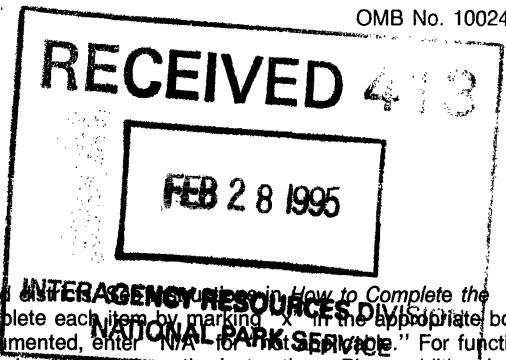


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. Please refer to the instructions on the back of this form and to the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking an X in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A." 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 Veterans Memorial School

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 1200 Locust Street not for publication

city or town Reno vicinity

state Nevada code NV county Washoe code 031 zip code 89502

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

Ronald M. Jones SHPO 2/23/95
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State of 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 certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

| | | |
|---|--|---------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet. | for Signature of the Keeper <u>Annueli Alee</u> | Date of Action <u>4/4/95</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet. | _____ | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register. | _____ | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register. | _____ | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> other, (explain:) | _____ | _____ |

Veterans Memorial School
Name of Property

Washoe County, Nevada
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal
- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

| Contributing | Noncontributing | |
|--------------|-----------------|------------|
| 1 | 2 | buildings |
| | | sites |
| | | structures |
| | | objects |
| 1 | 2 | Total |

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Education/School

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Education/School

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Modern Movement/Moderne

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete

walls concrete

roof asphalt

other

Narrative Description

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

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

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

Period of Significance

1949

Significant Dates

October 5, 1949

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Russell Mills, architect

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

Veterans Memorial School
Name of Property

Washoe County, Nevada
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property approximately 2 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------|---------|---|---|---|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 9 | 4 | 5 | 0 | 4 | 3 | 7 | 7 | 2 | 8 | 0 |
| Zone | Easting | | | | Northing | | | | | | | | | |

3

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

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

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

Boundary Justification

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Clement Spring and Michelle McFadden: Revised by Mella Rothwell Harmon

organization Nevada State Historic Preservation Office date May 1993: Revised Feb. 1995

street & number Capitol Complex, 100 Stewart Street telephone (702) 687-7601

city or town Carson City state Nevada zip code 89710

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

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

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

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

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

Property Owner

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

name Washoe County School District

street & number 425 E. 9th Street telephone (702) 348-0200

city or town Reno state Nevada zip code 89520

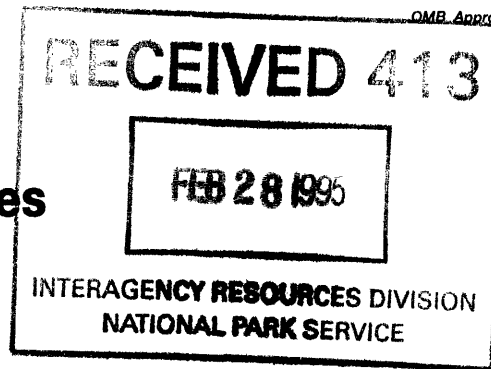
Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain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

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

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7,8 Page 1



Veterans Memorial School
Washoe County, NV

Description

Veterans Memorial School, designed by Reno architect Russell Mills, was completed in 1949. The building contains elements of both the Art Deco and Moderne styles, popular in the 1940s. Veterans Memorial has always functioned as a school and it is in very good condition. The school stands on a rectangular lot bordered by Wonder Street to the north, Kirman Street to the east, Vassar Street to the south, and Locust Street to the west. The main elevation faces west. Two one-story annexes, built of cinder blocks with flat roofs, are located to the east and southwest of the main school building. Both annexes were constructed in 1958 and are non-contributing buildings. The southeast corner of the property contains playgrounds. The surrounding neighborhood consists of residential buildings, most of which were built during the late 1940s.

The one-story, L-shaped school is constructed of concrete. The long elevations are divided into smaller units by recessed panels and piers. The walls rise to a parapet of varying height above a flat roof. A curved canopy projects over two rounded, glass-block piers that flank the paired double doors with transom windows above. The multi-light, steel-framed windows, placed asymmetrically, are of assorted sizes and heights. The piers display geometric details.

The front doors open to a lobby area with adjacent offices and the entrance to the auditorium. The south wing of classrooms is located to the right, and the east wing of classrooms is to the left. The interior, in excellent condition, also retains its integrity. The rounded hallway corners and columns in the classrooms have not been altered. Air conditioning units project from some classrooms on the inside of the "L;" however, these are not visible from the street elevations.

Statement of Significance

Veterans Memorial School in Reno, Nevada, is significant under Criterion A, for its role in the local history of education. It is also significant under Criterion C, for its Art Deco/Moderne style of architecture by a prominent local architect, Russell Mills. Veterans Memorial School is only one of two public schools dedicated to the veterans of World War II in the states of Nevada, California, Oregon, and Washington; the other is located in Eureka,

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Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 2

**Veterans Memorial School
Washoe County, NV**

Statement of Significance, continued

California. In addition, the school was the first in the Reno School District (later to become the Washoe County School District) to incorporate design features intended to enhance the educational experience and to utilize the latest building technology. Veterans Memorial School served as a transition between the pre-war schools and the schools built in the 1950s and served as a model for the modern school that became the norm in the Reno School District.

Historical background and significance - Criterion A:

Reno initially developed in the 1860s as a mercantile center for the distribution of supplies to the Comstock Lode in Virginia City and to nearby ranches. In 1869, with the completion of the transcontinental railroad, Reno grew in importance and, in 1872, it successfully captured the seat of Washoe County government from Washoe City to the south. Reno is bisected by the Truckee River that runs roughly east-west through town. The railroad was established on the north side of the river, and most of the community began growing to the north. When the decision was made to establish the courthouse on the south side of the river, there were complaints because many felt that the community would never grow in that direction. Nevertheless, that act established a trend for Reno to eventually also grow to the south. With Virginia Street, a main avenue of transportation, bisecting Reno along a north-south line, the city was divided into four quadrants. The two northern sections grew quickly.

The southeast section, where Veterans Memorial School is located, began as an industrial and warehouse district. It was also the location of the Virginia and Truckee Railroad right-of-way. Residential growth in the southeast began in earnest after World War II; it was this growth that provided the impetus to build Veterans Memorial School. The neighborhood and school developed jointly in response to the nation-wide boom in home building and home ownership that followed World War II. Veterans Memorial School was the first of many schools in Reno built to serve the Baby Boom Generation.

Early Reno School District plans called for an elementary school in each of the four sections of town. Because of its slow start, the southeast section was the last to build a school. The Reno School Board recognized the future need for additional school facilities in the southeast

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National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
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**Veterans Memorial School
Washoe County, NV****Statement of Significance, continued**

by 1920, when they purchased the land on which the Veterans Memorial School would later be constructed. The Great Depression and World War II essentially halted school construction in the Reno School District. During the years spanning these events (1929 - 1945), only two schools were built in Reno. These were the B.D. Billingham School (1930) and the Home Gardens School (1941). Neither of these remain as active school facilities. It was, perhaps, fortuitous that school construction was delayed in the southeast. The delay allowed this neighborhood to avail itself of the latest technology, resulting in a school that has served the community for over four and a half decades.

Beginning in the latter nineteenth century, educators began to recognize that other aspects of the educational experience were as important as the curriculum. Health, safety, physical comfort and exercise became major considerations in the planning of school facilities. By 1910, the one-story school building was considered to be the ideal, as it allowed for safety (particularly fire safety), good heating and ventilation, adequate lighting and the opportunity for physical activity. By 1920, one-story schools were the norm and were considered the appropriate style for suburban neighborhoods. The State Board of Education standardized school design in Nevada in 1920, including the development of uniform building codes for schools.

During the 1920s to 1940s, American society became captivated with modernism and technology. The coming of the Machine Age gave rise to consumerism, as machine-made items became widely available. Between 1920 and 1930, private automobile ownership rose to over 26 million and 80 percent of American urban dwellings were electrified. Radios, washing machines, toasters, refrigerators and the movies became a part of American culture. The Art Deco/Moderne style of architecture was one manifestation of this interest. Modernism also became a focus of educational programs, including the physical facility. Technology influenced the notions of light, safety, hygiene and comfort in schools. To provide one's child access to the latest of modern technology was to assure him the ability to obtain his portion of the American Dream.

After the financial constraints placed upon American communities by the Depression and World War II, the post-war period brought about new growth and the impetus for

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 4

**Veterans Memorial School
Washoe County, NV**

Statement of Significance, continued

construction. The citizens of this time believed schools were good and proper uses for tax dollars and school construction was widely supported. Between 1946 and 1948, Reno voters passed two bond issues, totaling \$4,000,000, that contributed to the construction of Veterans Memorial School. These funds also supported renovations to existing school properties.

The southeast Reno neighborhood served by Veterans Memorial School saw increased growth following World War II. Reno's population increased by 50 percent after the war and many schools experienced overcrowding and double sessions. The original plans for the school, drawn in 1946, were to include seven classrooms to serve 350 students. By 1947, when the final plans were drawn, the design was for eleven classrooms serving more than 400 students. Veterans Memorial School was built in 1949 during the seventh period of education in Nevada (1941-1956) as outlined by Dorothy Wright and Richard Bernstein in "Education in Nevada," a chapter of the Nevada Comprehensive Preservation Plan. This was a period of unprecedented growth statewide, partly as a result of the introduction of tourism as a major industry for the state. Veterans Memorial School was one of the first constructed in the state after World War II and the Reno School District named the structure in honor of those who fell during that conflict.

Veterans Memorial School, as the first new school constructed in Reno since 1941, was replete with the latest in technology and design features to provide the best educational experience. In newspaper articles announcing its opening, the school was described as a sprawling, ultra-modern structure. One particularly proud headline declared, "The Little Red Schoolhouse Was Never Like This One." Features addressing comfort included the scaling of furniture to the age and size of the students, the use of warm colors in north-facing rooms and cool colors in the south-facing rooms, and the use of blond furniture, believed to be comforting to children's eyes. Heating and ventilation systems were of the latest technology. Safety was addressed by eliminating any steps in hallways and classrooms and the rounding of corners. Fire safety was accomplished by the use of materials such as steel-reinforced concrete and the placement of the five main entrances and exits to eliminate cross traffic. The principal's office with partial glass walls, was centrally located, affording him a view of students in the halls and outdoors, and thereby emphasizing the centralized control built into the school. Classroom lighting was provided by windows built to a height of six

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Section number 8 Page 5

**Veterans Memorial School
Washoe County, NV**

Statement of Significance, continued

feet, with glass brick above to diffuse direct sunlight. An efficient, modern kitchen offered hot lunches and there were indoor and outdoor play areas. The auditorium was designed to convert to additional classroom space in the event of future overcrowding and it served as the cafeteria and gymnasium. The central library was the first at a Reno grade school. Each classroom was connected to a central telephone and radio system. Outlets were installed for the eventual use of television. This represents innovative thinking on the part of the designer, as the first Reno television station was not established until several years after Veterans Memorial School opened.

Veterans Memorial School was the first modern, technologically advanced facility in the Reno School District. It was also the only one-story Art Deco/Moderne school building in Reno, but its sprawling lines and modern amenities provided a model for school buildings that followed. In the decade after the construction of Veterans Memorial School, twenty-two schools were built in Reno, drawing from the standard set by Veterans Memorial.

In 1954, the Nevada State Board of Education issued a list of twelve elements that schools must provide students:

1. Safety to life and conservation of health.
2. Comfortable temperature and ventilation.
3. Adequate glare-free light.
4. Sanitary water.
5. Adequate and sanitary indoor facilities.
6. Cheerful schoolrooms where children live.
7. Comfortable and hygienic seating.
8. Ample learning supplies, tools and materials.
9. Ample reading facilities.
10. Supervised play and health education spaces.
11. Healthful and appetizing hot lunches.
12. Inspiring building spaces for activities needed to develop talents.

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Veterans Memorial School
Washoe County, NV

Statement of Significance, continued

Each and every one of these was provided in the design of Veterans Memorial School. The school was a benchmark for education in post-war Reno. As a testimony to its modernity and its value to the community, Veterans Memorial School has been in continuous use as a school since its opening in 1949. It deserves listing in the National Register for its exceptional historic significance to Reno.

A modern style for a modern school - Criterion C:

The modest proportions and simple applications of the Art Deco and Moderne styles as embodied in Veterans Memorial School are typical of the styles' incarnation in Nevada. Structures in these styles include several buildings in Reno, which experienced a construction boom in the 1920s and 1930s. The El Cortez Hotel (1931) and the Mapes Hotel-Casino (1947), two good examples of Art Deco architecture, were listed in the National Register in 1984. Additional properties include the Nevada State Supreme Court Building in Carson City (built 1935 and listed in 1987), Las Vegas High School, a Mayan Revival/Art Deco design, (built 1930-31, listed in 1986), and the Lincoln County Courthouse (1938), considered eligible for the National Register. Examples of Moderne architecture in Nevada include Sparks City Hall (1940) and Pershing County High School (1941), both by Russell Mills.

An open house for Veterans Memorial School was held on September 11, 1949 and construction on the project was completed on October 5, 1949 at a cost of \$360,399.45. The building was initially designed by Perry Means, a Reno architect, but Russell Mills completed the design. Mills, a noted local architect, received \$18,000 for his services. He designed several buildings in northern Nevada, roughly between 1935 and 1955. Originally from Berkeley, California, Mills apparently moved to Nevada in the mid-1930s. Documentation on his training is not readily available, but he was a member of the Nevada State Association of Architects. His work suggests that he was influenced by modern architectural styles, including Art Deco and Moderne. In 1940, Mills designed the Sparks City Hall in the Art Moderne style. The following year he designed the Art Moderne Lovelock Vocational-Agricultural Building in Lovelock, Nevada, for the National Youth Administration (listed in the National Register of Historic Places, 10/24/91).

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Section number 8 Page 7

**Veterans Memorial School
Washoe County, NV**

Statement of Significance, continued

Other Nevada projects by Mills include private houses in the Lake Tahoe Basin (Carnelian Bay, California), Reno, and Elko. Mills also designed a Reno country club in the mid-1950s, a fraternity house associated with the University of Nevada, Reno, and the Brown Elementary School to the south of Reno. In the 1950s, Mills completed the design for the Art Moderne Pershing County High School in Lovelock. In 1955, he was elected to the Reno City Council, and it appears that his career as an architect ended about that time.

Veterans Memorial School is an excellent example of one architect's interpretation of the Art Deco and Moderne styles. The low, one-story school is constructed of concrete and glass block, popular building materials for these styles. The long elevations of the building are divided into blocks delineated by recessed panels, square piers and varying, flat roof lines. Incised geometric detailing on the piers speaks to the Art Deco style, while the semi-circular glass block piers at the entrance and the corner windows are characteristic of the Moderne style. Mills's design included site specific details, such as the veteran in a helmet over the entrance and the eagle in a medallion in the floor tile.

The modern style of the building was a conscious attempt by the architect, as well as the community, to create an ultra-modern structure. Innovative planning for the school included a large, centralized library, no stairs, rounded hallway corners to reduce accidents, lining the halls with a smooth, plastic material, warm color schemes in the cold north rooms and cool color schemes in the warm south rooms, glass brick above windows six feet high to diffuse bright sunlight, and slanted ceilings in the classrooms to reflect additional light. Thus, both the exterior and interior of the school was designed in the latest style.

The parents and teachers associated with the school are very conscious of the building's importance in the development of education in Reno, and of its unique design. Listing in the National Register will enable the school to undertake necessary repairs that will be in keeping with the historic appearance of this important local resource.

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Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 8

Veterans Memorial School
Washoe County, NV

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Wilson, Richard Guy. "The Arts and Crafts After 1918: Ending and Legacy." In The Arts and Crafts Movement in California: Living the Good Life. Kenneth R. Trapp, Editor. New York: The Oakland Museum and Abbeville Press, 1993.

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 9,10 Page 9

**Veterans Memorial School
Washoe County, NV**

Bibliography, continued

Other documents on file:

Reno Evening Gazette, issues from 1949 on file with the nomination, the Division of Historic Preservation and Archeology, Carson City, Nevada.

Nevada State Journal, issues from 1949 on file with the nomination, the Division of Historic Preservation and Archeology, Carson City, Nevada.

Verbal boundary description

Legal parcel number 013-237-01.

Verbal boundary justification

The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the school.