, the historic windows are intact. Changes to the doors, also replaced for security reasons, are easily reversible.

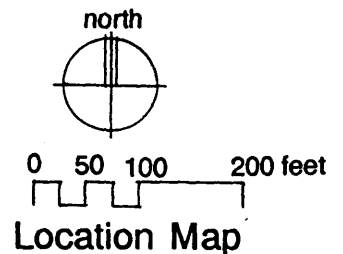
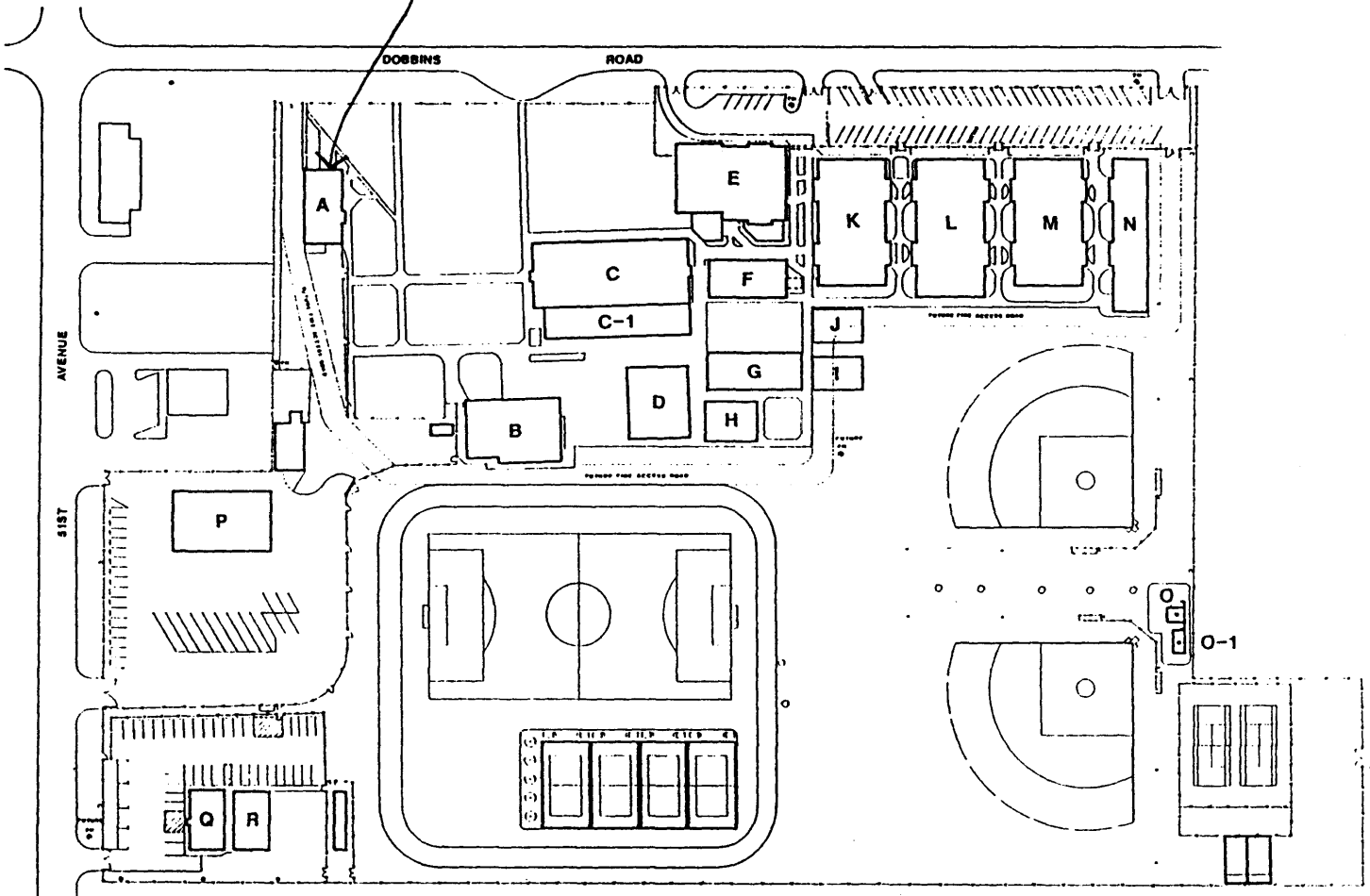
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Laveen School Auditorium



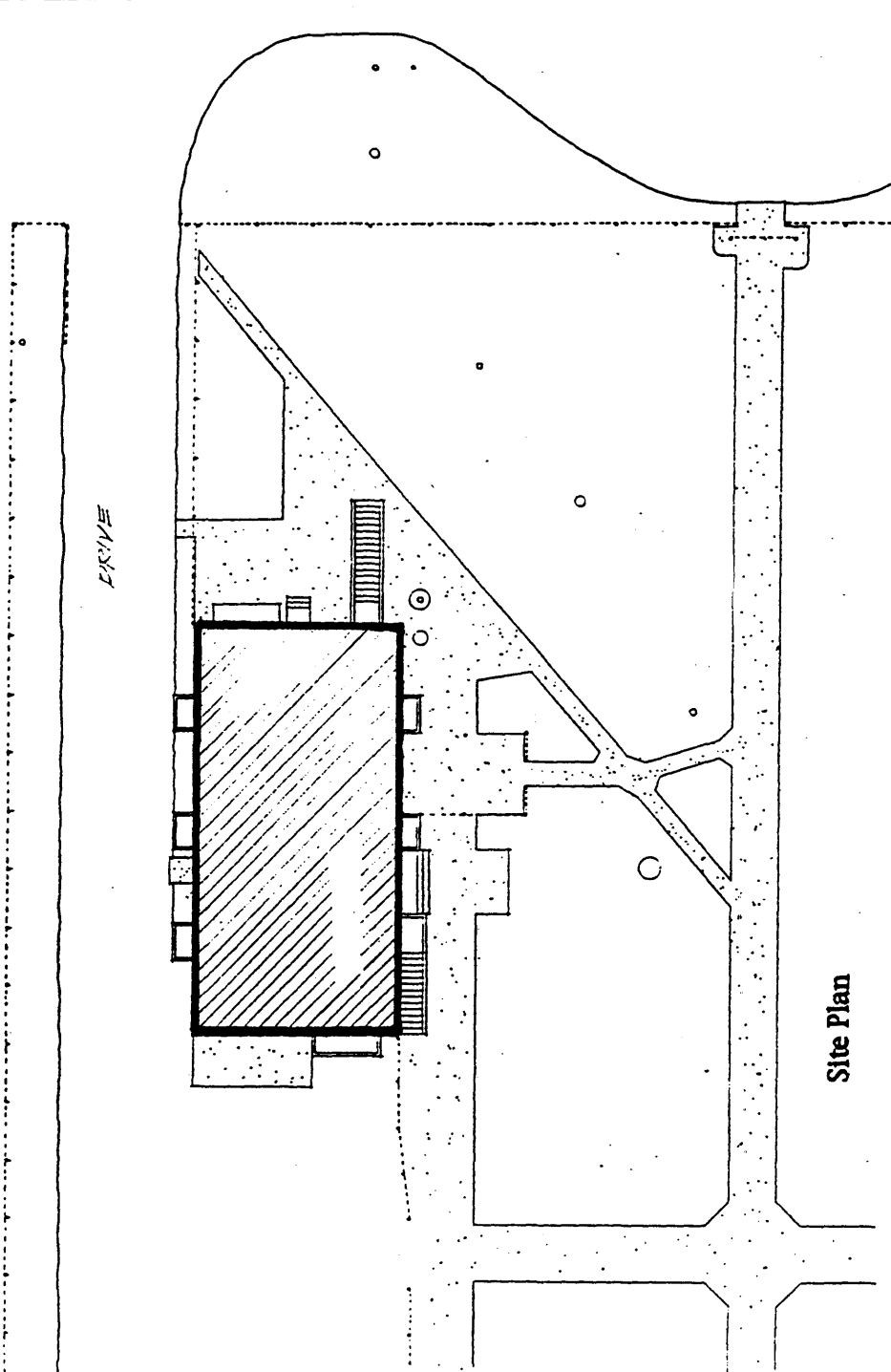


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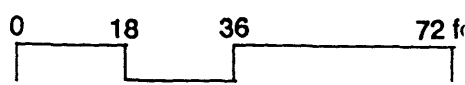
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Laveen School Auditorium  
Laveen, Maricopa County, AZ



Site Plan



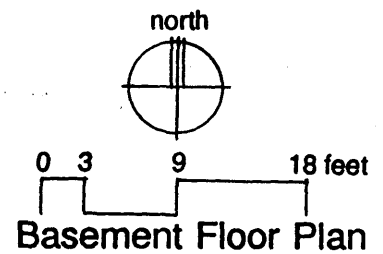
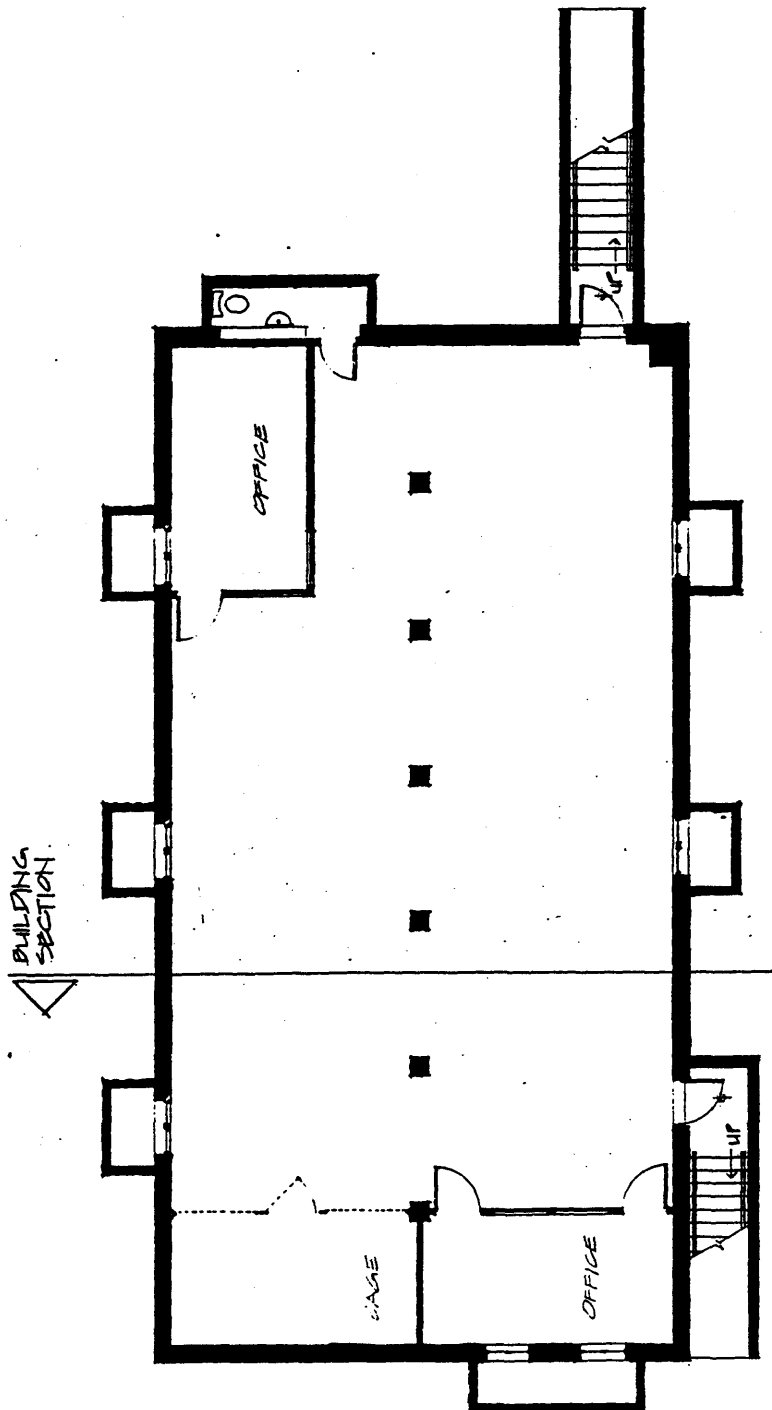
Site Plan

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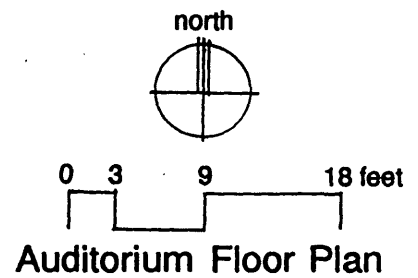
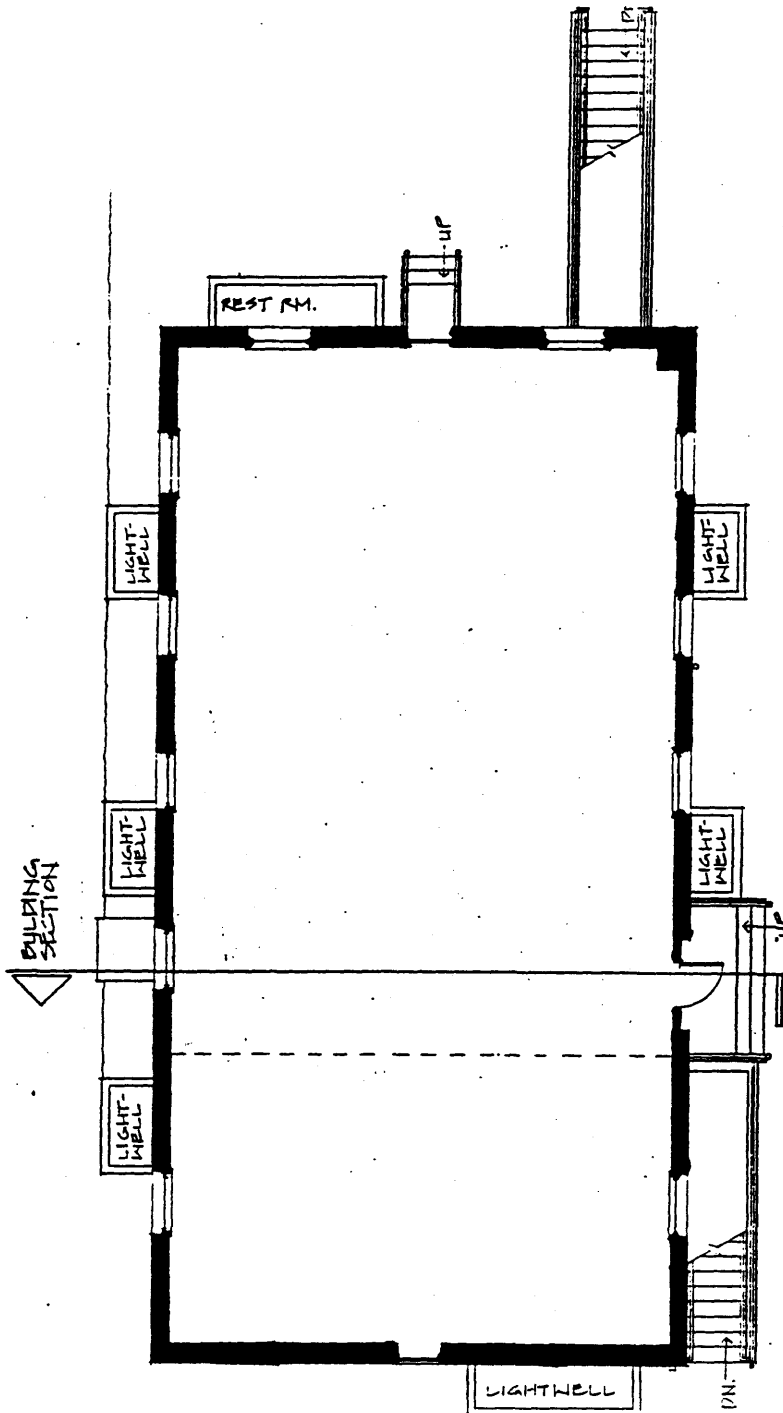


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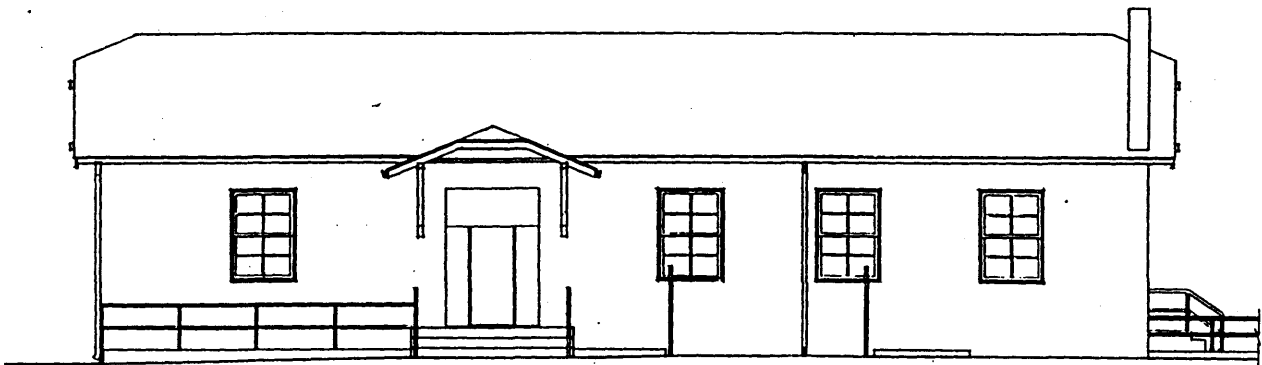


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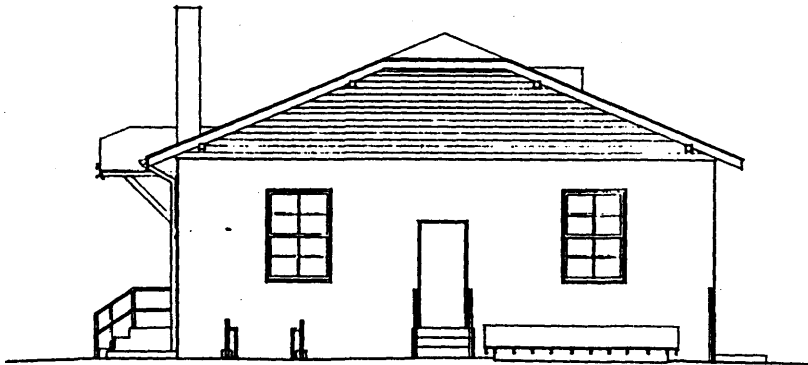
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Laveen School Auditorium  
Laveen, Maricopa County, AZ



East Elevation

0 3 9 18 feet



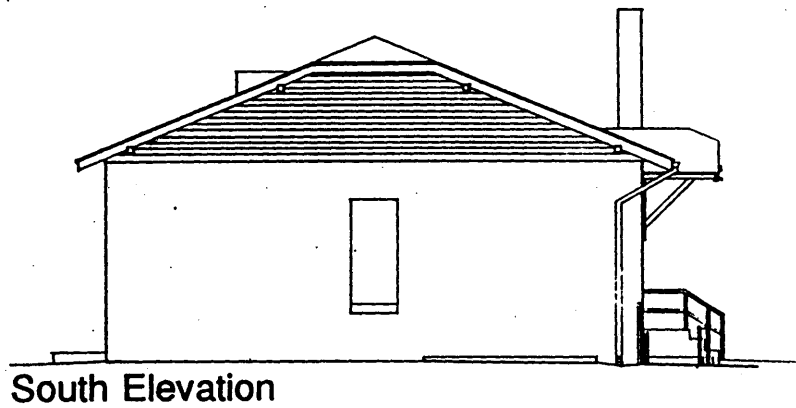
North Elevation

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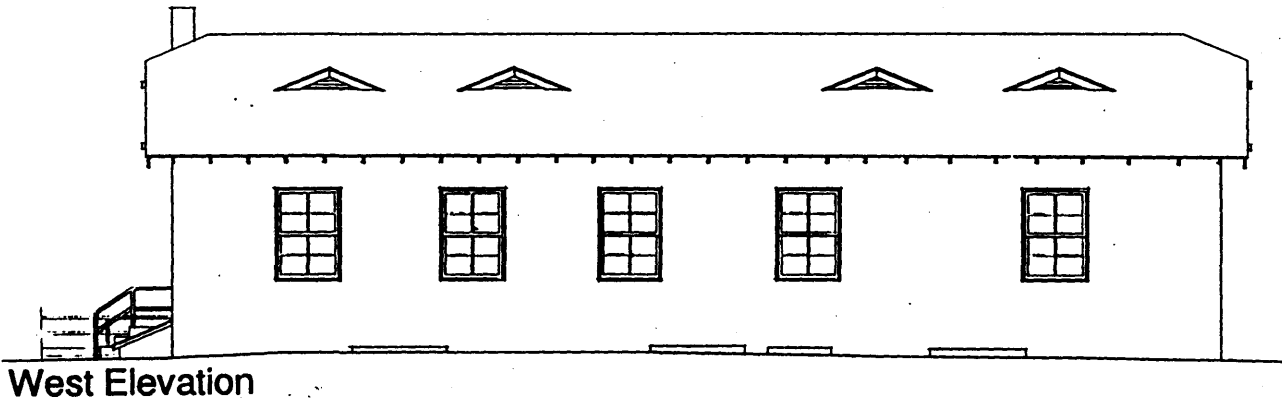
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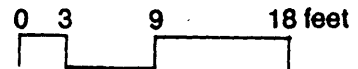
Laveen School Auditorium  
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South Elevation



West Elevation

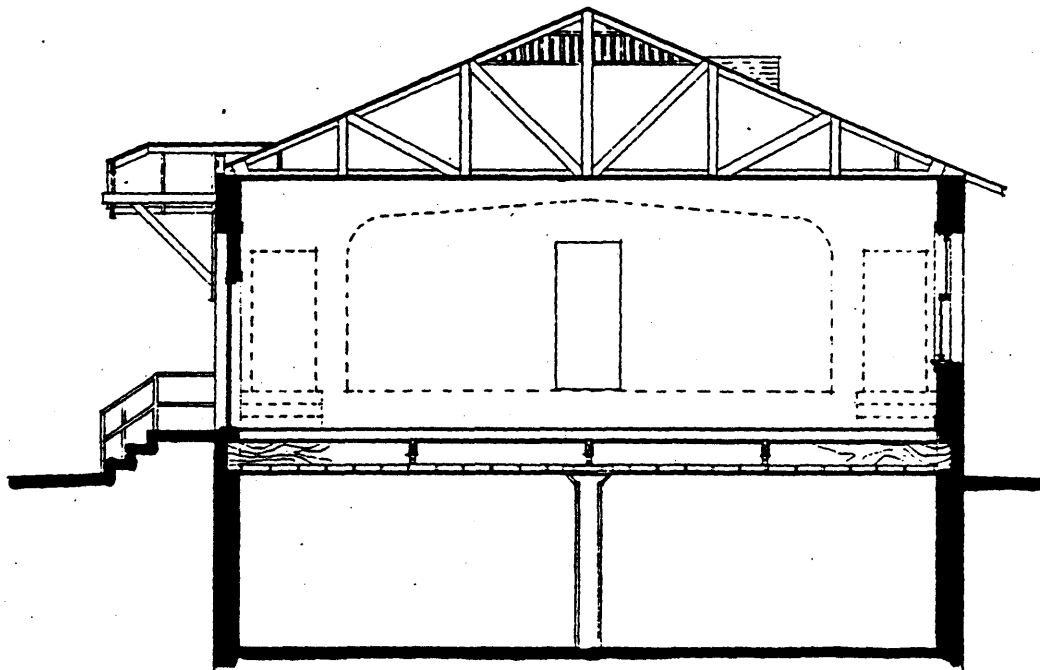


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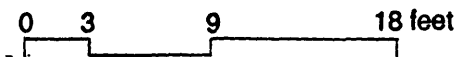
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Building Section



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## NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

### SUMMARY

The Laveen School Auditorium, constructed in 1940, is significant to the local Laveen community under National Register criterion "A" as an example of the trend of rural school centralization in Arizona. It is importantly associated with the development of centralized rural education in Arizona prior to World War Two. It is also significant under National Register criterion "A" as a local representative of Federal Works Projects Administration (WPA) construction. The Federal government constructed the Auditorium (designated as building "A" on the Laveen School building inventory) using WPA funds and labor for the Trustees of Maricopa County School District #59 in Laveen. The construction of the Auditorium building is representative of two aspects of WPA construction: the use of Federal funds to construct public buildings to combat depressed economic conditions, and the selection of an auditorium as a project to further WPA goals of community betterment. The building served as the de facto town hall in Laveen, providing a location for community as well as school functions. The building retains its historic appearance and setting, and is the only school building remaining from the historic period in Laveen.

### Early Development of Laveen

The rural community of Laveen, an un-incorporated area of Maricopa County, Arizona, developed fairly late in the history of the Salt River Valley. Although Laveen today is located only a short drive from downtown Phoenix, for most of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the

twentieth century Laveen stood isolated from the main center of settlement in the Valley by the untamed Salt River. Some early pioneers had arrived near Laveen as early as 1884, but a series of improvements in the first decade of the twentieth century ended the isolation of the area on the south side of the river and led to the establishment of Laveen.

The community takes its name from the Laveen family. Roger G. Laveen first arrived in the area in 1908 and established a post office on September 30, 1913. The founding of Laveen was a family affair; Roger's brothers and sisters acquired land in the vicinity of 51st Avenue and Dobbins Road at what would be the heart of the community. These included his sisters Agnes, Frieda, and Esther; and his brothers Frank and Walter. The children's widowed mother, Anna Laveen, maintained a residence in Phoenix. The Laveen family moved to Arizona from Minnesota.

Beyond a group of dedicated family members, the development of Laveen depended on outside factors that influenced growth in the area as a whole. The completion of Roosevelt Dam on the Salt River in 1911 reduced the danger of floods on the Salt River, and created a large reservoir to impound flood waters. The dam and reservoir were part of the Salt River Project, one of the first reclamation projects sponsored by the United States government. After the construction of Roosevelt Dam, the flood waters of the Salt River could be stored during periods of heavy rain and spring runoff, to be released slowly during the agricultural growing season. This construction project spurred agricultural development in the Salt River Valley, including Laveen.

With the raging river tamed by the massive bulk of

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Roosevelt Dam, Valley leaders moved to end the isolation of the south side by constructing bridges across the Salt River. The first bridge, completed in 1910 at the foot of Central Avenue south of Phoenix, linked the rich agricultural lands south of the river with the commercial center of Arizona's capitol city. A second bridge, constructed in 1913 at the site of Hayden's Ferry in Tempe, further solidified transportation and communication links between areas north and south of the Salt River.

The completion of Roosevelt Dam and the bridging of the Salt River were two steps that facilitated the development of Laveen, but residents needed a third element as well. The existing canal system of the Salt River Project as acquired from private owners by the Federal government did not extend to the far western portion of the Valley near Laveen. In order to take advantage of the benefits afforded by the reclamation project, settlers needed to extend the canals westward to their land. Since the Federal government was short of cash after completing the dam and acquiring the existing canals in the Valley, officials of the US Reclamation Service asked landowners in the southwest portion of the Salt River Valley to construct a canal to link up that area with the water supply.

Settlers created the Western Canal Construction Company to build the canal. On August 19, 1912, the Western Canal Construction Company entered into a contract with the United States to construct the Western Canal at a cost not to exceed \$60,000. The Western Canal would be built to a size that would allow an additional 13,000 acres of land south of the Salt River to come into agricultural use. The settlers finished the construction job on February 16, 1913, and the US Reclamation Service took over operation

of the Western Canal. On October 16, 1913, the Western Canal Construction Company transferred ownership in the Western Canal to the US Government. Roger, Ferieda, and Walter Laveen assisted the construction effort by granting portions of their land to the US government for the canal right-of-way in 1913.

It took a few more years for the settlers to extend laterals and ditches from the main canal to their individual properties, but by 1917 the job of completing the remaining infrastructure had been finished. For the residents of Laveen, the timing was propitious. The entry of the United States into World War I led to a demand for cotton, especially the long-staple Pima variety grown in the Salt River Valley. Cotton prices leaped skyward, along with the fortunes of Laveen area farmers. Lured by the income that could be made by farming, a dependable water supply, and ease of transportation, many new arrivals began to call Laveen home after 1917. Census records indicated that the population of the Laveen area reached 875 in 1920.

History of Maricopa County School District #59, Laveen

The early residents of Laveen, being forward-looking individuals, knew that the future of their settlement depended on a solid foundation of community services. One of their first steps in organizing the community concerned education. During the summer of 1908, residents began circulating a petition for the establishment of a school district under the provisions of Arizona territorial law which assigned that duty to county governments. Maricopa County Superintendent of Schools A.H. Fulton approved the petition on July 25, 1908. On August 18, 1908, the Maricopa County Board of



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Supervisors voted unanimously to create Maricopa County School District #59. The founders of Laveen demonstrated their penchant for organization and timing, receiving permission from the county to start their school district just in time for the opening of classes in September.

For the next decade the Laveen School operated in a one-room school house on the property of Walter Laveen. Walter kept the school close to home by marrying one of the first teachers, Cora Hudlow, who had graduated from Tempe Normal School in 1913. The small building met the needs of the slowly growing community for a time, but students recalled that it made for difficult learning with all grades in the same room. Black students, such as future teacher Irene McClellon King, were sent to the Roosevelt School District since there were too few Black students in Laveen for separate facilities under Arizona's segregated school system. With increased prosperity and an influx of population caused by the agricultural boom associated with World War I, the Trustees of the Laveen School began to plan for a larger facility.

At a meeting held in the old one-room school house on March 6, 1919, the Trustees voted to hold a bond election. They asked the voters to approve \$27,000 in bonds, of which \$21,000 would go to the acquisition of a site and the construction of a new school adjacent to the old school; \$4,000 would be allocated for a site and school in the northwest part of the district; and \$2,000 designated for a site and school in the northeast part of the district. The voters approved the bonds on March 29, 1919. On April 14, 1919, the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors authorized the bond sale and sold the bonds to the firm of Causey, Foster, & Co.

In the aftermath of World War I, the Trustees ran into some financial difficulty which delayed the construction project. An economic slump in the wake of the war depressed cotton prices and set back the district's financial plans. The Trustees decided to eliminate the two satellite school locations and concentrated their funds on a central school. On January 16, 1924, Walter and Cora Laveen donated a portion of their property to the Trustees of Laveen School District #59 for the construction of the new Laveen School. Construction went smoothly during the spring and summer, and classes opened in the new school in September, 1925.

The new Laveen School served the needs of the students and teachers well for the next fifteen years. These were difficult times for the residents of Laveen. Agricultural prices increased slowly in the twenties, finally rising by the end of the decade. The stock market crash of 1929, followed by a severe economic downturn known as the Great Depression, kept agricultural prices low through the 1930s. While these economic problems caused difficulties for the Trustees, changes in national migration patterns exacerbated the situation. Hundreds of migrants, fleeing the dust bowl conditions of the midwest, traveled west in search of a new life. Many of these migrants settled in the rich farming lands of the Salt River Valley in places such as Laveen. This influx of population added many new students to the roster of the Laveen School, placing strains on the limited facilities of the old building.

Although the economic conditions limited the options of the Trustees, a new funding source arrived in the 1930s which Laveen leaders took advantage of. As a means to combat the depression, the Federal government under the direction of President Franklin D. Roosevelt created a number of public works projects designed to get people

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back to work and increase the amount of money circulating in local economies. One of these programs, the Works Progress Administration (WPA - known as the Works Projects Administration after 1939) concentrated on the construction of public buildings and facilities. From July 1, 1935 to December, 1939, the WPA constructed more than 23,000 public buildings nation wide. Of these buildings, 3,985 were schools. The WPA emphasized buildings such as schools, town halls, and auditoriums that would facilitate education, community betterment, and recreation. By giving the unemployed jobs on these types of public buildings, the program also kept these individuals off the relief rolls and allowed them to obtain skills which would assist them in finding private employment. The WPA program continued until 1943, ending shortly after the entry of the United States into World War Two.

Maricopa County officials took advantage of the WPA program, applying for many types of grants from 1935 to 1940. On June 28, 1937, the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors approved the application for a WPA grant to improve rural schools in the county. Laveen School District #59 received funds to construct an auditorium building on its campus. By April of 1940, nearly \$4,000 had been expended to construct the basement and adobe walls of the auditorium. The building was completed by early summer.

The Laveen School Auditorium served the community well for many years. The basement housed the school cafeteria and the ground floor was used for a community center for club meetings, dances, plays, town socials, and meetings, as well as school functions. In 1980 the building was converted into a home economics classroom with a wood shop located in the basement. The

Auditorium is currently used for storage.

World War Two put a hold on non-military construction in the Salt River Valley, but brought in large amounts of defense industries and workers. These conditions led to an economic boom for the Salt River Valley in the post-war period. Many new residents called the Valley home, and many were attracted to the rural lifestyle of Laveen. By the end of the 1950s the large farms and ranches in the Laveen area began to be subdivided into smaller acreages, with a resulting increase in population. The increased numbers of residents placed additional demands on the facilities of Laveen School District #59.

On February 28, 1959, voters in the district authorized a \$35,000 bond issue to erect a new class room building at Laveen School and acquire additional acreage for expansion. The Maricopa County Board of Supervisors approved the bond issue on April 27, 1959. It soon became apparent that the new facilities at the old Laveen School site would not meet the demands of the many new residents of Laveen. The Trustees went back to the voters, who on December 17, 1960, authorized a \$120,000 bond issue to acquire a site for a new school and erect a building. The Maricopa County Board of Supervisors approved the plans and specifications for the new school on February 6, 1961. The Trustees named the new school M.C. Cash elementary, after Maurice C. Cash. Maurice C. Cash and his wife Alice had donated land near 35th Avenue and Roeser Road for a public park in 1960 and in 1961 donated additional land for the new school.

The history of the next thirty years of the Laveen School District #59 is one of a continual expansion to meet the increasing needs of a growing population in Laveen. Improvements at the Laveen School site included an eight

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classroom addition in 1965 (six since demolished), additional classrooms in 1969 (building "C") and 1976 (portable classrooms "J" and "I"), a locker room in 1971 (building "H"), and a new cafeteria in 1979. After the construction of the new cafeteria, the Laveen School Auditorium no longer served daily meals to students, although it continued in use as a class room for shop and home economics. In 1982 voters authorized a bond issue which resulted in the construction of classroom "D" and a bus barn (building "P"). In 1984, voters approved a \$2,000,000 bond issue for extensive renovations to Laveen School. This included the demolition of the old Laveen School and the construction of a new main building (building "E") and three classrooms (buildings "K", "L", and "M"). The 1984 round of construction left only one building standing from Laveen School's historic period, the Laveen School Auditorium. One additional classroom (building "N") was constructed in 1988.

## HISTORIC CONTEXTS

### Rural School Centralization in Arizona, 1920-1940

The construction of the Laveen School Auditorium in 1940 is associated with the historic context of rural school centralization which occurred in Arizona from 1920 to 1940. This historic context was examined in the National Register nomination for the Mohawk Valley School in Roll, Arizona. The Laveen School Auditorium is another significant example of this broad pattern in rural Arizona education. Education in Arizona's urban areas, specifically in Phoenix, was examined in the multiple property documentation form "Educational Buildings in Phoenix, Arizona from Early Settlement to 1942" under the context of "Education in Phoenix, 1871 to 1942."

However, the patterns for Arizona's rural and urban schools are quite different. Centralization of rural schools, such as that which occurred in Laveen, was not an important part of the urban school complex as evidenced by the Phoenix experience. However, for rural Arizona communities, the context of rural school centralization changed the pattern of education in an important way by fostering the sense of community. The construction of the Laveen School Auditorium is a significant example of this pattern.

Education developed slowly in early Arizona, as the pioneers were more concerned with making a living than with looking to the future. By 1870, there were 1,923 school-age children in the territory but still no public schools. Governor Anson P.K. Safford, known as the "Father of Arizona Schools," remedied this situation during his administration from 1869 to 1877. In 1871, the Territorial Legislature passed the first tax bill to benefit schools, and expansion quickly followed.

Prior to statehood, the early schools of Arizona were widely scattered because of the vast geographical expanse of the territory and the difficulty of transportation. Students were few, and usually packed tightly in the tiny one or two teacher schools which dotted many small rural communities. Most of these schools were in private homes or on private lands. With statehood in 1912, the State Legislature mandated separate public school facilities, but progress was slow. After World War One, and the publication of a 1918 report titled Educational Conditions in Arizona, educators moved to improve the state's rural school system through consolidation. Between 1920 and 1940, widely scattered small rural schools were consolidated into larger schools at the centers of rural population.

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The construction of the Laveen School is a particularly good example of this context. As originally planned in 1919, the Trustees advocated constructing a central school and two satellite schools in outlying areas of the district. As actually constructed in 1925, the two outlying schools were eliminated and operations centralized at the Laveen School. Increased population, better transportation, and concentrated development all contributed to the centralization of rural Arizona schools.

The construction of the Laveen School Auditorium in 1940 is also a significant representation of this context. Rather than expand services to students at a new location, the Trustees of the district chose to concentrate their efforts at improving the centralized school site. In this way the Trustees could take advantage of economies of scale available by utilizing the existing site. This organizational emphasis on the efficient use of space was justified on the basis of economics. Although the construction of the Laveen School Auditorium is a local example of the centralization of rural schools, this is a pattern that was statewide in scope until 1940. Centralization of rural schools was also emphasized on a national level through the thirties, as evidenced by the 1935 report by the US Commissioner of Education which stressed the reorganization of school units.

Works Progress Administration Construction in Arizona,  
1935-1943

The Laveen School Auditorium is significantly associated with a second historic context, the construction of Works Progress Administration (WPA) buildings in Arizona from 1935 to 1943. Authorized by Congress and created by President Franklin E. Roosevelt in 1935, the Works

Progress Administration (its name was changed to the Works Projects Administration in 1939), was the most important New Deal work-relief agency. Headed by Harry Hopkins until 1939, the WPA developed relief programs to preserve an individual's skills and self-respect by providing useful work during a period of massive unemployment. From 1935 to 1943 the WPA provided approximately eight million jobs at a cost of more than \$11 billion. It funded the construction of thousands of public buildings and facilities.

New Deal programs such as the WPA had an important impact on states in the West, including Arizona. Up to the depression decade of the 1930s, the economy of Arizona was based on the extraction of resources. The profits made from those industries most often made their way into the hands of eastern investors. The New Deal changed the economic equation, and for the first time money flowed back to Arizona and began to replenish the local economy. That change was most evident in the construction of public buildings, including the Laveen School Auditorium.

The depression hit the rural areas of Arizona hard. Mines were closed and farmers received low prices for their products, when they could find buyers at all. The rural areas of the state needed a massive influx of money and jobs. The WPA, starting in 1935 and continuing until 1943, was a significant source of economic progress for Arizona during this period. The WPA constructed many public projects across the state, providing jobs and an influx of dollars into the local economy.

Many of the public buildings constructed by the WPA were associated with schools. The multiple property documentation form for educational buildings in Phoenix

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identified Federal public works construction as an important contributing element to the development of education in Arizona's largest urban area during the late thirties and early forties. The Federal influence was also important in rural areas, perhaps even more so than in urban areas. Rural school districts such as Laveen lacked the resources that urban areas might draw on. For Laveen, the WPA construction and labor funds provided the only source of assistance available.

Beyond the economic and scholastic benefits, WPA construction projects emphasized community betterment. Projects focused on educational, recreational, and government buildings which could be used to uplift the social and educational status of rural Arizona residents. In addition to its building programs, the WPA stressed educational and vocational skills, thus giving residents a means to combat unemployment through personal growth.

The construction of the Laveen School Auditorium is evidence of these two aspects of WPA construction programs in Arizona. Its construction provided jobs for local residents and brought money into the community. The choice of a school auditorium as the project is representative of the WPA emphasis on community buildings, ones that would provide an educational and social benefit to the community. The Laveen School Auditorium served the daily needs of the students, but it also addressed a need in the community for a central public building given the absence of any organized form of government in the un-incorporated rural area.

Rural areas in Arizona lacked a central focus of community activities. Town halls, county courthouses, and similar public buildings were concentrated in larger

urban centers. Rural residents began to combat this situation with the construction of centralized school facilities. The Federal government, recognizing the need for community development in rural areas, placed an emphasis on the construction of community buildings in rural areas as a means to bring residents together in the face of the economic crisis caused by the depression. The construction of the Laveen school is a significant example of this second aspect of Federal public works construction. Capitalizing on the trend toward centralization of rural schools in Arizona, the Federal government constructed a dual-purpose building: a school auditorium that also functioned as a community center for an isolated rural area.

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### **VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The National Register boundary for the Laveen School Auditorium is a rectangle measuring 150 feet east/west by 200 feet north/south centering on the building. The Laveen School Auditorium is located within this rectangle.

### **BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The area encompassed by the boundary consists of the building and the historic period landscaping (trees, grass, and walkways) which is located adjacent to the building. This area surrounding the building is not considered a "buffer zone" but is an integral part of the setting of the Laveen School Auditorium. Although the landscaping is important to the setting of the building, only the building itself is considered a counting resource per National Register specifications.



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Photographer: Robert G. Graham  
Date: June 1995  
Location of Original Negatives: Ryden Architects  
645 N. Fourth Avenue, Suite A  
Phoenix, Arizona 85003

<u>Photo #</u>	<u>View to</u>
1	West
2	West showing landscape
3	Southeast
4	Northwest
5	South
6	WPA imprint in sidewalk
7	Historic photo - interior stage
8	Historic photo - exterior