

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC  
McKinley Park School  
AND/OR COMMON  
City of Reno, Recreation Center

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER  
Riverside Drive and Keystone Avenue n/a NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
CITY, TOWN  
Reno n/a VICINITY OF 2 CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
STATE Nevada CODE 32 COUNTY Washoe CODE 031

**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 type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	n/a IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME  
City of Reno  
STREET & NUMBER  
P.O. Box 1900  
CITY, TOWN  
Reno n/a VICINITY OF Nevada 89505

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.  
Washoe County Courthouse  
STREET & NUMBER  
50 South Virginia Street  
CITY, TOWN  
Reno Nevada 89501

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE  
None  
DATE  
\_\_\_\_ FEDERAL \_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_ COUNTY \_\_\_\_ LOCAL  
DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS  
CITY, TOWN  
STATE

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" 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		

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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The McKinley Park School is a one-story, stucco-surfaced institutional structure with a two-story central tower. The Mission Revival building stands on one square block surrounded by open space with a lawn and mature trees to the south and parking to the north. It stands just north of the Truckee River and is located at the base of the Newlands Heights bluff with Keystone Avenue as the western and Riverside Drive as the southern boundaries.

Constructed in 1909 to the designs of architect George Ferris, the multi-story structure is U-shaped with a central open court that faces south. A two-story central tower stands at the base of the U with a one-story wing extending to the north behind it. The roof is composed of intersecting gables. Scroll shaped parapets project from the facades of the wings that flank the central court.

The corners of the wings are marked by battered post forms indented at the eaveline and carrying capped projections that define the ends of the parapet scroll forms. Battered pilasters are centered in the south facades of each wing, flanked by paired windows. A raised design is centered beneath the scrolled gable. Paired and capped post projections flank side entries to each wing. These wings also contain rectangular windows on both east and west facades. Low walls, penetrated by circular openings and a stairway, define the courtyard area. An arcade with arched openings stands at the base of the U beneath the two-story tower and its scrolled parapet. The name of the school is written on a scrolled panel above paired windows in the south facade and the tower roof is gabled. A raised design ornaments the parapet above the name panel. A scrolled parapet that matches that of its facade surfaces the rear of the tower.

A rectangular wing extends to the north from the rear of the tower. This gabled wing contains rectangular windows, two canopied entrances, two newer doors, and stair access to the interior. A handicap access ramp has been constructed and a shed roof addition has been made to the rear of the wing on the west. A horizontal projecting belt course encircles the entire structure a few feet above the ground. Various chimney stacks and vents extend from the roof.

The structure is constructed in brick, covered with concrete stucco, and trimmed with concrete. The building is 150' x 160' and was almost identical in design to the Mt. Rose Elementary School which is already listed in the National Register.

The structure remains basically unaltered.

# 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 1909

BUILDER/ARCHITECT George Ferris

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The McKinley Park School is a particularly fine representative of the Mission Revival style. The school is one of the so-called "Spanish Quartet" of four Reno grammar schools constructed at virtually the same time and almost identical in design. The schools were highly lauded at the time for their modern convenience and technology, as well as their potential capacities to serve as community focal points. They represent a spurt in building intended to answer the growing needs of Reno. The principal town of Nevada was growing, becoming the financial and bureaucratic hub of the Newlands Reclamation Project and the Tonopah-Goldfield silver and gold strikes of central Nevada.

The school is an interesting and careful execution of the Mission Revival style. The plan appears to be well adapted to school needs with its ground floor access and the almost free standing placement of classroom wings to gain a maximum of natural light. The courtyard design with its arcade and decorative low walls is a particularly attractive feature. The design treatment of the facades and tower is both handsome and skillful.

The structure was designed by architect George Ferris and was constructed in 1909 at a cost of \$40,000. It was built at approximately the same time as the Orvis Ring School which was almost identical in design. Of the four schools constructed between 1909 and 1912, only two survive. The other, the Mt. Rose Elementary School, was listed by the National Register of Historic Places in 1977.

At the time of their construction, the schools were lauded for their design and planning "for the health, comfort and convenience of pupils and teachers, and to the demands of the industrial idea in modern education." The mechanical fan system of heating and ventilating was innovative. The schools were commended in publications of the Russell Sage Foundation for their modern construction and recreational capacities and, at the same time, the role they assumed as social centers for their respective communities.

Superintendent of Reno Schools at the time, B.D. Billingham, was said to have hired the architect, George Ferris, to employ the Mission Revival style because of his own interest in Spanish architecture. The State Superintendent of Public Instruction, however, had a different interpretation. In his report to the 27th Session of the Legislature (1915) suggested that mission architecture is "especially adapted to one-story structures." He added that "there is nothing better for school purposes than one-story buildings. The one-story plan eliminates the stair climbing so destructive to the nervous strength of pupils and teachers, and also renders danger from fire impossible."

The structure reverted to the City in September 1975. It continues to serve the function it was designed to serve - a social and cultural center for the community - and now operates as the office of the City Recreational Center.

