



Elizabeth Learning Center

Historical Resources Evaluation Report

prepared for

Los Angeles Unified School District
Office of Environmental Health and Safety
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1 Executive Summary

Rincon Consultants, Inc. (Rincon) was retained by the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) to complete a historical resources evaluation of the Elizabeth Learning Center campus (Elizabeth Street School, subject campus), located at 4811 Elizabeth Street, Cudahy, California. Although the school was initially developed in 1923, the oldest extant building dates to 1932. The campus has undergone continual redevelopment since this time and the campus currently contains 16 permanent and 22 portable buildings and structures.

This evaluation was prepared to inform future planning efforts and to facilitate compliance with LAUSD's cultural resource policies and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), which requires lead agencies to consider the impacts of proposed projects on historical resources. All work completed as part of the current effort was conducted in accordance with the requirements of CEQA and applicable local regulations. The current study included background research, an intensive-level field survey, and preparation of this Historical Resources Evaluation Report.

Based on the current study, the Elizabeth Learning Center campus is recommended ineligible for federal or state designation under any applicable criteria. Although the campus was originally developed in the context of pre-1933 Long Beach earthquake schools in greater Los Angeles, only one building, the Administrative Building, is extant from this early time period. This building has been altered greatly since its original construction, in particular following a 1976 seismic rehabilitation that removed many of the building's original Mediterranean Revival-style features. As a result, it does not appear to meet the registration requirements outlined in *Los Angeles Unified School District: Historic Context Statement, 1870 to 1969* for pre-1933 Long Beach earthquake school.¹

The subject campus contains other permanent buildings over 45 years of age, but these structures are not unified in their design, nor does their placement contribute to a unified campus plan of any significance. None of the extant campus buildings appear to possess significant associations under any other relevant contexts and do not appear eligible for federal or state designation under any applicable criteria; therefore, the campus is not considered a historical resource for the purposes of CEQA.

Rincon Senior Architectural Historian Steven Treffers served as the project lead, with oversight and quality assurance/quality control provided by Architectural History Program Manager Shannon Carmack. Additional assistance was provided by Rincon architectural historians Rachel Perzel and Susan Zamudio-Gurrola. All of these individuals meet and exceed the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards for Architectural History and History.

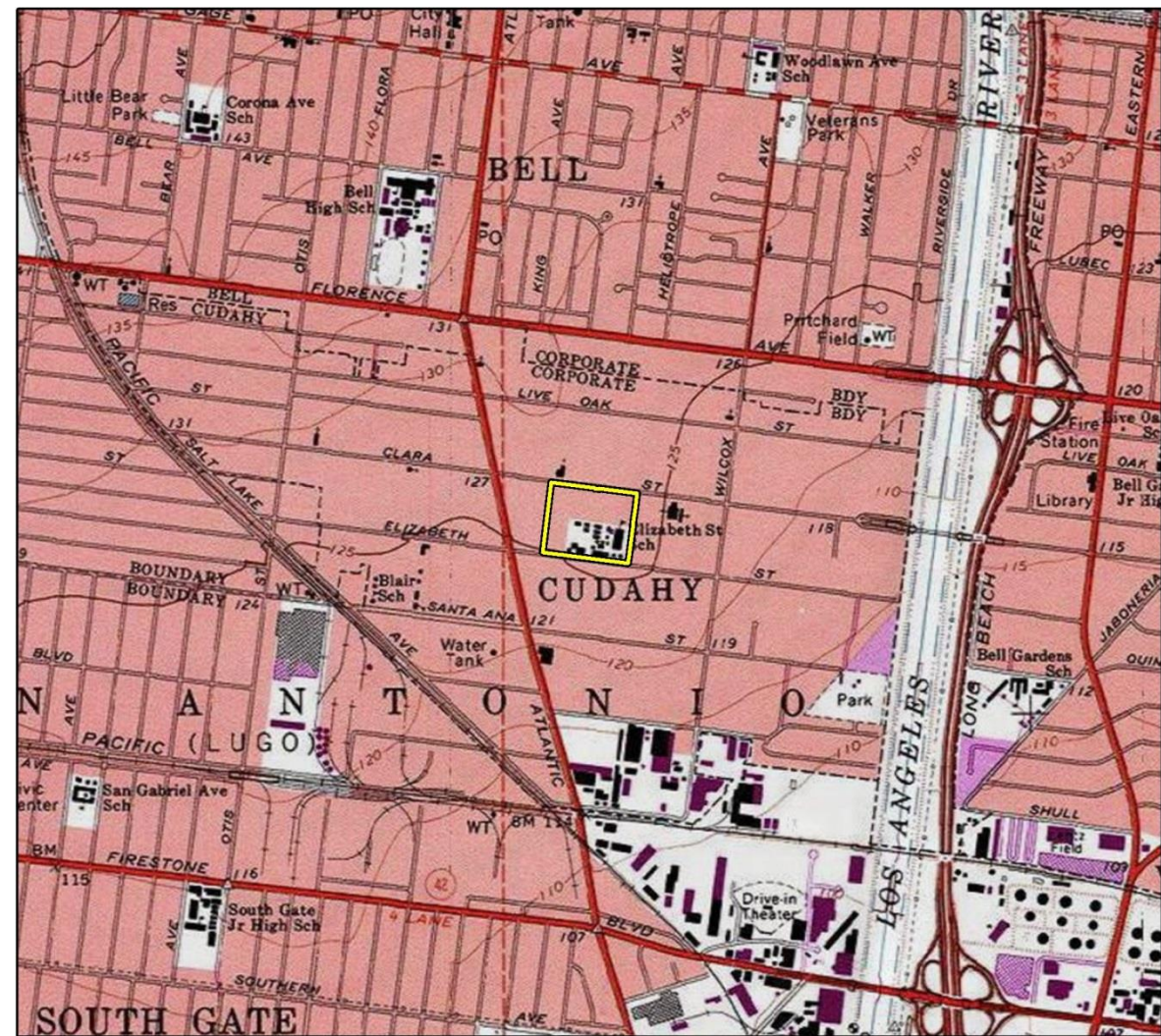
¹ Sapphos Environmental, Inc. *Los Angeles Unified School District Historic Context Statement, 1870 to 1969* (Los Angeles Unified School District Office of Environmental Health and Safety, March 2014).

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2 Introduction

Elizabeth Learning Center is located on a level site in the unincorporated community of Cudahy, approximately 0.5 miles west of Interstate 710 and 2.75 miles north of Interstate 105 in Los Angeles County (Figure 1). The school boundary spans approximately 16 acres and contains 38 buildings and structures (Figure 2). The school's entrance is on Elizabeth Street, which forms the campus' southern boundary. It is bounded on the north by Clara Street, on the east by a small public park, and on the west by a United States Postal Service facility and a residential property. The surrounding area is predominantly residential, though a park and some commercial properties are situated along the northern side of Clara Street, north of the school.

Figure 1 Vicinity Map



Imagery provided by National Geographic Society, ESRI and its licensors © 2017. South Gate Quadrangle. T02S R12W S30. The topographic representation depicted in this map may not portray all of the features currently found in the vicinity today and/or features depicted in this map may have changed since the original topographic map was assembled.

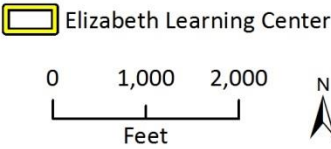


Figure 2 Location Map



2.1 Regulatory Framework

CEQA requires lead agencies to consider the impacts of proposed projects on historical resources. Under CEQA, historical resources are defined properties listed in, or eligible for listing in, the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR), or a local register. Eligible resources may include buildings, sites, structures, objects, cultural landscapes, and historic districts. Properties that are listed in the NRHP or found eligible for the NRHP through consensus with the State Office of Historic Preservation are automatically listed in the CRHR. Federal, state, and local designation criteria are presented below.

National Register of Historic Places

The NRHP was established by the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966 as “an authoritative guide to be used by federal, state, and local governments, private groups and citizens to identify the nation’s cultural resources and to indicate what properties should be considered for protection from destruction or impairment.”² The NRHP recognizes properties that are significant at the national, state, and local levels. To be eligible for listing in the NRHP, a resource must be significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, or culture. A property is eligible for the NRHP if it is significant under one or more of the following criteria:

- **Criterion A.** It is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- **Criterion B.** It is associated with the lives of persons who are significant in our past.
- **Criterion C.** It 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 may lack individual distinction.
- **Criterion D.** It has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

In addition to meeting at least one of the above designation criteria, resources must also retain integrity, or enough of their historic character or appearance, to be “recognizable as historical resources and to convey the reasons for their significance.”³ The National Park Service recognizes seven aspects or qualities that, considered together, define historic integrity. To retain integrity, a property must possess several, if not all, of these seven qualities, defined as follows:

1. **Location.** The place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred
2. **Design.** The combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property
3. **Setting.** The physical environment of a historic property
4. **Materials.** The physical elements combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property

² Code of Federal Regulations 36, Code of Federal Regulations 60.2.

³ California Office of Historic Preservation, “California Register and National Register: A Comparison (for Purposes of Determining Eligibility for the California Register),” Technical Assistance Series No. 6. (Sacramento, CA, 14 March 2006).

5. **Workmanship.** The physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory
6. **Feeling.** A property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time
7. **Association.** The direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property⁴

California Register of Historical Resources

Created in 1992 and implemented in 1998, the CRHR is “an authoritative guide in California to be used by state and local agencies, private groups, and citizens to identify the state’s historical resources and to indicate what properties are to be protected, to the extent prudent and feasible, from substantial adverse change.”⁵ Certain properties, including those listed in or formally determined eligible for listing in the NRHP and California Historical Landmarks numbered 770 and higher, are automatically included in the CRHR. Other properties recognized under the California Points of Historical Interest program, identified as significant in historical resources surveys, or designated by local landmarks programs may be nominated for inclusion in the CRHR. According to PRC Section 5024.1(c), a resource, either an individual property or a contributor to a historic district, may be listed in the CRHR if the State Historical Resources Commission determines that it meets one or more of the following criteria, which are modeled on NRHP criteria:

- **Criterion 1.** It is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California’s history and cultural heritage.
- **Criterion 2.** It is associated with the lives of persons important in our past.
- **Criterion 3.** It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of installation, or represents the work of an important creative individual, or possesses high artistic values.
- **Criterion 4.** It has yielded or may be likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

It is possible that a resource that does not possess sufficient integrity for NRHP listing may still be eligible for the CRHR. Furthermore, while typically NRHP eligibility requires a property to be at least 50 years of age, there is no age requirement for listing in the CRHR. Rather, regulations specify that enough time must have passed for a property to be evaluated within its historic context.

Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monuments

Local landmarks in the city of Los Angeles are known as Historic-Cultural Monuments and are under the aegis of the Los Angeles Planning Department, Office of Historic Resources. A Historic Cultural Monument is defined in the Cultural Heritage Ordinance as follows:

Historic-Cultural Monument (Monument) is any site (including significant trees or other plant life located on the site), building or structure of particular historic or cultural significance to the City of Los Angeles, including historic structures or sites in which the broad cultural, economic or social history of the nation, State or community is reflected or exemplified; or which is identified

⁴ U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service. “How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation,” *National Register Bulletin* No. 15 (Washington D.C., 2002).

⁵ Public Resources Code, Sections 21083.2 and 21084.1.

with historic personages or with important events in the main currents of national, State or local history; or which embodies the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type specimen, inherently valuable for a study of a period, style or method of construction; or a notable work of a master builder, designer, or architect whose individual genius influenced his or her age.⁶

LAUSD Historic Context Statement, 1870 to 1969

In addition to using all applicable criteria of significance, this evaluation utilized the methodology and framework for evaluations described in the 2014 *LAUSD Historic Context Statement*. Adopted by the LAUSD Board of Education, the *LAUSD Historic Context Statement* offers a consistent, standard approach for evaluating schools and campuses throughout the district. The document utilizes the NRHP Multiple Property Documentation (MPD) format, which provides a comparative, context-driven framework for evaluating related properties. As discussed in that document, “the MPD approach defines themes of significance, eligibility standards, and related property types. Properties sharing a theme of significance are then assessed consistently, in comparison with resources that share similar physical characteristics and historical associations.”⁷

2.2 Methods

This historical resources evaluation was completed in accordance with recognized professional standards, following the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Preservation Planning, Identification, Evaluation and Registration; California Office of Historic Preservation; and National Park Service professional standards and guidelines. Applicable national, state, and local level criteria were considered, as were the context-driven methods and framework used in *LAUSD Historic Context Statement, 1869-1970*, and other applicable historic context statements, including SurveyLA, the citywide historic resources survey conducted by the Los Angeles Office of Historic Resources.⁸

Efforts were made to identify previous historical resource evaluations of the subject campus and other related LAUSD schools. This included a records search of the California Historical Resources Information System, conducted at the South Central Coastal Information Center at California State University, Fullerton in June 2017. The California Historical Resources Information System search reviewed the combined listings of the NRHP, CRHR, California State Historical Landmarks, California Points of Historical Interest, and California Historic Resources Inventory. In addition, the findings of the following surveys were reviewed:

- Post-1994 Northridge Earthquake Historical Resources Surveys: These surveys were conducted for the Federal Emergency Management Agency in support of compliance with Section 106 of the National Preservation Act and recorded 71 LAUSD campuses.

⁶ Los Angeles Municipal Code, Section 22.171.7, added by Ordinance No. 178,402, Effective 4-2-07

⁷ Sapphos Environmental, Inc. *Los Angeles Unified School District: Historic Context Statement, 1870 to 1969* (Los Angeles Unified School District Office of Environmental Health and Safety, March 2014).

⁸ Ibid. As part of SurveyLA, the Los Angeles Department of City Planning Office of Historic Resources has been developing a citywide historic context statement that provides a framework for identifying and evaluating the city’s historic resources: see Los Angeles Department of City Planning Office of Historic Resources, “SurveyLA, Historic Context,” <https://preservation.lacity.org/historic-context> (accessed 2 October 2017).

- Phase 1 and 2 Getty Surveys: These surveys were conducted in two multi-year phases between 2001 and 2004 and expanded on the post-Northridge Earthquake surveys, covering approximately 410 LAUSD campuses.⁹
- 2014 LAUSD Historic Resources Survey: Completed in 2014, this historic resources survey included 55 LAUSD campuses that, at the time of survey, were over 45 years of age. Of these, 14 were found eligible for NRHP and/or CRHR listing.¹⁰
- SurveyLA: A multi-year, citywide historical resources survey that is currently being finalized by the Los Angeles Office of Historic Resources.

Property-specific research was also conducted to document the construction and alteration history of the subject campus and to explore potential significant associations. A package of historic aerial and topographic maps and Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps for the property was acquired from Environmental Data Resources. Other sources reviewed include the combined collections of ProQuest historical newspapers, historic *Los Angeles Times*, Los Angeles Public Library (including the California Index), University of Southern California Libraries and Special Collections, and the online photographic collection of the Huntington Library and yearbooks at Classmates.com. Rincon staff also reviewed Vault Drawings on file with LAUSD that include architectural plans and drawings detailing the construction and alteration histories of the subject campus and its buildings.

Shannon Carmack conducted an intensive-level survey of the subject campus on August 30, 2017. All buildings and structures on the subject campus were photographed and documented in field notes describing character-defining features, materials, and alterations. The survey included the exteriors and interiors of campus buildings.

The campus and its buildings were recorded on California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) 523 series forms, which are included in Appendix A of this report.

2.3 Previous Historical Resource Surveys

The Elizabeth Learning Center campus is located in the city of Cudahy and therefore was not evaluated as part of SurveyLA, the Los Angeles Office of Historic Resources citywide historic resources survey. In 2002, in fulfillment of a Planning Grant provided under the Preserve Initiative of the J. Paul Getty Trust, the LAUSD performed its first systematic survey in an effort to identify historically significant school properties within the district. The Elizabeth Learning Center campus was included in this survey and found ineligible for federal, state, or local designation.

⁹ Leslie Heumann, Science Applications International Corporation, "Historic Resources Survey of the Los Angeles Unified School District," (Pasadena, CA, 2002-2004).

¹⁰ Sapphos Environmental, Inc., *Los Angeles Unified School District: Historic Resources Survey Report* (Los Angeles Unified School District Office of Environmental Health and Safety, June 2014).

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3 Campus Site Description and History

3.1 Overview Description

Located in the city of Cudahy, Elizabeth Learning Center occupies a rectangular, 16-acre campus. The school's main entrance faces Elizabeth Street, which marks the southern boundary of the campus. It is bound on the north by Clara Street, on the east by a small public park, and on the west by a United States Postal Service facility and a residential property. The grounds are mostly paved in asphalt, though in the northeastern and northwestern corners there are clay tennis courts and a playing field, respectively. There are 38 buildings and structures on the campus that were constructed between 1932 and 2001.

Buildings are arranged in a rough L shape along the school's southern and eastern boundaries. A primary cluster of permanent buildings is situated near Elizabeth Street, consisting of the Administrative Building, built in 1932; the Multi-Purpose Building, constructed in 1960; the Classroom Building, built in 1963; and Sanitary Building and seven classroom buildings constructed between 1990 and 2009. These buildings enclose an L-shaped, macadam-paved courtyard with planted trees and a large lunch shelter. Several portable buildings and the circa-1990 Physical Education building are arranged along the campus' eastern boundary. The buildings that make up the Elizabeth Learning Center possess a range of architectural styles, owing to an overall construction period spanning nearly 80 years.

Facing Elizabeth Street, the two-story, I-shaped Administrative Building is the most elaborate building on the campus and serves as the school's focal point. It conveys a Mediterranean Revival architectural style through a moderate-pitched roof clad in clay tiles, arched windows and doorways, and stuccoed exterior walls. The building's adherence to this style is minimal, however. Some of its Mediterranean Revival-style design elements were removed during remodeling, most notably the upper section of a three-story tower and an arcade, both formerly located near the eastern elevation. A setback on the southern elevation allows for a lawn and other landscaping in front of the building along Elizabeth Street.

Buildings elsewhere on the campus exhibit a degree of stylistic variety. The tall one-story Multi-Purpose Building has a frame structure erected on an irregular-shaped plan. Heavily altered, the southern half of the building has a low-pitched, gabled roof with wide eaves, while a flat roof caps a large addition to the north. The interior of the building includes an auditorium space that appears to retain much of its original appearance, including exposed wooden rafter beams. The two-story Classroom Building features a regular plan, flat roof, broad eaves, and multi-paned, aluminum-framed windows. Classrooms are accessible from the outside, with broad, covered exterior walkways tracing the building's perimeter on both floors. The cluster of circa-1990s classroom buildings, generally one-storied and built on irregular plans, are clad in stucco and feature exterior walkways sheltered by wide, heavily massed overhangs. Finally, the campus' many portable buildings are stylistically nondescript and are located along the eastern edge of the campus. Unique among these is a portable building located in the southeastern corner. Its most notable design elements—exposed rafter tails, gable vents, and multi-light, sash windows—suggest a construction date as early as the 1940s.

Residential uses predominate along Elizabeth and Clara streets in the immediate vicinity of the school. West of the school, however, these streets intersect Atlantic Avenue, a multi-lane commercial corridor.

Figure 3 Campus Map



Table 1 Elizabeth Learning Center Campus Buildings

| No. | Name | Type | Year Built |
|-------|--------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| 20508 | Physical Education | Permanent | 1993 |
| 22052 | A-1967 | Portable | 1994 |
| 22135 | Oral Arts & Music Building | Permanent | 1993 |
| 22139 | Science Building #2 | Permanent | 1993 |
| 22220 | A-1963 | Portable | 1994 |
| 22237 | Graphic Arts & Electrical Shop | Permanent | 1993 |
| 22330 | Sanitary Building | Permanent | 2001 |
| 22537 | East Classroom Building #3 | Permanent | 1963 |
| 22566 | Administrative Building | Permanent | 1932 |
| 22577 | Lunch Shelter | Permanent | 1993 |
| 22603 | Science Building #1 | Permanent | N/A |
| 22708 | A-1962 | Portable | 1994 |
| 22709 | A-1968 | Portable | 1994 |
| 22710 | A-1964 | Portable | 1994 |
| 22711 | A-1970 | Portable | 1994 |
| 22712 | A-1959 | Portable | 1994 |
| 22713 | A-1960 | Portable | 1994 |
| 22714 | A-1961 | Portable | 1994 |
| 22786 | A-1966 | Portable | 1994 |
| 22929 | A-1965 | Portable | 1994 |
| 22947 | DSA Building #1 | Portable | 2001 |
| 22948 | DSA Building #2 | Portable | 2001 |
| 22955 | Metal & Wood Shop | Permanent | 1993 |
| 23816 | A-1969 | Portable | 1994 |
| 25969 | AA-3063 | Portable | 1997 |
| 26105 | Classroom Building B | Permanent | 1949 |
| 26208 | AA-419 | Portable | 1948 |
| 26212 | AA-2918 | Portable | 1996 |
| 26213 | AA-2917 | Portable | 1996 |
| 26234 | Multi-Purpose Building | Permanent | 1960 |
| 26339 | AA-2919 | Portable | 1996 |
| 26369 | Classroom Building #4 | Permanent | 1993 |
| 29389 | Student Store | Permanent | 1993 |
| 32642 | Classroom Building A | Permanent | 1949 |
| 39542 | AA-3064 | Portable | 1997 |
| 39543 | A-1568 | Portable | 1990 |
| 43717 | Concession Stand | Permanent | N/A |
| 45353 | DSA Building #3 | Portable | N/A |

Figure 4 Administrative Building, South Elevation



Figure 5 Administrative Building, North and East Elevations



Figure 6 Western End of Administrative Building, North Elevation



Figure 7 Science Building, North Elevation



Figure 8 Physical Education Building, South and West Elevations



Figure 9 Oral Arts & Music Building, South Elevation



Figure 10 East Classroom Building #3, North and West Elevations



Figure 11 Metal & Wood Shop Building, South and East Elevations



Figure 12 Multi-Purpose Building, South and East Elevations



Figure 13 Classroom Building A, East and North Elevations



Figure 14 Portable Buildings along Eastern Edge of Campus, West Elevations



Figure 15 Lunch Shelter



3.2 Site History and Construction Chronology

The Elizabeth Learning Center site and its surrounding neighborhood were undeveloped through the early years of the twentieth century.¹¹ The subdivision and sale of the area's land began in the 1910s, during which time real estate developers marketed several 1.5-acre lots for their agricultural potential and proximity to downtown Los Angeles."¹² While not all of the surrounding property was improved, by the early 1920s most of the long and narrow "Cudahy lots" located at the present school site appear to have contained single-family homes near the fronts of the lots and ancillary buildings, orchards, and gardens to the rear.¹³ The increased settlement of the area resulted in the need for services and facilities, such as schools, to service the neighborhood's new residents.

Originally named San Antonio School, after the former rancho of which the land was once a part, the school opened in 1921, serving kindergarten through the eighth grade. The original campus consisted of approximately eight one-story buildings. The largest building, referred to as the Primary Building, was located at the center of the campus and was flanked by three smaller classroom buildings on each side.¹⁴

Between 1924 and 1926, the large, one-story No. 2 Building was constructed as a replacement for the three classroom buildings that had been located east of the Primary Building. Its architect was not ascertainable for the present evaluation.¹⁵ The new building had a U-shaped floorplan and a covered walkway in the interior courtyard.¹⁶ In addition, the number of classroom buildings on the western edge increased to five, as another smaller, U-shaped building was added to the rear (north of) the original Primary Building and another small classroom building was located behind the No. 1 Building (Figure 16).¹⁷

¹¹ Environmental Data Resources, Inc. (EDR). 2017. EDR Historical Topo Map Report: Elizabeth St. ES. Shelton, CT. June 20.

¹² 1913. Beazell and Marshall. *Los Angeles Herald*. Home Acres for home Makers on Cudahy Acres; 1917. *Los Angeles Herald*. Rich soil in L.A. Makes Farm Popular. April 7.

¹³ Environmental Data Resources, Inc. (EDR). 2017. EDR Aerial Photo Decade Package & Historic Topo Map Report: Elizabeth St. ES. Shelton, CT. June 20; 2016. *Business View Magazine*. Cudahy, California: Small City, Big Plans (reproduced by City of Cudahy).

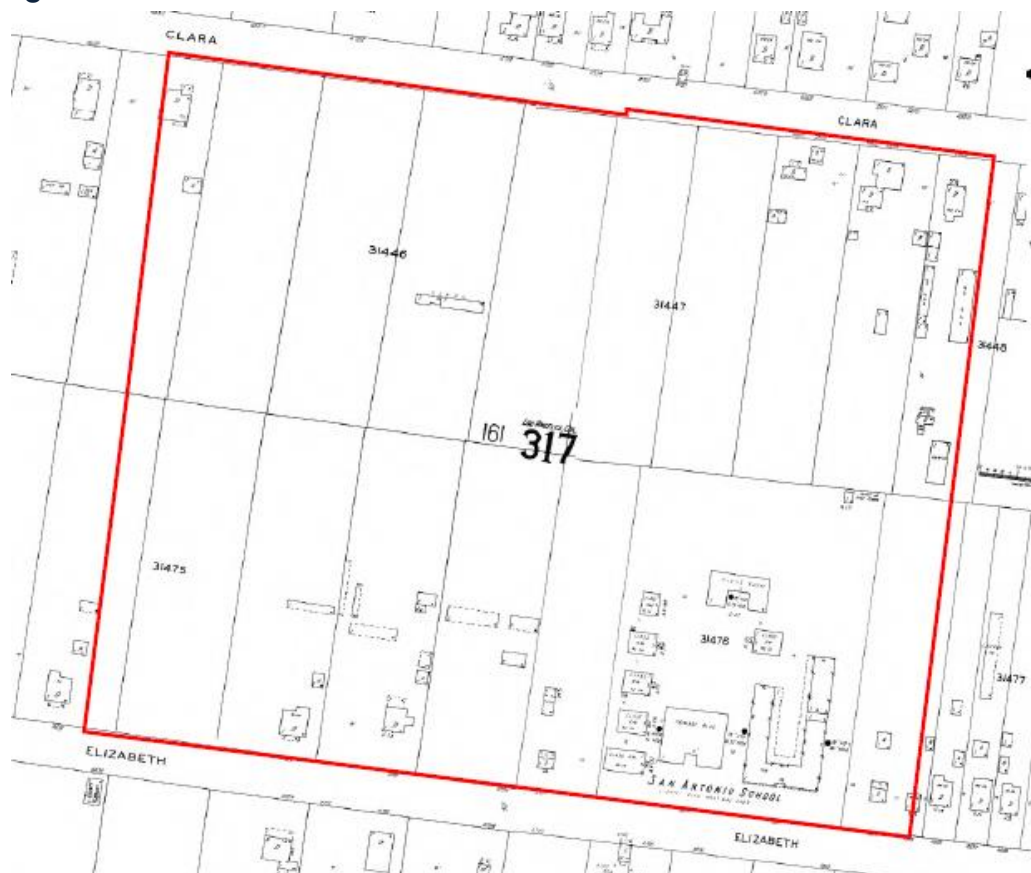
¹⁴ Environmental Data Resources, Inc. (EDR). 2017. EDR Historical Topo Map Report: Elizabeth St. ES. Shelton, CT. June 20.

¹⁵ 1924. *Los Angeles Sunday Times*. Foundations Laid. August 24.

¹⁶ Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). 2017. Vault Drawings: 1931-2009. From LAUSD Facilities Site Portal: Site 13480, Elizabeth Learning Center. Los Angeles, CA. July 25, 2017; Environmental Data Resources, Inc. (EDR). 2017. EDR Historical Topo Map Report: Elizabeth St. ES. Shelton, CT. June 20.

¹⁷ Environmental Data Resources, Inc., Historical Topo Map Report.

Figure 16 1929 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Map of Current Site of Elizabeth Learning Center



In 1931, architect Robert H. Orr produced plans for a new main building (Administrative Building) fronting Elizabeth Street, situated slightly to the west of the U-shaped building. The two-story, brick classroom and administrative building was completed in 1932 at a cost of \$67,000.¹⁸ Orr designed the new school building in a Mediterranean Revival style featuring arcades, arched window and door openings, tile vents, a clay tile roof, and a tower and a chimney at opposite ends of the building (Figure 17).¹⁹ By 1938, the Primary Building had been moved to the west, making way for the Administrative Building. Meanwhile, the rear portion of the campus was cleared of its older classroom buildings and a small Cafeteria was erected behind No. 1 Building. Around this time, most of the residential parcels surrounding the campus were developed with houses (Figure 18).²⁰

¹⁸ Ibid; 1933. *Los Angeles Times*. All City Schools Will Be Thoroughly Inspected Before Children Allowed to Enter. March 15.

¹⁹ Los Angeles Unified School District, Vault Drawings.

²⁰ Environmental Data Resources, Inc., Aerial Photo Decade Package Report.

Figure 17 1931 drawing of the North and South Elevations of the Administrative Building



Figure 18 Detail of 1938 Aerial Photograph of Elizabeth Learning Center and Environs



The 1933 Long Beach earthquake caused serious damage to many Los Angeles-area schools, including the Elizabeth Learning Center (then named the San Antonio School), where the main Administrative Building incurred damage to its chimney.²¹ State and local officials responded to widespread earthquake-related damage to Southern California schools with new legislation: the California state Legislature passed the Field Act of 1933 that set new guidelines for the construction of safer school facilities, and the Los Angeles City School district adopted its own revised building standards and launched a program of school rebuilding and rehabilitation in the years following the earthquake.²²

Despite the execution of this large-scale program to rehabilitate and rebuild Los Angeles schools, available records do not definitively indicate that any such projects took place at the subject campus. However, it is possible that officials approved the demolition of the original No. 2 Building as a response to the earthquake. The building is described in architectural plot plans as having had a hollow tile roof and plaster walls and was demolished between 1938 and 1944.²³ It was nearly

²¹ 1933. *Los Angeles Times*. All City Schools Will Be Thoroughly Inspected Before Children Allowed to Enter. March 15; 1933. *Los Angeles Times*. City's Schools Shut For Week. March 13.

²² Sapphos Environmental, Inc., 63.

²³ Environmental Data Resources, Inc., Aerial Photo Decade Package Report; Los Angeles Unified School District, Vault Drawings.

twenty years after the Long Beach earthquake before significant seismic safety measures were introduced at Elizabeth Street Elementary School's pre-1933 physical plant.

Elizabeth Street School experienced significant change in the years following World War II, due to changing demographics and new patterns of development. Pronounced population growth brought major changes to the Los Angeles region and its schools. As explained in the *LAUSD Historic Context Statement*:

Perhaps in no other state of the union was [postwar population] growth felt more acutely than in California. The booming birth rate was accompanied by a wave of in-migration, as new settlers were drawn by established employment centers in, among other things, the aerospace industry, which had shifted operations to peacetime production.²⁴

Overcrowding led to the need to offer "half-day" sessions for children, where attendance happened in shifts of half-days. Bond issues in 1946, 1952, and 1955 addressed the pressing need for new school construction, and the resulting funds paid for the construction and expansion of numerous schools. The 1946 bond issue provided \$75 million, which helped generate 66 new schools, with a total of over 2,300 classrooms, over 480 cafeterias, gyms, auditoriums, and other ancillary buildings. In addition, over \$7.8 million went toward land for new schools, \$3.2 million for maintenance and improvements to an aging stock of facilities, \$4.5 million for grounds improvements, and \$10.6 million for equipment. In spite of these investments, another \$148 million was proposed for a 1952 bond issue.

In 1948, district-wide enrollment stood at 301,000 students; by 1949, this figure had increased by 15,000, with enrollment reaching over 316,000. By the end of the 1950s baby boom, however, the student population of the Los Angeles City school district more than doubled, climbing from 316,000 to over 645,000. A further increase of 28,000 pupils was predicted for the school year 1960–1961.²⁵

As postwar growth took place in the wider Los Angeles region, Cudahy experienced its own population boom. Drawn to the community by jobs at nearby industrial plants, an influx of white, blue-collar families settled in what was then semi-agricultural Cudahy. Whereas hen houses and gardens had once occupied the rear of the neighborhood's long, narrow parcels, around the school, property owners began to build second and third dwellings on their lots. The school expanded in the 1950s and 1960s to meet the demands of the neighborhood's growing population: by 1950 the campus grew to occupy approximately double its 1920s footprint. That year, the campus was composed of the Primary Building, Administration Building, and as many as ten smaller classroom and ancillary buildings.²⁶ Additional classroom buildings were constructed in 1951, 1957, 1960, and 1963. Robert H. Orr's firm, Orr, Strange, Inslee, & Senefeld, designed the extant 1963 Classroom Building.²⁷ The original Primary Building was removed or demolished and replaced by a new multi-purpose building constructed in 1960. By 1966 the campus occupied about eight parcels and consisted of over 20 buildings. The density of the surrounding neighborhood increased as well (Figure 19).²⁸

²⁴ Sapphos Environmental, Inc., *LAUSD Historic Context Statement* (p. 71).

²⁵ Sapphos Environmental, Inc., *LAUSD Historic Context Statement* (p. 102).

²⁶ EDR Environmental Data Resources, Inc., Certified Sanborn Map Report.

²⁷ Los Angeles Unified School District, Vault Drawings.

²⁸ EDR Environmental Data Resources, Inc., Certified Sanborn Map Report.

Figure 19 Detail of 1966 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Map



In 1959, the school hosted a pilot project for a new seismic stabilization method intended to quickly and cost-effectively bring buildings into compliance with the 1933 Field Act. The new method employed mesh and reinforced plaster as a substitute for the more expensive and time-consuming convention of installing structural steel and concrete supports. Elizabeth Street School was one of about 200 campuses that the school district/board planned to rehabilitate between approximately 1959 and 1975. Consulting engineers involved in the project included Earl Holmberg, John C. Freeman, John J. Sturgis, and Charles E. Stickney. Hight Construction Company served as the general contractor and Gaston Duncan was the plastering subcontractor.²⁹

During the 1960s, schools in Los Angeles' central city experienced a surge in enrollment reflecting an increase in the local population. As the once-booming San Fernando Valley's population growth slowed, the LAUSD focused on expanding older and smaller schools in the central city area. In 1967,

²⁹ 1959. *Los Angeles Times*. New Reinforcing Plan Saves Money, Schools. March 16.

corner, a cluster of classrooms just west of the Administration Building, and a cluster of science classrooms near the center of the campus.³³ In addition, dozens of extant portable classrooms and other minor buildings have stood on the campus since at least the late 1990s, mostly situated along the eastern and northern property lines.³⁴ The southwestern corner of the property was converted to a parking lot between 1994 and 2002.³⁵ Residential development remains predominant in the area surrounding the campus.

³³ Environmental Data Resources, Inc., EDR Aerial Photo Decade Package Report.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

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4 Historic Overview

4.1 Focused Neighborhood History

Only 1.23 square miles in size, the city of Cudahy was once part of the nearly 30,000-acre Spanish-era Rancho San Antonio. Don Antonio Maria Lugo was granted the enormous rancho in 1810; it included portions of the modern-day cities of Bell, Bell Gardens, Cudahy, Huntington Park, Lynwood, South Gate, Vernon, and an unincorporated area of East Los Angeles.³⁶ Michael Cudahy, who was involved in a successful meat-packing businesses originating in the Midwest, acquired 2,777 acres of the rancho land in 1908. He began selling one-acre lots in what he called “Cudahy Acres.” The lots measured 100 feet by 395 feet and were intended to allow inhabitants to plant gardens and keep animals such as chickens and horses. The lots were attractive to new arrivals from the Midwestern and southern parts of the United States, and population in the area increased during the 1910s and 1920s. Settlement in Cudahy was part of a larger trend in the Los Angeles region in this period, where in the 30 years between 1880 and 1910, rapid growth increased the population of Los Angeles from 10,000 to 320,000.³⁷ In the 1910s, important regional developments fueled further expansion in and around Los Angeles. The *LAUSD Historical Context Statement* notes that “[in] addition to the 1913 opening of the Los Angeles Aqueduct, the film industry settled in the Los Angeles area during this time, and its economic strength drew new residents.” This growth continued into the 1920s:

During the boom of the 1920s, Los Angeles film and aeronautics industries remained strong draws for new settlers. In one decade, between 1920 and 1930, Los Angeles’s population doubled, climbing to 1.2 million, making the city the fifth largest in the United States. At a high point during the 1920s, new residential subdivisions were being established at the rate of 40 per week in the city of Los Angeles. By 1930, Los Angeles spanned 441 square miles. This represented a twelvefold expansion in 30 years.³⁸

Los Angeles’s prodigious regional growth continued during and after World War II. Following the war, Cudahy prospered in part due to the local steel and automotive industries. Firms such as General Motors, Chrysler, Firestone, and Bethlehem Steel established plants in or near Cudahy.³⁹

A campaign for the incorporation of Cudahy began in 1959. At the time, leading proponents characterized the incorporation drive as an effort to “ward off piece-meal annexations of the area by surrounding cities,” including South Gate and Bell, and to thereby “maintain the community in its present residential and commercial character.”⁴⁰ Cityhood opponents emerged from the community, including some who doubted that the value of property in the proposed city would allow for its financial solvency. Incorporation proponents carried the vote, however, and Cudahy attained cityhood in 1960.⁴¹ In the ensuing decades, the original long narrow lots were subdivided

³⁶ Kyle, Douglas E. *Historic Spots in California* (5th Edition). *Stanford University Press*. 2002.

³⁷ Los Angeles, City of. 2012. Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan Area. Survey LA-Historic Resources Survey Report. Department of City Planning. Prepared by Galvin Preservation Associates. El Segundo, CA. March, 2012, 9.

³⁸ Sapphos Environmental Inc., *LAUSD Historical Context Statement* (p. 30, 44).

³⁹ N.d. City of Cudahy. Cudahy, California: Small City Big Plans.

⁴⁰ 1959. *Los Angeles Times*. Cityhood Try Planned at Cudahy: Sponsors Recruit Group to Obtain Petition Signers. November 1; 1960. *Los Angeles Times*. Cudahy Given Chance to Try for Cityhood. February 7.

⁴¹ 1959. *Los Angeles Times*. Cudahy Groups to Oppose Cityhood. November 8; N.d. City of Cudahy. Cudahy, California: Small City Big Plans.

and redeveloped, resulting in a common pattern of long public blocks with long driveways leading to homes and apartment buildings arranged one behind the other.⁴²

The city is densely populated with residential, retail, commercial, light industrial, and public uses along its main streets.⁴³ As of the latest federal Census, the population was approximately 23,805 people, 96 percent of whom were of Latino descent.⁴⁴

⁴² 2016. City of Cudahy. Existing Conditions Report: Cudahy 2040.

⁴³ 1899. Willard, Charles Dwight Willard. A History of the Chamber of Commerce of Los Angeles, California: From Its Foundation, September, 1888 to the Year 1900 (Los Angeles: Kinglsey-Barnes & Neuner Company).

⁴⁴ 2010. United States Census Bureau. "Cudahy: 2010 Demographic Profile Data". Accessed June 2, 2017 at <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=CF>.

5 Associated Design Professional Biographies

The following section presents biographies for design professionals who are known to be associated with the primary and potentially significant buildings at Elizabeth Learning Center.

5.1 Robert H. Orr

Robert Hall Orr, FAIA, designed Elizabeth Learning Center's Administrative building, which was constructed in 1932.⁴⁵ In 1961, Orr, Strange, Inslee, & Senefeld designed the extant Classroom Building on the east side of the Elizabeth Learning Center campus.⁴⁶ Orr was born in 1873 in Canada and immigrated to the United States in 1881.⁴⁷ He studied architecture for two years at the University of Illinois, but received his architectural training primarily in the San Francisco office of architect William H. Weeks.⁴⁸ Although Orr's first draftsman position with Weeks was unpaid, he took a formal, paid position in Weeks's Watsonville, California office in 1898.⁴⁹ Orr relocated to Pomona, California and opened his own firm there by 1910.⁵⁰ He soon operated offices in Pomona and San Diego.⁵¹ At the time of the 1920 U.S. Census, Orr lived in Los Angeles with his wife Hilda, his daughter Faith, and his father.⁵²

Orr designed a wide variety of buildings, including residences, churches, banks, and school buildings.⁵³ His Wilshire Christian Church building is a City of Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monument, and his Pitzer House in Claremont, California is listed in the NRHP.⁵⁴ Orr joined the Southern California chapter of the American Institute of Architects in 1912 and was made a fellow of that organization in 1941. He died in 1964.⁵⁵

⁴⁵ Los Angeles Unified School District, Vault Drawings.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ 1930. United States Department of Commerce – Bureau of the Census. U.S. Census.

⁴⁸ 1913. Harper, Franklin. *Who's Who on the Pacific Coast: A Biographical Compilation of Notable Living Contemporaries West of the Rocky Mountains*. Los Angeles: Harper Publishing Company. Accessed on December 30, 2017 at ancestry.com.

⁴⁹ 2015. Michelson, Alan. Robert Hall Orr. Pacific Coast Architecture Database. Accessed at <http://pcad.lib.washington.edu/person/874/>.

⁵⁰ 1910. United States Department of Commerce – Bureau of the Census. U.S. Census.

⁵¹ Harper, 1913.

⁵² 1920. United States Department of Commerce – Bureau of the Census. U.S. Census.

⁵³ Gebhard, David and Robert Winter. *An Architectural Guidebook to Los Angeles* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Gibbs Smith Publisher, 2003).

⁵⁴ Calisphere, "Wilshire Christian Church," (n.d.). Accessed December 30, 2017, < <https://calisphere.org/item/1c171e63e2a39d87f03206e5f198ad86/>>; National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places Digital Archive. Accessed December 30, 2017, < <https://npgallery.nps.gov/NRHP/SearchResults/>>.

⁵⁵ Michelson, 2015.

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6 Significance Evaluation

This evaluation utilized the framework for historic resource assessments described in the *LAUSD Historic Context Statement, 1870-1969*, which follows the NRHP MPD format that “defines themes of significance, eligibility standards, and related property types. Properties sharing a theme of significance are then assessed consistently, in comparison with resources that share similar physical characteristics and historical associations.”⁵⁶ In addition, this evaluation utilized the MPD-format historic context statements prepared as part of SurveyLA that similarly identify themes of significance along with associated registration requirements.⁵⁷

In addition to each of the applicable federal, state, and local designation criteria, one evaluation framework and its associated eligibility standards and integrity thresholds from the *LAUSD Historic Context Statement* were identified and applied to this evaluation after careful consideration of all themes and subthemes. Each building on the campus was evaluated for eligibility both individually and as a contributor to any potential historic district. For buildings that were found to be potentially eligible, an integrity analysis was carried through in Section 7 to determine if the property retained sufficient integrity to convey the reasons for its significance.

Evaluation Framework 1

Theme: LAUSD | Pre–1933 Long Beach Earthquake School Plants, 1910-1933

Property Type: Institutional/Education

Property Subtypes: Elementary, Junior High, and High Schools Buildings and Campuses

Period of Significance: 1910–1933

Area of Significance: Education

Geographic Location: Citywide

Area of Significance: A/1

Eligibility Standards

- Embodies LAUSD school planning and design ideals and principles of the era
- One of few remaining schools from the pre–1933 Long Beach earthquake era that was not substantially altered or remodeled
- Retains most of the associative and character-defining features from the period of significance

Character-Defining Features – Buildings/Structures

- Articulated buildings plans, facilitating the creation of outdoor spaces (often T-shaped, E-shaped, U-shaped, and H-shaped plans)
- Generally low massing, usually one to two stories (with two to three stories more common for middle and senior high schools)

⁵⁶ Sapphos Environmental, Inc., *LAUSD Historic Context Statement* (p 4).

⁵⁷ Los Angeles, City of. 2016. *Field Survey Results Master Report*. Survey LA-Los Angeles Historic Resources Survey. Department of City Planning. Los Angeles, CA. August, 2016.

- Includes designed outdoor spaces, such as courtyards and patios, adjacent to classroom wings
- Exteriors usually lined with rows of grouped windows, including wood-framed multi-light windows; expanses of windows often mark the location of classrooms
- Designed in popular period-revival styles of the era (including Spanish Colonial Revival, Renaissance Revival, Mediterranean Revival, and Collegiate Gothic)
- Often designed by prominent architects of the era

Character-Defining Features – Campus/District

- Emphasis on a more spread-out site plan, with designed outdoor spaces
- More varied collection of buildings, differentiated by function and use (rather than a single building with all functions inside)
- Might include an elaborate Administrative building, usually the focal point of the campus, as well as classroom wings, auditoriums, gymnasiums, and outdoor recreation areas
- Middle or senior high schools might include a gymnasium designed in the style of the campus overall

Integrity Considerations

- Most pre-1933 schools were substantially remodeled following the Long Beach earthquake
- Designed outdoor spaces, such as courtyards and patios, should be intact in use, if not with landscape design and hardscaping; development pressures over the years often resulted in these open spaces being in-filled with new construction; overall sense of relationship of building to designed outdoor spaces should be intact
- Should retain integrity of Materials, Design, Workmanship, Feeling, and Association from its period of significance
- Intact campus groupings from a single period of time are not common
- Some materials and features may have been removed or altered
- Modern lighting and fencing of site acceptable

6.1 Designation Criteria A/1/1

Historic District Evaluation: Extant buildings on the subject campus were developed over a period of nearly 70 years and do not exhibit a unified site plan nor architectural style that meet the eligibility requirements for historic districts as described in the *LAUSD Historic Context Statement* for eligibility under Criteria A/1/1.

Individual Resource Evaluation: None of the buildings appear to be individually eligible per the registration requirements described *LAUSD Historic Context Statement* for eligibility under Criteria A/1/1. As originally designed in 1931, the Administrative Building exhibited many of the common features of schools from its era, including most notably a Mediterranean Revival-style design that included a tower, arcade with arched openings, and ornate cast stone elements. Unlike many school buildings from this era, the Administrative Building was not extensively altered following the 1933 Long Beach earthquake, but a 1976 seismic rehabilitation project resulted in the removal and/or alteration of many of the building's character-defining features, including most notably the

demolition of the building's distinctive tower and arcade. These changes, as well as additions to both the east and west elevations, have resulted in a loss of integrity as discussed in greater detail below, and the building no longer meets the integrity considerations identified in *LAUSD Historic Context Statement*.

The remaining campus buildings do not appear individually eligible for federal, state, or local designation. They were constructed over a period of nearly 70 years and do not meet the eligibility requirements described in the *LAUSD Historic Context Statement* for eligibility under Criteria A/1/1.

6.2 Designation Criteria B/2/2

Historic District and Individual Resource Evaluation: As a public elementary school, the subject campus and its individual buildings are associated with a number of individuals who attended, visited, or taught at the school. However, per the guidance of the National Park Service, properties that are significant for their association with an important person in our past, must illustrate a person's important achievements.⁵⁸ Archival research completed as part of this study failed to identify any direct and significant associations that are directly represented by the subject campus. As a result, the campus and its buildings do not appear eligible for designation either individually or collectively as a historic district under Criterion B/2/2.

6.3 Designation Criteria C/3/3

Historic District Evaluation: Developed in phases over a period of nearly 80 years, the campus buildings feature a variety of architectural styles that are representative of the period in which they were constructed. The campus does not feature cohesive design intent such that it meets any of the applicable eligibility standards described in the *LAUSD Historic Context Statement* and as a result does not appear eligible as a historic district under Criteria C/3/3.

Individual Resource Evaluation: The campus buildings do not appear individually eligible for federal, state, or local designation under Criteria C/3/3. The 1976 seismic rehabilitation of the Administrative Building removed and/or altered many of the building's distinctive Mediterranean Revival-style features, including most notably the tower and arcade with arched openings. As a result the Administrative Building no longer retains sufficient integrity to be individually eligible for federal, state, or local designation.

The postwar buildings on campus are not eligible under Criteria C/3/3. Although some of these buildings display minimal degrees of a Mid-Century Modern -influenced architecture, such as flat roofs and a modular design, these buildings lack the distinction required of significant properties for designation under Criteria C/3/3.

⁵⁸ U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service.(p.14). 2002. *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*. National Register Bulletin No. 15. Washington, DC.

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7 Integrity

Integrity is the ability of a property to convey its historic significance. In order to retain integrity, the property must possess enough of its character-defining features, materials, and spaces such that it continues to convey the reasons for its significance. According to the National Park Service, there are seven aspects of integrity: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.⁵⁹

To retain integrity, a property will always possess several of these aspects, with those relevant aspects dependent on the property's significance. The Administrative Building at the Elizabeth Learning Center was found to be potentially eligible as a representation of pre-1933 Long Beach earthquake school plants, but substantial alterations have affected some aspects of its integrity as detailed below.

7.1 Location

The Administrative Building has not been relocated from its original site; therefore, it retains integrity of location.

7.2 Design

As designed by Robert H. Orr in 1931, the Administrative Building featured a distinctive Mediterranean Revival-style design that was characteristic of schools during this era. Prominent original features representative of this style included the building's tall rectangular tower, an arcade with arched openings, and elaborate cast stone architectural elements. These features were retained for over 40 years following the 1933 Long Beach Earthquake, but they were ultimately removed as part of a 1976 seismic rehabilitation. That project also resulted in the application of gunite and cement plaster to exterior walls and one-story additions to the east and west elevations. The removal of many of the building's original design elements that constitute and were highly reflective of the form, plan, and style of the building's original Mediterranean Revival design has negatively affected those features. As a result, the Administrative Building no longer retains integrity of design.

7.3 Setting

The setting of the Administrative Building has substantially changed since the building was first constructed in 1932. At that time, the school boundaries were limited to a smaller mid-block parcel that was surrounded by residential and vacant properties. While the surrounding area was further developed in the following decades, these properties were later acquired and demolished as the school boundaries were expanded to their current configuration after 1989. In addition to these noticeable changes, all of the early buildings on the school campus that contributed to the setting of the Administrative Building have been demolished and replaced with buildings that feature more

⁵⁹ U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service (p. 44-47). 2002. *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*. National Register Bulletin No. 15. Washington, DC.

modern, incompatible architectural styles. As a result, the Administrative Building no longer retains integrity of materials.

7.4 Materials

As discussed above, the Administrative Building has been substantially altered through its history, particularly during its 1976 seismic rehabilitation. The alterations resulted in the extensive removal and/or alteration of original building materials, including the demolition of its original tower, arcade, and cast stone ornament, and the application of gunite and cement plaster over its original stucco exterior wall sheathing. The Administrative Building does not retain integrity of materials as a result.

7.5 Workmanship

The physical evidence and workmanship of the Administrative Building were largely erased following the application of gunite and plaster to exterior walls and the removal of original cast stone architectural features. The building no longer retains integrity of workmanship as a result.

7.6 Feeling

The integrity of feeling is the quality a property has in evoking a historic sense of past, and is largely tied to a property's integrity of design, setting, materials, and workmanship. Because all of these aspects of integrity have been compromised, the Administrative Building no longer retains integrity of feeling.

7.7 Association

Similar to feeling, the integrity of association depends on a period appearance and is conveyed through the combination of integrity of setting, location, design, workmanship, materials, and feeling. Because the Administrative Building does not possess many of these aspects it does not retain integrity of association.

7.8 Summary

As summarized above, the Administrative Building is associated with the theme of pre-1933 Long Beach earthquake school plants. However, substantial alterations that occurred in the 1970s and subsequent years have resulted in a loss of integrity of design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. As a result, the building does not meet the integrity considerations identified in *LAUSD Historic Context Statement, 1870-1969* for schools from this era and it does not appear eligible for federal, state, or local designation.

8 Conclusion

In summary, the Elizabeth Learning Center campus is recommended ineligible for federal or state designation under any applicable criteria. Although the campus was originally developed in the context of pre-1933 Long Beach earthquake schools in greater Los Angeles, only the Administrative Building is extant from this early time period. This building has been highly altered since its original construction, in particular following a 1976 seismic rehabilitation that removed many of the building's original Mediterranean Revival-style features, and as a result it does not appear to meet the registration requirements outlined in the *LAUSD Historic Context Statement* for a pre-1933 Long Beach earthquake school. The remaining buildings and structures are not unified in their design and their placement does not contribute to a unified campus plan of any significance. None of the extant campus buildings appear to possess significant associations under any other relevant contexts and they do not appear eligible for federal or state designation under any applicable criteria; therefore, the campus is not considered a historical resource for the purposes of CEQA.

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