

Phase I Preservation Planning Study
-Historical Resource Survey

San Diego State Normal School Campus
& San Diego City Schools
Historic Education Complex
(P-37-016203)



Urbana Preservation & Planning
February 2009

Page **2** of 4 *Resource Name or # San Diego Normal School / San Diego City Schools Historic Education Complex
 *Recorded by: Wendy L. Tinsley Becker, Principal: Urbana Preservation & Planning
 *Date recorded: December 2008 Continuation Update

Historical Overview

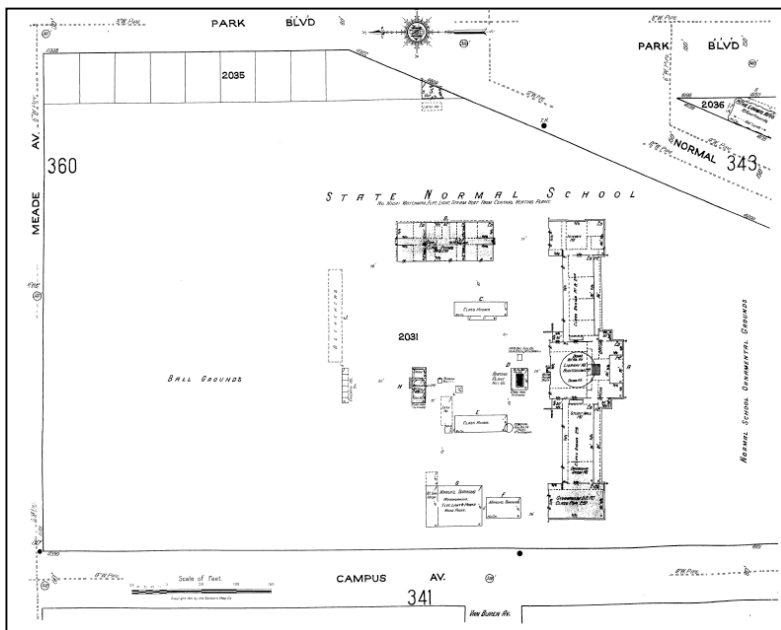
The San Diego Normal School / San Diego City Schools Education Complex was initially developed in 1887-1888 as part of a campaign to construct the San Diego College of Arts & Letters of the Los Angeles based University of Southern California by the College Hill Land Association (CHLA) a syndicate of real estate speculators led by William Choate. Lot sales of the University Heights land subdivision commenced in December 1887 and soon thereafter construction efforts were initiated which included pouring of the foundation and installation of the University building's cornerstone. Construction efforts, however, were brief with lagging lot sales resultant from an economic downturn, and by the early 1890s, construction efforts permanently ceased, leaving the CHLA property vacant until the turn-of-the-century.



A second campaign to bring a permanent institution of higher learning to San Diego was initiated in 1897 when the State of California requested design proposals for a \$100,000 school building that would serve as the San Diego Normal School, a training facility for elementary school teachers. The Normal School was established in March of 1897 housed in temporary quarters in Downtown San Diego where 17 faculty members and 91 students met regularly until the permanent campus was completed. Drawings prepared by San Diego architects William Hebbard and Irving Gill were selected, with full drawings approved in March of 1898. Construction commenced immediately with the cornerstone installed on December 10, 1898 and the completed building dedicated on December 10, 1899. Hebbard & Gill were again commissioned by the San Diego State Normal School to prepare plans for the east and west wings of the Normal School; both wings were completed in 1904.

In 1910 the Teachers Training Annex to the San Diego State Normal School was completed under the design and direction of civil engineer Nathan Ellery who served as the head of the State of California Department of Engineering. Constructed at the cost of \$50,000 in the Italian Renaissance Revival style, the two-story with basement Teachers Training Annex was utilized as a training laboratory wherein student teachers were observed as they provided instruction to school-age children. A smaller Period Revival building was constructed in 1922 for use as the San Diego Normal School Drafting Classroom & Men's Locker Room. This two-story building exhibits similar design features as those employed at the Teachers training Building including a

rectilinear plan, a hipped roof, and revival details attributed to Spanish, Mediterranean and Classical Revival/Beaux Arts buildings including mid-level ovolo coursing and second-level disappearing pilasters with a minimal Tuscan Order entablature.



1921 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map for San Diego (sheet 351) showing the layout of the State Normal School campus. At the time of the 1921 Sanborn survey the campus was developed with eight buildings and structures including the 1898 Classical Revival style building which housed a first floor library and second floor auditorium under the central block with two floor of classrooms and a ground floor kitchen at the east wing and two floor classrooms and study hall and a two-level gymnasium comprising the basement and ground floor of the west wing; the 1910 Teachers Training Annex; two separate single-story classroom buildings sited north of the Normal School; two single-story manual training buildings fronting Campus Avenue and north of the Normal School; a heating plant; and a grain and tool storage structure with a second-level

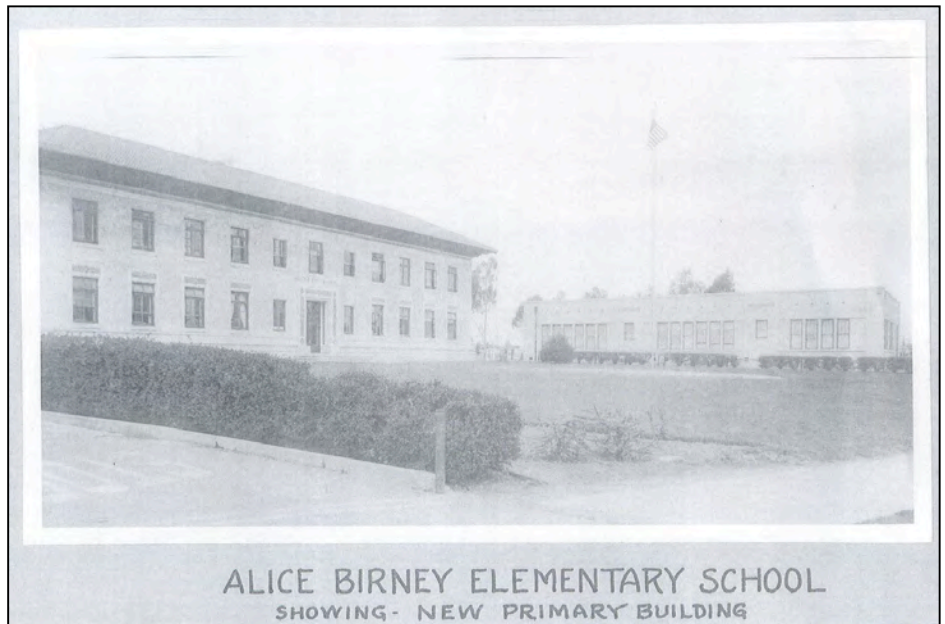
observatory. A chicken house and bleachers lined the south side of the ball grounds that comprised the northern half of the property along Meade and Campus Avenues.

Page 3 of 4 *Resource Name or # San Diego Normal School / San Diego City Schools Historic Education Complex
*Recorded by: Wendy L. Tinsley Becker, Principal: Urbana Preservation & Planning
*Date recorded: December 2008 Continuation Update

In 1930 San Diego State College opened at its newly constructed campus built in a Spanish Revival style on a mesa overlooking Mission Valley. With the College's departure from its original campus, the vacant education buildings were opened to occupants that continued the educational use. In 1931 the Alice Birney School opened at the 1910 Teachers Training Building and Horace Mann Junior High School moved into the 1898 Normal School Building. The Alice Birney School remained at the Teachers Training Building until approximately 1951-1952 when the campus for the new Alice Birney Elementary School campus was completed at the west/northwest quadrant of the Normal School property along Campus Avenue. Horace Mann Junior High School remained at the old Normal School building until the early 1950s, and during its occupancy period, commissioned the construction of additional buildings at the campus including the Domestic Science Hall & Band Room in 1936 designed by architect William Wheeler, the Girl's Showers & Locker Room in 1936 (approximate) and also likely by William Wheeler, as well as the Teachers Cafeteria Building completed in the 1940s. While based from the old Teachers Training Building the Alice Birney School sought funds from the United States Works Progress Administration to construct a Kindergarten Building adjacent to the 1910 annex. Completed in 1936, the building is also speculatively attributed to architect William Wheeler who completed designs for the neighboring Horace Mann Junior High School.

Historic Photograph of the Alice Birney Elementary School showing the newly constructed Kindergarten Building identified in the image as the new primary building.

*Photo Courtesy of the Alice Birney Elementary School Archives.
Photo Date: 1936.*



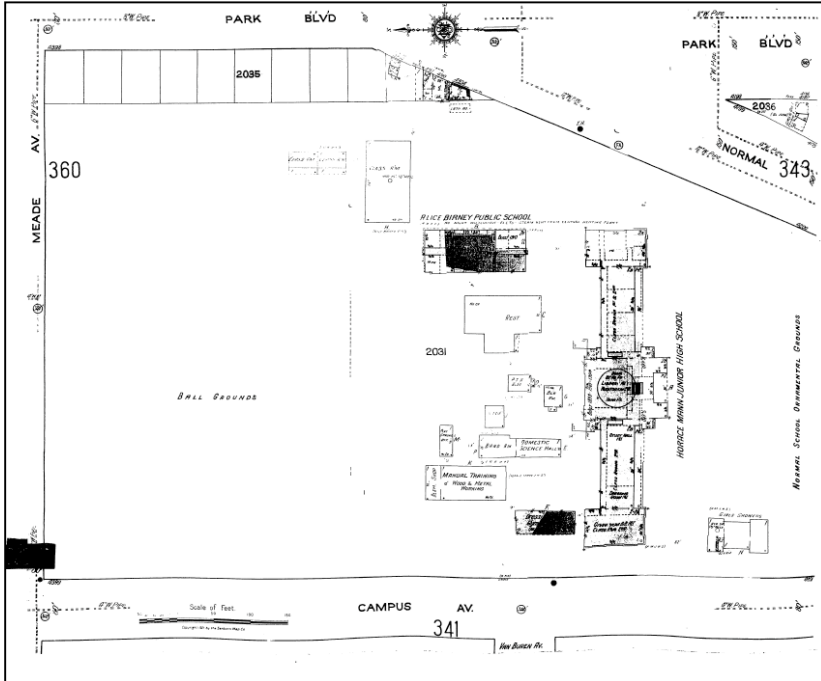
Extant bronze placard mounted at the southwest corner (north elevation) of the Alice Birney School Kindergarten Building inscribed "Built By United States Works Progress Administration 1936".

Avenue, making the 1910 Teachers Training Building and 1936 Kindergarten Building available to San Diego City Schools for educational administration purposes. With a focus on progress San Diego City Schools sought plans for a new education center on the south lawns of the old Normal School's ornamental grounds. Designed by master architect Clyde Hufbauer, the new International Style education center was completed in 1953.

The Alice Birney Elementary School constructed in 1951-1952 and designed by master architect Clyde Hufbauer.



Page **4** of 4 *Resource Name or # San Diego Normal School / San Diego City Schools Historic Education Complex
 *Recorded by: Wendy L. Tinsley Becker, Principal: Urbana Preservation & Planning
 *Date recorded: December 2008 Continuation Update

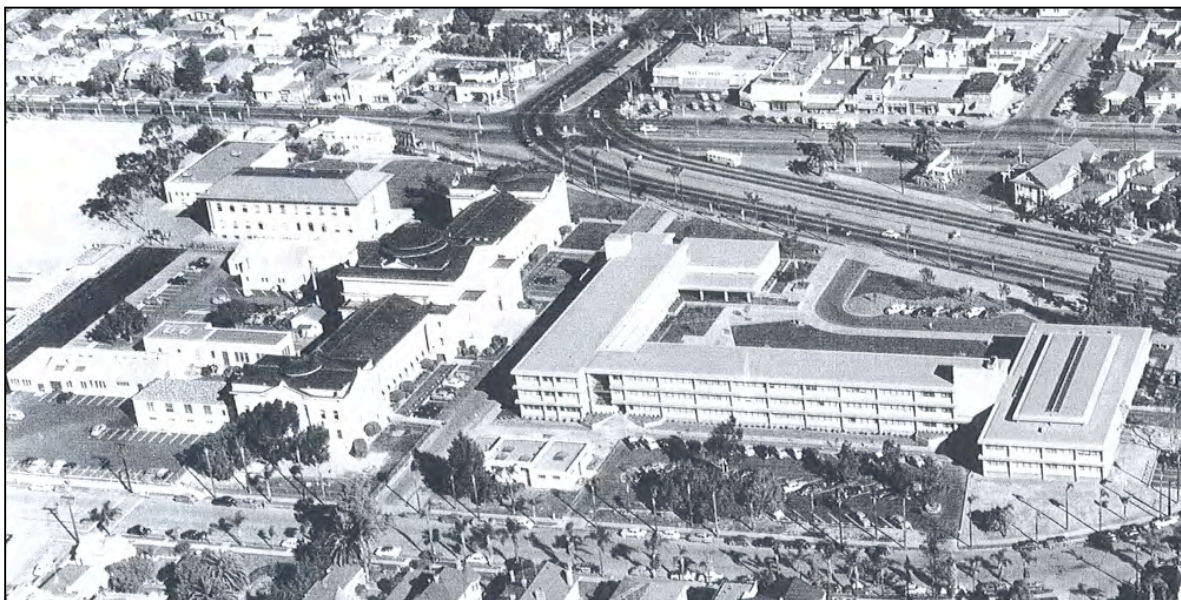


1950 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map for San Diego (sheet 351) showing the layout old State Normal School campus, which was then occupied by the Horace Mann Junior High School and the Alice Birney Public School. Multiple construction campaigns were completed at the campus between 1921 and 1950 including removal of the two classroom buildings sited north of the old Normal School; removal of the two manual training buildings along Campus Avenue; removal of the heating plant and grain/tool storage/observatory structure; and construction of a new manual training building, new band room and science hall, new drafting room and men's locker room, boiler room, PTA Building, cafeteria building, and two classroom buildings.

For a brief period the modern education center sat adjacent to the historic complex of college buildings, creating a brief snapshot of San Diego's education, social, and architectural history from the turn-of-the-century to the modern-period. By 1955, however, the monumental Normal School building had been demolished. Citing safety

issues and a lack of compliance with building and fire codes, primarily due to the building auditorium's second floor location, San Diego City Schools elected to raze the historic college building.

From the 1950s forward the historic Normal School campus has served as an education complex for San Diego City Schools and the San Diego Unified School District with extant historic buildings from the Normal School (1898/1910-1930) and Horace Mann (1931-ca.1951) periods of occupation housing additional education and learning programs as well as administrative support uses to the school district.



Aerial image showing the newly constructed Education Center adjacent to the Normal School building and extant contributing properties constructed from 1910 thru 1953. The Normal School was demolished in 1955.

Page **1** of **3**

*NRHP Status Code: 5D

*Resource Name or # San Diego Normal School / San Diego City Schools Historic Education Complex

D1. Historic Name: San Diego Normal School / San Diego City Schools Historic Education Complex **D2. Common Name:** Same

***D3. Detailed Description** (Discuss overall coherence of the district, its setting, visual characteristics, and minor features. List all elements of district.):

The San Diego Normal School / San Diego City Schools Historic Education Complex was developed from the 1890s through the 1950s, with the 1898 State Normal School Building designed by architects William Hebbard and Irving Gill serving as an anchor to the campus until its demolition in 1953-1955. As occupancy and ownership changed from the San Diego Normal School/State Teachers College (1898-1931), to Horace Mann Junior High School (1931-1951/1952), to Alice Birney Elementary School (1930-1951/1952), and to the present owner-occupant San Diego City Schools/San Diego Unified School District (ca. 1950-present), classroom and educational support buildings of varying levels of significance and eligibility have been constructed in almost every decade of the approximate fifty-year period of significance for this property. Today the property is comprised of seven permanent structures built between approximately 1910 and 1953 that contribute to the significance of the property as a local historic district. These contributing features are identified as:

- the National Register listed San Diego Normal School Teachers Training Building (1910 – State of California, Nathan Ellery),
- the San Diego Normal School Drafting Classroom & Men’s Locker Room (1922 – unknown architect possibly Nathan Ellery),
- the Alice Birney Elementary School Kindergarten Building (1936 – master architect William Wheeler),
- the Horace Mann Jr. High School Domestic Science Hall & Band Room (1936 – master architect William Wheeler),
- the Horace Mann Jr. High School Girl’s Showers & Locker Room (ca. 1936 – possibly master architect William Wheeler),
- the Alice Birney Elementary School (1951/1952 – master architect Clyde Hufbauer), and
- the San Diego City Schools Eugene Brucker Education Center (1953 – master architect Clyde Hufbauer).

***D4. Boundary Description** (Describe limits of district and attach map showing boundary and district elements.): The San Diego Normal School / San Diego City Schools Historic Education Complex comprises one irregular swath of land bound by Campus Avenue to the west, Meade Avenue to the north, Park Boulevard to the east, and Normal Street to south.

***D5. Boundary Justification:** The boundary for the San Diego Normal School / San Diego City Schools Historic Education Complex comprises all sites developed and historic-era buildings constructed to house education uses by the San Diego State Normal School, the Horace Mann Junior High School, the Alice Birney Public School, and San Diego City Schools from 1898 & 1910 through 1953. The buildings identified as historic contributing elements to the education complex prove to create a clearly defineable area connected physically in plan (although deteriorated through lack of cohesive landscaping and installation of surface parking lots) and in chronological periods and styles of architecture. The contributing buildings that comprise the complex also maintain historical thematic associations as the earliest extant educational complex for higher learning in San Diego originally anchored by the State Normal School the predecessor of present-day San Diego State University (the flagship school in the California State University system), and which later served as the campus for the Horace Mann Junior High School, and the Alice Birney Public School until the present owner and occupant, San Diego City Schools, acquired the property and completed a development campaign resulting in the education center that is generally regarded as the iconic example of the International style of architecture in San Diego.

***D6. Significance:** Theme: Education, Architecture, & Community Development Area: San Diego & University Heights

Period of Significance: c.1898/1910 - c.1953 Applicable Criteria: City of San Diego (Local Register) 1/A, 2/B, 3/C, 4/D, 5/E, & 6/F.

This historic campus and education complex represents a half-century of American and San Diego architectural and social history visually conveying the distinctive characteristics of the Italian Renaissance Revival, Period Revival, Art Moderne/Streamline, Mid-Century Modernism, and the International styles. The contributing buildings within the historic complex and thematic phases of development at the property represent a continuum of professional work by a group of San Diego based architects who today are regarded as Masters including William Hebbard, Irving Gill, William Wheeler, and Clyde Hufbauer, as well as the United States Works Progress Administration, a New Deal program that provided for the design and construction of notable civic buildings throughout San Diego. Additionally the historic campus served as the anchor of neighborhood development and land subdivision efforts in San Diego including the University Heights and Normal Heights subdivisions; both of which were developed as first ring suburbs accessible from streetcar lines that today feature many significant historic commercial and residential buildings.

As a finite group of resources related to one another in a clearly distinguishable way and as a geographically defineable area containing special character, historic interest and aesthetic value which represents multiple architectural periods of development, the San Diego Normal School/San Diego City Schools Historic Education Complex appears to be eligible for inclusion on the City of San Diego Historical Resources Register under criterion 6/F. The San Diego Normal School/San Diego City Schools Historic Education Complex is also comprised of three buildings that appear to be individually eligible for listing on the City of San Diego Historical Resources Register including:

- the 1910 National Register listed San Diego Normal School Teachers Training Building (Nathan Ellery) – Local Register criterion 1/A, 3/C, & 5/E.
- the 1936 Alice Birney Elementary School Kindergarten Building (William Wheeler) – Local Register criterion 1/A, 2/B, 3/C, & potentially 4/D.
- the 1953 San Diego City Schools Eugene Brucker Education Center (Clyde Hufbauer) – Local Register criterion 1/A, 3/C & 4/D.

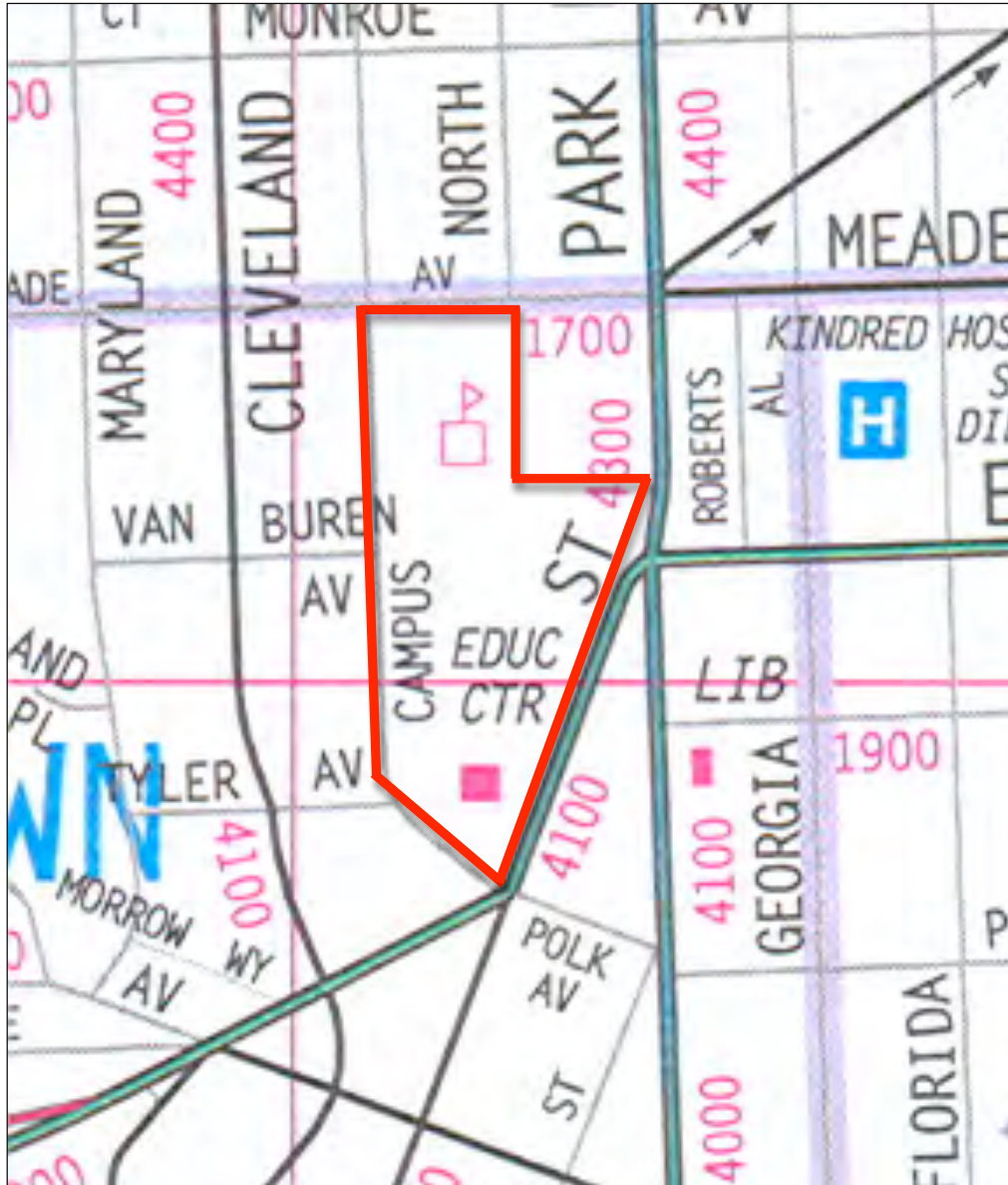
All of the contributing buildings observed at the property are in need of varying degrees of exterior rehabilitation and provide excellent opportunity for adaptive reuse; all buildings are currently occupied by a daily use except for the 1910 National Register listed Teachers Training Building. Also observed at the property are additional non-contributing, temporary facilities in the form of portable structures that house a variety of educational-administrative support needs.

***D7. References:** (1) University Heights Community Development Corporation, (2) National Register Nomination for the San Diego Normal School Teachers Training Building – prepared by Alex Bevil, (3) San Diego Historical Society Research Archives, (4) City of San Diego Central Library – California History Room, (and 5) Teachers Training Building Historical Significance Assessment & Adaptive Reuse Analysis (2004) – prepared by City of San Diego & Fields Devereaux Architects & Engineers.

***D8. Evaluator:** Wendy L. Tinsley Becker, AICP, Principal Historian & Preservation Planner: Urbana Preservation & Planning Date: December 2008

Page **2** of **3** *Resource Name or # San Diego Normal School / San Diego City Schools Historic Education Complex
*Recorded by: Wendy L. Tinsley Becker, Principal: Urbana Preservation & Planning
*Date recorded: December 2008 Continuation (of District Record) Update

Site Location Map – S.D.N.S./S.D.C.S. Historic Education Complex & Historic District



The site/district is bound by Meade Avenue to the north, Campus Avenue to the west, the intersection of Campus Avenue & Normal Street to the south, and the intersection of Normal Street, El Cajon Boulevard & Park Boulevard to the east.

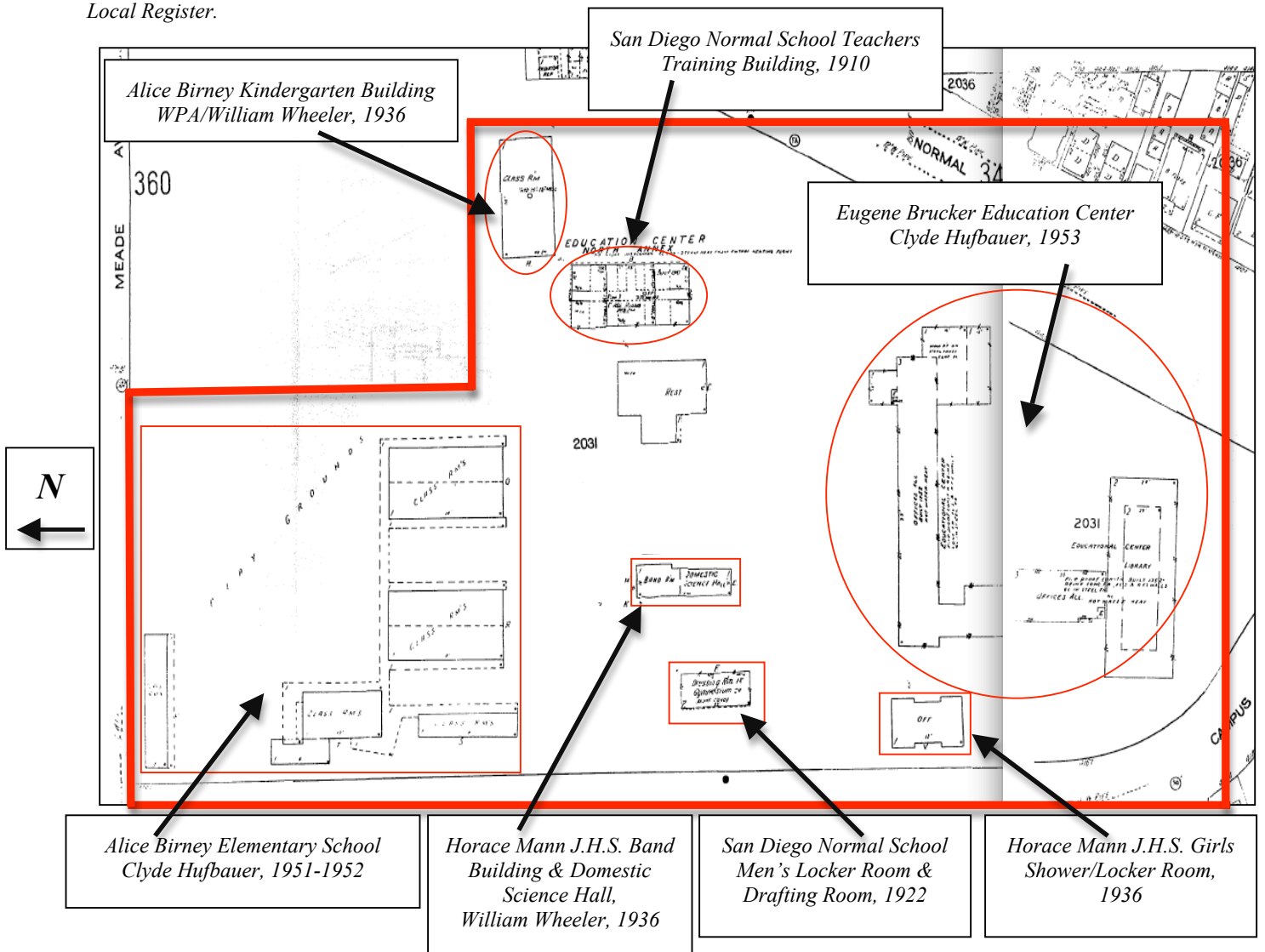
Page **3** of **3** *Resource Name or # San Diego Normal School / San Diego City Schools Historic Education Complex
 *Recorded by: Wendy L. Tinsley Becker, Principal: Urbana Preservation & Planning
 *Date recorded: December 2008 Continuation (of District Record) Update

District Map – Boundary Justification

The boundary for the San Diego Normal School / San Diego City Schools Historic Education Complex comprises all sites developed and historic-era buildings constructed to house education uses by the San Diego State Normal School, the Horace Mann Junior High School, the Alice Birney Public/Elementary School, and San Diego City Schools from 1898 & 1910 through 1953. The buildings identified as historic contributing elements to the education complex prove to create a clearly defineable area connected physically in plan (although somewhat deteriorated through lack of cohesive landscaping and installation of surface parking lots) and in chronological periods and styles of architecture. The contributing buildings that comprise the complex also maintain historical thematic associations as the earliest extant educational complex for higher learning in San Diego originally anchored by the State Normal School the predecessor of present-day San Diego State University (the flagship school in the California State University system), and which later served as the campus for the Horace Mann Junior High School, and the Alice Birney Public School until the present owner and occupant, San Diego City Schools, acquired the property and completed a development campaign resulting in the education center that is generally regarded as the iconic example of the International style of architecture in San Diego.

**Properties circled in red demarcate district contributors that are also individually listed or appear to be eligible for individual designation under the criteria of the City of San Diego Historical Resources Register (Local Register).*

**Properties outlined in red squares demarcate contributing properties that do not appear to be individually eligible for inclusion on the Local Register.*



State of California — The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
PRIMARY RECORD

Primary#: P-37-016203
HRI#: _____
Trinomial #: N/A
NRHP Status Code: 5D3
Other Listings: _____

Review Code _____ Reviewer _____ Date _____

Page 1 of 1 *Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) Horace Mann Junior High School Domestic Science & Band Building
P1. Other Identifier: San Diego Unified School District Normal Street Complex – Annex 3

*P2. Location: Not for Publication Unrestricted

*a. County San Diego

*b. USGS 7.5' Quad: La Jolla Date: 1975 T: _____ R: _____; 1/4 of 1/4 of Sec; _____ B.M. _____

c. Address: 4345 Campus Avenue City: San Diego Zip: 92116

d. UTM: (Give more than one for large and/or linear resources) Zone 11, _____ E / _____ N

e. Other Locational Data: (e.g., parcel #, directions to resource, elevation, etc., as appropriate)
University Heights Subdivision (Map 558)

*P3a. Description: (Describe resource and its major elements. Include design, materials, condition, alterations, size, setting, and boundaries)

This single-story building was designed in a Moderne style by master architect William Wheeler. Constructed in 1936 and 1937 the building features a rectilinear plan comprised of two volumes, each featuring unadorned wall surfaces, a plain bulkhead defined by a concrete base and coursing at the lower wall section, tall double sash windows with narrow multi-lite divides ganged in groups of two or three which span the height of the central wall section defined by additional coursing. Ornamental vents are aligned horizontally in the bulkhead and in the frieze around the facade. Principal entries appear to be at the south elevation and feature double metal doors surmounted by fixed transoms with narrow five-lite divides. Overall the building exterior appears to be in good condition. The interior was not observed.

The building appears to be a significant and contributing element to the San Diego Normal School/San Diego City Schools Historic Education Complex that appears to be eligible for recognition as a local historic district and for designation under City of San Diego eligibility criterion 6/F.

*P3b. Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes) HP15 Educational Building(s)

*P4. Resources Present: Building Structure Object Site District Element of District Other (Isolates, etc.)



P5b. Description of Photo:
(View, date, accession #)

Westerly view

Photo Date: October 2008

*P6. Date Constructed/Age and Source:

Historic, 1936

Prehistoric

Both

*P7. Owner and Address:

San Diego Unified School District

4345 Campus Avenue

San Diego, CA 92116

*P8. Recorded by:

(Name, affiliation, and address)

Wendy L. Tinsley, Becker, AICP, Principal Historian & Preservation Planner

Urbana Preservation & Planning

3525 4th Avenue, San Diego, CA 92103, 619-543-0693/Phone

248 3rd Street #841, Oakland, CA 94607, 510-663-7443/Phone

*P9. Date Recorded: December 2008

*P10. Survey Type: (Describe) Historic Resource Survey

*P11. Report Citation: (Cite survey report and other sources, or enter "none.")

Urbana Preservation & Planning, *Historical Resource Survey – San Diego Normal School Campus*, February 2009.

*Attachments: NONE Location Map Continuation Sheet Building, Structure, and Object Record

Archaeological Record District Record Linear Feature Record Milling Station Record Rock Art Record Artifact Record

Photograph Record Other (List): _____

State of California — The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
PRIMARY RECORD

Primary#: P-37-016203
HRI#: _____
Trinomial #: N/A
NRHP Status Code: 5D3
Other Listings: _____

Review Code _____ Reviewer _____ Date _____

Page 1 of 1 *Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) Alice Birney Elementary School

P1. Other Identifier: San Diego Unified School District Normal Street Complex – Annex 3

*P2. Location: Not for Publication Unrestricted

*a. County San Diego

*b. USGS 7.5' Quad: La Jolla Date: 1975 T: _____ R: _____; 1/4 of 1/4 of Sec; _____ B.M. _____

c. Address: 4345 Campus Avenue City: San Diego Zip: 92116

d. UTM: (Give more than one for large and/or linear resources) Zone 11, _____ E / _____ N

e. Other Locational Data: (e.g., parcel #, directions to resource, elevation, etc., as appropriate)
University Heights Subdivision (Map 558)

*P3a. Description: (Describe resource and its major elements. Include design, materials, condition, alterations, size, setting, and boundaries)

Master architect Clyde Hufbauer designed this single-story complex of school buildings in a Modern style. Constructed in 1951-1952 the elementary school features approximately four rectilinear classroom buildings dating to the mid-century, and a square volume at the northwest corner of the westernmost classroom that serves as the front office and administrative center for the campus. All original mid-century buildings are sited along the southern portion of the property, with two newly constructed buildings (a single-story library and two-story classroom building) situated at the north property line along Meade Avenue. Asphalt surface play lots are located in the center of the property between the historic-era and recent buildings. The eastern section of the campus historically served as the shared-use ball fields for the San Diego Normal School, then Horace Mann Jr. High School, and the Alice Birney School. Today it is un-landscaped dirt and gravel, although the playground is intended for turf cover in the near future.

The mid-century portion of the Alice Birney campus appears to be a significant and contributing element to the San Diego Normal School/San Diego City Schools Historic Education Complex that appears to be eligible for recognition as a local historic district and for designation under City of San Diego eligibility criterion 6/F.

*P3b. Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes) HP15 Educational Building(s)

*P4. Resources Present: Building Structure Object Site District Element of District Other (Isolates, etc.)



P5b. Description of Photo:

(View, date, accession #)

Westerly view

Photo Date: October 2008

*P6. Date Constructed/Age and Source:

Historic, 1951-1952

Prehistoric

Both

*P7. Owner and Address:

San Diego Unified School District

4345 Campus Avenue

San Diego, CA 92116

*P8. Recorded by:

(Name, affiliation, and address)

Wendy L. Tinsley, Becker, AICP, Principal Historian & Preservation Planner

Urbana Preservation & Planning

3525 4th Avenue, San Diego, CA 92103, 619-543-0693/Phone

248 3rd Street #841, Oakland, CA 94607, 510-663-7443/Phone

*P9. Date Recorded: December 2008

*P10. Survey Type: (Describe) Historic Resource Survey

*P11. Report Citation: (Cite survey report and other sources, or enter "none.")

Urbana Preservation & Planning, *Historical Resource Survey – San Diego Normal School Campus*, February 2009.

*Attachments: NONE Location Map Continuation Sheet Building, Structure, and Object Record

Archaeological Record District Record Linear Feature Record Milling Station Record Rock Art Record Artifact Record

Photograph Record Other (List):

END