

Historic Preservation Research Office

Structure/Site Information Form

1 IDENTIFICATION

Street Address: 3440 N. 3000 West Benson, Cache County, Utah UTM: 12 424840 4627280
 Name of Structure: Benson Elementary School T. 12 N R. 1 W S. 12
 Present Owner: Cache County School District Board of Education
 Owner Address: 2063 N. 1200 East Logan, Utah 84321
 Year Built (Tax Record): Effective Age: Tax #: 12-014-0007
 Legal Description Kind of Building:

Commencing at a point S 88°36' W 10.50 chains of a point 31.36 chains S of NE corner of NW 1/4 of Sec 12, T12N, R1W; thence S 88°36' W 4.24 chains, S 35' W 70 feet, N 88°36' E 4.24 chains, N 35' E 70 feet to beginning. Also, beginning at a point S 88°36' W 10.00 chains of a point 31.36 chains S of NE corner of Sec 12; thence E 80 feet, S 88°36' W 4.24 chains, S 35' W 80 feet, N 88° E 4.24 chains to beg. 1.18 acres

2 STATUS/USE

Original Owner: Board of Education Cache County School Dist. Construction Date: 1935 Demolition Date:
 Original Use: educational--school Present Use: educational
 Building Condition: Integrity: Preliminary Evaluation: Final Register Status:
 Excellent Site Unaltered Significant Not of the National Landmark District
 Good Ruins Minor Alterations Contributory Historic Period National Register Multi-Resource
 Deteriorated Major Alterations Not Contributory State Register Thematic

3 DOCUMENTATION

Photography: Date of Slides: 1983 Slide No.: Date of Photographs: 1983 Photo No.:
 Views: Front Side Rear Other Views: Front Side Rear Other

Research Sources:
 Abstract of Title Sanborn Maps Newspapers U of U Library
 Plat Records/Map City Directories Utah State Historical Society BYU Library
 Tax Card & Photo Biographical Encyclopedias Personal Interviews USU Library
 Building Permit Obituary Index LDS Church Archives SLC Library
 Sewer Permit County & City Histories LDS Genealogical Society Other

Bibliographical References (books, articles, records, interviews, old photographs and maps, etc.):

Cardon, Alice S. This is Benson, Cache County, Utah: Its History and Its People. n.p., 1982
Twenty-first Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the State of Utah for the Biennial Period Ending June 30, 1936. n.p., n.d.

Architect/Builder: unknown

Building Materials: brick

Building Type/Style: PWA Moderne

Description of physical appearance & significant architectural features:

(Include additions, alterations, ancillary structures, and landscaping if applicable)

The Benson Elementary School, a PWA Moderne design from the 1930s, is 1 story high, has a large basement, and is constructed of locally manufactured yellow bricks. On the west there is a wing that has a parapeted gable roof. Each end of this section contains a large entrance flanked by stepped back, angular piers supporting a stylized, geometric pediment. The doors are recessed and are topped by three rows of transom lights. To the side of these entrances are pairs of narrow windows with semi-circular heads separated by a large rectangular plaque containing the name and date of the building. The rounded arches above the windows are hooded with contrasting red brick and connected to each other by a string course above the name plaque. Another string course, this one of dog-toothed bricks, is located in the upper gable wall and the parapet itself has smooth, fluted coping of molded concrete. Along the side there are three sets of classroom windows, each consisting of five square casements separated by brick mullions. Flanking this gabled section is a large, flat-roofed wing. On each side wall of this wing are found tripartite windows within a rectangular panel. Mullions and window heads here are of red brick. There is a flush string course at the top level of the windows. On the end, several sets of windows and doors are found that also have the semi-circular heads. The Benson School remains basically unaltered and retains much of its original historic integrity. A similar design was used for the school in Mendon in Cache County.

Statement of Historical Significance:

Construction Date: 1935

Built in 1935, the Benson Elementary School is part of the Public Works Buildings Thematic Resources nomination and is significant because it helps document the impact of New Deal programs in Utah, which was one of the states that the Great Depression of the 1930s most severely affected. In 1933 Utah had an unemployment rate of 36 percent, the fourth highest in the country, and for the period 1932-1940 Utah's unemployment rate averaged 25 percent. Because the depression hit Utah so hard, federal programs were extensive in the state. Overall, per capita federal spending in Utah during the 1930s was 9th among the 48 states, and the percentage of workers on federal work projects was far above the national average. Building programs were of great importance. During the 1930s virtually every public building constructed in Utah, including county courthouses, city halls, fire stations, national guard armories, public school buildings, and a variety of others, were built under federal programs by one of several agencies, including the Civil Works Administration (CWA), the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA), the National Youth Administration (NYA), the Works Progress Administration (WPA), or the Public Works Administration (PWA), and almost without exception none of the buildings would have been built when they were without the assistance of the federal government.

The Benson Elementary School is one of 233 public works buildings identified in Utah that were built during the 1930s and early 1940s. Only 130 of the 233 buildings are known to remain today and retain their historic integrity. Of the 233 buildings, 107 were public school buildings, and 55 of them remain. This is one of 43 elementary schools originally built, of which 19 remain. In Cache County a total of 18 buildings were constructed, 13 of which remain. Of the 18 originally built, 7 were public school buildings and 5 of them remain.

The Benson Elementary School was built in 1935. It had 3 classrooms in which 3 teachers taught 6 grades. There was also a lunch room, offices, and "clean,
(See Continuation Sheet)

Benson Elementary School
History continued:

modern restrooms." The school closed in the spring of 1968 when elementary students who had previously attended the Benson School went to Summit Elementary School in Smithfield.

In the fall of 1969 the school began to be used as the Cache Instructional Workshop which provided vocational training for developmentally and physically disabled people 16 years of age and older who lived in Cache, Rich, Box Elder, and Franklin, Idaho, counties. The Workshop was administered by the Cache County School District and funded through A.D.A. school funds, contracts with the Utah Division of Family Services, Utah Division of Rehabilitation Services, the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, and the United Way of Cache Valley. In the early 1980s the Workshop had a staff of 10 people and an enrollment of about 60.¹

Notes

¹Alice S. Cardin, This is Benson, Cache County, Utah: Its History and Its People (n.p., 1982), pp. 55-56.