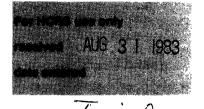
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National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form



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Los Angeles

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

1. Name

Torrance School historic

Torrance High School Campus (Thematic Nominati and/or common Historic Resources of the

Location 2.

2200 West Carson N/A not for publication street & number Torrance congressional district 32nd N/A vicinity of city, town

county

06

state

code

Classification 3.

CA

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
district	<u>X</u> public	<u>X</u> occupied	agriculture	museum
X building(s)	private	unoccupied	commercial	park
structure	both	work in progress	educational	private residence
site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	entertainment	religious
object	in process	yes: restricted	government	scientific
X Thematic	being considered	X yes: unrestricted	industrial	transportation
	x N/A	no	military	other:

<u>4. Own</u>	er ot Pro	perty						
name Torr	ance Unified	l School	District	<u>.</u> .				
street & number	2335 Plaza	Del Amo		·				
city, town	Torrance	-	N/Avicinity of		state	CA	90501	
5. Loca	ation of L	egal D	escripti	on				
courthouse, regis	stry of deeds, etc.	Los Ang	eles County	Archives,	Hall	of F	Records	
street & number	222 North	Hill St	reet, Room	B-212				
city, town	Los Angel	es			state	CA		
6. Repr	resentati	on in E	Existing	Surveys	5			
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date Marc	ch 1979			federal	_X_sta	ate	county	<u>X</u> local
depository for su	rvey records TO1	rance Hi	storical Sc	ociety Muse	um, 1:	345 F	ost Ave	enue
city. town To	rrance				state	CA		

7. Description

Condition

Check one ed _____ unaltered _____ altered Check one <u>X</u> original site moved date

date N/A

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

TORRANCE HIGH SCHOOL

Summary

Torrance High School is located on a 9-acre, landscaped site at the end of El Prado Park near Downtown Torrance. The campus includes three wellpreserved structures in Mediterranean styling built between 1917 and 1923, an auditorium in PWA Moderne that dates from 1938, and a variety of more recent structures built (or significantly remodeled) between 1952 and 1970. Because of the large number of newer buildings, the 4 significant structures are being nominated in a limited thematic format.

MAIN BUILDING (A)^{*} UTM: 11/377820/3744000 Acreage: 0.5

The Main Building, built in 1917, was the first building on the high school campus. It is a two-story structure designed in the Mediterranean styling and influenced by both Classical and Spanish Colonial design elements. The form is rectangular with the central two-story mass flanked by one-story wings.

The main entrance is the dominant element of the building's facade. It consists of a set of layered elements; a large pediment with cornice, a cofferred arch, a flat window with pediment above, a large arched fanlight, and a flat door opening. The doorway is flanked by paired columns supporting a broken cornice at the first story level.

Alterations to the facade are minor. They consist primarily of modifications to window and door openings. The original design intent is still clearly evident. Two lamps of a more recent vintage flank the central doorway.

A detached building (the Home Economics Building) is located to the north and behind the original structure. This building is visually connected by means of a semi-circular colonnade, included in the nomination.

An addition also adjoins the original structure to the rear, forming a slightly offset "T" shaped configuration. The southern side of the area formed by the intersection of the two structures has been designed as a patio area with tile fountain, benches brick patio, and an arched portico with balcony above. This addition is also designed in a style compatible with and similar to the original.

HOME ECONOMICS BUILDING (B) UTM: 11/377760/3744030 Acreage: 0.3

The Home Economics Building at Torrance High School is in Mediterranean styling with classical detailing. This building dates from 1923.

The two-story cast-in-place concrete structure exhibits bold rectilinear massing which gives it a strong monumental quality. The exterior walls are painted white while the hip roof is steeply pitched and uses red

*Note: Building letter designations are keyed to locations on site plan.

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CONTINUATION SHEET ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

Spanish clay tiles. The building is internally organized with a straightforward double-loaded corridor on both floors.

Ornamentation of the facades is restrained. An entablature is suggested where the walls and roof meet by two moulding-like rain gutters. The main northeast facade is composed in the 2:1:2 proportion. A large threeinch deep rectangular recess on either side of the entry accentuates this proportional system while modulating the wall surface. In the center of the facade, a seven-step staircase leads to a shallow portico of the Tuscan order. This portico is three feet deep with one free-standing column on either side of the doorway supporting an entablature. Two pilasters are shadowed behind the columns on the wall. The entablature supports a finial, rather than a pediment, located directly above each column. Above the portico there is a vertical rectangular window trimmed with a shouldered architrave and a balcony railing.

There is no ornament on the other three facades except for the rain gutter entablature. Fenestration consists of large vertical rectangular windows on the northwest and southeast facades. The southwest facade is proportioned in the same manner as the main northeast facade, but is missing a portico and surface articulation.

Alterations include sun control louvers and solar glass double doors and windows on the southeast fenestration. A building exit and steel staircase from the second floor were added to the southwest facade to conform to Uniform Building Code's requirements. While these alterations adversely affect the original design of the building, they are reversible.

TORRANCE HIGH SCHOOL ANNEX (TORRANCE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL) (K) UTM: 11/378000/ 3743690 Acreage: 1 The Torrance High School Annex is an L-shaped cast-in-place concrete acre structure. It is designed in an Italian Renaissance style and was completed incrementally between 1923 and 1925.

The two-story building has two virtually identical entrances located at the one-third points of its principal east facade. Each entrance is of a vertical proportion with a broad pilaster on either side of the doorway, supporting a simple entablature and pediment. Above each doorway is a vertical rectangular window without ornament. Fenestration is grouped into large horizontal rectangular segments separated by pilaster strips which run vertically the full height of the facade.

At the north end of the long, rectangular building, an auditorium extends to the west at 90 degrees to form the leg of the "L". This auditorium employs Palladian window motifs as opposed to rectilinear groupings, but is otherwise consistent with the rest of the building. It is, however, lower in height. The roof of both portions of the edifice

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use Spanish clay tile.

In the angle of the "L", there is a back door entrance which is indicated by a loggia. This loggia is built of simple wood post and beam construction.

The only apparent alteration to the building is the addition of horizontal galvanized metal louvers over all the windows on the east facade. This addition is virtually inconsistent with the rhythm and aesthetic principles of the entire building, but can be removed.

AUDITORIUM (ASSEMBLY HALL) (AUD) UTM: 11/377880/3743890 Acreage: 0.4

The Torrance High School Assembly Hall, completed in 1938, is an example of the PWA Moderne style, which was popular in the 1930's for public school buildings. The PWA Moderne style draws from the Zig Zag Moderne style of the 1920's, the Streamline Moderne of the early 1930's and the Neo-Classical style popular in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The structure is cast-in-place concrete painted white.

The main entrance to the Hall has a lintel with a stylized relief inscription supported by two piers forming three deep-set bays on the facade. Within each bay is a set of double doors which open into the hall's foyer. Above each doorway is a bas-relief, depicting stylized pedagogic scenes which are illuminated at night by an incandescent fixture concealed by an ornamental acanthus leaf. A corrugated architrave follows the upper edge of the walls, punctuated by engaged piers or pilasters, which suggest trabiated construction. The southwest and northwest walls of the foyer are actually quarter-cylinders which connect the principle volume of the foyer to the auditorium.

Fenestration consists of large vertical slits which are repeated throughout the building. In the foyer these slits are found in the quartercylinder elements and are glazed with transparent lites. In the auditorium volume these slits occur two-to-a-bay and are glazed with glass block. The Assembly Hall appears to be in general good repair, with the exception of some cracked and poorly matched replacement glass blocks.

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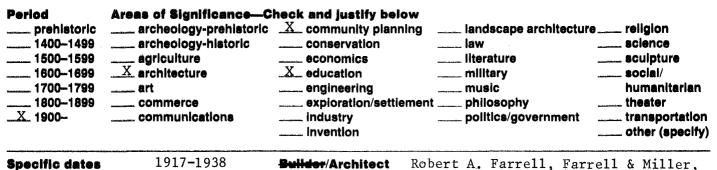
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CONTINUATION SHEET	ITEM NUMBER 7	page 4
Building	Label on Plot Plan	Date of Construction
*Main Building	(A)	1917
*Home Economics	(B)	1923
*Torrance High School Annex	(K)	1923
*Auditorium	(AUD)	1938
Classroom Bungalow	(C)	1952
Classroom Bungalow	(D)	1952
Classroom Bungalow	(E)	1952
Cafeteria	(CAFE)	1954
Administration Building	(G)	1963
Boys' Gymnasium	(I)	1936 (altered)
Girls' Gymnasium	(L)	1965
Science Building	(M)	1965
Industrial Arts Building	(N)	1965
Music Building	(J)	1966
Library	(X)	1970
Classroom Building	(Y)	1970

*Nominated buildings

8. Significance



Robert A. Farrell, Farrell & Miller, E. H. Cline, Wesley Eager

1 St. M.

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Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

TORRANCE HIGH SCHOOL

Summary

Torrance High School is significant as the oldest, and until 1955 the only, high school in Torrance. Since its opening in 1917, it has been in continuous use as an educational facility and has played a vital role in the City's development. The present high school campus was constructed over a 50-year period and today includes 16 buildings, 12 of which were built (or significantly and irreversibly altered) since 1950. Although the whole campus is discussed in this statement, only four buildings are singled out for nomination to the National Register: the Main Building (1917), the Home Economics Building (1923), the Torrance High School Annex (1923), and the Auditorium (1938).

Torrance High School is an impressive local landmark, occupying the most visible site in the expertly planned and landscaped downtown core area. Designed by the Olmsted Brothers of Boston, Massachusetts, the City of Torrance was conceived as a "modern garden-industrial city" by its developers. The Olmsteds' city plan, in conjunction with buildings designed by Irving J. Gill, the city's original architect, now classifies Torrance as one of a small handful of cities with auspicious origins in early "City" Beautiful" planning.

Torrance High School, the oldest high school in the city, has played a vital role in Torrance's development since its opening in 1917. Not only was it the first high school in Torrance, but it was the only one until 1955. It has been in continuous use through the years. Torrance Unified School District officials plan for the school to have a long and progressive future as part of Torrance's secondary educational system.

In the spring of 1916, the Torrance community made plans to develop a new school system to replace its several "one-room schoolhouse" facilities. As an inducement, they offered the Los Angeles City School Board a choice nine-acre site, at the end of El Prado, originally intended for a civic center. Because the property was reasonably priced, adjacent to a beauti-fully landscaped park, and because the community anticipated a student population of over 2,000 within a few years, the Los Angeles City School District purchased the land and, in 1917, constructed a new school building.

The Main Building (A) was opened to students as Torrance School in 1917. In 1921, a rear addition was constructed. In 1923, two new buildings were completed. One was an auditorium and the other a structure now known as the Home Economics Building (B).

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Attachment A

Acreage of nominated property _	2.2			
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JMT References			udulian	
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Verbal boundary description campus is shown as nominated buildings on Attachment D. 	the red line s within the	e on Attach campus com	ment B. The plex are marke	
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When completed, the school complex included thirty classrooms, an auditorium, "assessory compartments", laboratories for the physical and natural sciences, shops, and home economics facilities. In 1923, after Torrance Elementarv School was built, on the property, the original Torrance School was converted into a high school. A three-fold instructional program offered regular academic and commercial courses together with shop, mechanical drawing, sewing, and agriculture.

The first auditorium was destroyed by an earthquake in 1933. It was replaced in 1938 with a WPA Moderne structure (AUD) designed by Wesley Eager. The Boys' Gymnasium (I), designed by the same architect, was built in 1936. (It was significantly and irreversibly altered in 1965 and again, after a fire, in 1970.) Three classroom bungalows (C, D, and E) were added in 1952. A cafeteria (CAFE) was built in 1954.

From 1950 to 1970, the population of Torrance grew from 22,241 to 134,584. During this period, the school age population multiplied eightfold, from 4,515 to 36,504. By the early 1960's, three more high schools had been built in Torrance. Still more space was needed. An expansion program was begun. From 1963 to 1970, Torrance High School facilities were expanded to nearly two and a half times their previous size, from approximately 110,000 square feet to about 260,000 square feet of floor space.

The Administration Building (G) was built in 1963. The same year the Torrance Elementary School building (K), built in 1923, was annexed to the high school after 40 years' continuous use as an elementary school.

The Girls' Gymnasium (L), the Science Building (M), and a new Industrial Arts Building (N) were built in 1965. At the same time additions were made to the Boys' Gymnasium.

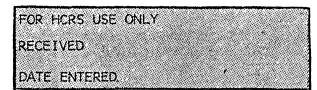
In 1966, the Music Building (J) was built. In 1970, a Library (X) and a classroom building with an adjoining wing (Y) were built. To make room for these two new buildings, an old Gymnasium, built in 1926, and an old Industrial Arts building, constructed in 1929, were demolished. (The location of these two former buildings, designed by A.S. Nibecker, is marked with a broken blue line on the plot plan.)

Although the Torrance High School campus has undergone considerable changes since its inception in 1917, it remains an important place in the city. The historic significance of the campus is expressed in the remaining original structures, especially in the Main Building and attached Home Economics Building.

The location of Torrance High School, in relation to the older downtown Torrance community, is of particular importance. The City of Torrance is FHR-8-300A (11/78)

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one of a handful of planned communities in the United States and was first envisioned as a model garden-industrial city by its founders. The original city plans were designed by the Olmsted Brothers of Boston, Massachusetts, sons of the celebrated landscape architect Frederic Law Olmsted.

The Olmsteds' plan called for the separation of residential, industrial, and commercial sectors. A long boulevard, the El Prado, divided the downtown business district extending through the residential area as a common. It was aligned to frame M^t. San Antonio and the San Gabriel Mountains fifty miles to the northeast. Two buildings were planned to face each other across this impressive stretch of parkway: the railroad depot and the city hall. The city hall was never built on this site; instead, Torrance School was situated on the most scenic parcel in the downtown area. Because of the new construction described above, the few remaining early structures are dispersed throughout the campus and are being nominated individually in a limited thematic format. MAIN BUILDING (A) Architect: ROBERT ALLEN FARRELL The Main Building was the first, and originally the only, building of Torrance High School. Named Torrance School and accommodating students from kindergarten through the twelfth grade, it opened on September 11, 1917, and was completed December 23, 1917. Constructed at a cost of \$34,230, it was designed to readily incorporate future additions. It provided seven classrooms, a principal's office, and a makeshift auditorium which could be improvised by sliding partitions between the kindergarten and primary rooms.

In 1921, a rear addition designed by E.H. Cline was built at a cost of \$38,849. Later referred to as the "Senior Patio," the addition included a brick patio with a tile fountain and benches. A long-standing tradition dictates that only Seniors (12th grade students) are permitted to congregate or cross the site. Two one-story wings were also added to the building.

Beginning in 1974, major rehabilitation and restoration work totalling over two million dollars was focused on the Main Building, preserving and enhancing the building's unique architecture.

HOME ECONOMICS BUILDING (B) Architects: Farrell and Miller

The Home Economics Building was added to the school as part of a \$200,000 construction program begun in 1922. At that time, the school population was only 537 students - an increase of 114 in one year - but a campaign to build 3,000 new homes to house Torrance factory workers promised a much larger influx of students in the near future. The Los Angeles City School District purchased 17 adjoining acres of land and contracted with Farrell and Miller to design two additional buildings for the school.

The whole project included two separate structures, one to the east of the Main Building and one to the west, each connected to the Main Building with a

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colonnade. The east building was an auditorium. The one on the west was the present Home Economics Building.

In 1933, an earthquake so damaged the Auditorium and the eastern colonnade that they had to be demolished. The Home Economics Building and the colonnade connecting it to the Main Building were unaffected and remain intact and well-preserved today.

Architect: TORRANCE HIGH SCHOOL ANNEX (Torrance Elementary School)(K) E.H. Cline

The Torrance High School Annex, some 800 feet south of the Main Building, was built in 1923 as the Torrance Elementary School. The architect was E.H. Cline, who also designed the rear addition to the Main Building. Before it opened, Torrance School (the present Torrance High School) accommodated both elementary and high school students. In 1923, with the opening of the new elementary school for kindergarten through sixth grade students, Torrance School was renamed Torrance High School.

In 1963, the Torrance Elementary School building became part of the high school . . . Its two-story design was now considered inappropriate for elementary school use, and the high school needed additional classroom space. The Board of Education built a new elementary school facility nearby, and the old 1923 building was annexed to the high school. It was renamed Torrance High School Annex and became an integral part of the high school campus.

For 40 years this building was in continuous use as an elementary school. Up until the 1950's, it was one of only four elementary schools in the city. Two of the other three were subsequently demolished. The third, similar in style to the Torrance Elementary School, was completed in 1932. Thus, although the Torrance High School Annex is not used as an elementary school at present, it is the oldest remaining elementary school building in the city.

AUDITORIUM (Assembly Hall) (AUD) Architect: Wesley Eager

The old auditorium at Torrance High School was irreparably damaged by an earthquake in 1933. It was demolished, along with the colonnade connecting it to the Main Building.

In the fall of 1938, a new auditorium, designed by Wesley Eager, opened on the campus. The Torrance Herald's special edition, "Torrance on the Air," published September 15, 1938, praised the new building:

"The outstanding addition to school properties this year will be the new \$100,700 high school assembly hall which will seat some 700. This building, now in the final stages of construc-

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tion, will probably be ready for use late in October. It will be equipped with the latest apparatus for stage productions and decorated in the modern manner. A sunken garden will connect the assembly hall with the present high school campus."

The newspaper predicted that the new auditorium, described as functional and beautiful, would become "one of the show places of the city."

Until the 1950's, the high school auditorium was the only hall in Torrance with a large enough space and properly equipped to hold concerts and theatrical productions. It had state-of-the-art lighting, sound, and stage equipment. Thus, it was used not only by the high school, but regularly for productions sponsored by community groups in Torrance.

In 1974, when the Main Building was being rehabilitated and restored, a WPA mural painted in the library was in danger of being destroyed. People responsible for maintaining the building noted that it was being damaged by the work in progress. With some difficulty, they mounted the mural on plywood and moved it to the auditorium. An art teacher at the school restored the damaged sections of the mural. It hangs in the auditorium today, bearing the inscription: "A. Katharine Skeele, WPA Federal Art Project #36."

Although less than 50 years of age, the auditorium is an integral part of the Torrance School complex. It is one of only two examples of its type and period in the community. Both the auditorium and the Torrance Post Office (1936) are excellent examples of the PWA Moderne and would appear to be exceptional when viewed in the local architectural context.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTIONS

Boundaries are lines of convenience which encompass the historic resources and significant associated features.

Main Building (A)

Beginning at the east corner of the Main Building and proceeding northwest 275 feet to the north corner of the Main Building, then turning left and proceeding 25 feet southwest to the colonnade connecting the Main Building to the Home Economics Building, then proceeding 85 feet in a westward curve around the outside of the colonnade to the Home Economics Building, then turning left and proceeding 2 feet to the corner of the Home Economics Building, then turning right and proceeding southwest 100 feet along the side of the Home Economics Building to a point directly opposite the rear end of the Main Building, then turning left and proceeding 325 feet southeast across the landscaped area between the Home Economics Building and the Main Building, across the rear end of the Main Building and the landscaped area directly to the south of it, to a point directly opposite the southeast side of the Main Building, then turning left and proceeding 175 feet northeast across the landscaped area and the southeast side of the building, back to the starting point.

Home Economics Building (B)

Beginning at the east corner of the Home Economics Building and proceeding northwest 62 feet then turning left and proceeding 115 feet southwest along the side of the building, then turning left and proceeding southeast 62 feet across the rear of the building, then turning left and proceeding northeast 115 feet along the side of the building to the starting point.

Auditorium/Assembly Hall (AUD)

Starting at the east corner of the building and proceeding northwest 175 feet to the north corner of the building, turning left and proceeding southwest 90 feet across the front of the building, to the west corner of the building, turning left and proceeding 165 feet southeast to the south corner, then turning left and proceeding northeast 90 feet across the back of the building, thus returning to the starting point.

Torrance High School Annex (K)

Beginning at the southwest corner of the building and proceeding 90 feet east, then turning left and proceeding north 365 feet across the front of the building, then turning left and proceeding 175 feet west, then turning left again and proceeding 50 feet south across the end of this wing of the building, then turning left and proceeding 75 feet east, then turning right and proceeding 315 feet across the rear of the building back to the starting point.

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

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 11 PAGE 1

FORM PREPARED BY:

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DATE ENTERED.

February 12, 1983

RECEIVED

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

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date entered

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nuation sheet	Item number Multiple Resource Thematic Group		Page 1 al/ dnr-11
Name Torrance High S	chool Campus Thematic Re		
State California	LA County		
Nomination/Type of Review	7		Date/Signature
1. Home Economics Building	Substantive Review	Keeper	Linda helland 10.
2. Auditorium	Substantive Neview	Attest Keeper	Junda Mc Clelland 101
		Attest	
3. Torrance School	Substantive Review	Keeper	Jinda McChilland 10:13
4. Main Building	Marie Leine of the State	Attest Keeper	Linda he Cle land 10.7
		Attest	
5.		Keeper	
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6.		Keeper	
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8.		Keeper	
		Attest	
9.		Keeper	
		Attest	
10.		Keeper	

Attest

OMB No. 1024-0018 Exp. 10-31-84