

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received **OCT 12 1983**
date entered

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

1. Name

historic Nara Visa School

and/or common Nara Visa Community Center

2. Location

street & number US Highway 54, ^{1/2 mile east of intersection with} highway 18 not for publication

city, town Nara Visa N/A vicinity of

state New Mexico code 35 county Quay code 037

3. Classification

| Category | Ownership | Status | Present Use |
|---|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> district | <input type="checkbox"/> public | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s) | <input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> educational |
| <input type="checkbox"/> site | Public Acquisition | Accessible | <input type="checkbox"/> entertainment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> object | N/A in process | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted | <input type="checkbox"/> government |
| | N/A being considered | <input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted | <input type="checkbox"/> industrial |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> no | <input type="checkbox"/> military |
| | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Community Center |

4. Owner of Property

name Nara Visa Community Center, Inc. Mrs. Jack Nelson, Chairman

street & number Drawer 22

city, town Nara Visa N/A vicinity of state New Mexico 88430

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Quay County Board of Education

street & number Tucumcari Public Schools Administration Office, 902 S. 11th Street

city, town Tucumcari state New Mexico 88401

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Site #930

title State Register of Cultural Properties has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date August 25, 1983 federal state county local

depository for survey records Historic Preservation Division, 228 East Palace

city, town Santa Fe state New Mexico

7. Description

Condition excellent good fair deteriorated ruins unexposed**Check one** unaltered altered**Check one** original site moved

date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Nara Visa School is a one story pitched roof structure with projecting flat roof pavillions. The corrugated red metal roof, which replaces the original barrel tile red metal roof, is supported by heavy wood corbel brackets. The center two story section of the school presents a group of 5 windows set under a single curved double header brick arch. Brick pilasters extend to the ground, separating cast concrete diamond ornaments placed between the first and second story windows. The running bond brick walls are capped by cement coping which steps to a decorative curve at the center of each pavillion, surmounting a cast concrete volute. Wooden windows, framed by header brick lintels and cement lug sills, are double hung 6/1 except for the south wing where the two pairs of triple wood windows were replaced in 1958 by two pairs of metal casement and glass brick windows. This replacement and the roof replacement are the only alterations in the building, which retains its original floor plan and fixtures. The Nara Visa School complex includes the Nara Visa School and several associated properties and structures which contribute to the significance of the school. The associated properties are a 1936 WPA adobe gymnasium, showerhouse and storage building; the original generator building, the original pumphouse (which serves as a base for a windmill), the wooden base of the old windmill, and the original playground equipment. All are shown on the enclosed sketchmap.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education | <input type="checkbox"/> military | <input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799 | <input type="checkbox"/> art | <input type="checkbox"/> engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> music | <input type="checkbox"/> theater |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement | <input type="checkbox"/> philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900- | <input type="checkbox"/> communications | <input type="checkbox"/> industry | <input type="checkbox"/> politics/government | <input type="checkbox"/> other (specify) |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> invention | | |

Specific dates 1921

Builder/Architect Joseph Champ Berry

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Nara Visa School is significant in the areas of architecture and education as an outstanding example of a rural school in New Mexico during the time the eastern part of New Mexico was being settled. In his design for the school, noted Panhandle architect J. C. Berry displayed a grasp of the synthesis possible between regional expression and a modern point of view. He combined a 'sodbuster' profile of massive walls and gabled roof with the civic symbolism provided by the Mission Revival style. The unadorned surfaces and red "clay" tile roofing material reflect the Mission Style but the broad pitched roofs with their wide overhangs and exposed rafters have a kinship with the vernacular homes of the region and also with the Greene and Greene bungalows of California, while the very simplicity of the form is an aspect of the early modern movement in American architecture. The commitment of this small town to a substantial school, continuously operated for the community, also reflects the rural community's commitment to provide a progressive education for their children, in much the same way as the design of the school synthesizes vernacular and modern values.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet, item 9

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 4.53 acres

Quadrangle name Nara Visa

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

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| Zone | | | Easting | | | | Northing | | | | | | | |

Verbal boundary description and justification

See continuation sheet, item 10

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

state N/A code county code

state N/A code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Betsy Swanson and Kathleen Brooker, Architectural Historians

organization Historic Preservation Division date September 30, 1983

street & number 228 East Palace Avenue telephone (505) 827-8320

city or town Santa Fe state New Mexico

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 Thomas W. Mel

title State Historic Preservation Officer date 10-5-83

For NPS use only

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

Beth Crowder date 10/31/83
for Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date

Chief of Registration

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The Nara Visa School's plan is a symmetrical one, with bungalow-like portico entrances located at the northwest and southwest corners of the pitched roof central section of the building. A large auditorium with stage and balcony occupies the east wing of the school. Pressed tin ceilings are found in all rooms and halls. Heavy wood panel doors are provided with six-light transoms. Many of the original furnishings, books and equipment remain in place.

The original playground equipment (a merry-go-round, slide, swings, and see-saw) still stand as do the pumphouse (now electric), wooden windmill base, and adobe storage building.

Quay County Board of Education meeting minutes from February 16, 1921, note the acceptance of plans and specifications for the Nara Visa School Building as prepared by J. C. Berry and Company of Amarillo, Texas, "provided the building and steam heat all complete can be built for the sum not to exceed \$3500. (The presence of a sketch for a proposed 'School for Nara Visa' in the Trost and Trost Archives in El Paso indicate that the bid for the project was a competitive one). Fred Bone and Frank Little, of Amarillo's Bone Construction Company, received the contract for construction. The building was dedicated on September 22, 1921.

The gymnasium, constructed under the auspices of the Works Progress Administration, expanded the School's facilities with its provision of a basketball court and classrooms for home economics and vocational/agricultural training. The building, which measures 112' X 71', is a simple adobe structure with its original, paired 18 light wooden windows separated by pilasters which rise slightly above the parapet. The parapet conceals the vaulted roof of the gymnasium, while the two classrooms at the east have a flat roof. One vertical member divides the front of the building in the center, with double leaf entrance doors on either side.

Roland Bell, a Nara Visa native, was the construction foreman and was assisted by a number of local men, including Lester Statser, Clyde Loving, A. J. Shields, Bob Curlin, Bill Wright, Preacher Woolery, Marcus Lucero and Lester Gray. The adobes were made in the front yard of the school. Lester Statser recalls that the adobe bricks, which contained no straw, were so strong that they wouldn't shatter if dropped from a second story window. Mr. Statser built the windows and the home economics classroom cabinets. The men began work with the making of the adobe bricks in September 1936 and completed the building and its detached showerhouse by August of 1937 when they were transferred to Forrest. Several similar gymnasiums were built in nearby communities by this crew but only the Nara Visa structure remains in good condition.

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The community of Nara Visa was established in 1901 with the building of the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad through the northern part of Quay County from Nara Visa through Tucumcari to Santa Rosa in Guadalupe County. The county is a rolling prairie cut up by canyons similar in physical features to the western plains of Texas of which, geographically, it forms a part. The area's connection with Texas had always been a strong one and was further increased with the railroad's provision of a direct link to Amarillo. Indeed, the community of Nara Visa remains on Central (Texas) time today, while the rest of New Mexico is on Mountain time.

A dugout school and post office were established in 1902 and Nara Visa boomed with the railroad construction and later with the filing of land in the county. A more substantial stone schoolhouse was built in 1908 to handle the increasing population of homesteaders' children. However, the surrounding country could not support the new settlers and they soon left. The population of Quay decreased from 14,912 in 1910 to 10,444 in 1920.

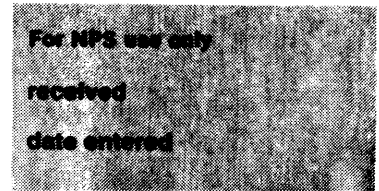
The use of the land returned to dry farming and stock raising, and those ranchers were determined to provide their children with educational opportunities after the railroad and homesteading boom had passed. Nara Visa, with a population of 651 in 1920, was the largest community in the county, aside from the county seat of Tucumcari which was the only incorporated town in Quay County. Nara Visa residents voted to provide a school for the children of Nara Visa and nearby ranching communities. The land for a new, larger school was donated by John Burns, a prominent rancher who had bought the Nara Visa townsite and platted it in 1901, building a homestead adjacent to it. On this homestead stands the Nara Visa School, the largest public school to serve the unincorporated communities of Quay County.

J. C. Berry of Amarillo was an ideal choice as architect, for he had designed many homes and schools for Texas and Oklahoma ranchers whose needs and values were similar to those of his Nara Visa clients. Sometimes called the "dean of Amarillo architecture," Berry was born on October 15, 1875 in Lufkin, Texas, but received most of his formal education in Ardmore, Oklahoma. Architectural training was achieved through correspondence course and experience, much of which he obtained in Amarillo, Texas, where he arrived in 1906 and established a business under the name of J. C. Berry and Company. As Amarillo experienced some its most prosperous years, Berry's practice grew and developed as well. By the time of his death on April 10, 1950, he had designed scores of schools, commercial buildings, and homes throughout the Texas Panhandle, New Mexico, and Oklahoma.

The School was a success, and by 1936 was the choice of WPA sponsored additional construction to expand its facilities. The tradition of community involvement was continued with the construction of an adobe gymnasium with local labor and materials. The gymnasium also provided classrooms for agricultural and home economics training which could enable the students to become better ranchers.

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When the School was finally closed in 1968, the number of students had dwindled to seven. Nara Visa residents, continuing a commitment to education begun in 1902, voted to acquire the building from the Board of Education and to maintain it as a local museum and community center.

The Nara Visa Community Center was incorporated to hold the property and groups such as the Masons and the Garden Club hold regular meetings at the old school. A model classroom displays the School's original furnishings and books, while another room is the site of a local history museum. The School's gym, where athletic teams from Nara Visa met with Logan, San Jon and other schools, now houses community dances, senior citizen events and club meetings. The auditorium serves for plays, funerals, pagents and weddings. Personal donations have been used to repair the roof and to pay for utilities and needed repairs for the school and gymnasium, both of which remain in good condition.

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Coan, Charles F. History of New Mexico, Chicago and New York: American Historical Society, Inc., 1925. Vols. 1 and 3.

"Historic Nara Visa School May Close". Amarillo Daily News, 17 December 1967, p. 28.

New Mexico State Business Directory. Gazetteer Publishing Co., Denver - 1923.

"Pioneer Business". The Sun, 11 December 1975, p. 15.

Quay County Board of Education - Minutes of Meeting, 16 February 1921.

"Ranches Grow Larger but Children Fewer." Review. 27 May 1977, p. 27.

"School Building Put to Use." Tucumcari News, 26 June 1970, p. 43.

Statser, Lester - Correspondence, 23 August 1983.

Texas Historical Commission. National Register nomination for Shelton-Houghton House, 22 April 1980.

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Continuation sheet Nara Visa School

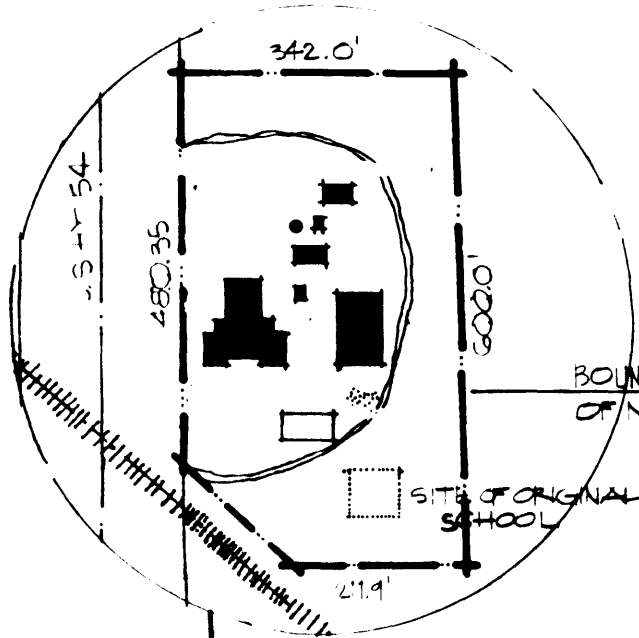
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The nominated property includes 4.53 acres as deeded to Nara Visa Community Center by the Board of Education, Clayton Municipal School District No. 1. The boundaries enclose the original school grounds and include the Nara Visa School and associated structures.

The legal description follows:

A tract of land lying in the $W\frac{1}{2}$, $SW\frac{1}{2}$ of Section 14, Township 16 North, Range 36 East, N.M.P.M., and more particularly described as follows: From a stone that marks the west $\frac{1}{4}$ corner of said Section 14, run S $0^{\circ} 31'$ East along common line Sections 14 and 15, 1341.7 feet to a point on the Southeasterly right of way line of U.S. 54; thence along said right of way line North $48^{\circ} 03'$ East 70.8 feet to the point of beginning, said point being the Northwest corner of said tract. Thence along said right of way line North $48^{\circ} 03'$ East 480.85 feet to the Northeast corner of said tract; thence South $42^{\circ} 01'$ East 342.0 feet to the Southeast corner of said tract; thence South $48^{\circ} 19'$ West 600.0 feet to the Southwest corner of said tract; thence North $41^{\circ} 49'$ East 211.9 feet; thence North $0^{\circ} 13'$ East 172.2 feet, to the point of beginning. Contains 4.53 acres.



NORTH
 ←
 DRAWINGS NOT TO SCALE

BOUNDARY
 OF NOMINATED COMPLEX

SITE OF ORIGINAL
 SCHOOL

WINDMILL BASE

PUMP HOUSE

SHOWER HOUSE

CLASSROOMS

GYMNASIUM

STORAGE
 (OLD GENERATOR
 BUILDING)

SCHOOL

PLAYGROUND

25'

116'

22'

S.H.V 54

PAT

SKETCH MAP
 NARA VISA SCHOOL & RELATED BUILDINGS

