

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

MAR 8 1994  
NATIONAL REGISTER

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 any item does not apply to the property being documented, 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 Americanization School

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number 1210 Division Street not for publication NA  
city or town Oceanside vicinity NA  
state California code CA county San Diego code 073  
zip code 92054

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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.)

Cheryl Fidell March, 1994  
Signature of certifying official Date

California Office of Historic Preservation  
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 Edson H. Beall 4/8/94

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): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of 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

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>1</u>	_____ buildings
_____	_____ sites
_____	_____ structures
_____	_____ objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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

N/A

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6. Function or Use

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Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Education \_\_\_\_\_ Sub: School \_\_\_\_\_

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Wk in progress Sub: Restoration \_\_\_\_\_

Social \_\_\_\_\_ Civic \_\_\_\_\_

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

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7. Description

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Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

\_\_\_\_\_ Moderne \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Other: Islamic \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete \_\_\_\_\_

roof Other: built-up \_\_\_\_\_

walls Stucco \_\_\_\_\_

other \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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

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**8. Statement of Significance**

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Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

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

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or 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)

Architecture  
Education  
Other-Immigration  
Social History

Period of Significance Architecture, 1931  
Education, Immigration-1931-43

Significant Dates 1931

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

NA

Cultural Affiliation NA

Architect/Builder Gill, Irving J.

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

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### 9. Major Bibliographical References

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(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

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Acreage of Property 0.3

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	11	465400	3672900	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.)

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11. Form Prepared By

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name/title Harry Kelsey, President

organization Interdisciplinary Research, Inc. date 23 July 1993

street & number 2104 North Craig Avenue phone 818-791-1237

city or town Altadena zip code 91001

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**Additional Documentation**

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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)

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**Property Owner**

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

name City of Oceanside

street & number 300 North Hill Street phone 619-966-4770

city or town Oceanside state CA zip code 92054

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(Rev. 8-86)

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NATIONAL  
REGISTERSection 7 Page 1Americanization School

name of property

San Diego, California

county and state

The Americanization School is a single-story structure of Moderne architecture, designed in 1930 and built in 1931. The three classrooms and office occupy an irregular corner site approximately a third of an acre in size. With its entrance located at the vertex of the triangular lot, the floor plan is tailored to the peculiar geometry of the place. From the main entrance at the base of the triangle the building facade proceeds to the north, room by room, in a series of graceful steps. Facing Center Street, the entrance to the neighborhood, the Moderne building with its mature palm trees provides open space and an atmosphere of freshness and light for the area. The roofs of the building are flat and the walls are stucco, mimicking the reinforced concrete that was typical of Gill's architectural designs. Though allowed to deteriorate in recent years, the building was never altered. The recent restoration was done with care, respecting the architectural integrity of the site. The original landscaping on Center Street has deteriorated to some extent but is in the process of being restored. The landscaping of the inner garden is completely gone, and that area is being re-landscaped under the supervision of a qualified landscape architect.

The focal point of the building is the front entrance, a pair of French doors facing the angle of the corner. Matching French doors on the opposite side of the arched entryway lead directly to the garden-playground, which is visible through the entrance. A recessed panel on either side of the front entrance is framed by engaged piers. A rectangular window in the south panel provides light to the small office inside.

Along the northwest side are three classrooms, receding from the corner in a series of graceful steps that break what might otherwise have been a somewhat monotonous facade. The original plan envisioned two classroom wings, extending along the sides of the triangle, with each room opening onto the interior garden and playground. For no very clear reason, only one wing--the Center Street side--was built. However, the design is done so cleverly that the building does not appear to be incomplete. In addition, with no intervening wing to block the view from Division Street on the south side of the property, it is possible to see the four pairs of French doors and clerestory windows that form the garden wall of each classroom.

The original landscaping, shown in a photograph of about 1936, included palm trees in the grass verge facing the streets, mock-orange bushes spaced along the walls of the building, and yew trees at each side of the entrance arch.

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The entrance porch, paved with red colored concrete, leads to a square entrance room, surmounted by an octagonal drum and topped by a dome. Doors on either side of this room lead to a storage closet and office on one side and the separate bathrooms and showers for boys and girls on the other.

Because the school district lacked the money for a more expensive building, the entire structure is built of wood-frame, covered in lath and plaster, simulating the reinforced concrete that typified Gill's usual construction methods. The classrooms are separated by partition walls, also of wood-frame covered in lath and plaster. The rooms are connected by interior wood-panel doors through these partition walls. The classrooms have standard maple flooring and wooden subflooring on joists over a crawl space.

Allowed to deteriorate during the 1940s, the building was abandoned as a school in 1951. Used for a time as a warehouse, it was finally allowed to become derelict. An appraisal made in 1971 described the building as "an old frame and stucco structure, which provides no functional utility, and is presently abandoned and boarded up." The appraiser recommended that the property be sold for redevelopment. In fact, the Americanization School was sold to a private developer in 1972 and hereafter slated for destruction.

When the owners requested permission to demolish the building, the city responded with an initial plan to move the structure. Finally, in 1990, the Americanization School was purchased by the City of Oceanside for use as a new community center.

By this time the leaky roof had allowed water into the building, ruining most of the maple floors and the lath-and-plaster walls. Vandals looted and destroyed many of the doors and interior fittings. However, the basic structure was sound, and the construction details were sufficiently well documented to allow the building to be restored very nearly to its original condition. The work of restoration is nearly complete. It was all done in a painstaking and professional manner by a coalition of neighborhood residents, civic organizations, local government officials and staff, working under the guidance of professional architects, designers, and builders, in close consultation with the State Office of Historic Preservation. This was a community restoration project as it ought to be done.



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The Americanization School is significant under Criterion C in the area of architecture as an example of Irving J. Gill's mature work in California. The building is a small jewel in Gill's Southern California legacy, so much of which has been destroyed through demolition and alteration. The Americanization School is basically unaltered from its date of construction and epitomizes Gill's interest in simplified geometric forms. The design is also reflective of the new trends in elementary school architecture in the 1920s which used light, color, and natural surroundings to enhance the intellectual and social development of the students. The Americanization School is also significant under Criterion A in the area of education, immigration and social history in Oceanside for the association with the Americanization movement, which encouraged all immigrant groups to abandon their native languages, learn English, and adopt the social practices of their new communities. The Americanization School in Oceanside was created to meet the needs of the large population of non-English speaking grade school students, children of the Mexican laborers living or wintering in Oceanside.

The wall of French doors in each classroom of the Americanization School provides a clear expression of Irving Gill's idea that light and natural landscaping were integral parts of good architectural design. Gill's plan for the Americanization School is also closely related to the emerging themes of other architects of his time. The Peachtree School (1929) designed by Louis De Soissons for the planned community of Welwyn Garden City (England) featured classrooms with French doors opening onto an outdoor play area. A somewhat similar plan was adopted by Johannes Duiker for the Openluchtschool Cliostraat (1930) in Amsterdam (Netherlands). Utilizing Gill's favorite building material, reinforced concrete, Duiker constructed a multi-story building for the crowded urban site. Classrooms had large expanses of steel-framed glass on one side, facing multiple French doors that opened onto a ground-floor play area or an upper-level terrace where children could play and lessons could be given. Designed in a vee shape, Duiker's Open Air

1. Maurice De Soissons, Welwyn Garden City: A Town Designed for Healthy Living (Cambridge, England: Publications for Companies, 1988, 42, 72.

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School (Openluchtschool) was positioned diagonally across the lot, with the classroom doors facing south.<sup>1</sup>

The extent to which Gill's work is related to that of Duiker and De Soissons is still unclear,<sup>2</sup> but it seems obvious that Gill will have to be given more credit than he has received in the past for his early work in modernist school design. Thomas Hines, for example, credits the Hessian Hills School (1931) of Howe and Lescaze at Croton-on-Hudson, New York, as "the most noted early example of modernist school design in America." Even so, Hines insisted that Richard Neutra deserved credit for what he called a more thorough development of "the indoor-outdoor relationship." Neutra's ideas for a Ring Plan School appeared in his 1932 show at the Museum of Modern Art, a show that toured a number of American cities, including Los Angeles. Interested educators retained Neutra to design an addition for the Corona Avenue School in Bell, a structure that was completed in 1934. The unique element in Neutra's design seems to have been his use of "a sliding glass wall which, when opened, truly brought the outside in."<sup>3</sup>

No doubt important in their own right, Neutra's plans for the Corona Avenue School may well owe something to Gill's much earlier Americanization School and to the Nevada Avenue School which Gill also designed in 1931. Classrooms in both buildings featured a long wall of French doors opening onto a landscaped play area. With school finances curtailed by the financial problems of the Great Depression, Gill's Americanization School and Nevada Street School had to be constructed in stages, as funds became available. And while it is not readily apparent to the casual viewer, the second wing of the Americanization School was never built. Even so, Gill's 1931 Oceanside

1. W. A. L. Buren et al., Het Nieuwe Bouwen: Amsterdam, 1920-1940 (Amsterdam: Delft University Press & Stedelijk Museum, 1983), 32-33, 38.
2. The question will doubtless be considered in Bruce Kammerling's forthcoming biography of Gill, which the San Diego Historical Society plans to publish as soon as funds are available.
3. Thomas Hines, Richard Neutra and the Search for Modern Architecture: A Biography and History (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 163-64.

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school buildings are surely among the very earliest in America to use multiple classroom doors that "truly brought the outside in." The same spirit was reflected in Gill's use of bright colors for the classrooms and attractive landscaping to create a pleasant and lively learning environment.<sup>1</sup>

The Americanization School is one of the few original Irving Gill buildings to retain its architectural integrity. Gill designed numerous other buildings for Oceanside, including a Civic Center, a complex of municipal buildings for which Gill drew the plans in 1929, revising them in 1934. Portions of his plan were completed in 1930 (fire and police stations), and others (city hall and library) were constructed in 1934. His simple, durable designs appealed to commercial owners as well, and local builders began to follow Gill's uncluttered design principles. Gill's other commissions in Oceanside included work on a newspaper office located close to the civic center and complementing the designs he had established for this complex of municipal buildings.<sup>2</sup> Some specialists maintain that "all of the buildings have been badly remodeled."<sup>3</sup> In a certain sense this is true, but it is also true to say that Gill's civic center buildings have been mellowed by time and Nature, just as he hoped they would be.<sup>4</sup> And, whether consciously or

1. The original sketches for the Americanization School, signed by Gill and dated 3 December 1930, can be seen in the Architecture Collection, University of California Santa Barbara. Plans for the initial kindergarten room and later classrooms in the Nevada Street School are in the San Diego Historical Society, MSS 1009-10(A)(B)(C).
2. Irving J. Gill: Oceanside Buildings, (Oceanside: Oceanside Historical Society, 1992), unpaginated pamphlet.
3. David Gebhard and Robert Winter, A Guide to Architecture in Southern California (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1965), p. 127.
4. See his statement in The Craftsman (May 1916), quoted in Esther McCoy, Five California Architects (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1975), p. 61.

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not, architects and builders in Oceanside since Gill's time have followed his insistence on emphasizing "the straight line, the arch, the cube and the circle--the mightiest of lines."<sup>1</sup>

The construction of the Americanization School in Oceanside is a result of the city's unique response to an unusual array of economic and social problems. Prior to the First World War large-scale agriculture in California relied to a great extent on immigrant groups from Asia for cheap and easily exploitable labor. This changed with the advent of war, as thousands of Mexican field workers came to the state for seasonal jobs on farms and ranches. Largely unemployed during the winter months, these workers migrated to nearby cities to wait for the next year's round of work. During the twenties fluctuating waves of migrant Mexican families became an annual feature in most California communities. Rural farm interests were generally pleased with the opportunity to hire good workers at a low rate of pay, but urban taxpayers began to resent the necessity to provide schools for Mexican children whose families moved to the cities during the winter months.<sup>2</sup>

The same war that increased the world-wide demand for agricultural products and thereby attracted migrant workers from Mexico also created a renewed insistence in the United States that all immigrant groups abandon their native languages, learn English, and otherwise adopt the social practices of their new communities.<sup>3</sup> Among some portions of the population the anti-foreign sentiment reached semi-hysterical proportions. Many American extremists began to view organized workers as Communists, linking them with the radicals responsible for the revolution in Russia and the murder of the Romanov family. The Roaring Twenties may have brought prosperity to Ameri-

1. Quoted in Esther McCoy, Roots of California Architecture (Los Angeles, n.p., 1956).
2. Carey McWilliams, Factories in the Field: The Story of Migratory Farm Labor in California (Boston: Little, Brown, & Co., 1939), 103-119, 124-129.
3. One of the earliest books on the subject is Frances A. Keller's tract entitled Straight America: A Call to National Service (New York: Macmillan Co., 1916), esp. 186-187. See also Edward G. Hartmann, "The Movement to Americanize the Immigrant," Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, New York, 1948., 244-45, 250-55, 260-61.

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cans, but the decade also saw a resurgence of membership in hate organizations such as the Ku Klux Klan.<sup>1</sup> There were nationwide movements to restrict immigration, matched in California by efforts to deport migrant workers to Mexico, whether citizens or not.<sup>2</sup>

School districts responded to the shift in public opinion by launching "Americanization" programs, designed to create "a sturdy loyalty to American institutions and American ideals."<sup>3</sup> In some school districts these new programs found expression in the singing of patriotic songs, the daily pledge to the flag, and a general emphasis on the civic obligations of citizens. In others the focus was on people who did not speak English. Very often such students were segregated into special classes for English, American history, and civics. A number of school districts found the Americanization school to be a convenient place to segregate foreign students, who were seen as dirty, disruptive, and perhaps incapable of learning at the same rate as other children. In California and other parts of the Southwest such students were generally the children of Mexican migrant workers.<sup>4</sup>

Many California school districts refused to let migrant children enroll. As one rural principal put it, "Mexican children will not be admitted to this school. The reason is public sentiment. The trustees will never put those children in here. This school is a white school, in the language of the district."<sup>5</sup> When the Lemon Grove School District in San Diego County faced a sudden increase in migrant children, the trustees set up an Americanization

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1. John W. Caughey, California (2nd ed.; Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1953), 468-84.
  2. McWilliams, Factories in the Field, 129.
  3. Ellwood Criscom, Jr., Americanization: A School Reader and Speaker (New York: Macmillan Co., 1920), preface.
  4. Herschel T. Manuel, Spanish-Speaking Children of the Southwest: Their Education and the Public Welfare (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1965), 134-38. McWilliams, Factories in the Field, 150.
  5. McWilliams, Factories in the Field, 150.

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school in a separate building and refused to permit migrant children to attend the regular school.<sup>1</sup> The facilities were deplorable. The parents called it a caballeriza, a stable, and refused to allow their children to attend. The controversy led to a lawsuit in which the parents ultimately prevailed.<sup>2</sup>

The procedure adopted in Oceanside stands in stark contrast to that of Lemon Grove. In the fall of 1930, registration at Oceanside Grammar School soared by 25% to an astonishing 559 students. The two second-grade classes numbered nearly forty students apiece, and it was necessary to provide an additional classroom for that grade. Fourth- and fifth-grade classes numbered almost fifty students apiece. Nearly half of the new students, 45 children, did not speak English and were therefore enrolled in the Americanization class, which also needed an additional classroom.<sup>3</sup>

To cope with the emergency, the trustees decided to create a separate Americanization school. As a temporary measure they rented the former telephone building on Tremont, near Second Street, and had it painted and refurbished for classroom use. The Americanization classes moved to this location on 16 September 1930.<sup>4</sup> Special Americanization classes for Spanish-speaking adults were also organized as part of the night courses offered at Oceanside High School, and the teacher began "circulating among the Spanish speaking people, enrolling the students who wish to study English."<sup>5</sup>

1. San Diego Union, 9 January 1931, pp. 1,8.
2. Robert E. Alvarez, Jr., "The Lemon Grove Incident: The Nation's First Successful Desegregation Court Case," Journal of San Diego History (Spring 1986), 32:116-135.
3. Blade-Tribune (Oceanside), 8 September 1930, p. 1; 10 September 1930, p. 1. By year's end average daily attendance in the grade school reached 590 students, with a high of 630 and enrollment in February 1931 of 616. A year earlier average daily attendance was 429. Blade-Tribune (Oceanside), 18 February 1931, p. 1.
4. Oceanside School Board, Trustees Minutes, 15 September 1930, p. 364. Blade-Tribune (Oceanside), 13 September 1930, p. 1; 16 September 1930, p. 1.
5. Blade-Tribune (Oceanside), 17 September 1930, p. 1.

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After a few weeks of planning, the principal and the trustees decided that it would be possible to build additional classrooms on a scale that would not require a new bond issue.<sup>1</sup> By the first of October the trustees had selected a site and approved its purchase.<sup>2</sup> How the architect was chosen is not clear. Because of his earlier work on the civic center and other buildings in Oceanside, Irving Gill was well known to the trustees. In addition, he had a special interest in designing structures especially for Mexican laborers and other poor people.<sup>3</sup> Whatever the reason, Gill was asked to design the new building for the Americanization School.

Gill presented his sketches to the trustees of the Oceanside School District on 5 December 1930, and he was told to proceed immediately with the preparation of plans and specifications. No doubt influenced by Gill's own ideas, the board resolution called for "a partially open roof in the shower rooms," as well as "specially detailed window frames, roof and ceiling constructions."<sup>4</sup> The very next day Gill drove to La Jolla with the school principal and one of the board members, to inspect other schools and buildings that might have features useful for the Oceanside structure.<sup>5</sup> No doubt these included the Women's Club, structures at the Community House, and Gillman

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1. Planning began early in September and continued into the following year. See the Blade-Tribune (Oceanside), 13 September 1930, p. 1; 18 February 1931, p. 1.
  2. Oceanside School Board, Trustee Minutes, 1 October 1930, p. 366.
  3. McCoy, Five California Architects, pp. 84-87.
  4. Oceanside School Board, Trustee Minutes, 5 December 1930, p. 405.
  5. Blade-Tribune (Oceanside), 6 December 1930, p. 1

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Hall at the Bishop's School, all of them designed by Gill.<sup>1</sup> A week later Gill had the plans ready for review.<sup>2</sup> The plans received immediate approval, and the trustees issued a call for construction bids on the first of six classroom units. Bids were opened on 7 January 1931, with the contract going to low bidder Omer Nelson, a local building contractor.<sup>3</sup> Nelson's original bid was \$4,294. When the structure was occupied on 17 March 1931, the total cost was said to be "approximately \$4,440,"<sup>4</sup> only \$150 over the original bid.

Scarcely pausing for breath, the trustees ordered plans and specifications for two more classrooms at the Americanization School, plus a kindergarten to be built at a newly purchased site on Nevada Street.<sup>5</sup> Perhaps because of pressure to stay within the contract limits, Nelson declined to bid on the additional two rooms, so the contract went to the new low bidder, C. G. Rieke, whose January bid had been the highest of all. Gill, of course, was the architect for this addition, as well as the kindergarten, and a new cafeteria and a girls' rest room at the Oceanside Grammar School.<sup>6</sup> The

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1. Esther McCoy included a list of his major commissions in her biographical sketch to accompany the exhibit, Irving Gill, 1870-1936 (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum in collaboration with the Art Center in La Jolla, 1958).
  2. Blade-Tribune (Oceanside), 15 December 1930, p. 1.
  3. Oceanside School Board, Trustee Minutes, 7 January 1931, p. 406. Blade-Tribune (Oceanside), 7 January 1931, p. 1; 8 January 1931, p. 1.
  4. Blade-Tribune (Oceanside), 17 March 1931, p. 1.
  5. Oceanside School Board, Trustee Minutes, 3 April 1931, p. 426; 1 May 1931, p. 448; 28 May 1931, p. 451. Blade-Tribune (Oceanside), 15 May 1931, p. 1.
  6. Blade-Tribune (Oceanside), 15 May 1931, p. 1; 30 May 1931, p. 1. Oceanside School Board, Trustee Minutes, 8 July 1931, p. 458; 11 July 1931, p. 459. An interesting remark in the Trustee Minutes for 5 June 1931 says, "It was moved and seconded that the Board offer Mr. Gill \$100.00 for the completion of the plans and specifications for the kindergarten building to be erected on the new kindergarten lot." (P. 432.)



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result of Rieke's low bid can be seen in the inferior quality of materials used for the second two classrooms.<sup>1</sup>

Despite the unhappy experiences elsewhere the Oceanside Americanization School was a delightful place. A room off the entrance area was designed for use as an administration and teachers' room; two large windows provided cross ventilation on the west and the south. Separate boys' and girls' rest rooms opened off the opposite side of the entrance hall, equipped with the usual plumbing fixtures, plus showers with hot and cold water; natural light entered through the special roof panels specified in the board resolution. The large expanse of French doors and clerestory windows provided a warm natural light in the classrooms, which were decorated in pleasant shades of green, a new trend toward bright colors in classrooms. The exterior stucco was painted white, and the trim was done in deep greenish colors described in the news account as "bronze shades."<sup>2</sup>

The students loved the school. Ref Magaña, a former student, said, "It was a fun place and the kids learned fast." Reminded that such schools are considered today as instruments of segregation, Morgana and his friend Bill Orballo said that youngsters did not think such things in those days. They simply enjoyed the place.<sup>3</sup>

Changing trends in education, plus a decline in the need for special language instruction, led to the deterioration of the building during the forties and the discontinuance of the Americanization School in 1943. Used until 1951 as an annex to the nearby elementary school, the building became a warehouse for school materials and then was abandoned entirely. An appraiser for the school district said in 1971 that the structure itself had no value, though the land might be sold for the construction of medium priced rental

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1. Staff report, Oceanside Historic Preservation Advisory Commission, Americanization School Community Center, 2 June 1992, p. 4, Americanization School file, Oceanside Planning Department.
  2. Blade-Tribune (Oceanside), 17 March 1931, p. 1. For no clear reason, the newspaper article was confused about colors. The interior was described as blue, though paint scrapings showed clearly that the original paint was green.
  3. San Diego Tribune, 3 March 1993, p. B-10.

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apartments.<sup>1</sup> A year later the property was sold to a private investor. After several unsuccessful attempts to resell the property, the private owner asked the Planning Department in 1988 for permission to demolish the Gill building.<sup>2</sup>

Almost from the time the property was sold in 1971 local preservationists had tried to raise money for its purchase and restoration. The new planning request resulted in a flurry of additional activity for preservation of the Gill building. With promise of restoration assistance in the form of a Community Development Block Grant, a new bidder began negotiations to buy the property, determined to restore the building and to operate it as a children's museum.<sup>3</sup> This effort also failed, and when a charitable organization suggested that the Americanization School would make a fine homeless shelter, local interest was again revived.<sup>4</sup> One organization of local citizens objected that the homeless shelter would have an adverse effect on the neighborhood.<sup>5</sup> The Oceanside Historical Society began a quiet but relentless

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1. Letter from Robert M. Dodd to Alfred Lafleur, 24 September 1971. Americanization School file, Oceanside Planning Department.
  2. Letter from Stella Pennington to Rita Baker, 21 September 1988, Americanization School file, Oceanside Planning Department.
  3. James F. Knowlton to Cynthia Howse, 1 November 1988, with attached National Register nomination form, Americanization School file, Oceanside Planning Department. San Diego Union, 26 November 1988; Oceanside Breeze, 14 June 1989, news clippings, Americanization School file, Oceanside Planning Department.
  4. Brother Benno's Kitchen announced plans for a homeless shelter and "day center." Oceanside Breeze, 14 June 1989; Blade Tribune (Oceanside), 15 June 1989; news clippings, Americanization School file, Oceanside Planning Department.
  5. See the letter from the chairman of the Community Development Advisory Committee, to the chairman and members of the Community Development Commission, 8 August 1989, Americanization School file, Oceanside Planning Department.

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campaign to have the City of Oceanside purchase the site and restore it.<sup>1</sup> Using Community Development Block Grant funds, the city purchased the building and lot in 1990,<sup>2</sup> and entered into a "programmatic agreement" with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and the California State Historic Preservation Officer to conduct the rehabilitation in accordance with the prescribed standards.<sup>3</sup> Neighborhood residents organized site cleanups and campaigned to find seed money and to interest volunteers in working on the restoration project.<sup>4</sup> The National Trust for Historic Preservation provided funds for plan preparation, and Wayne Donaldson of San Diego was selected as architect for the project.<sup>5</sup>

Although Donaldson found the building badly deteriorated, no significant alterations had been made, and the structure was still sound enough to be completely restored. Since the quality of materials was better in the first classroom than in the second two, it was possible to save the original windows and doors of the first classroom by repairing and stabilizing the original muntins or replacing individual pieces in kind. These fixtures were used as models for the construction of replacements doors and windows in the second and third classrooms. Similar procedures were used for roof joists and girders, some of which were marked for retention, while others were replaced in kind. Some items are different. Electrical connections are all

1. San Diego Union, 20 October 1989, pp. B-1, B-4.
2. San Diego Union, 29 March 1990, p. B-2.
3. Important among many documents are the letter from Kathryn Gualtieri to Tim Cox, 5 September 1990; memo from Rita Baker to Debra Corbett, 13 September 1990; Americanization School file, Oceanside Planning Department.
4. Rita Baker, personal communication, 13 August 1993.
5. See the staff report to the Oceanside Historic Preservation Advisory Commission on the Americanization School Community Center, 2 June 1992, p. 2, Americanization School file, Oceanside Planning Department. See also Dirk Sutro, "Oceanside's Treasure-Trove of Gill Buildings," Los Angeles Times, 22 October 1992, p. E-6.

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underground, and the landscaping will be of a design suitable for a community center rather than a school.<sup>1</sup>

Cabinets, hardware, and plumbing fixtures were also salvaged and restored to their original condition for reinstallation.<sup>2</sup> Because water had collected for years in the crawl space beneath the classrooms, it was not possible to save the original flooring and sub flooring. However, the Wisconsin firm that originally manufactured the maple flooring, provided material of the same style, dimensions, and quality for use in the restored building.<sup>3</sup>

Since the building will be used as a neighborhood community center, the restoration project has attracted a surprising amount of voluntary support, donated materials, and services.<sup>4</sup> The Fieldstone Company provided a construction superintendent. Dike Partnership of San Diego designed the courtyard landscaping. Wayne Donaldson provided restoration drawings and carefully monitored the work of construction craftsmen. The work is now very nearly completed, final installations awaiting the selection of a supervising community organization.

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1. Staff Report, Oceanside Historic Preservation Advisory Commission, Americanization School Community Center, 2 June 1992, p. 4, Americanization School file, Oceanside Planning Department.
  2. Interview with Rita Baker, 22 July 1993.
  3. Interview with Richard M. Barker, 21 July 1993.
  4. Sutor, Times, 22 October 1992, p. E-6. Staff Report, Oceanside Planning Commission, Americanization School Community Center, p. 3, Americanization School File, Oceanside Planning Commission.

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Irving J. Gill Collection

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10. Verbal Boundary Description & Justification

Boundary Description

Lot Number 22, School Center Addition, City of Oceanside, Map No. 1874, Division Street and Center Avenue. Quad Map Number 0361, Parcel Number 150-141-17.

Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the Oceanside Americanization School.

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Americanization School  
San Diego County, California  
Nicholas M. Magalousis  
15 July 1993  
Oceanside Planning Department  
Camera facing northeast  
Photograph 1

Americanization School  
San Diego County, California  
Nicholas M. Magalousis  
15 July 1993  
Oceanside Planning Department  
Camera facing southwest  
Photograph 2

Americanization School  
San Diego County, California  
Nicholas M. Magalousis  
15 July 1993  
Oceanside Planning Department  
Camera facing west  
Photograph 3

Americanization School  
San Diego County, California  
Nicholas M. Magalousis  
15 July 1993  
Oceanside Planning Department  
Camera facing north, inside courtyard  
Photograph 4

Americanization School  
San Diego County, California  
Nicholas M. Magalousis  
15 July 1993  
Oceanside Planning Department  
Camera facing north, at curb  
Photograph 5



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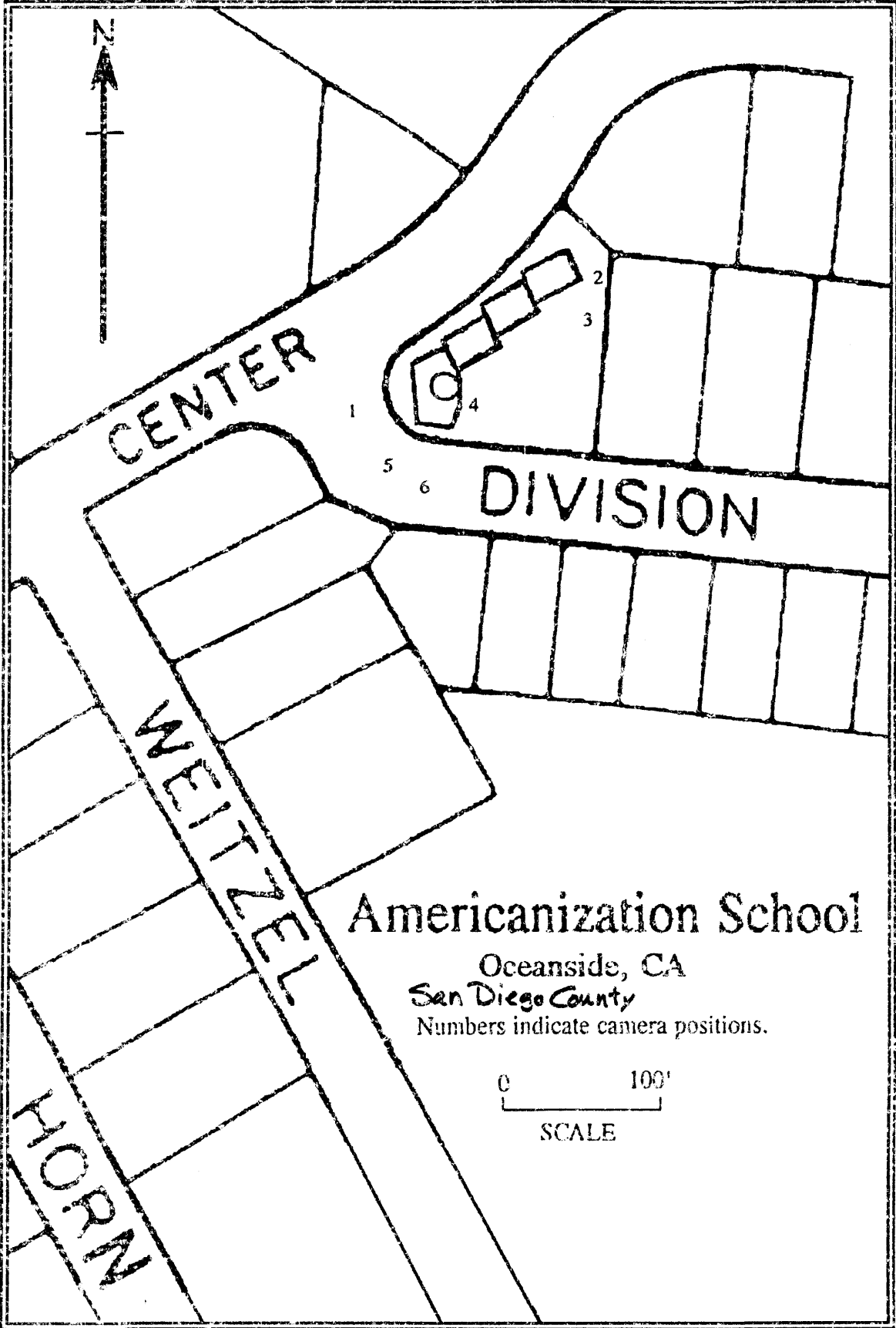
county and state

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Americanization School  
San Diego County, California  
Nicholas M. Magalousis  
15 July 1993  
Oceanside Planning Department  
Camera facing north, across street  
Photograph 6

Americanization School  
San Diego County, California  
Irving Gill  
4 December 1930  
Irving Gill Collection, UC Santa Barbara  
Southwest Elevation  
Architect's sketch 7

Americanization School  
San Diego County, California  
Irving Gill  
3 December 1930  
Irving Gill Collection, UC Santa Barbara  
North, south, east, and west elevations  
Architect's sketch 8



CENTER

DIVISION

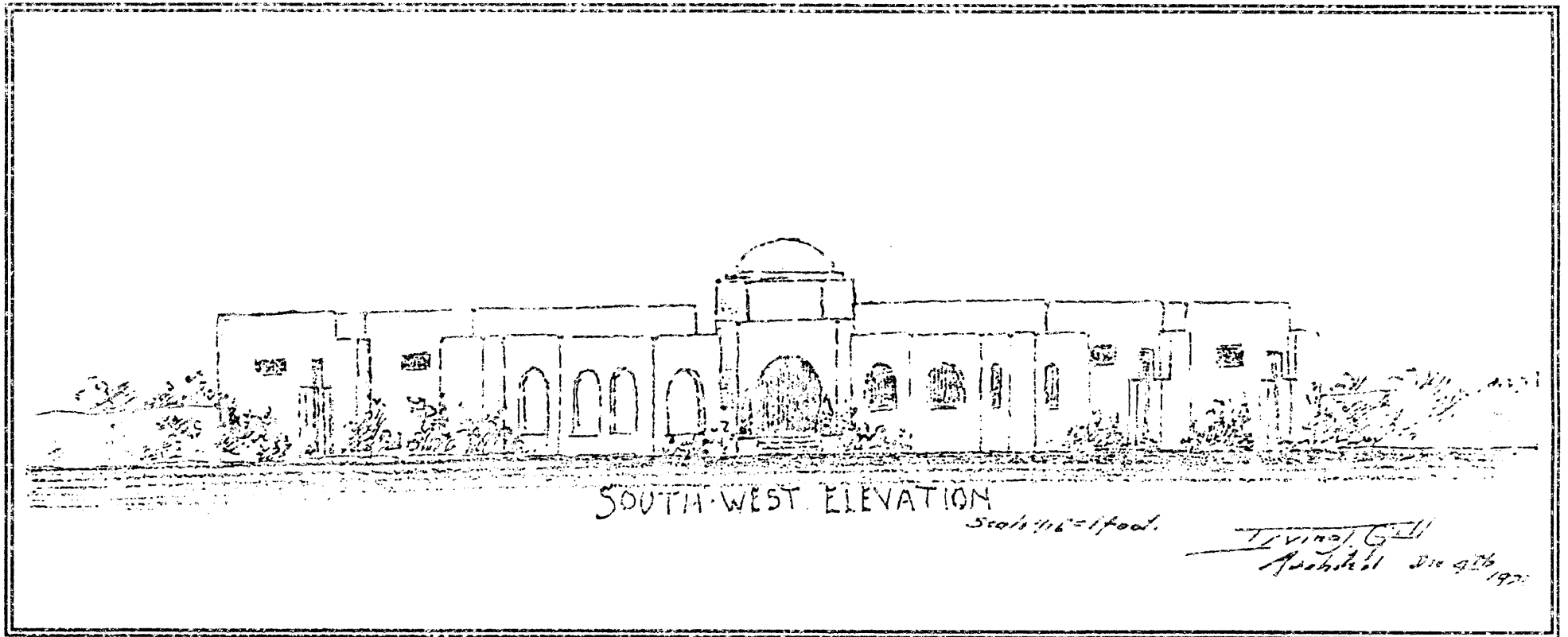
WEITZEL

HORN

# Americanization School

Oceanside, CA  
San Diego County  
Numbers indicate camera positions.

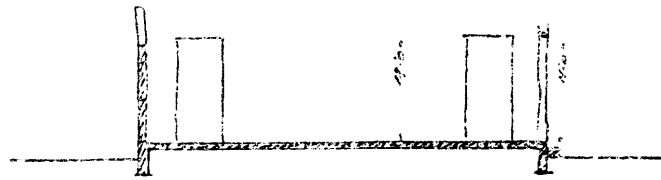




Americanization School  
San Diego County, California  
Architect's Sketch # 7

OCEAN SIDE CALIF.

*Erving C. Gil  
Architect  
San Diego Calif.  
Dec. 22 1920 Tel. 1107*



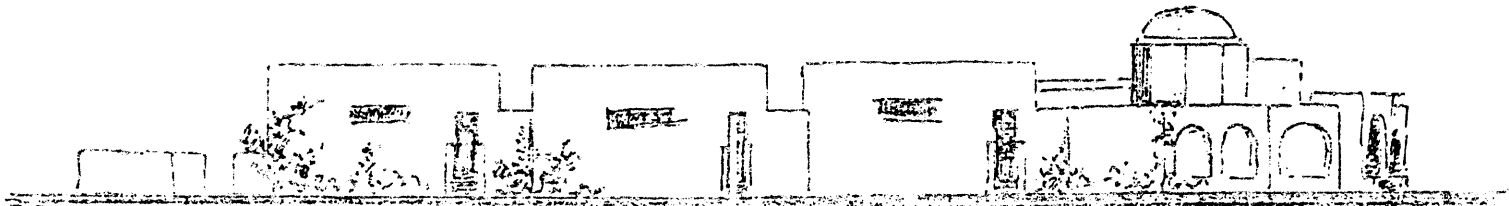
SECTION

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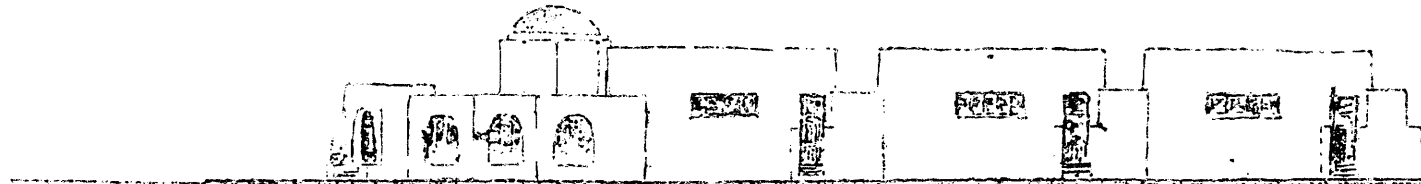
EAST ELEVATION

*Scale 1/4" = 1 foot*



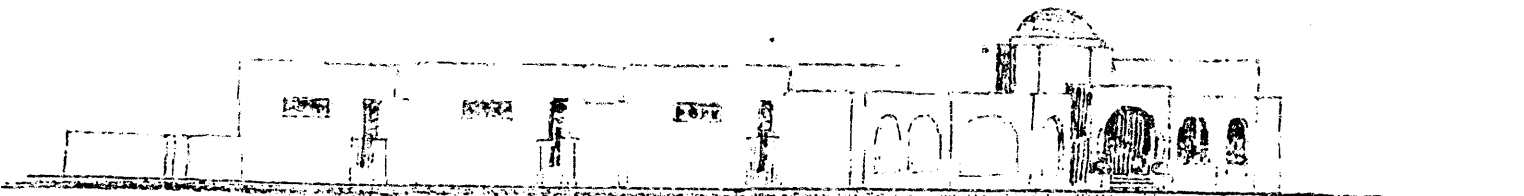
NORTH ELEVATION

*Scale 1/4" = 1 foot*



SOUTH ELEVATION

*Scale 1/4" = 1 foot*



WEST ELEVATION

*Scale 1/4" = 1 foot*

*Americanization School  
San Diego County, California  
Architect's sketch # 8*