

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received NOV 28 1986

date entered DEC 29 1986

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Mohawk Valley School

and/or common Mohawk Valley School

2. Location

street & number 5151 South Avenue 39 East N/A not for publication

city, town Roll N/A vicinity of

state Arizona code 04 county Yuma code 027

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name The Governing Board, Mohawk Valley School District (#17)

street & number P.O. Box 68

city, town Roll N/A vicinity of state Arizona 85347

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Yuma County Courthouse

street & number 168 Second Avenue

city, town Yuma state Arizona 85347

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Arizona State Historic Properties Inventory has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date February 1986 federal state county local

depository for survey records State Historic Preservation Office, 800 W. Washington, Suite 415

city, town Phoenix state AZ 85007

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

SUMMARY

Mohawk Valley School in Roll, Arizona, is a one-story, masonry, Mission Revival style elementary school designed by the prominent architectural firm of Lescher and Mahoney. It was built during the summer of 1930 at the southeast corner of Fifth Street and 39th Avenue in Roll, an intersection which was redrawn in order to accommodate the building. Mohawk Valley School serves the small communities of Roll and Tacna in addition to the widely dispersed farm families of the Mohawk Valley. The Mohawk Valley is located east of Yuma along the Gila River in the southwest corner of Arizona.

DESCRIPTION

Mohawk Valley School is impressively sited at the end of an arrow-straight, mile-long view corridor, an ideal setting for the structure's symmetry and Mission Revival style to be appreciated fully. When the school is approached from the town of Roll to the west, the main facade, with its arcades and gabled wings flanking the parapeted main entrance, directly faces the onlooker for a distance of one mile. When the school is approached from the town of Tacna to the east, the wide curve of rerouted Fifth Street swings around the north side of the schoolgrounds: twelve acres of lawn which serve as the Valley's only public playground and parkland. The grounds are bordered by towering eucalyptus and fully mature oleander which create a desert oasis.

E-shaped in plan, the axis of the main block (the spine of the "E") is 150 feet long and runs north/south. The front elevation faces west and contains the main entrance which is distinguished by an attached arcade (offset from the main wall) ninety feet long by eight feet wide. The arcade is pierced by ten arched, unglazed openings (eight along the north/south axis and one at either end) and, in the center, a larger arched entryway capped by a small parapeted front gable. Comprising the upper and lower arms of the "E" are front gabled blocks containing classrooms. The northern block is 30' x 96'; the southern block is 30' x 56'. Although Lescher and Mahoney's plans specified a strictly symmetrical structure, the end classroom on the south wing (classroom number eight) was omitted during construction in order to save \$9,000 for books and furnishings.

The large central block (the middle arm of the "E") contains the auditorium/gymnasium, a gabled structure whose eastern facade is forty feet wide. A centered pair of doors provides access to the back of the stage. The north and south walls of the auditorium also display a set of double doors which are detailed with wrought-iron hinge straps. These walls are decorated by tall, narrow buttresses of brick (four to a side) but are obscured in their overall proportions by the addition of a girls locker room abutting the north and a boys locker room and a greenhouse abutting the south. Lescher and Mahoney's plans called for a balcony running along the east facade of the auditorium; however, this structure was never built, possibly have been omitted to save money.

(See continuation sheet)

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The roof plan of Mohawk Valley School consists of four large gables and a shed roof over the arcade. The large side gable of the main block running north/south intersects the front gables of the north and south classroom wings and the large gable of the auditorium all of which extend from the east side of the main block. The ridge of the auditorium gable is just visible over the main facade due to its height. The auditorium was designed to function not only as an assembly hall but as a basketball court. A shed roof with exposed rafter ends covers the arcade. Within the arcade, the ceiling is finished with shiplap boards painted a sandy beige -- the color all the brickwork is painted. Cutting through the midpoint of the arcade and centered along the main facade is a small, subsidiary front gable marking the front entrance. This contains an arched opening over which is a small Mission Revival style parapet featuring decorative brickwork and displaying the words "MOHAWK VALLEY SCHOOL." The roof is shingled with red, diamond-shaped, composition shingles.

Fenestration dominates the facade. Windows, set in groups of five, feature metal framed awning sash with 9" x 18" panes, each window framed by wooden mullions. A bank of windows illuminates each of the seven classrooms. A large area of many exterior walls is glazed, although the area beneath the arcade is deeply shadowed and the windows are not readily visible. In addition, there are two windows flanking the front door. These windows, like those in the classrooms, each contain fifteen lights and originally illuminated the small library (to the immediate left of the front door) and the office (to the right of the door). There is no fenestration on the east elevation -- rooms whose interior walls are devoted to blackboards (in the north and south wings) and to the stage (in the auditorium).

The front door is double-wide and bears two diamond-shaped windows and a cyma-curved door handle. Above the doorway is a center-divided arched window, 36" high. Hanging from the ceiling of the arcade, directly in front of the front door, is a decorative lamp of wrought metal in an Arts and Crafts design.

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Interior

The interior proportions of Mohawk Valley School are spacious. The hallways and classrooms have twelve-foot high ceilings. In the eight-foot wide hallways the interior arches recall the rhythms of the arcade. The fine proportions of the hallways are somewhat altered by recently installed wood paneling, presumably placed there to protect the plastered walls. The classrooms, which measure 25' x 30', retain their original woodwork and detailing. The classrooms contain amenities such as closets with vertical-sliding, solid wood doors.

Mohawk Valley School contains seven classrooms, two restrooms, an office, a kitchen, a library, and an auditorium. Lescher and Mahoney's plans originally had called for a symmetrical floor plan with eight classrooms, but one was deleted due to economic considerations. The classrooms were numbered one through seven, beginning with the classroom at the east end of the north wing. The girls restroom was tucked into the main block in the inner angle formed by the courtyard between the north wing and the north wall of the auditorium; the boys restroom occupied the corresponding position to the south. Both restrooms have tile detailing.

Integrity

Over the decades, the interior space of Mohawk Valley School has proven flexible. After WWII, the interior wall between classrooms number five and six was removed, and a large library was installed in that space. During the 1960's, the wall between classrooms three and four was removed and replaced with an accordian-folding wall in order to accommodate the unusually large class of '69. The nurse's office now occupies the original library to the left of the front door, and administrative offices now occupy the entire southern half of the main block. The displaced library is now accommodated in one of the school's separate (unattached) annexes, added in 1955 and 1965. The 1955 annex is situated just to the south of the original Mohawk Valley School. It is

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constructed of unpainted red brick and displays an arcade on its north facade. It is aesthetically sympathetic and in no way detracts from the original school building. The 1965 annex, located to the south of the 1955 annex, is a dun-colored, cinderblock structure. In 1964, girls and boys showers were constructed in the courtyard adjoining the central block. In the early 1970s, a greenhouse/lab was erected adjoining the south wall of the central block.

The 1930 Mohawk Valley School retains its integrity from the historic period. The changes which have occurred over time do not compromise the historic appearance of the building. The interior modifications are relatively minor and illustrate the changing needs of this rural school through the years. The showers and greenhouse/lab additions are located to the rear of the building and are at a scale compatible with the rest of the structure. These two additions are not apparent from the front facade of the building and do not detract from the integrity of the Mohawk Valley School.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1930 **Builder/Architect** Lescher and Mahoney, Architects

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

SUMMARY

Mohawk Valley School's significance is two-fold. It is a representative example, very well preserved, of a rural school building in the Mission Revival style designed by the prominent architectural firm of Lescher and Mahoney. It reflects the status of community education to the residents of a remote desert valley in the decades following Arizona's statehood. It is associated with the establishment of regional public education and is also associated with a statewide architectural firm.

CONTEXT

Early Development of the Mohawk Valley

The Mohawk Valley is located along the Gila River in southwestern Arizona between the towns of Gila Bend and Yuma. The Gila River served as an early travel route for Americans moving west. In 1869 the Butterfield Stage established Mohawk station in the valley, and in the 1880's the present city of Mohawk was founded. By the end of the decade, many scattered homesteads dotted the valley.

After the Reclamation Act was passed by Congress in 1902, the U.S. Reclamation service began construction on Laguna Dam near Yuma. Completed in 1907, the dam ushered in a new era of prosperity for local farmers who could now depend on regular delivery of water. Although not served by the Yuma Project, population in the Mohawk Valley increased as farmers moved into southwestern Arizona, lured by the success provided by the Yuma Project.

Agriculture in the Mohawk Valley was primarily dependent on water pumped from underground aquifers. Advances in pump technology and ample energy supplies enabled farmers in the valley to develop the area quickly by the end of World War I. The war had created a great demand for agricultural products. The town of Wellton, named for an ambitious irrigation project dependent on pumping groundwater, sprang up in the western end of the valley. The completion of Gillespie Dam on the Gila River in 1920 removed the threat of floods in the valley. In 1926 John H. Roll patented a homestead in the Mohawk Valley and established himself as postmaster of the town of Roll.

(See continuation sheet)

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Less than one acre

Quadrangle name Roll, Arizona

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	2	2	2	0	8	2	0	3	6	2	7	4	9	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C

Zone			Easting				Northing							

D

Zone			Easting				Northing							

E

Zone			Easting				Northing							

F

Zone			Easting				Northing							

G

Zone			Easting				Northing							

H

Zone			Easting				Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification

See continuation sheet.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county N/A code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Rosalie F. Stafford Edited by: Roger Brevoort, Architectural Historian, AZ SHPO
Douglas Kupel, Historian, AZ SHPO

organization N/A date July 20, 1986

street & number 464 Glen Lily Road telephone (502) 782-8529

city or town Bowling Green state Kentucky 42101

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Donna J. Schover

title State Historic Preservation Officer date November 24, 1986

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Linda McCllland date 12/29/86
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Education in Early Arizona

Education developed slowly in early Arizona. The pioneers were more concerned with scratching a living out of the mines and fields than with establishing schools. The 1864 Territorial Legislature passed a bill providing for school funds if communities would put up a matching amount, but few towns could come up with the money. In 1867, the first school district was established in Tucson. However, it ran for only six months until the funds were exhausted. By 1870, there were 1,923 school-age children in the state but still no public schools.

The administration of Governor Anson P. K. Safford (1869-1877) moved to correct the situation. In 1871, the Legislature passed the first tax bill to benefit schools. Expansion quickly followed and schools were established at Tucson, Prescott, Yuma, and Ehrenburg. By 1876, 1,450 children out of the 2,955 children living in the state could read and write. Because of his efforts, Governor Safford is known as the "Father of Arizona Schools."

The state moved to expand the program, and by 1894 there were 288 teachers and 11,000 students in Arizona. In 1891, the University of Arizona opened its doors to 149 students. However, there was still a lack of secondary education. Many of the students admitted to the University were there under a "preparatory" program to finish their high school education. Arizona's quest for statehood provided an impetus to upgrade the school system as the residents tried to shed the image of an uncivilized frontier territory. After statehood was attained in 1912, the first state governor, George W. P. Hunt, advocated continued educational expansion in his inaugural address.

Prior to statehood, the early schools were widely scattered because of the vast regions of Arizona. Students were few, packed into tiny one or two teacher schools in the hundreds of small rural communities. Many of these schools were in private homes, business, and mills. The 1912 state constitution mandated separate educational facilities and the consequent growth of the state introduced major changes to the educational structure.

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Educational support slowed during World War I. After the armistice was signed, educators turned their attention to improving conditions. When large numbers of young men were drafted to fight in Europe, many had very little education and required extensive remedial training. To combat this, both Federal and state governments worked to reform the school system. A 1918 report, Educational Conditions in Arizona, recommended consolidation as one of the many ways to improve the system. In the 1920s, population increase and improved bus transportation strengthened the trend toward centralization. Widely scattered small rural schools were consolidated into larger schools at centers of rural population in the years between 1920 and 1930. The construction of the Mohawk Valley School in 1930 is an example of this concious effort to reorganize the school system in the years after World War I.

Educational Significance

The Mohawk Valley School in Roll is importantly associated with the development of education in rural Arizona during the first few decades of the twentieth century. The school meets National Register criterion "A" for its association with this broad theme in Arizona history. The Mohawk Valley School is not significant simply because it provided education to children in a remote desert area of Arizona, although it certainly did so, but is primarily significant because its construction represents the important shift from scattered rural schools to central community schools which took place in the late 1920s and early 1930s.

This important historic association with the expansion of rural educational facilities in southwestern Arizona makes the Mohawk Valley School a particularly good representative of this theme. Although the 1920s were generally poor years for agriculture in the United States, exacerbated by low prices and depression following World War I, the rapid development of water resources in Arizona during this period tempered the blow. New settlers, encouraged by the example set in the Salt River Valley and on the Yuma Mesa, moved into the Mohawk Valley. This increased population, when combined with better transportation and rural consolidation, meant that the older tradition of widely scattered rural schools was coming to an

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end. This trend was not limited to the Mohawk Valley, but was generally representative of changes in Arizona education during the late 1920s.

The older schools were gradually replaced with more modern facilities located in the larger centers of rural population. The Mohawk Valley School is an example of this important shift in Arizona education. Clean, modern in layout, and designed by a prominent architectural firm with an eye toward beauty as well as function, the 1930 Mohawk Valley School represents a clear break with the more traditional school facilities. That this change was a significant new departure is revealed by the success of the new method. The Mohawk Valley School is still used today, despite a few minor changes in its fifty-six year history, providing quality education to the citizens of this rural agricultural area in Arizona.

Construction of the Mohawk Valley School

The building designed by Lescher and Mahoney replaced two small frame buildings, the Old Wade School (located at Fourth Street and Avenue 40 East) and the Worthington School (located at Fifth Street and Avenue 37 East), which in turn had replaced various small school houses scattered throughout the Mohawk Valley. No records exist concerning schools in the Mohawk Valley prior to the Old Wade School and the Worthington School. Only one photograph of the Worthington School is known to exist. It is likely that the earliest Mohawk Valley schools were located in homes and businesses.

Although some parents continued to favor the idea of several small schools serving the widely dispersed farm families of the Mohawk Valley, the Ming School District Board of Trustees (formed in 1928 and consisting of J.W. Worthington, J.H. Roll, and R.E. Linden) supported the idea of a single centralized school serving the entire valley. To this cause, on September 1, 1928, James H. Hoshaw deeded ten acres located at the southeast corner of Fifth Street and 39th Avenue East to the Ming School District. On July 11, 1930, Joseph X. Christensen donated two acres located at the northeast corner of the same intersection. This land formed the basis for a centralized school in the Mohawk Valley.

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Mr. Christensen's gift of deed was made with the stipulation that the new school building, already designed by Lescher and Mahoney, be sited precisely on the section line (Fifth Street) with the main facade directly facing the town of Roll, one mile westward. The county agreed to abandon approximately one-quarter mile of Fifth Street just east of 39th Avenue East and cut in a permanent detour to the north of the section line on land donated by Mr. Christensen for a right-of-way. Thus, with the active participation of various public and private parties (Mr. Christensen, Mr. Hoshaw, Ming School District, the county, Lescher and Mahoney), Mohawk Valley School was constructed in the summer of 1930.

The Architectural Firm of Lescher and Mahoney

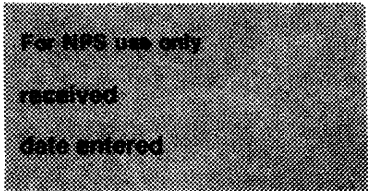
The firm of Lescher and Mahoney, initially Lescher and Kibbey, was established in Phoenix in 1912 and grew rapidly into statewide prominence. The vast majority of their early work centered on public buildings, including schools, courthouses, and other civic buildings. After 1930, their major projects shifted to commercial commissions, primarily in Phoenix. Although not specifically documented, the commercial projects very likely resulted from the firm's growing reputation for civic designs throughout the state.

The firm worked in numerous styles, primarily conforming to trends of the time. Major buildings in the early years were predominantly Neo Classic in style. This period is represented by work such as the Mohave County Courthouse (1912) in Kingman, the Graham County Courthouse (1916) in Safford, and the Florence High School (1916).

By the mid-twenties the firm's work shifted toward Spanish Colonial Revival and Mission Revival forms, often retaining the formality and symmetry associated with the preceding Neo Classic and Renaissance Revival forms. It was also in this period that they became more active in commercial buildings. Their departure from the Neo Classic designs is indicated by the Spanish Colonial Revival Orpheum Theatre (1928). This

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was a major commission which can be viewed as their first entry into an increasingly competitive market for office buildings in Phoenix. Their stylistic shift continued with the Moderne style Title and Trust Building (1931) and was essentially complete with the International style Hanny's Building (1947).

Despite this shift to Phoenix commercial commissions, Lescher and Mahoney continued to be extremely active with civic designs around the state. Between 1912 and 1941, the firm completed eighty elementary school buildings in small communities throughout Arizona, broken down as follows:

1912-1920	34 Schools
1920-1930	26 Schools
1930	4 Schools (including Mohawk Valley, Coolidge, Lowell, and Warren)
1931-1941	16 Schools

During the 1930s, their work on elementary schools declined, but they designed numerous high schools. The Mohawk Valley School was built towards the end of the firm's major period of designing elementary schools. In total, the firm designed 132 major school buildings in Arizona, primarily in the 1920-1940 period:

80 Elementary Schools
31 High Schools
16 College Buildings
5 Stadiums

It is clear that Lescher and Mahoney was the primary architectural firm for public school buildings in Arizona. The majority of the public school buildings in Arizona during the period from 1920 to 1940 were designed by the firm. Stylistically, these elementary schools designed by Lescher and Mahoney are modest buildings, combining Neo-Classic, Mission, and

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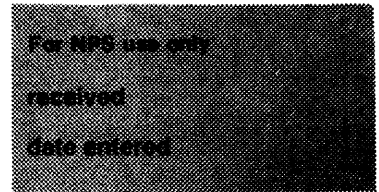
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Spanish Colonial motifs. Many of the schools are central hall plan with a curved parapet at the entry and commonly had roofs sheathed in red clay tile. The Mohawk Valley School exhibits this same design and is clearly representative of Lescher and Mahoney's rural school buildings.

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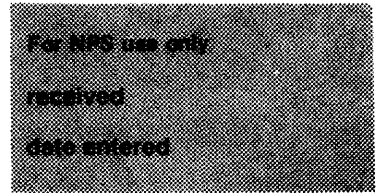
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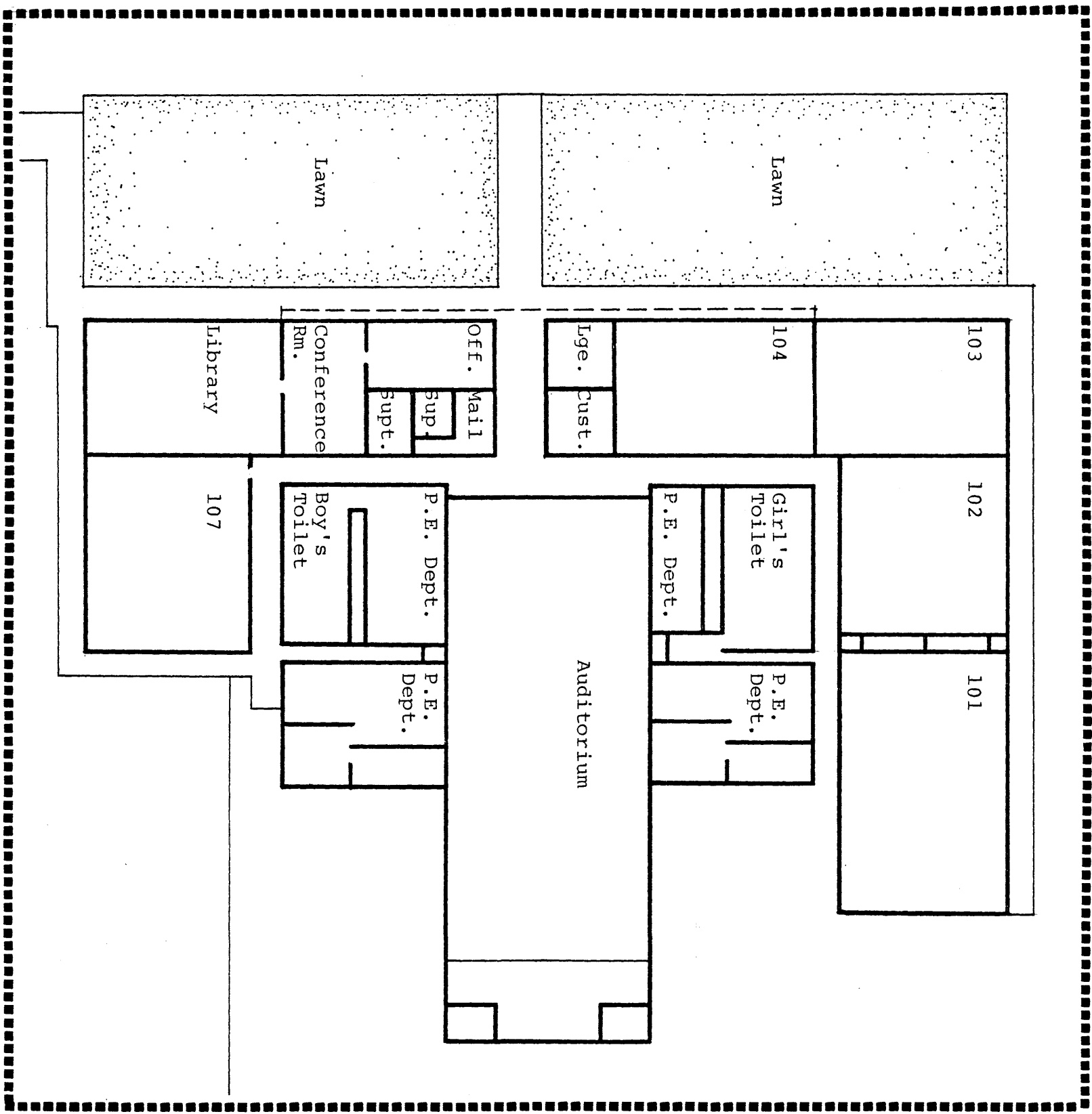
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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION AND JUSTIFICATION

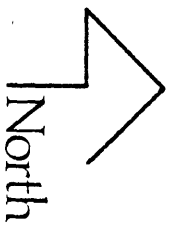
The National Register boundary for the Mohawk Valley School is a 170 foot by 170 foot square centering on the building. The 150 foot by 120 foot building is located within this square. The additional area encompassed by the boundary consists of the historic period landscaping (lawn, plants, trees, and walkways) which is located in front of the west (main) facade of the building. This additional area is not considered a "buffer zone" but is an integral part of the setting of the Mohawk Valley School. Although the landscaping is important to the setting of the building, only the building itself is considered a counting resource per the specifications of National Register Bulletin 14 (as amended).

5th street

39th avenue



Mohawk Valley School
Roll, Arizona
Yuma County



Boundary of Nominated Property

Scale: 1"=20'-0" 0 1 20