

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

## 1. Name of Property

**DRAFT**

Historic name: Old Farmdale School

Other names/site number: Farmdale School, Farmdale Schoolhouse

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

## 2. Location

Street & number: 2839 North Eastern Avenue

City or town: Los Angeles State: CA County: Los Angeles

Not For Publication:  Vicinity:

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this \_\_\_ nomination \_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

\_\_\_ national \_\_\_ statewide \_\_\_ local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

\_\_\_ A \_\_\_ B \_\_\_ C \_\_\_ D

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#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

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Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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#### 5. Classification

##### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

##### Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>          </u>	buildings
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	sites
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	structures
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION/school  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION/school  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE VICTORIAN/Queen Anne

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**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Wood, composition shingle

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

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### Summary Paragraph

Old Farmdale School, constructed in 1894, is located on the campus of El Sereno Middle School in northeastern Los Angeles. Local architects Bradbeer and Ferris designed the 1,870.05 square foot Queen Anne Revival-style schoolhouse to serve the small, rural community of Farmdale (later known as El Sereno). The area was historically part of Rancho Rosa Castilla, a large tract of land owned by Basque farmers. Significant architectural features of Old Farmdale School include its one-story height, irregular floor plan, two-room interior, side-gabled and hipped roofs, projecting bell tower, double-hung wood sash windows, horizontal wood clapboard and fishscale siding, and applied decoration. Its north-facing entry is recessed within a projecting belltower and features a double door and lunette window. Pin mounted signage along the primary façade reads “Farmdale”; the letters P and S for Public School, flank the entry. A four-sided open bell tower with arched openings contains the building’s original cast metal bell. Historically set within a bucolic nineteenth century agrarian community, the schoolhouse occupies a small portion of a 27.7-acre middle school campus in a major city. While the setting has evolved, and the Los Angeles Unified School District moved the schoolhouse from elsewhere on the site in 1975, the property retains integrity of design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. It is one of only three surviving nineteenth century schoolhouses in Los Angeles.

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## **Narrative Description**

### Location and Setting

Old Farmdale School sits at the northern end of the El Sereno Middle School campus, located at 2839 North Eastern Avenue in Los Angeles. The 27.7-acre campus contains buildings dating to various periods, including the 1894 schoolhouse, 1930s bungalows, a 1940 Italian Renaissance Revival Administration Building, and several buildings dating to the postwar period.

The schoolhouse faces north to Gambier Street. It has small front, rear, and side yards and is enclosed with a metal fence. The area between the schoolhouse and Gambier Street contains several mature trees. To the west of the schoolhouse, at the corner of Gambier Street and Eastern Avenue, is a large, L-shaped, post-war classroom building. To the southeast of the schoolhouse is the 1940 Italian Renaissance Revival Administration Building, which faces Eastern Avenue.

Old Farmdale School was relocated from elsewhere on the campus in 1975. Originally, the building sat southeast of this location and faced Eastern Avenue.<sup>1</sup> In the nineteenth century, the area immediately surrounding the schoolhouse was bucolic. The building was located on a two-acre parcel in the rural community of Farmdale. In 1915, as the area's population continued to grow, the Los Angeles City School District (later, the Los Angeles Unified School District [LAUSD]) annexed the Farmdale School District and expanded the campus by acquiring adjacent land. In 1923, the school district erected a new building for the Farmdale Elementary School, located south of the old schoolhouse. At that time, the earlier 1894 schoolhouse became known as Old Farmdale School.<sup>2</sup> In 1936, the campus became El Sereno Area High School, changing names again the following year to become Woodrow Wilson High School. The school district conducted a major expansion and redesign of the campus in the 1930s, erecting many new buildings, including those adjacent to Old Farmdale School.

In 1970, the campus became known as El Sereno Middle School. Between 1974 and 1975, a local movement to preserve Old Farmdale School coalesced into a major structural strengthening and restoration project for the building. In 1975, Old Farmdale School was relocated to the northern part of the campus and its configuration changed to face Gambier Street, rather than Eastern Avenue as it originally had.

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<sup>1</sup> Structural Strengthening and Restoration of Building AA-143, December 4, Permit No. 8118.23, 1975, on file with the Los Angeles Unified School District Archives.

<sup>2</sup> "Board Speedily Relieving City School Crowding," *Daily News*, October 24, 1923, 10; Grading Plan and Future Development Plan, Permitt No. 8118.0, June 12, 1936, on file with the Los Angeles Unified School District Archives.

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## Exterior

### *Plan and Massing*

The 1,870 square foot schoolhouse is one-story in height with an irregular plan that consists of a projecting belltower and vestibule at the entry, a large classroom at the western portion of the building, and a smaller classroom at the eastern portion of the building.

### *Roof*

The roof is comprised of composition shingles and includes both side-gabled and hipped roof forms. The belltower and western volume of the building have hipped roofs, while the eastern volume has a side gable roof. The belltower is capped with a flagpole and the side gable roof displays metal finials as well as a roof ventilator.

### *Cladding*

The schoolhouse features horizontal wood clapboard siding around all four facades. Decorative elements including brick veneer along the water table, a decorative stringcourse at the lower third of the building, and a cornice with boxed eaves below the roofline—all of which wrap around the building's exterior. The upper portions of the belltower display fishscale shingles, wood siding, and applied decoration.

### *North Façade (Primary)*

The primary façade faces north and has three asymmetrical bays. The first (left) bay contains a pair of double-hung wood sash windows with transoms (**Photo 1**).

The second (center) bay consists of the projecting belltower and the building's main entrance. Iron railings border a set of concrete steps that lead up to a stoop and an arched entryway, behind which sits a recessed entry. Above the entry, pin mounted letters spell "Farmdale." Additional pin mounted letters, "P" and "S," flank either side of the archway. Within the recessed entry is a wood-paneled double door and multi-light lunette window. The western and eastern walls of the recessed entry contain applied decoration in the shape of elongated rectangles. At the belltower's exterior, the west and east returns each contain a single, elongated, double-hung wood sash window with transom. The upper portions of the belltower's exterior display fishscale shingles and wood siding with applied decoration consisting of lattice and boss details. Each of the tower's four sides contains an arched opening from which a cast metal bell is visible. Capping the belltower is a hipped roof constructed of composite shingles with four small dormers on each side and a flagpole at the top (**Photos 1, 2, 3**).

The third (right) bay of the primary façade is the widest of the three bays. Centered within the bay is a set of three, double-hung, wood sash windows with transoms. A front-gabled dormer is above. It contains three groupings of fixed, multi-paned windows, each grouping with sixteen divided lights. A gable vent in the shape of a half-circle sits above those windows (**Photo 4**).

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### *East Façade*

The east façade is the narrowest of all four exterior walls. It displays a centralized pair of double-hung wood sash windows with transoms and a gable vent that sits above the cornice and boxed eaves (**Photos 5, 6**).

### *South Façade (Rear)*

The south façade at the rear of the building contains two bays. The right bay (to the east) displays no fenestration (**Photos 6, 7**). The left bay projects outward and contains a single door at the center of the wall, with a short set of steps leading up to the rear entry (**Photo 7**).

### *West Façade*

The west façade contains a grouping of three double-hung wood sash windows with decorative trim beneath the windowsill. Unlike the other three façades, fenestration at the west exterior wall contains no transoms (**Photo 8**).

### Interior

The building's interior consists of an entry vestibule, a main classroom, a smaller classroom, a small storage room, and a utility closet.

### *Entry Vestibule*

The building's main entrance leads into a small, entry vestibule. Light enters the space through vertically oriented, wood sash windows with transoms that are located at the east and west walls. Above are decorative ceiling tiles, a ceiling fan, and a bronze light fixture—none of which are original to the building (**Photo 9**). The vestibule contains hardwood floors, which continue throughout the building. Also inside the vestibule are two doorways which to the classrooms. Both openings are bordered by wood surrounds, decorated with wood medallion details at the corners. The doorway at the east wall leads to a small room (**Photo 10**), while the second doorway, located at the west wall and consisting of wood double doors (**Photos 11, 12**), leads to the main classroom.

### *Main Classroom*

The main room is characterized by its large, open volume, extra high ceilings, flying crown molding, and beadboard wainscoting that wraps around all four walls. The north wall displays a second set of three double-hung wood sash windows, also centered along the wall (**Photo 13**). The east wall, where the double doors connect to the vestibule, has a second door at its southeast corner, which leads to a utility closet. Also along the east wall, in between the two sets of doors, is an eight-foot-long, rectangular blackboard frame made of wood. Built-in wooden shelves surround the blackboard frame underneath and along either side (**Photo 14**). The south wall features built-in wooden wall shelves with coat rack, an original stove (with a pipe leading through the south wall to the exterior), a wood rear entry door centered along the wall, and a second built-in wood blackboard frame (**Photos 15, 16**). The west wall contains a third built-in wood blackboard frame, as well as a set of three double-hung wood sash windows centered along the wall (**Photo 17**).

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### *Small Classroom*

The third interior room is located at the eastern portion of the building. Like the main classroom, it features extra high ceilings, flying crown molding, and beadboard wainscoting. Along both the east and south walls are sets of two double-hung wood sash windows. A small storage space is accessible from the room's south wall.

### Alterations

Known alterations include relocation and reconfiguration of Old Farmdale School within the same campus. The school district relocated the schoolhouse during a major structural strengthening and restoration project that took place in 1975-76. The building's configuration was also changed, as its primary façade was rotated to face north towards Gambier Street rather than Eastern Avenue as it originally faced. Old Farmdale School retains its 1975 location and configuration.

A review of plans and permits on file with LAUSD indicate that several minor alterations were made during the 1975-76 restoration. Most were in-kind replacements. Alterations included installation of new wire mesh and closure details in the belltower's arched openings, new door frames and oak plank flooring at the entrance, and new oak sills. Additional alterations included a new composition shingle roof and a new water table with brick veneer along the exterior. Original windows, doors, frames, transoms, wood panels, and trim were completely reinstalled except for the interior finish. On the south façade, two windows (one of which had a transom) and a door were removed and filled in. At that same façade, a new door was inserted at a different location. The bell tower was also restored with installation of a new concrete foundation, shear wall, rope and thru-pulley assembly, 12-inch aluminum spire, and cupola.

At the interior, non-original mastipave flooring from the 1930s was removed. Interior finishes were replaced in-kind, including paint, new beadboard wainscoting and molding, and several new eight-foot-long black slate boards. Original details such as turned wood medallions that decorated interior windows and doors were preserved when possible or were replaced in-kind with replicas when necessary.

The metal railing at the entry is not original, as historic photographs show a solid railing of what appears to be clad in vertical wood siding.

There have been no major alterations since the building's 1975-76 restoration.

### Integrity

*Location:* The building was moved to its present location from elsewhere on the campus in 1975.

*Design:* Old Farmdale School retains integrity of design, including its one-story height, irregular plan, original massing, side-gable and hipped roof forms, projecting bell tower, and Victorian-era



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finishes and detailing. Most of its original fenestration is present, except for two windows (one of which had a transom) and a door on the south façade, which were removed and filled in.

*Setting:* It remains on its original school campus, although the campus experienced growth and changes to the layout several times during the first half of the twentieth century. Old Farmdale School remains nestled behind trees with front, rear, and side yards that provide space between it and adjacent school buildings.

*Materials and Workmanship:* The building retains original material or in-kind replacements, including its double-hung wood frame windows, horizontal wood siding, wood fishscale and lattice and boss siding, and its original cast metal bell at the exterior, as well as wood siding and Victorian-era detailing at the interior.

*Feeling:* Integrity of feeling is also present, as the building's exterior and interior look much as they did in the late-nineteenth century. The building would be recognizable to someone familiar with the property during the period of significance.

*Association:* The property remains in use as an educational facility on a school campus, therefore retaining its association.

Integrity of design, materials, and workmanship are particularly strong. While its integrity of location and setting are compromised, the building remains near its original location and within the same school campus. Furthermore, such changes were typical of American nineteenth century schoolhouses and educational campuses, which evolved to serve growing student populations and were often repaired, rebuilt, or restored with better materials. Old Farmdale School possesses sufficient integrity to convey its significance as a rare surviving example of an educational building in Los Angeles dating to the founding years of the city's public educational system.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

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

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION

ARCHITECTURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1894-1915

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Bradbeer and Ferris

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Old Farmdale School is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criterion A in the area of Education for its association with the founding years of Los Angeles' public educational system. The building is also eligible at the local level of significance under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as an excellent and rare remaining example of a late-nineteenth century rural schoolhouse in Los Angeles—one of only three extant examples of the property type in the city. The 1894 schoolhouse embodies national and regional trends in late-nineteenth century rural school design, before urbanization and twentieth century educational reforms resulted in larger school campuses and new school design and construction standards. The period of significance begins in 1894 when the Farmdale School District in unincorporated Los Angeles County erected the building to serve the surrounding rural community; it was the only public school in the area until 1911. The period of significance ends in 1915, when the Los Angeles City School District (later Los Angeles Unified School District) annexed the Farmdale School District, reflecting national trends of rural school consolidation.

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

### ***Criterion A: Education***

Old Farmdale School is associated with the founding years of Los Angeles' public educational system. Constructed by and for the rural, ranching community of Farmdale, Old Farmdale School was the only public school to operate between 1894 and 1911 in the Farmdale School District. Its history reflects national trends in American education during the mid-to-late nineteenth century, including the public education movement and the development of rural schools. In 1915, the Farmdale School District consolidated under the Los Angeles City School District (later Los Angeles Unified School District), further reflecting national trends of rural school consolidation.

### **Public Education in the United States and California**

Prior to the nineteenth century, most children received an education at home, if at all. Generally, only the children of white wealthy or middle-class families were educated outside of the home and/or with external, specialized assistance. Wealthy parents hired private tutors or enrolled their children in private subscription or parochial schools.<sup>3</sup> Instruction focused on the Bible and Latin above all else; reading, writing, arithmetic came second. Meanwhile, poor children entered the workforce without the benefit of any formal education.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Andrew Gulliford, *America's Country Schools* (Washington, DC: Preservation Press, 1984), 36; William W. Cutler, III, "Cathedral of Culture: The Schoolhouse in American Educational Thought and Practice since 1820," *History of Education Quarterly*, 29, no. 1 (Spring, 1989): 1-40, 3.

<sup>4</sup> Gulliford, 37.

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Free, public education in the United States emerged during the colonial period, with Massachusetts Bay establishing the first public education system in 1647.<sup>5</sup> In 1730, voters in New England enacted a public education system and established the local school district as its governing body.<sup>6</sup> Thomas Jefferson was a strident supporter of free, public education. His advocacy led the federal government to enact public financing mechanisms for schools, although early efforts were largely unsuccessful. Early congressional action to fund public education also failed due to corruption at the local level.<sup>7</sup> As a result, most early American schools were financed by parents or other community members.<sup>8</sup>

It was during the nineteenth century when education in the United States “transformed from an informal, unregulated activity into a systematic, well-organized enterprise.”<sup>9</sup> Educational reformers such as Horace Mann, John Pierce, Samuel Lewis, and Henry Barnard advocated for publicly funded education, and Emma Willard, Catharine Beecher, and Mary Lyon urged women to become educators.<sup>10</sup> Public education was seen as key to progress and “became firmly established as an American idea.”<sup>11</sup> Education also became a profession with a trained workforce: teachers. By the 1870s, the role of county school superintendent became an elected position and by the 1890s, a movement to standardize public education was underway.<sup>12</sup> States enacted educational reform policies, such as laws requiring English-only instruction or standardized tests for eighth graders.<sup>13</sup> School design also became more professionalized and standardized and was increasingly seen as worthy of public funding.<sup>14</sup>

California laid the groundwork for its public education system in its first state constitution, published in 1849, which established the position of Superintendent of Public Instruction. Communities throughout the state subsequently established school districts, with most erecting one schoolhouse to serve all the children within that district. Public schools were a point of pride within California’s cities and towns during the nineteenth century. Voters recurrently approved bonds to help finance their construction. The Progressive Era brought additional changes to public education. Los Angeles established the third junior high program in the country in 1911

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<sup>5</sup> Gulliford, 36.

<sup>6</sup> Walter Sargent, “The Evolution of the Little Red School-House,” *The School Review*, 11, no. 6 (June 1903): 435-455, 437.

<sup>7</sup> The Land Ordinance of 1784 and the Northwest Ordinances of 1785 and 1787 required that as each new state formed, the federal government would “allot one section in every township for support of common schools.”<sup>7</sup> “Common schools” referred to public schools—typically one-room country schools. The allotted land was intended to be leased, with proceeds benefitting public education. The strategy, however, did not work. Free land was abundant, and the strategy was not profitable. Congress then passed a law requiring that states put proceeds from the sale of public lands toward public education, and that also failed as government officials frequently sold off the land and diverted or pocketed the funds.

<sup>8</sup> Gulliford, 38; Sargent, 436.

<sup>9</sup> Cutler, 2.

<sup>10</sup> Gulliford, 40.

<sup>11</sup> Gulliford, 40.

<sup>12</sup> Gulliford, 72.

<sup>13</sup> Gulliford, 41.

<sup>14</sup> Cutler, 2.

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and by 1919, following the lead of other states, California required teenagers to enroll in part-time school.<sup>15</sup>

### **Farmdale: A Rural Ranching Community in Los Angeles**

In the late nineteenth century, Farmdale was a small, rural, ranching community in unincorporated Los Angeles County. Its residents included American Indians, Spaniards, Californios, Basques, and Mexican Americans, some with ties to the former San Gabriel Mission. Following Mexico's independence from Spain, the mission was secularized, and a portion was granted to Juan Ballesteros in 1831, which he named Rancho Rosa de Castilla.<sup>16</sup> After the United States claimed victory in the Mexican American War, Rancho Rosa de Castilla came under the ownership of Juan Batista and Catherine Hegui Batz, French Basques who arrived in California from Argentina in 1850. The Batzes eventually amassed 3,330 acres in the area for grazing sheep, cattle, horses, pigs, and fowl, and farming hay and barley.<sup>17</sup> In the years following, Spanish Basques moved into the vicinity, including the Huarte (Uharte), Arcostegui (Arostegui), Juaregui, Oxarart, and Lifur families.<sup>18</sup> Mexican American families, such as the Yorbas, and Native Americans, including descendants of those who resided and labored at the former San Gabriel Mission, also called Farmdale and its surrounding area home.

In 1882, after both Juan Batista and Catherine Hegui Batz passed away, Rancho Rosa de Castilla was divided among the Batz children. Some land was sold off for development, and the area remained mostly undeveloped until the turn of the century. The arrival of the railroad beginning in 1895 sparked real estate development in the area, led primarily by developer, George Baird.<sup>19</sup> Baird's brother, Lewellyn Baird, was an early board member of the Farmdale School District.<sup>20</sup> In 1911, the area had four distinct neighborhoods: Rose Hill, Bairdstown, Farmdale, and Sierra Vista.<sup>21</sup> By 1915, the larger area became known as El Sereno, named after Mexican lamplighters.<sup>22</sup> El Sereno continued to grow during the 1920s and 1930s with the development of new residential neighborhoods and community facilities.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Sapphos Environmental, "Los Angeles Unified School District Historic Context Statement, 1870 to 1969," March 2014, 45-46.

<sup>16</sup> Rancho Rosa de Castilla correlates with the modern-day neighborhoods of El Sereno, Alhambra, and Monterey Park, among other parts of East Los Angeles.

<sup>17</sup> Charles Cooper, "Bicentennial El Sereno Looks Back," *Northeast Newspapers*, September 24, 1980, B5.

<sup>18</sup> John R. Chavez, "Rancho Rosa de Castilla: Hispanic Continuity in Greater East Los Angeles," *Southern California Quarterly*, 80, no. 4 (Winter 1998): 399-418, 413; "Jean Baptiste Batz and Catalina Hagui," Basques in California, retrieved September 4, 2021, <https://basquesincalifornia.eus/second-period-1849-1960/pioneers/jean-baptiste-batz-catalina-hagui/>.

<sup>19</sup> Historic Resources Group, "Historic Resources Survey Report, Northeast Los Angeles Community Plan Area," Prepared for the City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning, February 2017, 13.

<sup>20</sup> Old Farmdale School and Museum pamphlet, Bicentennial Project of the California State University, Los Angeles School of Education, c. 1976, on file with the El Sereno Historical Society.

<sup>21</sup> Each neighborhood had its own school and only Old Farmdale School is extant. Historic Resources Group, 14.

<sup>22</sup> William J. Johnston and D. Michael Johnston, *The Doc Newman Story: A Biography* (Victoria, B.C.: Trafford Publishing, 2005), 162; Charles Cooper, "Bicentennial El Sereno Looks Back," *Northeast Newspapers*, B5.

<sup>23</sup> Historic Resources Group, 14.

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The Farmdale School District was in existence by 1889 and operated a schoolhouse that same year. Like most rural schoolhouses of the era, Farmdale School was the likely the first public building in town.<sup>24</sup> Little is known about this first iteration of the schoolhouse. It was likely intended to be temporary, as was customary in rural communities across the United States in the nineteenth century. In 1891, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors solicited bids for bonds to fund the purchase of land, and the construction of a new school building, for the Farmdale School District. Following “a meeting attended by a majority of the taxpayers of that district”<sup>25</sup> and a subsequent election, voters overwhelmingly approved the bond measure. The strong voter support for establishing a public school for the first time, particularly in rural California during the late-nineteenth century, aligns with national trends in American education that promoted and valued schooling for all.

The Farmdale School District Board of Trustees had the responsibility to issue and sell bonds and move forward with the purchasing of a two-acre lot for the new schoolhouse.<sup>26</sup> In violation of their public duty, however, the trustees delayed action. They waited months to transfer the bond proceeds to the county treasurer and waited even longer to purchase property for the school. An article in the *Los Angeles Evening Express* captures voter frustration over the trustees’ inaction: “Their masterly inactivity in this regard became so tiresome to the enterprising citizens of Farmdale that the latter rose in arms, so to speak, and ordered the trustees to step down and out.”<sup>27</sup> Town resident Daniel Kevane filed a lawsuit against the trustees, accusing them of malfeasance, corruption, and neglect, and called for their removal from office.<sup>28</sup> Kevane won the lawsuit and the courts ousted all three trustees—H.P. Matthewson, B. Kujaneck, and H.I. Roper—from the board.<sup>29</sup> In April 1892, the Farmdale School District was back on track, purchasing property for the new school building and commissioning architects, Bradbeer and Ferris, to design it.<sup>30</sup>

The new, one-story, two-room, wood-frame schoolhouse was completed in 1894. Its students, who ranged in age from five to seventeen, came from the surrounding areas as far away as the San Gabriel Valley.<sup>31</sup> Many of its earliest pupils were descendants of the aforementioned Native American, Spanish, Californio, Basque, and Mexican American families. Those who lived close by walked to school. Gregory Lifur, the grandchild of Basque immigrants, recalled walking past sheep and a nearby rancho on his way to school. Others, like Esperanza and Marguerite Batz, arrived via horse and buggy along a dirt trail (later Valley Boulevard) where they passed cattle fields. When the Batz and Lifur children attended Farmdale School, there was one teacher

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<sup>24</sup> “Election Notice,” *Los Angeles Evening Express*, October 18, 1890, 6.

<sup>25</sup> “Farmdale School Trustees in Trouble,” *The Los Angeles Times*, February 27, 1892, 3.

<sup>26</sup> “The Supervisors,” *Los Angeles Times*, November 22, 1891, 16.

<sup>27</sup> “Fired Out,” *Los Angeles Evening Express*, March 15, 1892, 8.

<sup>28</sup> “A Beautiful Row: Farmdale School Trustees in a Lawsuit,” *Los Angeles Herald*, February 27, 1892, 5.

<sup>29</sup> “Fired Out,” *Los Angeles Evening Express*, March 15, 1892, 8.

<sup>30</sup> “Notice to Contractors,” *Los Angeles Times*, April 23, 1892, 10.

<sup>31</sup> Robert A. Lerner, “91 Years of Students at Farmdale,” *Northeast Newspapers*, September 24, 1980, B5.

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responsible for instructing eighteen students in the first through the eighth grades. They learned “the basics, spelling, reading, writing, and arithmetic.”<sup>32</sup> Many of the students were English-language learners whose first language was French or Spanish.<sup>33</sup> Between 1894 and 1911, Old Farmdale School was the only school in the district that served the area’s ranching communities.

### **The Los Angeles Unified School District: Founding Years and School Consolidation**

The state of California in the 1870s required all cities to establish local boards of education and delegated to them the task of curriculum development. The Los Angeles City School District formed in 1872 and gained legal authority in 1879. Soon after, it began the process of creating educational programming.<sup>34</sup> Los Angeles administrators and educators aligned themselves with the pedagogy of educational reformer, Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, who underscored the values of memorization, recitation, discipline, and uniformity for all students, an approach that was widespread throughout the United States during the nineteenth century.<sup>35</sup>

The population of Los Angeles exploded in the last two decades of the nineteenth century, following the arrival of the transcontinental railroad, and the Los Angeles City School District struggled to keep pace with the growth.<sup>36</sup> Its schools became overcrowded, as did schools throughout California. The state responded by enabling local school boards to issue their own bonds for facility construction, expansion, and improvements. By 1898, Los Angeles had a total of fifty-seven educational facilities.<sup>37</sup> In growing unincorporated parts of Los Angeles County such as Farmdale, “utilitarian wood-framed schoolhouses continued to serve the needs of new communities.”<sup>38</sup> That pattern held until the 1910s when Los Angeles initiated a process of annexation and school district consolidation.<sup>39</sup>

The movement within Los Angeles County to consolidate school districts was part of a national trend. At the turn of the century, federal attention was increasingly given to the “rural school problem.” President Theodore Roosevelt in 1908 launched the National Commission on Country Life to identify solutions to rural problems. Chief among them was the condition of rural schools, which were deemed inadequate and in need of reform. Education reformers, state and county superintendents, and the American Association of School Administrators all supported the concept of consolidating rural schools under larger school districts. A series of books published between 1908 and 1925 strongly advocated for rural school consolidation and as an incentive, some state legislatures even offered increased funding for consolidated schools. Subsequently, many rural schools began to consolidate, and a significant number of one-room

<sup>32</sup> Mayerene Barker, “Old School: Ties that Bind,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 2, 1976, SG1.

<sup>33</sup> Mary Barber, “Home Overlooks Cal State: Sisters Recall Campus as Grain Fields,” *Los Angeles Times*, November 25, 1968, 147.

<sup>34</sup> Sapphos Environmental, “Los Angeles Unified School District Historic Context Statement, 1870 to 1969,” March 2014, 24.

<sup>35</sup> Sapphos Environmental, 19-20.

<sup>36</sup> Sapphos Environmental, 25-26.

<sup>37</sup> Sapphos Environmental, 28.

<sup>38</sup> Sapphos Environmental, 27.

<sup>39</sup> Sapphos Environmental, 28.



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schoolhouses were demolished.<sup>40</sup> In Los Angeles, “[b]etween 1911 and 1915, a total of 22 schools had been annexed to the district, with an additional 31 elementary and high school buildings under construction.”<sup>41</sup>

As early as 1908, a group of parents with children enrolled in the Farmdale School District petitioned the County Superintendent of Schools to request that the district be consolidated under the Los Angeles City School District.<sup>42</sup> The movement gained momentum and in 1909, a portion of the Farmdale School District was annexed to the Los Angeles City School District.<sup>43</sup> Then in 1913, the voters of El Sereno, as the area became known, considered whether to approve annexation of the entire town to the city of Los Angeles. At the time, El Sereno was “the largest connecting link on the west between Los Angeles, South Pasadena and Alhambra.”<sup>44</sup> El Sereno voted overwhelmingly in favor of the proposition in 1913, as did Los Angeles voters in 1915. Subsequently, the entire Farmdale School District was consolidated under the Los Angeles City School District (later, LAUSD).

### **Post-Period of Significance: Campus Expansions and the 1975-76 Building Restoration**

Los Angeles schools continued to expand during the 1920s and 1930s as the city’s geography and population increased in size and number. El Sereno was among the neighborhoods most impacted, as noted by the *Los Angeles Evening Express* in 1924: “[p]erhaps nowhere in Southern California has a community grown as fast as El Sereno due primarily to the natural scenic beauty, healthy conditions and accessibility from Los Angeles.”<sup>45</sup> Additionally, in 1919, California made high school mandatory, further adding to the growth of the student population and the need for larger and more numerous schools within Los Angeles.<sup>46</sup>

In 1923, LAUSD debuted a new Farmdale Elementary School just south of the original schoolhouse, which then became known as “Old Farmdale School.”<sup>47</sup> By this time, unified school campus plans or “open air” schools emphasizing large campuses and landscape elements were dominant trends in school architecture.<sup>48</sup> In 1936, Old Farmdale School and its surroundings became part of El Sereno Area High School, changing its name to Woodrow Wilson High School the following year. Over the next few years, several new buildings, including some funded by the New Deal, were added to the campus. Old Farmdale School was used for woodshop classes. Woodrow Wilson High School relocated in 1970 and the campus became El Sereno Middle School, as it is remains known.

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<sup>40</sup> Gulliford, 40-43.

<sup>41</sup> Sapphos Environmental, 43-44.

<sup>42</sup> “School Seeks Annexation,” *Los Angeles Herald*, June 23, 1908, 5.

<sup>43</sup> “Questions Considered by Board Supervisors,” *Los Angeles Evening Express*, January 26, 1909, 7.

<sup>44</sup> “To Vote on New City District: Bairdstown, with two thousand people, ready to come in,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 23, 1915, 24.

<sup>45</sup> “Growth Comes to El Sereno,” *Los Angeles Evening Express*, December 2, 1924, 3.

<sup>46</sup> Sapphos Environmental, 44, 46.

<sup>47</sup> “Board Speedily Relieving City School Crowding,” *Daily News*, October 24, 1923, 10.

<sup>48</sup> Sapphos Environmental, 37, 42, 46, 50.

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In the 1970s, as part of El Sereno's observance of the United States Bicentennial, community members and school district officials organized to restore Old Farmdale School and turn it into a museum. LAUSD School Board President and El Sereno Bicentennial Committee organizer, Dr. Donald D. Newman, led the effort.<sup>49</sup> Dr. Newman was a physician from San Gabriel who fought for years to get the schoolhouse restored, and it took time for his cause to gain traction. An advocate of El Sereno history, Dr. Newman also led the community in obtaining certification for an official Bicentennial committee.<sup>50</sup> El Sereno Bicentennial Committee took the restoration on as one of its projects and in 1974, the committee, along with the LAUSD Board of Education, approved monies for the proposed project.<sup>51</sup> California State University Los Angeles' Education Department volunteered their resources to the project, assisting primarily with historic documentation.<sup>52</sup>

One of the most exciting moments during the restoration process involved the schoolhouse bell. According to local observer Patrick Richmond:

One of the workers remembered an old bell that had been stored [at the storage yard of the school district] for years. No one knew its history, but since the museum needed a bell, they thought it might come in handy. They put it on the truck and took it out to the site.

The only problem was that there was no clapper on the bell. When they got to the museum, the Principal remembered a piece of metal he had seen in the old walk-in safe located at the junior high school. He brought it out, and to everyone's amazement, it was the missing clapper! The schoolhouse bell had come home.<sup>53</sup>

A ribbon cutting ceremony to unveil the newly restored Old Farmdale School and museum took place April 29, 1976, during LAUSD's celebration of Public Schools Week. The original school bell rang for the first time in decades.<sup>54</sup> School and school district officials, Los Angeles city council persons, students, alumni, PTA representatives, members of El Sereno Bicentennial Committee, and others attended the event. Among the alumni present were descendants of the Batz and Lifur families who lived in the area when it was known as Rancho Rosa de Castilla; in 1976 they were in their 70s, 80s, and 90s.<sup>55</sup> According to newspaper coverage of the event, alumnus Gregory Lifur "found the schoolhouse the same as he did as a boy."<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Johnston and Johnston, 165.

<sup>50</sup> Charles Cooper, "Bicentennial El Sereno Looks Back," *Northeast Newspapers*, B5.

<sup>51</sup> Old Farmdale School and Museum pamphlet.

<sup>52</sup> The El Sereno Historical Society made several attempts to locate this research. It was not available in public records nor were staff from Cal State Los Angeles able to locate the research.

<sup>53</sup> Johnston and Johnston, 163.

<sup>54</sup> Johnston and Johnston, 195.

<sup>55</sup> "Old El Sereno School Restoration Completed," *Star News—Pasadena*, April 30, 1976, D-az; Johnston and Johnston, 166.

<sup>56</sup> Mayerene Barker, "Old School: Ties that Bind," *The Los Angeles Times*, May 2, 1976.

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Amidst all the celebration and fanfare, the primary champion of Old Farmdale School—Doc Newman—had unfortunately passed away before he could see the completed restoration.<sup>57</sup> The rededication of the school was named in his honor. As noted by authors William and D. Michael Johnston, the “rededication became a memorial to those who attended the school; it was a tangible tribute to America’s Bicentennial, and it became a hallmark of the pride of the community of El Sereno.”<sup>58</sup> While it is no longer utilized as a museum, this major community-based effort to restore Old Farmdale School and turn it into a museum underscore its significance to local history. Old Farmdale School remains in use as an educational building on the campus of El Sereno Middle School.

### ***Criterion C***

Old Farmdale School embodies the distinctive characteristics of the nineteenth century American schoolhouse. It is an excellent and rare extant example of this property type in Los Angeles, one of only three remaining in the city. Built by and for the agricultural community of Farmdale in 1894, Old Farmdale School reflects national and regional trends in late-nineteenth century rural school design, before urbanization and educational reforms of the twentieth century resulted in larger school campuses and new school design and construction standards.<sup>59</sup>

### **Rural American Schoolhouse Architecture**

From the onset of the eighteenth century to the mid-twentieth century, most school buildings in the United States took the form of one-room schoolhouses, particularly in rural areas; the schoolhouse may have had two rooms in areas with larger populations.<sup>60</sup> Scholars divide nineteenth century schoolhouses into four main categories: folk vernacular, mass vernacular, architect-designed based on plan books, and architect-commissioned.<sup>61</sup>

The earliest schoolhouses were *folk vernacular*. Local builders, sometimes including parents of the school’s future students, erected temporary shelters constructed with locally available materials. Often simple in design, they may have displayed regional or ethnic characteristics. Many were later replaced with more substantial, permanent buildings or were modified, expanded, or relocated as necessary to address local needs. The second category of nineteenth century schoolhouses are *mass vernacular schoolhouses*, or those constructed with mass-produced, commercially available materials. By the early 1830s, *architect-designed schoolhouse plan books* enabled easy replication and standardization of schoolhouse design, although school districts did not widely utilize them until the 1870s. The last category, *architect-commissioned schoolhouses*, were those individually designed by an architect. These were rare.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Johnston and Johnston, 166.

<sup>58</sup> Johnston and Johnston, 166.

<sup>59</sup> Sapphos Environmental, 9.

<sup>60</sup> Gulliford, 36.

<sup>61</sup> Gulliford, 164.

<sup>62</sup> Gulliford, 164-165.

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Regardless of how they were constructed, nineteenth century rural American schoolhouses have a distinct, recognizable building form.<sup>63</sup> Most are rectangular in plan, although some are square or octagonal. They are generally small, typically no larger than 30 by 40 feet in size, so that the teacher's voice could be heard from all corners of the classroom. Usually only one entrance is present. Schoolhouse entrances typically face the street—usually to the south or east—and are located on the building's short façade. Some, especially in the West, have two entrances. Additionally, some schoolhouse entrances display porticos, porches, or roof overhangs.<sup>64</sup> Nearly all nineteenth century schoolhouses are one-story, and the vast majority contain only one or two classrooms. It was not until the turn of the century when some school districts expanded these buildings to include basements or additional classrooms to accommodate growing student populations.<sup>65</sup>

Construction materials vary widely among nineteenth century schoolhouses. The earliest schoolhouses often contained an amalgamation of materials, which in some cases came from the parents of schoolchildren.<sup>66</sup> Common materials for these early American schoolhouses included log, stone, brick, adobe, sod, and other earthen materials. Throughout the West, the oldest school buildings were typically constructed of sod, adobe, or local earth. By the 1870s, wood frame buildings replaced these early schoolhouses, with some utilizing mass-produced and manufactured materials.<sup>67</sup>

The one- or two-room, wood-frame rural American schoolhouse typology that became the industry standard first developed in the East Coast, moving westward by the 1870s and intensifying in the 1880s and 1890s.<sup>68</sup> Numerous architectural influences, educational reformers, teachers, government entities, and product manufacturers contributed to its development during the nineteenth century. Inspiration was taken first from England, where school buildings contained singular open spaces for instruction, and then from Prussia, where schools consisted of multiple rooms.<sup>69</sup> Soon, American educators and education reformers sought to create uniquely American schoolhouse designs and concepts. Key individuals who influenced American schoolhouse architecture include William A. Alcott, Henry Barnard, Charles P. Dwyer, Fletcher B. Dresslar, James Johonnot, and Samuel F. Eveleth.<sup>70</sup> They published prolifically on the topic of school architecture, including guides and plan-books for school buildings, and promoted the connection between school facilities and educational theory and approaches. The one-room wood-frame schoolhouse emerged as an American icon.<sup>71</sup> During the late nineteenth century,

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<sup>63</sup> Gulliford, 171.

<sup>64</sup> Gulliford, 172.

<sup>65</sup> Suzanne Doggett and Holly Wilson, "Rural School Buildings in Colorado, National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form," E-22, 1999.

<sup>66</sup> Gulliford, 166.

<sup>67</sup> Gulliford, 169 and 177.

<sup>68</sup> Gulliford, 165.

<sup>69</sup> Cutler, 4.

<sup>70</sup> Gulliford, 167.

<sup>71</sup> Cutler, 2.

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rural communities who had wood-frame schoolhouses considered them to be a symbol of community stability and a source of pride.<sup>72</sup>

Stylistically, nineteenth century American schoolhouses borrowed from popular architectural styles of the era such as Gothic Revival, Queen Anne, Italianate, Greek Revival, Richardsonian Romanesque, Classical Revival, Bungalow, Mission, and International styles.<sup>73</sup> A quintessential feature of the American schoolhouse is the bell tower. Some bell towers were capped with a simple roof while others were decorated with ornate siding and flags attached to finials. Bell towers were considered as a status symbol at the turn of the century and many existing schools without bell towers added them by 1910.<sup>74</sup> Other common architectural features include horizontal wood or wood shingle siding and wood-framed, double-hung sash windows.<sup>75</sup> Interiors sometimes contained a small vestibule or cloakroom near the entrance in addition to one or two classrooms, as well as black boards or slates, lath and plaster walls trimmed with wood, and a stove for heat placed in the center of the room. Windows and doors provided the building's only source of ventilation.<sup>76</sup> The schoolyard generally contained grass and an outhouse.<sup>77</sup>

Like rural schoolhouses across the country, those in Los Angeles were typically wood framed and contained one or two classrooms, with late-nineteenth century examples commonly featuring the signature school bell tower.<sup>78</sup> They were designed to be “easily enlarged or modified to accommodate growth or multiple uses.”<sup>79</sup> This model of schoolhouse design was followed in Los Angeles until 1910,<sup>80</sup> and many continued to operate in the city—and the rest of California—well into the twentieth century. There were still 1,360 one-room schools operating in California in 1935.<sup>81</sup>

### **Decline of the Rural American Schoolhouse**

By 1900, new school buildings in the United States evolved from the one- and two-room wood-frame schoolhouses that typified the previous century. A movement towards school district consolidation, as well as urbanization and growing populations, sparked the development of larger educational facilities with multiple classrooms. The Progressive Era of the early twentieth century also contributed to standardization and modernization of school architecture. A multitude of publications, journals, plan books, education department requirements, and state laws contributed to this process.<sup>82</sup> Following these trends, schools constructed in Los Angeles after the turn of the century were larger, “more monumental in their architectural expression,” and

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<sup>72</sup> Gulliford, 169 and 177.

<sup>73</sup> Gulliford, 167 and 182.

<sup>74</sup> Gulliford, 174.

<sup>75</sup> Sapphos Environmental, 19.

<sup>76</sup> Sargent, 439.

<sup>77</sup> Gulliford, 175 and 176.

<sup>78</sup> Sapphos Environmental, 24.

<sup>79</sup> Sapphos Environmental, 116.

<sup>80</sup> Sapphos Environmental, 116.

<sup>81</sup> Doggett and Wilson, 44.

<sup>82</sup> Gulliford, 193.

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contained multiple classrooms.<sup>83</sup> Preferences for architectural styles changed as well, with Beaux Arts Classicism and Neo-Classical Revival styles, as well as period revival styles like Italian Renaissance Revival, Collegiate Gothic Revival, Tudor Revival, Indigenous revival, Spanish Colonial, and Mission Revival styles, gaining in popularity.<sup>84</sup>

Despite the decline of one- and two-room, wood-frame schoolhouses by 1920, rural communities continued to operate their older schoolhouses through the 1940s.<sup>85</sup> In Los Angeles, many were destroyed or damaged beyond repair during the 1933 Long Beach earthquake, or significantly altered in the aftermath. Subsequently, both the state of California and the city of Los Angeles enacted new laws to govern school construction, further contributing to the reforms already taking place.<sup>86</sup> The rural nineteenth century schoolhouse property type is exceedingly rare locally, statewide, and nationally as most have been destroyed or altered beyond recognition. Only three examples remain in Los Angeles: Old Vernon Avenue School (1876), Old Canyon School (1894), and Old Farmdale School (1894).<sup>87</sup>

### **Old Farmdale School Architecture**

The 1894 Old Farmdale School is an outstanding example of the nineteenth century rural American schoolhouse. Like many rural schoolhouses across the United States, it was the second iteration of the Farmdale School District's schoolhouse, as newspapers and ephemera from the era support the existence of an earlier school building from 1889.<sup>88</sup> This earlier schoolhouse was likely constructed of lower quality materials and construction methods and was never intended to be permanent. The 1894 Old Farmdale School was specially designed by an architect, which was quite rare for the time. Its one-story, two-room with entry vestibule and bell tower form was very typical of the era.

Numerous character-defining features of Old Farmdale School convey its architectural significance as a representative example of its property type. This includes its wood-framed construction, one-story massing with two-classrooms and an entry vestibule, side-gable and hipped roof forms, open bell tower with original cast metal bell, horizontal wood clapboard siding, and wood-framed, double-hung sash windows (sometimes in groupings).<sup>89</sup> Its Queen Anne Revival style is also associated with nineteenth century rural schoolhouses, as it was a popular style for that property type. It displays architectural features characteristic of the Queen Anne Revival style, including an asymmetrical façade, irregular roofline, square bell tower, fish scale siding, decorative stringcourse, cornice with boxed eaves, and applied decoration consisting of lattice and boss details. Its interior character defining features include open volumes, vertical wood paneling and molding, and turned wood medallions at the windows.

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<sup>83</sup> Sapphos Environmental, 19.

<sup>84</sup> Sapphos Environmental, 117-118.

<sup>85</sup> Gulliford, 195.

<sup>86</sup> Lerner, B5.

<sup>87</sup> Sapphos Environmental, 116.

<sup>88</sup> "Election Notice," *Los Angeles Express*, October 18, 1890, 6.

<sup>89</sup> Sapphos Environmental, 116.

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Old Farmdale School represents the quintessential American schoolhouse of the nineteenth century. As only one of three extant examples of its property type in Los Angeles, Old Farmdale School provides a tangible connection to the city's nineteenth century agrarian past and serves as a memorial to American public education, as well as the hopes and dreams of the families who created it for their children and descendants.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Sapphos Environmental, 116.

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El Sereno Historical Society

Los Angeles Public Library Photo Collection

Los Angeles Unified School District Archives

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Other

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Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps

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**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested

previously listed in the National Register

previously determined eligible by the National Register

designated a National Historic Landmark

recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other

Name of repository: Los Angeles City Planning Department

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** \_\_\_\_\_

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**10. Geographical Data**

**Acres of Property** Less than an acre

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 34.080455

Longitude: -118.179325

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Old Farmdale School is located on the campus of El Sereno Middle School and occupies a small portion of Los Angeles Assessor Parcel Number (APN) 5214017901. The boundary encompasses Old Farmdale School and its immediate setting, which constitutes approximately ten to eleven feet of open space surrounding the building, extending to the existing fence that demarcates the schoolhouse area (**Sketch Map/Photo Key**).

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**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary encompasses the area historically associated with Old Farmdale School, which include the building and its immediate setting.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Desiree Aranda  
organization: on behalf of El Sereno Historical Society  
street & number: P.O. Box 32-113  
city or town: Los Angeles state: CA zip code: 90032  
e-mail: [eshs.org@gmail.com](mailto:eshs.org@gmail.com)  
telephone: (213) 241-4821  
date: November 2021; Revised December 2021, January 2022

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**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

**Photographs**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

**Photo Log**

Name of Property: Old Farmdale School  
City or Vicinity: Los Angeles  
County: Los Angeles  
State: California  
Photographer: Alixan Katanya  
Date Photographed: September 30, 2021

Old Farmdale School  
Name of Property

Los Angeles, California  
County and State

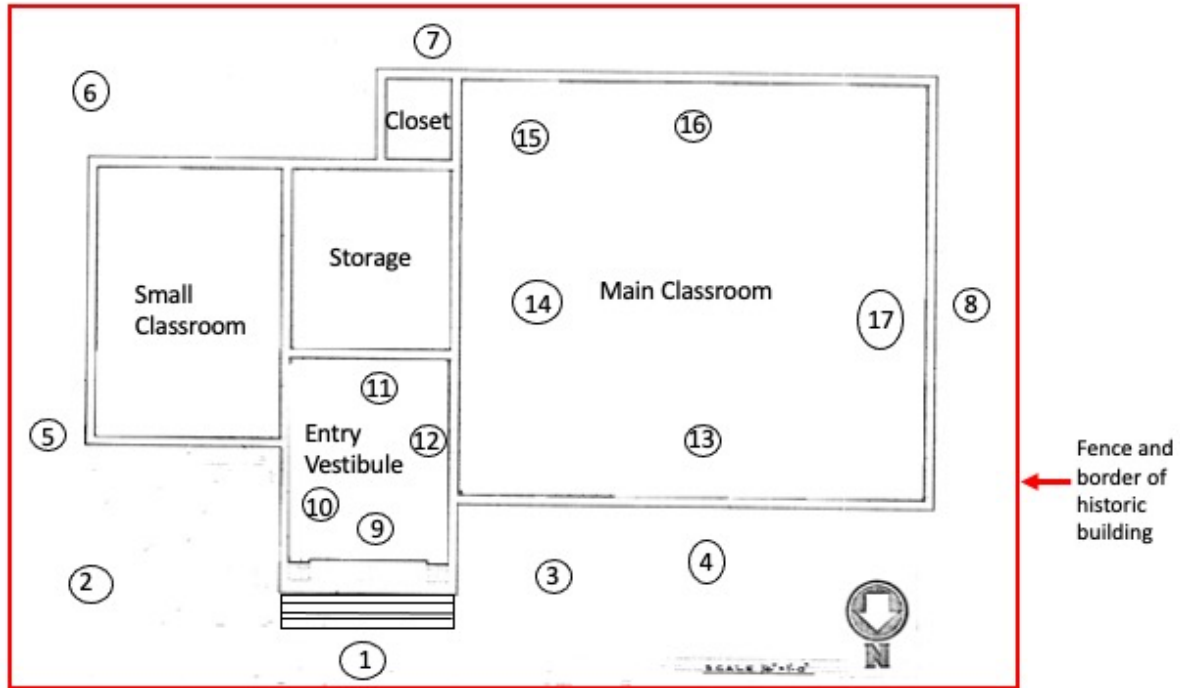
Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 17 Primary (north) façade, view south
- 2 of 17 North and east facades, view southwest
- 3 of 17 Primary entrance and bell tower, view southeast
- 4 of 17 Primary (north) façade, detail, view south
- 5 of 17 East façade, view southwest
- 6 of 17 East façade, view northwest
- 7 of 17 South façade, view north
- 8 of 17 West facade, view east
- 9 of 17 Entry vestibule, primary entry, view north
- 10 of 17 Entry vestibule, east wall, view northeast
- 11 of 17 Entry vestibule, south wall, view south
- 12 of 17 Entry vestibule, west wall, view southwest
- 13 of 17 Main classroom, north wall, view north
- 14 of 17 Main classroom, east wall, view east
- 15 of 17 Main classroom, stove detail, view southeast
- 16 of 17 Main classroom, south wall, view south
- 17 of 17 Main classroom, west wall, view west

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### Sketch Map/Photo Key



**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

- Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
- Tier 2 – 120 hours
- Tier 3 – 230 hours
- Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.

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### Location Map

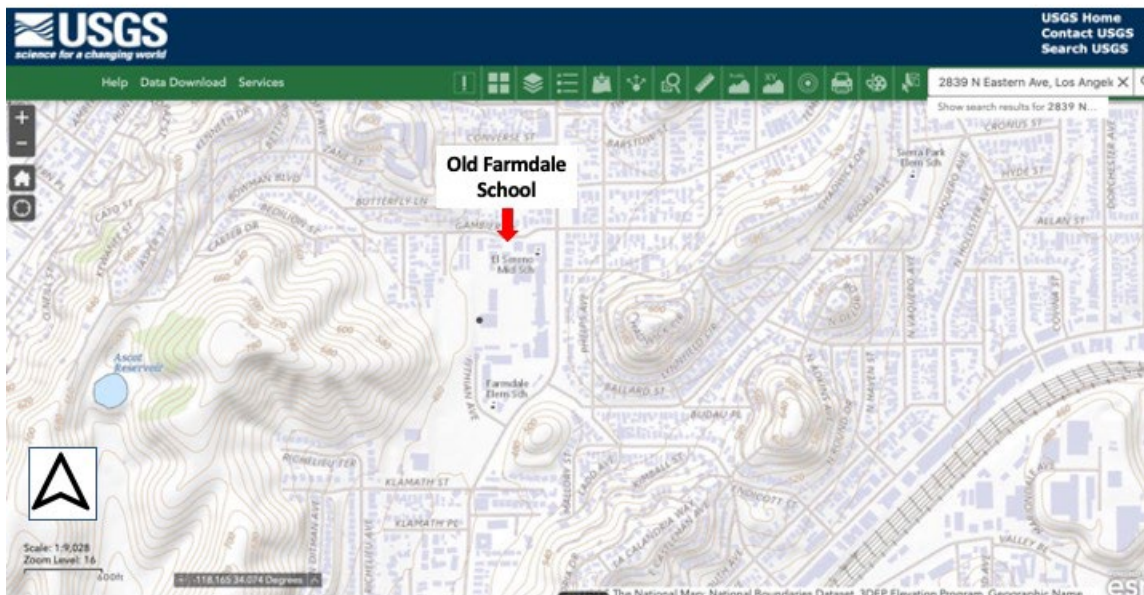
Latitude: 34.080455

Longitude: -118.179325



Courtesy Google Earth, 2021, annotated by author.

### Context Map



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**Figure 1** Old Farmdale Public School, 1904 (El Sereno Historical Society)



**Figure 2** Class portrait, Old Farmdale School, circa 1905 (Los Angeles Public Library Photo Collection, Security Pacific National Bank Collection)<sup>91</sup>



<sup>91</sup> The school is incorrectly identified as the “Bairdstown School” on the LAPL website. Newspapers from the era may have referred to it that way because the area was called “Bairdstown” at the turn of the century.



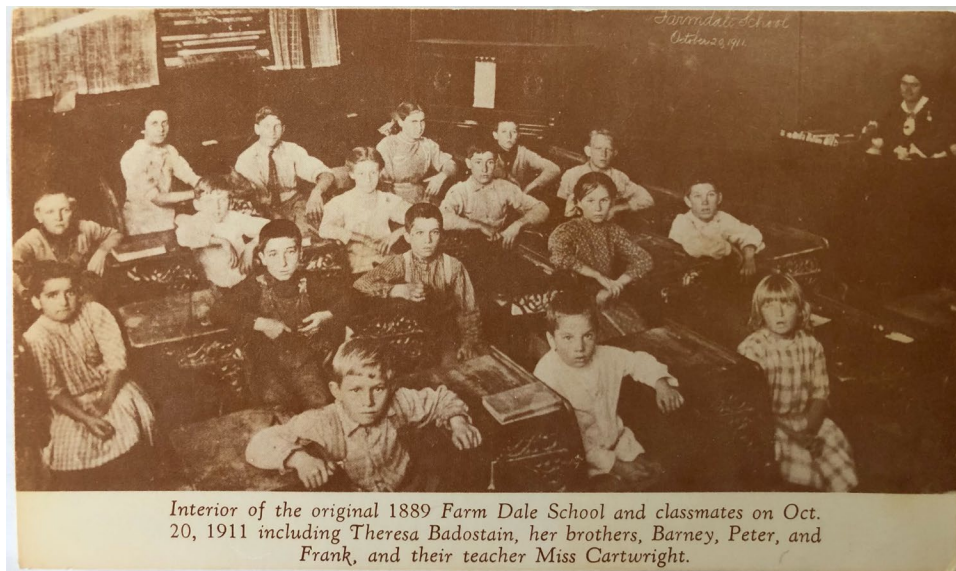
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**Figure 3** Class portrait, Old Farmdale School, circa 1905 (Los Angeles Public Library Photo Collection, Security Pacific National Bank Collection)<sup>92</sup>



**Figure 4** Postcard showing the interior of Old Farmdale School, 1911 (El Sereno Historical Society)



*Interior of the original 1889 Farm Dale School and classmates on Oct. 20, 1911 including Theresa Badostain, her brothers, Barney, Peter, and Frank, and their teacher Miss Cartwright.*

<sup>92</sup> The school is incorrectly identified as the “Bairdstown School” on the LAPL website. Newspapers from the era may have referred to it that way because the area was called “Bairdstown” at the turn of the century.

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**Figure 5** Old Farmdale School bell tower, 1937 (Los Angeles Public Library Photo Collection, Herald Examiner Collection)



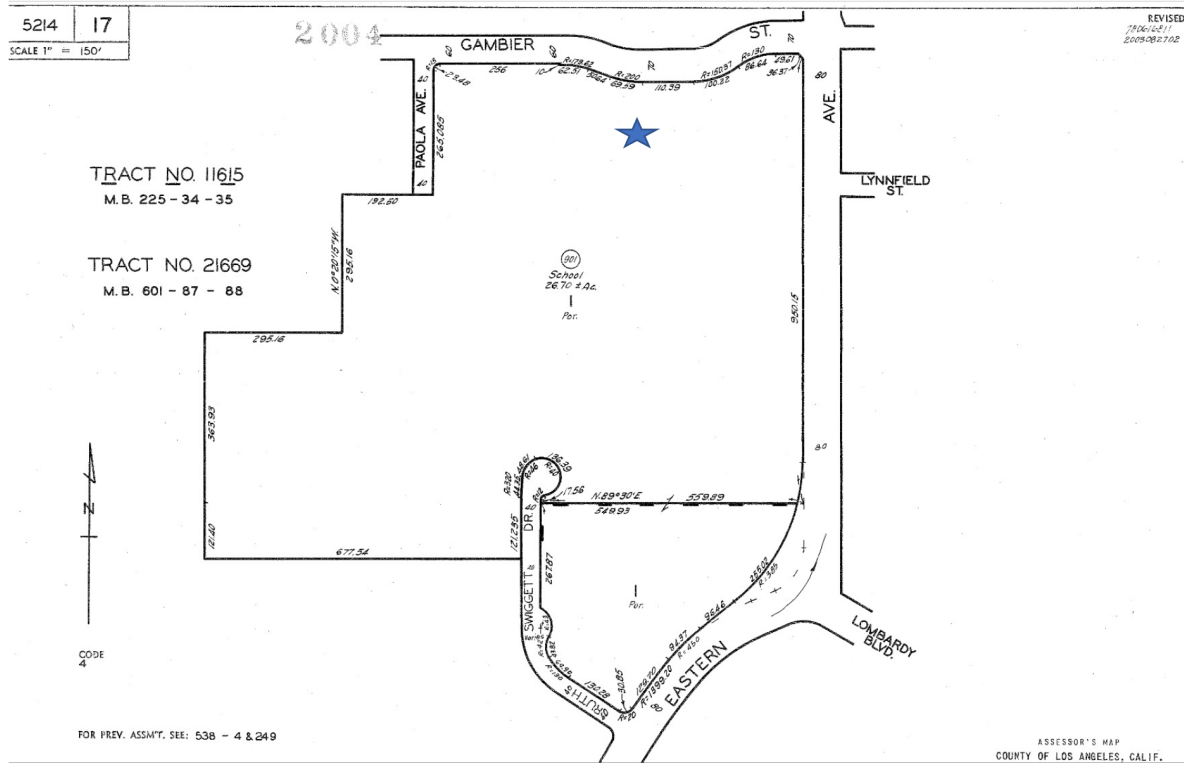
**Figure 6** Old Farmdale School Bell, 1937 (Los Angeles Public Library Photo Collection, Herald Examiner Collection)



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**Figure 7** County of Los Angeles Assessor's Map: The blue star marks the approximate location of Old Farmdale School within the campus of El Sereno Middle School.



Courtesy of Los Angeles County Assessor, 2004, annotated by author.

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**Photo 1** Primary (north) façade, view south



**Photo 2** North and east facades, view southwest



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**Photo 3** Primary entrance and bell tower, view southeast



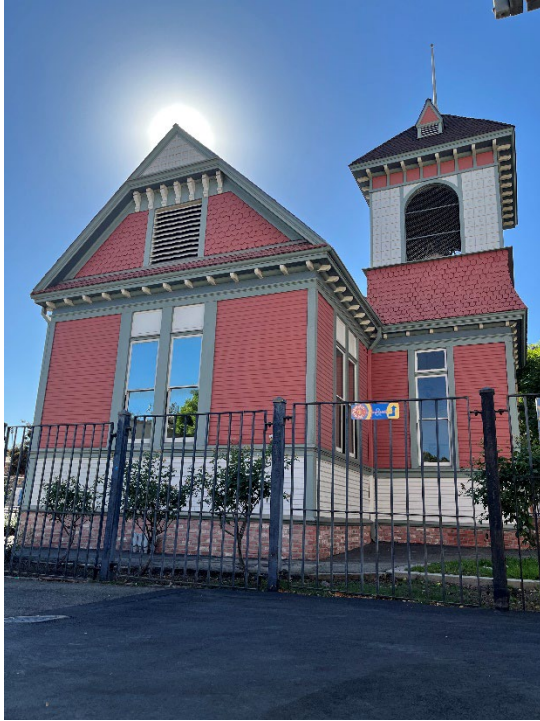
**Photo 4** Primary (north) façade, detail, view south



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**Photo 5** East façade, view southwest



**Photo 6** East façade, view northwest



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**Photo 7** South façade, view north



**Photo 8** West facade, view east



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**Photo 9** Entry vestibule, primary entry, view north



**Photo 10** Entry vestibule, east wall, view northeast





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**Photo 11** Entry vestibule, south wall, view south



**Photo 12** Entry vestibule, west wall, view southwest



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**Photo 13** Main classroom, north wall, view north



**Photo 14** Main classroom, east wall, view east



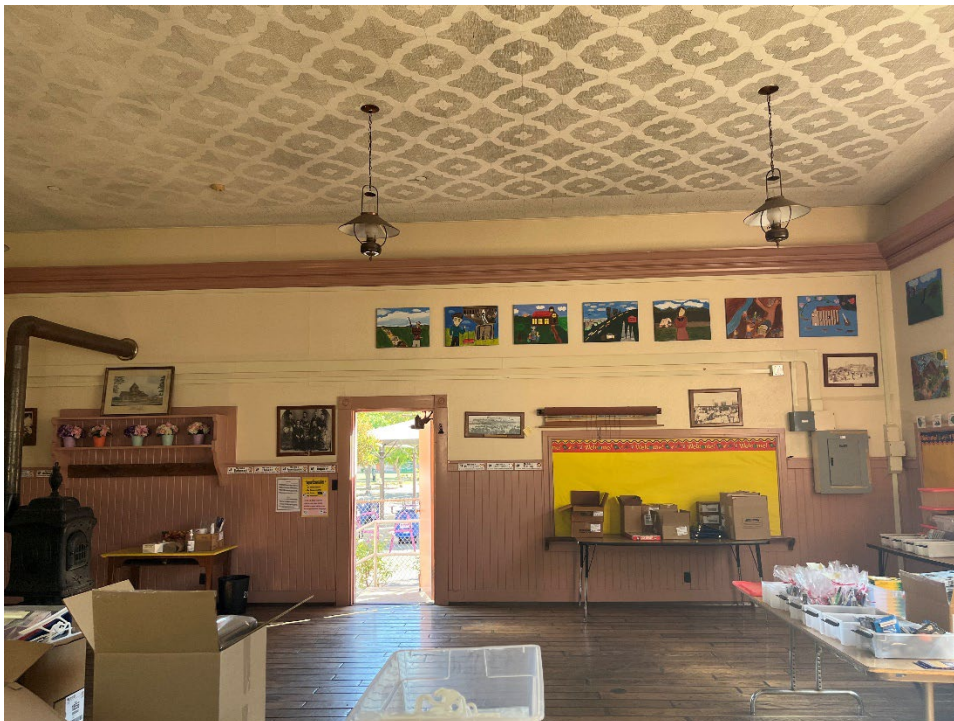
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**Photo 15** Main classroom, stove detail, view southeast



**Photo 16** Main classroom, south wall, view south



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**Photo 17** Main classroom, west wall, view west

