

September 4, 2026

**CITY OF SACRAMENTO
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
PRESERVATION DIRECTOR**

300 Richards Blvd, 3rd Floor, Sacramento, CA 95811

Staff recommends the Preservation Director approve the Statement of Nomination and initiate landmark proceedings to list 1400 Grand Avenue as a historic landmark on the Sacramento Register of Historic and Cultural Resources (M26-018) and make a recommendation to the preservation commission to review an ordinance and make a recommendation to the city council.

**Statement of Nomination to Consider Listing 1400 Grand Avenue on the
Sacramento Register of Historic and Cultural Resources as a Historic Landmark
(M26-018)**

Request: This request includes a historic resource nomination that would list 1400 Grand Avenue (hereinafter nominated property) as an individual landmark on the Sacramento register of historic and cultural resources (Sacramento register). Staff recommends the Preservation Director approve the statement of nomination and initiate nomination of the resource consistent with the requirements of City Code, § 17.604.220.

Attachments

- 1 Statement of Nomination
- 2 Historic Resource Evaluation Form (NPS Form 10-900)

Issue/Detail:

The Grant Union High School Alumni Association retained the services of Aztec TYP SA, qualified architectural historians, who prepared the historic evaluation for this property. The historic evaluation concluded that the property at 1400 Grand Avenue appears eligible for listing on the Sacramento Register of Historic and Cultural Resources under Criteria 1, 3 and 4 pursuant to Sacramento City Code Section 17.604.210 as a significant representation of federal public works architecture, for its use of innovative earthquake-resistant construction technology, and as the work of Harry J. Devine Sr. and Charles F. Dean, both master architects.

Community Outreach: A notice of the public hearing describing the proposed landmark listing was sent to the property owner of 1400 Grand Avenue, Twin Rivers Unified School District. No objections to listing have been received by staff.

September 4, 2026

Policy Considerations: The city council has found “that significant aspects of the city’s rich and diverse historic resources deserve recognition and preservation to foster an understanding of our heritage, and to promote the public health and safety and the economic and general welfare of the people of the city. The preservation and continued use of historic resources are effective tools to sustain and revitalize neighborhoods and business districts within the city, enhance the city’s economic, cultural and aesthetic standing, its identity, its livability, marketability and urban character” (Sacramento City Code section 17.604.100.A.). To this end, the city code directs the Preservation Director, to “make preliminary determinations relative to properties’ eligibility for listing on the Sacramento register” and to “initiate proceedings to nominate resources for listing on the Sacramento register” (Pursuant to City Code, § 17.604.100.C.2 and 17.604.220).

The nomination of 1400 Grand Avenue for listing as a landmark on the Sacramento Register is consistent with Sacramento 2040 General Plan goal HCR-2.3, which provides for the identification and preservation of historical and cultural resources. General Plan policy HCR-2.3 states, “The City shall maintain and update the Sacramento Register of Historic and Cultural Resources on a regular basis, including proactively identifying and listing additional unidentified landmarks and historic districts...”

Environmental Considerations: The listing of 1400 Grand Avenue as a historic landmark on the Sacramento register is exempt from review under the California Environmental Quality Act pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15308. Section 15308 exempts from review actions that are undertaken to assure the maintenance, restoration, enhancement, or protection of the environment where the regulatory process involves procedures for protection of the environment. Listing the property as a historic landmark would ensure that future development on the site would undergo preservation review, as part of the city’s site plan and design review process, prior to the granting of any entitlements, thereby preserving the important characteristics of the historic resource, which would be considered part of the environment.

Statement of Nomination: Listing 1400 Grand Avenue as a historic landmark on the Sacramento register is consistent with the Historic Preservation Chapter (17.604) of the City Code and the goals of the 2040 General Plan. Furthermore, listing the nominated resource on the Sacramento register will help ensure its preservation and encourage rehabilitation consistent with the U.S. Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

Listing a historic landmark on the Sacramento register requires the resource to meet the requirements of City Code section 17.604.210, subsection A.1 which states:

- A. Listing on the Sacramento Register-Landmarks. A nominated resource shall be listed on the Sacramento register as a landmark if the city council finds, after holding a hearing required by this chapter, that all of the requirements (a-c) set forth below are satisfied:
 - a. The nominated resource meets one or more of the following criteria:
 - i. It is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of the history of the city, the region, the state or the nation;
 - ii. It is associated with the lives of persons significant in the city's past;
 - iii. It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction;
 - iv. It represents the work of an important creative individual or master;
 - v. It possesses high artistic values; or
 - vi. It has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in the prehistory or history of the city, the region, the state or the nation;
 - b. The nominated resource has integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship and association. Integrity shall be judged with reference to the particular criterion or criteria specified in subsection A.1.a of this section;
 - c. The nominated resource has significant historic or architectural worth, and its designation as a landmark is reasonable, appropriate and necessary to promote, protect and further the goals and purposes of this chapter.



Figure 1: 1400 Grand Avenue

The property at 1400 Grand Avenue is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history or the cultural heritage of California or the United States. (Sacramento City Code § 17.604.210.A.1.a.i)

The property at 1400 Grand Avenue appears to be eligible under Criterion i as a building associated with the Public Works Administration (PWA) and other Depression Era work relief programs. The construction of permanent school buildings at Grant Union High School was financed through a series of PWA grants that were issued to the school district between 1934 and 1939. In total, Grant Union High School received more than \$300,000 from the PWA to defray the costs of the high school's construction. Recreational facilities, including the pool and football stadium, were also financed through New Deal agencies, including the Civil Works Administration (CWA) and the Works Progress Administration (WPA). Therefore, the building meets criteria for listing in the Sacramento Register of Historic and Cultural Resources under City Code criteria 17.604.210(A)1.a.i.

September 4, 2026

The property at 1400 Grand Avenue embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction (Sacramento City Code § 17.604.210.A.1.a.iii).

The property at 1400 Grand Avenue appears to be eligible under Criterion iii as a building that embodies the characteristics of a method of construction. The school was constructed shortly after the passage of the Field Act, a state law that mandated earthquake-resistant construction for all public-school buildings in California. Consequently, the high school's exterior walls were constructed using reinforced concrete to meet the new seismic standards established by the state. Following its initial construction in 1935, Grant Union High School was reportedly the first school in Northern California to meet the strict safety standards established by the Field Act. Therefore, the building meets criteria for listing in the Sacramento Register of Historic and Cultural Resources under City Code criteria 17.604.210(A)1.a.iii.

The property at 1400 Grand Avenue represents the work of an important creative individual or master; (Sacramento City Code § 17.604.210.A.1.a.iv).

The property at 1400 Grand Avenue appears to be eligible under Criterion iv as a building designed by a master architect. Grant Union High School was designed by two of Sacramento's most prestigious architects, Harry J. Devine Sr. and Charles F. Dean. Devine was responsible for the design of the main school building, gymnasium, auditorium, and first classroom addition, while Dean oversaw the development of the remainder of the school plant, including the second classroom addition, cafeteria, student store, and shop buildings. Both Devine and Dean were master architects with illustrious careers in Sacramento in the early to mid-twentieth century. Therefore, the building meets criteria for listing in the Sacramento Register of Historic and Cultural Resources under City Code criteria 17.604.210(A)1.a.iv.

The property at 1400 Grand Avenue has integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, association, and feeling.

The property at 1400 Grand Avenue retains a high degree of historic integrity in six of seven aspects. It remains in its original location, performs its original function, and retains the majority of its historic materials and its workmanship, continuing to convey evidence of Depression-Era construction methods. As such, the building's location, association, materials, workmanship, and feeling remain unaltered despite the large-scale construction in the vicinity that has eroded the school's original rural setting.

The property at 1400 Grand Avenue has significant historic or architectural worth, and its designation as a landmark is reasonable, appropriate and necessary to promote, protect and further the goals and purposes of this chapter.

September 4, 2026

The property at 1400 Grand Avenue has significant historic and architectural worth. It has been well-maintained and retains a high level of integrity regarding its location, design, materials, workmanship, and association. 1400 Grand Avenue is a significant representation of federal public works architecture using innovative earthquake-resistant construction technology and is the work of two master architects.

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 PropertyHistoric name: Grant Union High SchoolOther names/site number: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

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

2. LocationStreet & number: 1400 Grand AvenueCity or town: Sacramento State: California County: SacramentoNot 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

Signature of certifying official/Title:**Date**_____
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

Grant Union High School
Name of Property

Sacramento County, California
County and State

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official:

Date

Title :

State or Federal agency/bureau
or Tribal Government

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:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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 ☐

Grant Union High School
Name of Property

Sacramento County, California
County and State

Structure ☐

Object ☐

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>7</u>	<u>1</u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	structures
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>9</u>	<u>3</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION/school

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION/school

Grant Union High School
Name of Property

Sacramento County, California
County and State

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/

Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

Foundation: CONCRETE

Walls: CONCRETE/reinforced

Roof: TERRA COTTA

Other:

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.)

Summary Paragraph

Grant Union High School is a public high school located in the Del Paso Heights neighborhood of Sacramento, California. The school serves grades 9-12 and is part of the Twin Rivers Unified School District. Originally located in a rural area of northern Sacramento County, the school is now situated in a densely populated mixed-use area. The topography of the campus is generally flat and partially paved with asphalt and concrete. Landscaped areas are primarily located in front of the main school building, the interior courtyards, and the quad. The front of the campus, which is anchored by the main school building, faces north onto Grand Avenue.

Grant Union High School has been in continuous use as a public high school since its initial construction in 1934. The campus was constructed in multiple phases with funding provided by several New Deal Era work relief programs. The first phase of construction represents the initial

Grant Union High School
Name of Property

Sacramento County, California
County and State

development of the campus, which occurred between 1934 and 1935 and included the construction of the main school building, pool, and auditorium. The second phase of development occurred between 1936 and 1937 and included the construction of an 18-room classroom addition on the rear of the main school building. During the third and final phase, which spanned from 1938 to 1940, the current layout of the campus was completed. Notable resources built during the final phase of development included the cafeteria, school store (current museum), three shop buildings, and the football stadium. With the exception of the adobe store building, all permanent resources on the Grant Union High School campus are constructed of concrete and exhibit elements of the Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival architectural style. Overall, the campus remains in good condition and generally retains its integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The school's integrity of setting has been compromised by dense suburban development that was constructed on the campus's periphery beginning in the mid-twentieth century.

Narrative Description

Description of Campus Landscape

The early landscape design at Grant Union High School featured a grassy lawn located at the front of the main school building, with neat rows of more than 250 mature trees on the perimeter. The trees consisted of a variety of non-native species including Chinese elms, Australian hackberries, Spanish cedars, and black locusts.¹ While no extant plantings from the Depression era remain, several other important landscape elements and circulation features of the original campus have been preserved. These include the distinctive U-shaped driveway, located on the north side of the main school building, which historically provided the most direct and convenient route for automobiles to reach the school's front entrance, and the interior courtyards, located between the wings of the main school building, which allowed pedestrian access between the various classrooms. Additionally, the spatial organization of the campus remains virtually unchanged, with the main classroom building and flagpole located in a prominent position along Grand Avenue and ancillary structures, such as the power distributing plant and sports facilities, located towards the rear of the campus where they are less disruptive to academic activities.

BUILDINGS

Contributing Buildings:

Main School Building (1934; Modified 1937; 1939)

Designed by Sacramento-based architect Harry J. Devine Sr., the main school building is built of reinforced concrete in the Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival style with some Moorish detailing. Character-defining features of this style evident in the building's design include its distinctive red clay tile roof, reinforced board formed concrete exterior, square bell tower, interior courtyards, and double arched entryway. The building is oriented along an east-west longitudinal axis with its primary elevation facing north onto Grand Avenue. It has an asymmetrical front

¹ "High School Will Get More Trees," *The Sacramento Bee*, March 13, 1935, 12.

Grant Union High School
Name of Property

Sacramento County, California
County and State

façade and a roughly square plan with two open courtyards located in the center. The courtyards are surrounded by two wings that were added to the main school building in 1937 and 1939, respectively.

As initially constructed in 1935, the building consisted of an L-shaped structure with a concrete foundation. The building has a large two-story central block, flanked on the east and west sides by one-story wings. An attached two-story gymnasium is also located on the east side of the building. The gymnasium is located perpendicular to the main structure and has a front gable roof. The two one-story wings have side gabled roofs while the two-story central block has a mansard roof. All of these roofs are clad in clay barrel tiles. A square bell tower with a pyramidal roof is located on the northeast corner of the central block. The main entrance is offset on the north (front) façade of the two-story block and is recessed beneath a double pointed arched opening. The entrance itself consists of a pair of double leaf wooden entry doors with inset glass panels and a decorative Moorish-style clay tile surround. A pair of wood frame awning windows are located above the entrance and are accented by a decorative iron balcony supported by iron brackets.

With the exception of two steel frame oculus windows located on the north and east facades of the bell tower, all of the windows on the north façade of the central block and one-story west wing are wood frame double or triple stacked awning style windows. The north façade of the east wing currently has five large steel casement windows and a flat roof addition on the west half of the façade. The south (rear) façade of the 1935 building has aluminum frame three-lite windows and a unique bay window with a metal roof located on the first floor.

In 1937, the first classroom addition was constructed on the rear of the main school building. The L-shaped one-story addition was also built using reinforced board formed concrete and was designed by Harry J. Devine Sr. However, unlike the main school building, the 1937 addition has a flat roof. The north (front) façade of the 1937 addition faces the northernmost courtyard and consists of a series of 40 triple stacked awning style windows. The east and west sides of the courtyard are comprised of hallways with floor to ceiling divided lite windows that open onto the courtyard. The south (rear) façade of the addition consists of 35 aluminum frame three-lite windows with concrete sills.

The 1939 addition consists of a U-shaped structure, designed by local architect Charles F. Dean. This addition connected to the 1937 portion of the main school building and created the southernmost courtyard. Similar to the rest of the main school building, the 1939 addition was constructed of reinforced concrete and had a concrete foundation. Windows on the north (front) façade of the addition consist of aluminum frame awning style windows. On the east and west sides of the courtyard are two enclosed corridors with fixed pane picture windows. The south (rear) façade of the 1939 addition is anchored on the west end by the band room, with its distinctive curved concrete walls. The windows on the band room are covered with decorative metal sunscreens; thus, their type could not be determined. Immediately east of the band room is a double leaf entrance framed by a pair of concrete pilasters and a simplified entablature. The entrance is accessed by a set of concrete stairs with associated metal pipe railings. Windows on

Grant Union High School
Name of Property

Sacramento County, California
County and State

the south façade of the 1939 addition consist of aluminum frame three lite windows with cast concrete surrounds.

Since its initial construction in the mid-1930s, the Main School building has experienced some minor modifications including, the enclosure of three original “cloisters,” located on the north (front) façade of the east wing and on the east and west sides of the northern courtyard. A cloister is a covered colonnade typically found in a monastery or convent. As originally constructed, the cloister on the north (front) façade of the Main School Building’s east wing was comprised of a series of seven open bays separated by battered buttresses. The interior cloisters surrounding the courtyard connected the 1937 addition to the main 1935 school building, and consisted of a series of open bays separated by concrete posts with decorative concrete corbels. All of the cloisters were enclosed early in the school’s history. Additionally, the south (rear) façade of the 1935 building originally featured awning style windows, all of which have been replaced with the current aluminum frame three-lite windows, and the south (rear) façade of the 1937 addition originally included an arched entryway with a set of concrete pyramidal stairs on the east and west ends façade. Both of these exterior entrances were partially enclosed when the third addition was constructed on the building in 1939.

Although the two one-story additions were constructed on the rear of the main school building in the late 1930s, these additions were added within the period of significance (1934–1940) established for the school and were a necessary part of the school’s initial development. For this reason, the main school building is considered a contributing building to Grant Union High School.

Auditorium (1935; Modified 1939)

Originally constructed in 1935, the auditorium consists of a two-story reinforced concrete structure with an irregular plan. The building sits on a concrete foundation and has a front gable roof covered in red clay tile. The north (front) façade of the auditorium features a full-length shed roofed entry porch that is also clad in red clay tile. The porch has a succession of three contiguous round arches, the ends of which are supported by square concrete columns. Above the entry porch are a row of six arched casement windows. Several Moorish-style decorative elements are also present on the north (front) façade of the auditorium, including a group of small geometric vent openings beneath the gable peak, and two vertical lines and a single zig zag line at the gable end. Three double leaf entrances located beneath the porch roof provide access to the main auditorium. A fourth double leaf entrance is located in a one-story hipped roof ell that is attached to west wing of the main school building at the northeast corner of the auditorium.

The north half of the west façade of the auditorium is stepped back approximately three feet, with the remainder of the façade divided by a series of four concrete buttresses. All the windows on the first and second floors of this façade have been painted over, and it is not clear if they remain operable. A single leaf entrance and set of metal stairs is present in the approximate center of the upper story, and a second entrance is present at the first-floor level on the south half

Grant Union High School
Name of Property

Sacramento County, California
County and State

of the facade. Fenestration on the east façade of the auditorium includes two double stacked wood frame awning windows at the north end.

The south (rear) façade of the auditorium includes a large flat roofed addition that was added to the building in 1939 to house a radio studio. The addition is constructed of concrete and has a large steel casement window and single leaf entrance located on its east façade.

Although the radio studio addition was constructed on the rear of the auditorium after its initial construction in 1935, this addition was constructed within the period of significance (1934-1940) that has been established for the school and was a necessary part of the school's initial development. Therefore, the auditorium is considered a contributing building to Grant Union High School.

Shop #1 (1939)

Shop #1 consists of a one-story reinforced concrete building with a low-pitched front gable roof. The building was constructed in 1939 to serve as an art and pottery shop.² The building has a concrete foundation and a rectangular plan. The north (front) façade is three bays wide, with each bay separated from the others by a square concrete pilaster. The primary entrance consists of a double leaf entrance that is centered on the north façade. Multi-lite steel casement windows are located above, and to the east and west of the main entrance, all of which have been covered with steel mesh security screens. The east façade is seven bays wide. A square concrete pilaster is present within each of the bays, and the middle five bays feature a multi-lite steel casement window that is covered with a security screen. The south (rear) façade of the building contains another double leaf entrance located in the center of the façade, as well as three multi-lite steel casement windows enclosed with security screens. The west façade of the building has a one-story hyphen that connects to the east façade of Shop #2. Historic aerial imagery indicates that the hyphen was in place by at least 1947.

With the exception of the one-story hyphen/addition constructed on the building's west façade, Shop #1 has not experienced any other major exterior modifications since its initial construction in 1939 and still retains most of its historic integrity. For this reason, Shop #1 is considered a contributing building to Grant Union High School.

Shop #2 (1939)

Shop #2 was originally constructed to house a carpentry and woodworking shop. The building consists of a one-story reinforced concrete structure that is attached to Shop #1 by a concrete hyphen, located on its east façade. The building has a front gable roof with a low pitch and no eave overhang. The center of the north (front) façade has a double leaf entrance that is flanked by multi-lite steel casement windows. A third steel casement window was originally located above the main entrance but was enclosed with concrete sometime before 2007. The west façade of the building consists of seven bays divided by a series of six square concrete columns. This façade originally had five multi-lite steel casement windows of which only three remain.

² "Grant Union High Continues Expansion," *The Sacramento Bee*, August 31, 1939, 46.

Grant Union High School
Name of Property

Sacramento County, California
County and State

Although Shop #2 has experienced some exterior modifications since its construction, including the construction of the hyphen/addition on its east façade and the infill of several of its original casement windows, the building still retains the majority of its historic integrity and continues to convey its historic function as a shop building for students at Grant Union High School. Therefore, Shop #2 is considered a contributing building to the school.

Shop #3 (1939)

Shop #3 was also built in 1939 to serve as an aeronautical and mechanical shop for students at Grant Union High School. The building consists of a one-story reinforced concrete structure with a low-pitched front gable roof. Shop #3 has a concrete foundation and a rectangular plan. Its north (front) façade is three bays wide, with each bay separated by a square concrete pilaster. The primary entrance consists of a double leaf entrance centered on the north (front) façade of the building. Multi-lite steel casement windows are located above, and on the east and west sides of the main entrance. Shop #3's east and west façades are seven bays wide, with each of the bays separated by a square concrete pilaster. The five bays located in the middle of the east façade each contain a multi-lite steel casement window. Four steel casement windows are also located on the west façade of the building.

Shop #3 appears to have undergone no major exterior alterations since its initial construction and is, therefore, considered a contributing building to the Grant Union High School.

School Store (1939)

The school store (current museum) was originally constructed by students from Grant Union High School in 1939. The small building is located west of the auditorium. It is constructed of painted adobe brick and has a rectangular plan. Its side gable roof is clad in red clay tile. A recessed single leaf entrance flanked by two steel frame bay windows is present in the center of the north (front) façade. A hipped roof stretches across the front of the façade above the windows and door. Two adobe buttresses extend from the west façade of the building, while the east façade has one adobe buttress. On the east façade another bay window adjoins the buttress on its north side. A second double leaf entrance is present in the center of the south (rear) façade. The entrance is framed on the east and west sides by L-shaped adobe screen walls and sheltered beneath a hipped roof awning.

The school store does not appear to have undergone any significant exterior modifications since its initial construction in 1939. Therefore, it is considered a contributing building to Grant Union High School.

Cafeteria/Social Hall (1939)

The cafeteria/social hall was added to the Grant Union High School campus during the third phase of campus construction in 1939. The building is situated south of the main school building and north of the swimming pool. It consists of a one-story reinforced concrete building with a concrete foundation and a rectangular plan. The building has a clerestory roof clad in red clay

Grant Union High School
Name of Property

Sacramento County, California
County and State

tile. The south (front) façade of the building has three double leaf entrances located at regular intervals across the facade. Approximately 22 square picture windows are also located on the south façade. Windows on the clerestory include approximately seven pairs of multi-lite wood frame windows. The north façade of the building includes a row of six window openings with concrete surrounds. Five of the windows are aluminum frame two-lite windows. The sixth window is enclosed with plywood, making it difficult to determine its type. An additional seven pairs of multi-lite wood frame windows are located on the north façade of the clerestory. The north façade's only entrance consists of a double leaf entry door sheltered beneath a small entry porch. The porch is partially enclosed and features Moorish detailing, including concrete corbels and decorative clay tiles along its walls.

While the aluminum frame windows located on the building's north and south elevations are likely modern replacements, the cafeteria does not appear to have undergone any other major exterior modifications since its initial construction in 1939. In addition, the building continues to retain its historic function as a cafeteria and social hall for the school. For this reason, the cafeteria/social hall is considered a contributing building to Grant Union High School.

Non-Contributing Buildings:

Gymnasium (1976)

The gymnasium consists of a reinforced concrete building with an irregular plan. The building has a flat roof and a concrete foundation. It is situated in an asphalt parking lot, located on the east side of the Grant Union High School campus. The gym is approximately 115 feet northeast of the swimming pool. The building's main block is two-stories tall and five bays wide. Each bay on the north and east façades is separated by a square concrete pilaster. There is no fenestration on either the north or east sides of the building. A one-story flat roofed addition surrounds the two-story portion of the gymnasium on the west and south sides. The main entrance to the building is located on the west (front) façade of the one-story addition. Entrances consist of two double leaf entrances located on the far northern and southern portions of the west (front) façade. There is no fenestration on the south side of the one-story addition.

A gymnasium was constructed in roughly the same location on the Grant Union High School campus in 1939. The original gym burned down in 1973 and was replaced with the current structure in 1976. As a modern building that was added to the campus outside of the established period of significance (1934–1940), the gymnasium is considered non-contributing to the Grant Union High School campus.

STRUCTURES

Contributing Structures:

Power Distributing Plant (1939)

Grant Union High School
Name of Property

Sacramento County, California
County and State

The power distributing plant was added to the Grant Union High School campus as part of the third wave of campus construction.³ The plant consists of a small concrete block building with a rectangular plan and a flat roof. The plant is located approximately 75 feet west of the swimming pool and is surrounded by a chain-link fence. There is a large opening on the structure's east façade and a single leaf entrance on its north façade. Other features associated with the power distributing plant include a large propane tank located on the plant's south side, as well as generators and other electrical components associated with power production.

The power distributing plant does not appear to have undergone any significant exterior modifications since its initial construction in 1939 and is considered a contributing structure to Grant Union High School.

Non-Contributing Structures:

Swimming Pool (1934; Modified 2017)

The swimming pool measures approximately 125 feet long by 75 feet wide and has stainless steel walls. It is located approximately 60 feet south of the cafeteria and is designed for competitive swimming, water polo, diving, physical education, and teaching. It is surrounded on all sides by concrete paving and is fenced on the north, south, and west sides. On the east side, there is a pool house that includes restrooms and locker rooms. The pool house consists of a rectangular concrete block building with a one-and-a-half-story central section flanked by single story wings. The structure has a side gable roof clad in composite clay tile. A front gable roof, which is also covered in composite tile, is located in the central section of the building. A pair of double leaf doors, located on the east façade of the building's central section, provide access from the gymnasium parking lot. A similar pair of doors, located on the building's west façade, permit entry from the pool. Windows on the pool house consist entirely of fixed vinyl windows with simulated dividers.

A 120 foot by 50-foot pool was constructed in this same location on the Grant Union High School campus in 1934. The pool was accompanied by a U-shaped pool house, which was located on its west side. The original pool and pool house were completely demolished and replaced by the current structures in 2017. As associated modern structures, the pool and pool house are considered to be a singular non-contributing resource to Grant Union High School.

Stadium (1940; Modified 2005)

The stadium was the last Depression-Era structure built on the Grant Union High School campus. The structure consists of an open-air stadium surrounding an oval shaped playing field that measures approximately 245 feet by 570 feet in size. Tiered concrete seating for spectators is located on the east and west sides of the stadium. In addition, a riveted steel press box is elevated above the seating on the stadium's west side. The stadium is lit by six high-mast lights, which are mounted on tall poles overlooking the playing field. At the north end of the stadium is a modern field house, containing locker rooms, restrooms, and a concession stand. The current

³ "Grant Union High Continues Expansion," *The Sacramento Bee*, August 31, 1939, 46.

Grant Union High School
Name of Property

Sacramento County, California
County and State

field house replaced the original 1940 adobe field house in 2005. Also in 2005, an outdoor track was constructed around the football field and artificial turf was added. Modern ticket booths with an attached arched entryway were also constructed on the northwest and northeast corners of the stadium. The ticket booth/stadium entrances are constructed of split faced concrete block.

Although the original stadium seating and press box remain intact, the stadium has undergone significant modern alterations since its construction in 1940. Notable modifications to the stadium include the demolition and replacement of its original adobe field house, construction of modern ticket booths and entry arches that have altered the stadium's historic circulation pattern, and extensive modernization of the playing field, including the installation of artificial turf and construction of a new outdoor running track. For these reasons, the stadium is considered a non-contributing structure to Grant Union High School.

OBJECTS

Contributing Objects

Carlos K. McClatchy Memorial Flagstaff (1935)

The Carlos K. McClatchy Memorial Flagstaff is located in front of the main school building, between the U-shaped entrance drive and Grand Avenue. The flagstaff is surrounded by a semi-circular concrete retaining wall, the center of which is also paved with concrete. The flagstaff has a four-tiered octagonal concrete base. While the lowest three tiers are largely devoid of any architectural embellishment, the top tier features a vertical egg and dart design. Above the base is a fluted metal flagpole, without any crowning ornamentation.

The flagstaff was added to the Grant Union High School campus in 1935, as part of the initial construction of the school. As originally constructed, the flagstaff consisted of a 75-foot flagpole "based in concrete and topped with a three-foot spread eagle."⁴ Although the original flagpole appears to have been replaced since its initial construction, its decorative base remains intact and continues to serve as a focal point of the campus. For this reason, the flagstaff is considered a contributing object to Grant Union High School.

⁴ "2,000 Attend Dedication of School and Flagpole," *The Sacramento Bee*, May 27, 1935, 5.

Grant Union High School
Name of Property

Sacramento County, California
County and State

SUMMARY OF CONTRIBUTING AND NON-CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES:

TYPE	NAME	AGE	CONTRIBUTING	NON-CONTRIBUTING
BUILDINGS				
	Main School Building	1934; Modified 1937, 1939	X	
	Auditorium	1935; Modified 1939	X	
	Shop #1	1939	X	
	Shop #2	1939	X	
	Shop #3	1939	X	
	School Store	1939	X	
	Cafeteria/Social Hall	1939	X	
	Gymnasium	1939		X
STRUCTURES				
	Power Distributing Plant	1939	X	
	Swimming Pool	1934; Modified 2017		X
	Stadium	1940; Modified 2005		X
OBJECTS				
	Carlos K. McClatchy Memorial Flagstaff	1935	X	

STATEMENT OF INTEGRITY

Location

Since its permanent establishment in 1934, Grant Union High School has not been moved; thus, it retains its integrity of location.

Design

The general layout and design of the Grant Union High School campus remains largely unchanged, and the district generally retains its overall visual character dating to the period of

Grant Union High School
Name of Property

Sacramento County, California
County and State

significance (1934–1940). Resources within the Grant Union High School district exhibit characteristics of the Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival architectural style such as its use of red clay tile roofs, reinforced board formed concrete construction, decorative buttresses, interior courtyards, and arched entrances. Although the main school building and auditorium have undergone some alterations, including the construction of multiple rear additions, these modifications were completed within the period of significance (1934–1940) and therefore have not had a significant visual impact on the district's overall design or its ability to convey its historic significance under Criteria A or C. For these reasons, Grant Union High School retains its integrity of design.

Setting

Large-scale residential and commercial construction in the vicinity of Grant Union High School has altered the character of the surrounding community and diminished the school's ability to convey its historic function as a rural high school for students residing in outlying areas of Sacramento County. Therefore, the school does not retain its integrity of setting.

Materials

Grant Union High School retains the majority of its historic materials dating to the period of significance, including its distinctive red clay tile roofs, wood frame awning windows, decorative Moorish tiles, and reinforced board formed concrete and adobe brick construction. As such, the school generally retains its integrity of materials.

Workmanship

Grant Union High School retains its integrity of workmanship as it continues to convey evidence of the Depression-Era construction methods and the aesthetic principles of the Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival architectural style that characterized the property during the period of significance (1934–1940).

Feeling

The school generally retains integrity of feeling, which is defined as the physical features that, when taken together, are able to convey the property's historic character and function as a Depression-Era public high school constructed in the Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival style.

Association

Grant Union High School retains its integrity of association as it is still able to convey its original function and relationship with the development of education in the City of Sacramento during the Great Depression.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

Grant Union High School
Name of Property

Sacramento County, California
County and State

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1934-1940

Grant Union High School
Name of Property

Sacramento County, California
County and State

Significant Dates

1934: pool completed

1935: main school building, gymnasium, and auditorium completed

1937: first classroom addition completed

1939: second classroom addition, cafeteria, student store, and shop buildings completed

1940: stadium completed

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Harry J. Devine Sr. (Architect)

Charles F. Dean (Architect)

Azevedo and Sarmiento (Contractors)

M. R. Peterson (Contractor)

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.)

Grant Union High School is significant under Criterion A at the local level in the area of *Education*, for its association with the development of public secondary education in Sacramento during the Great Depression; and in the area of *Politics and Government*, for its association with the Public Works Administration (PWA), a federal public works program developed as part of President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal. The school is also significant under Criterion C at the local level in the area of *Architecture* for its innovative use of earthquake-resistant construction technology and for its association with Harry J. Devine Sr. and Charles F. Dean—both premier architects of public buildings in Sacramento during the early twentieth century. The period of significance for the property begins in 1934 when construction on the first permanent school buildings was started, and ends in 1940, when all major construction was completed and the school's Depression Era building program came to an end.

Grant Union High School
Name of Property

Sacramento County, California
County and State

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

Criterion A
Education

Grant Union High School is significant at the local level under Criterion A, in the area of *Education*, for its role as one of the first high schools built to meet the growing demand for public secondary education in Sacramento during the Great Depression. The economic crisis that followed the 1929 stock market crash significantly impacted secondary education, especially in urban areas like Sacramento. Limited job opportunities led to increased enrollments in the city's only public high school, while falling tax revenue created significant financial strain on the municipal school system. Grant Union High School was constructed to meet the increased demand for public secondary education in outlying areas of north Sacramento, as well as to reduce the economic burden on the city's existing public school system caused by the Great Depression.

Criterion A
Politics and Government

Grant Union High School also has significance at the local level under Criterion A, in the area of *Politics and Government*, for its association with the PWA and other Depression Era work relief programs. The construction of permanent school buildings at Grant Union High School was financed through a series of PWA grants that were issued to the school district between 1934 and 1939. In total, Grant Union High School received more than \$300,000 from the PWA to defray the costs of the high school's construction. Recreational facilities, including the pool and football stadium, were also financed through New Deal agencies, including the Civil Works Administration (CWA) and the Works Progress Administration (WPA).

Criterion C
Architecture

Grant Union High School is also significant under Criterion C at the local level in the area of *Architecture*. The school was constructed shortly after the passage of the Field Act, a state law that mandated earthquake-resistant construction for all public-school buildings in California. Consequently, the high school's exterior walls were constructed using reinforced concrete to meet the new seismic standards established by the state. Following its initial construction in 1935, Grant Union High School was reportedly the first school in Northern California to meet the strict safety standards established by the Field Act.

In addition to its innovative earthquake resistant construction, Grant Union High School was also designed by two of Sacramento's most prestigious architects, Harry J. Devine Sr. and Charles F. Dean. Devine was responsible for the design of the main school building, gymnasium, auditorium, and first classroom addition, while Dean oversaw the development of the remainder

Grant Union High School
Name of Property

Sacramento County, California
County and State

of the school plant, including the second classroom addition, cafeteria, student store, and shop buildings. Both Devine and Dean were master architects with illustrious careers in Sacramento in the early to mid-twentieth century.

Grant Union High School
Name of Property

Sacramento County, California
County and State

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

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Bennett, Stacie Victoria

2023 "Schooling the Other: The Role of Education in Nineteenth Century California," PhD dissertation, University of California, Riverside.

Finklestein, Barbara

1990 "Perfecting Childhood: Horace Mann and the Origins of Public Education in the United States," *Biography and Medicine*, Vol. 13, No. 1.

Goldin, Claudia

1998 "America's Graduation from High School: The Evolution and Spread of Secondary Schooling in the Twentieth Century," *The Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 58, No. 2.

Goldin, Claudia and Lawrence F. Katz

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Riggs, Rebecca Leigh

2017 "Harry J. Devine, Sr. and the Modernization of Sacramento Architecture," Master's thesis, California State University, Sacramento.

Rosen, Elliott A.

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Snyder, Thomas D., ed.

1993 "120 Years of American Education: A Statistical Portrait," U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement.

Tobriner, Stephen

2006 *Bracing for Disaster: Earthquake Resistant Architecture and Engineering in San Francisco, 1838-1933* Berkeley, Heyday Books.

Willis, William L.

1913 *History of Sacramento County, California*. Los Angeles: Historic Record Company.

Grant Union High School
Name of Property

Sacramento County, California
County and State

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: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 22 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|--------------|------------|
| 1. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Grant Union High School
Name of Property

Sacramento County, California
County and State

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927 or ☒ NAD 1983

- | | | |
|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Zone: 10 | Easting: 636050 | Northing: 4277595 |
| 2. Zone: 10 | Easting: 636451 | Northing: 4277599 |
| 3. Zone: 10 | Easting: 636451 | Northing: 4277599 |
| 4. Zone: 10 | Easting: 636465 | Northing: 4277222 |

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

The property is located at 1400 Grand Avenue, Sacramento, Sacramento County, California. The nominated property occupies an approximately 22-acre area situated on the north and southeast sides of APN 251-0112-002-0000.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The district boundary encompasses all significant resources that were constructed as part of the initial development of the Grant Union High School campus. The boundary includes all major extant resources that were constructed during the property's period of significance (1934—1940).

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Kasey Fulwood, M.A., Greta Rayle, M.A., RPA, and Aoife Guiney
organization: AZTEC Engineering, Inc.
street & number: 400 Capitol Mall Suite 900
city or town: Sacramento state: California zip code: 95814
e-mail kfulwood@aztec.us
telephone: (602) 454-0402
date: August 8, 2025

Grant Union High School
Name of Property

Sacramento County, California
County and State

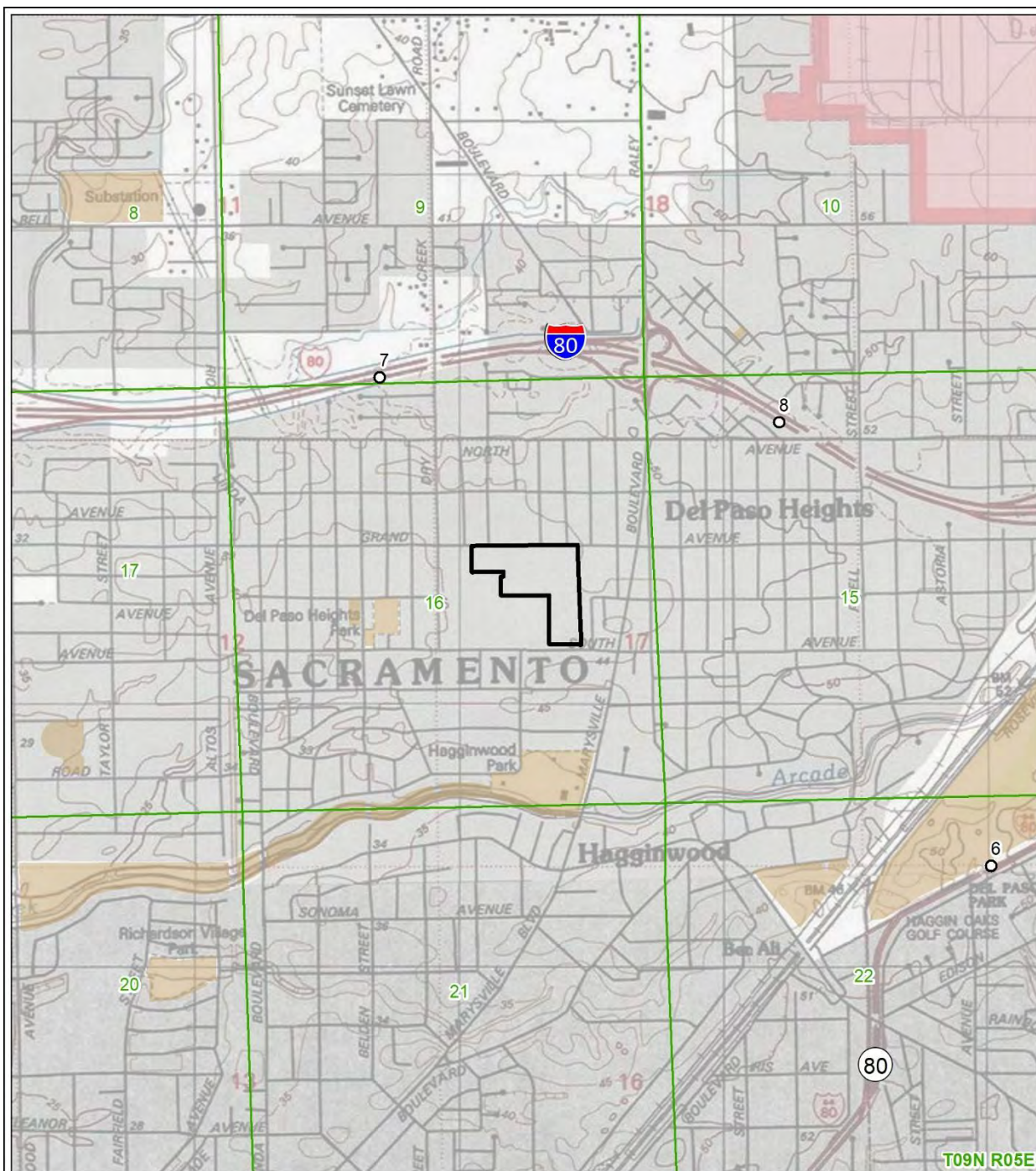
Additional Documentation

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.)

Grant Union High School
Name of Property

Sacramento County, California
County and State

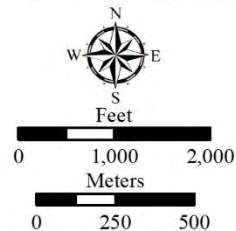


Sources: USGS 7.5' Rio Linda, CA (1992), and Sacramento East, CA (1992); NAD 83, UTM Zone 10N

Map Disclaimer: This map is for general siting purposes only.

AZTEC **TYPSA**

- Milepost
- Grant Union High School District Boundary
- Township/Range
- Section
- Local Government
- Department of Defense
- Private/Other Non-Federal Land



Grant Union High School
Name of Property

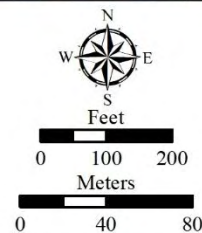
Sacramento County, California
County and State



Sources: Google Satellite Imagery; NAD 83, UTM Zone 10N

Map Disclaimer: This map is for general siting purposes only.

-  UTM Locator
-  Grant Union High School District Boundary



Grant Union High School
Name of Property

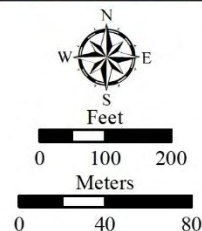
Sacramento County, California
County and State



Sources: Google Satellite Imagery; NAD 83, UTM Zone 10N

Map Disclaimer: This map is for general siting purposes only.

-  Photo Location
-  Grant Union High School District Boundary



Grant Union High School
Name of Property

Sacramento County, California
County and State

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: Grant Union High School

City or Vicinity: Sacramento

County: Sacramento

State: California

Photographer: H. Fuess

Date Photographed: July 2025

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

- | | |
|---------|--|
| 1 of 27 | Overview of Grant Union High School, facing southwest. |
| 2 of 27 | Overview of the Main School Building and Auditorium at Grant Union High School, facing southwest |
| 3 of 27 | Overview of the Main School Building and Auditorium at Grant Union High School, facing southeast. |
| 4 of 27 | View of the Flagstaff, facing south. |
| 5 of 27 | View of the north (front) façade of the Main School Building, facing south. |
| 6 of 27 | Detail view of the front entrance to the Main School Building, facing south. |
| 7 of 27 | View of the south (rear) façade of the 1935 portion of the Main School Building, facing northwest. |
| 8 of 27 | View of the east façade of the 1935 portion of the Main School Building, facing northwest. |

Grant Union High School

Name of Property

Sacramento County, California

County and State

- 9 of 27 School Building and the 1937 addition, facing west.
- 10 of 27 View of the south (rear) façade of the 1937 addition to the Main School Building, facing northwest.
- 11 of 27 View of the north (front) façade of the 1939 addition to the Main School Building, facing southwest.
- 12 of 27 Overview of southern courtyard located between the 1937 addition to the Main School Building and the 1939 addition, facing west.
- 13 of 27 View of the north (front) façade of the Auditorium, facing south.
- 14 of 26 View of the south (rear) façade of the Auditorium, showing the 1939 addition to the building, facing northwest.
- 15 of 27 View of the north (front) façade of the School Store, facing south.
- 16 of 27 View of the north (front) and west façades of the School Store, facing southeast.
- 17 of 27 Overview of Shop #1 and Shop #2, facing southeast.
- 18 of 27 View of the north (front) façade of the Shop #1, facing south.
- 19 of 27 View of the north (front) façade of the Shop #2, facing south.
- 20 of 27 View of the north (front) façade of the Shop #3, facing south.
- 21 of 27 View of the north (rear) and west façades of the Cafeteria, facing southwest.
- 22 of 27 View of the south (front) façade of the Cafeteria, facing north.
- 23 of 27 View of the west (front) façade of the Gymnasium, facing east.
- 24 of 27 Overview of the Swimming Pool and Pool House, facing east.
- 25 of 27 Overview of the Stadium, facing south.
- 26 of 27 View of the Stadium, showing the original tiered seating and press box, facing southeast.
- 27 of 27 View of the Stadium, showing the new field house, facing north.

Grant Union High School
Name of Property

Sacramento County, California
County and State



Photograph 1. Overview of Grant Union High School, facing southwest (H. Fuess, 2025).



Photograph 2. Overview of the Main School Building and Auditorium at Grant Union High School, facing southwest (H. Fuess, 2025).

Grant Union High School
Name of Property

Sacramento County, California
County and State



Photograph 3. Overview of the Main School Building and Auditorium at Grant Union High School, facing southeast (H. Fuess, 2025).



Photograph 4. View of the Flagstaff, facing south (H. Fuess, 2025).

Grant Union High School
Name of Property

Sacramento County, California
County and State



Photograph 5. View of the north (front) façade of the Main School Building, facing south (H. Fuess, 2025).



Photograph 6. Detail view of the front entrance to the Main School Building, facing south (H. Fuess, 2025).

Grant Union High School
Name of Property

Sacramento County, California
County and State



Photograph 7. View of the south (rear) façade of the 1935 portion of the Main School Building, facing northwest (H. Fuess, 2025).



Photograph 8. View of the east façade of the 1935 portion of the Main School Building, facing northwest (H. Fuess, 2025).

Grant Union High School
Name of Property

Sacramento County, California
County and State



Photograph 9. Overview of northern courtyard located between the 1935 portion of the Main School Building and the 1937 addition, facing west (H. Fuess, 2025).



Photograph 10. View of the south (rear) façade of the 1937 addition to the Main School Building, facing northwest (H. Fuess, 2025).

Grant Union High School
Name of Property

Sacramento County, California
County and State



Photograph 11. View of the north (front) façade of the 1939 addition to the Main School Building, facing southwest (H. Fuess, 2025).



Photograph 12. Overview of southern courtyard located between the 1937 addition to the Main School Building and the 1939 addition, facing west (H. Fuess, 2025).

Grant Union High School
Name of Property

Sacramento County, California
County and State



Photograph 13. View of the north (front) façade of the Auditorium, facing south (H. Fuess, 2025).



Photograph 14. View of the south (rear) façade of the Auditorium, showing the 1939 addition to the building, facing northwest (H. Fuess, 2025).

Grant Union High School
Name of Property

Sacramento County, California
County and State



Photograph 15. View of the north (front) façade of the School Store, facing south (H. Fuess, 2025).



Photograph 16. View of the north (front) and west façades of the School Store, facing southeast (H. Fuess, 2025).

Grant Union High School
Name of Property

Sacramento County, California
County and State



Photograph 17. Overview of Shop #1 and Shop #2, facing southeast (H. Fuess, 2025).



Photograph 18. View of the north (front) façade of the Shop #1, facing south (H. Fuess, 2025).

Grant Union High School
Name of Property

Sacramento County, California
County and State



Photograph 19. View of the north (front) façade of the Shop #2, facing south (H. Fuess, 2025).



Photograph 20. View of the north (front) façade of the Shop #3, facing south (H. Fuess, 2025).

Grant Union High School
Name of Property

Sacramento County, California
County and State



Photograph 21. View of the north (rear) and west façades of the Cafeteria, facing southwest (H. Fuess, 2025).



Photograph 22. View of the south (front) façade of the Cafeteria, facing north (H. Fuess, 2025).

Grant Union High School
Name of Property

Sacramento County, California
County and State



Photograph 23. View of the west (front) façade of the Gymnasium, facing east (H. Fuess, 2025).



Photograph 24. Overview of the Swimming Pool and Pool House, facing east (H. Fuess, 2025).

Grant Union High School
Name of Property

Sacramento County, California
County and State



Photograph 25. Overview of the Stadium, facing south (H. Fuess, 2025).



Photograph 26. View of the Stadium, showing the original tiered seating and press box, facing southeast (H. Fuess, 2025).

Grant Union High School
Name of Property

Sacramento County, California
County and State



Photograph 27. View of the Stadium, showing the new field house, facing north (H. Fuess, 2025).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Grant Union High School
Name of Property
Sacramento County, California
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 8 Page 1

History of Public Secondary Education in Sacramento

In the 1850s, Sacramento emerged as a crucial supply point and transportation hub for miners traveling to California's Gold Country. As capital investment in the city grew, local boosters worked to develop stable civic institutions to impose order and ensure the community's economic future.¹ The development of a municipal school system was an important part of the larger community building process that occurred in Sacramento in the mid-nineteenth century.

During the Gold Rush, Sacramento bustled with merchants, farmers, and other entrepreneurs who hoped to make their fortunes providing goods and services to the region's miners. Unlike the miners themselves, members of the capitalist class were often accompanied by their wives and a growing number of school-age children. Private schools were initially developed to meet the increased demand for education in the city before a formal system of public education could be established. Private schools were run by local individuals or religious organizations and were often short-lived and crudely executed endeavors. For instance, the first school recorded in Sacramento was opened in 1849 by C. T. H. Palmer at the corner of 3rd and I Streets. Palmer's school consisted of a one-story schoolhouse, measuring approximately 14 feet by 28 feet in size, with "sides [that] were covered with old sails from some craft tied up at the bank of the river."² The school was reportedly in operation for only one month and had an enrollment of just ten students.³

In September 1849, forty-eight delegates from all over California met in Monterey to develop a new state constitution as part of California's bid for statehood. The delegates modeled the new constitution on those of Iowa and New York, both of which included provisions for free public education.⁴ Iowa and New York had both been enthusiastic proponents of the Common School Movement—an educational reform initiative spearheaded by Massachusetts politician Horace Mann. The movement aimed to provide free, universal schooling for all children regardless of social class.⁵ As outlined in Article IX of California's constitution, the legislature would be responsible for dividing the state into various school districts and setting up a system of common schools within each district. Construction and operation of the schools would be supported through the sale of public lands and through taxes levied on private property.⁶

Despite these provisions, public school development in California progressed slowly after the state was admitted to the union in 1850. There were several reasons given for the system's sluggish development, including the state legislature's reluctance to impose additional taxes on its already overburdened

¹ Steven M. Avella, *Sacramento: Indomitable City* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2003), 49-50.

² William L. Willis, *History of Sacramento County, California* (Los Angeles: Historic Record Company, 1913), 167.

³ Stacie Victoria Bennett, "Schooling the Other: The Role of Education in Nineteenth Century California" (PhD dissertation, University of California, Riverside, 2023), 93.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 89.

⁵ Barbara Finkelstein, "Perfecting Childhood: Horace Mann and the Origins of Public Education in the United States," *Biography and Medicine*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (Winter 1990): 6-20.

⁶ Stacie Victoria Bennett, "Schooling the Other: The Role of Education in Nineteenth Century California," 87-88.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Grant Union High School
Name of Property
Sacramento County, California
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 8 Page 2

population, as well as the assumption that individual communities would be able to educate children adequately at the local level.⁷ Unfortunately, most cities in the state struggled to offer satisfactory public education to school-age children in their districts, and private schools provided the only means to obtain an education in Sacramento throughout the early 1850s.⁸

Finally, in 1852, the state began making significant progress toward the establishment of a universal public school system. That year, the California legislature voted to impose its first state school tax of five cents for every one hundred dollars of assessed property and authorized all counties and incorporated towns to impose an additional school tax not to exceed three cents on every hundred dollars of property.⁹ The law also made provision for a State Board of Education; established County Assessors as *ex-officio* County Superintendents; provided for three school commissioners to be appointed for each district; and prohibited the use of denominational or sectarian books in public schools.¹⁰ The act was amended on April 26, 1853, with Assessor H. J. Bidleman appointed as the first Superintendent of Sacramento County.¹¹

The following year, in February 1854, the county opened its first common school in an old theatre at Fifth and K Streets in Sacramento. The building had an initial enrollment of 90 students, with separate departments for boys and girls.¹² Most of the students were between seven and nine years old, and many had never attended school before. Attendance at the school increased rapidly and by its fourth day of operation, the number of pupils had nearly doubled. As the school became more crowded, the county acquired more classroom space throughout the city. By July 1854, there were more than 260 students attending the public schools in Sacramento.¹³ In October, the city council passed an ordinance that provided for the election of a City Superintendent of Schools and a Board of Education, which would take over control of the city schools from the county.¹⁴

The city formally took over the operation of the public school system in December 1854. City officials immediately set about securing additional classroom space to accommodate the growing number of students. The following January, they constructed the first city-owned public schoolhouse at 10th and H Streets. This school, which was known as the "Third Ward Free Common School," consisted of a single classroom that could accommodate up to 150 pupils.¹⁵ Boys and girls sat on opposite sides of the classroom, which was heated by a wood stove. By 1856, there were reportedly six public grammar schools and five primary schools in operation at various locations throughout the city.¹⁶

⁷ Ibid., 92.

⁸ Steven M. Avella, *Sacramento: Indomitable City*, 49.

⁹ Stacie Victoria Bennett, "Schooling the Other: The Role of Education in Nineteenth Century California," 99.

¹⁰ John Swett, *History of the Public School System of California* (San Francisco: A.L. Bancroft and Company, 1876), 20.

¹¹ Walter G. Reed, ed., *History of Sacramento County, California* (Los Angeles: Historic Record Company, 1923), 168.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ "City Items," *Daily California Statesman*, January 4, 1855, 2.

¹⁶ "Local News," *The Sacramento Bee*, March 31, 1857, 2.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Grant Union High School
Name of Property
Sacramento County, California
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 8 Page 3

It was at this time that city officials established the first public high school in Sacramento, located in a rented building on M Street between 8th and 9th Streets. Although the high school was small, boasting just 35 students in 1858, it was exceptional for the time in which it was established.¹⁷ While the Common School Movement was gradually gaining acceptance across the United States in the mid- to late nineteenth century, the national crusade for better public education was largely limited to primary and grammar schools. High school attendance was incredibly uncommon in the nineteenth century, accounting for less than two percent of all children enrolled in public schools in 1870.¹⁸ In fact, when Sacramento's high school was first organized in 1856, it was only the second high school to be established west of the Mississippi River. While the reasons for the school's establishment are not completely clear, it may have been related to the development of Sacramento's commercial economy, which created an unusually high demand for educated white-collar workers.

In 1858, classes for the city's high school students were moved to the newly constructed Franklin School, located at the corner of L and 6th Streets. The Franklin School was an impressive three-story brick edifice that cost more than \$8,000 to build.¹⁹ The school could house 150 primary school students on the first floor, 150 grammar school students on the second floor, and 60 high schoolers on the third floor.²⁰ Classes for high school students were held in the Franklin School until 1877, when the city constructed a new stand-alone high school building at the corner of 9th and M Streets. The new high school consisted of a two-story "diagonally boarded" and "rustic" wood frame structure.²¹ Considered a "stylish structure," the new high building cost an estimated \$11,000 to build.²²

¹⁷ "City Affairs," *The Sacramento Age*, January 26, 1858, 3.

¹⁸ Thomas D. Snyder, ed., "120 Years of American Education: A Statistical Portrait," U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, 1993.

¹⁹ "Local News," *The Sacramento Bee*, March 16, 1858, 3.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ "Local Matters," *The Sacramento Bee*, October 13, 1877, 3.

²² "Improvements of a Year," *The Sacramento Bee*, December 24, 1877, 1.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Grant Union High School
Name of Property
Sacramento County, California
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 8 Page 4



Figure 1. View of Sacramento High School located at 9th and M Streets, ca. 1880s (Photograph courtesy of the Eugene Hepting Photograph Collection, Center for Sacramento History, Sacramento).

By the late 1890s, increased enrollment at the high school led to severe overcrowding and city officials once again called for the construction of a new schoolhouse for secondary students. The existing high school was so small that classes were often held in other locations in the city, including at the old Perry Seminary building, located at 10th and I Streets, and in a vacant saloon, located across from the existing campus.²³ After several years of political wrangling, in 1904, Sacramento voters finally authorized \$200,000 worth of bonds to construct a new high school building.²⁴ Two years later, in 1906, the City Board of Education purchased the former Protestant Orphans' Asylum property, consisting of "the entire block bounded by Eighteenth and Nineteenth, K and L Streets," to serve as the location of the new school.²⁵ Completed in 1908, the new high school consisted of a two-story red brick building, with a basement and central dome designed by local architect R. A. Herold.²⁶

²³ "City's Crying Need a New High School," *The Sacramento Bee*, March 18, 1898, 8.

²⁴ "Progressive Sacramento," *The Folsom Telegraph*, July 23, 1904, 3.

²⁵ "To Start Work on High School," *The Sacramento Bee*, June 27, 1906, 3.

²⁶ Ibid.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Grant Union High School
Name of Property
Sacramento County, California
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 8 Page 5



Figure 2. View of Sacramento High School located at 18th and K Streets, ca. 1910s–1920s (Photograph courtesy of the McCurry Photograph Collection, California State Library, Sacramento).

The construction of the new Sacramento High School coincided with a transformational period in the history of American public education. The “High School Movement” was a period of rapid expansion and increased enrollment in secondary education that occurred across the United States between 1910 and 1940.²⁷ The growing popularity of secondary education was attributed to a variety of factors, including transportation improvements and the rise of “white collar jobs,” which required formal education in excess of what was provided by grammar or primary schools, but less than what was typically furnished by a four-year university.²⁸ As demand for high school education increased, public high schools abandoned their traditional Classical curriculum and began to offer more practical vocational training that would better prepare students for modern employment. The growing demand for secondary education was especially apparent in California, which saw high school graduation rates climb from just 10 percent in 1910 to 60 percent by 1935.²⁹

²⁷ Claudia Goldin and Lawrence F. Katz, “Human Capital and Social Capital: The Rise of Secondary Schooling in America,” *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, Vol. 29, No. 4 (Spring 1999): 683-723.

²⁸ Claudia Goldin, “America’s Graduation from High School: The Evolution and Spread of Secondary Schooling in the Twentieth Century,” *The Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 58, No. 2 (June 1998): 352.

²⁹ Claudia Goldin and Lawrence F. Katz, “Human Capital and Social Capital: The Rise of Secondary Schooling in America,” 685.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Grant Union High School
Name of Property
Sacramento County, California
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 8 Page 6

Likewise, in Sacramento, the number of students enrolled at the city's only high school increased exponentially after 1910, rising more than 122 percent over the next five years.^{30, 31} In response to the influx of new high school students, the city constructed an even larger high school in 1924. The new Sacramento High School was located at 34th and Y Streets in the Oak Park neighborhood. Designed by San Francisco-based architect Edgar A. Matthews, the two-story brick building featured a prominent square clock tower.³²



Figure 3. View of Sacramento High School located at 34th and Y Streets, ca. 1920s–1930s (Photograph courtesy of the McCurry Photograph Collection, California State Library, Sacramento).

The New Deal and High School Construction in Sacramento

The Great Depression ushered in a period of widespread poverty and joblessness that further increased the demand for secondary education. As job opportunities for young people declined, there was a reciprocal rise in public high school enrollment across the country.³³ In Sacramento, the city's only high school was inundated with new students, with enrollments totaling nearly 4,000 pupils by 1930.³⁴ At the

³⁰ "Auditorium May Be Study Room," *The Sacramento Bee*, October 13, 1910, 8.

³¹ "Large Increase Shown in High School Enrollment," *The Sacramento Bee*, February 11, 1915, 2.

³² "S.F. Man Gets School Job," *The Sacramento Star*, March 27, 1920, 1.

³³ Claudia Goldin, "America's Graduation from High School: The Evolution and Spread of Secondary Schooling in the Twentieth Century," 361.

³⁴ "19,846 Students in Local Schools," *Independent-Leader*, October 10, 1930, 6.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Grant Union High School
Name of Property
Sacramento County, California
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 8 Page 7

same time, schools were faced with severe budget cuts due to decreases in tax revenue. In Sacramento, reductions in revenue were compounded by “out of town” students attending the city’s only high school. In 1931, it was reported that Sacramento residents were paying \$85,000 per year for approximately 554 children who lived in outlying areas of Sacramento County to attend Sacramento High School.³⁵ Remote school districts were accused of “poaching” and evading their share of the cost of maintaining high schools for their [own] children.”³⁶ It was suggested that outlying elementary school districts should either be made to form their own high school districts, or to reimburse Sacramento taxpayers for the cost of educating their children.

Some relief for the city’s struggling public school system came in 1932 with the election of President Franklin D. Roosevelt and his New Deal policies. Shortly after Roosevelt took office, in June 1933, Congress passed the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA) which aimed to stimulate the American economy and alleviate unemployment. Article II of NIRA authorized the Public Works Administration (PWA), a major New Deal agency that was designed to reduce unemployment by funding large-scale public works projects throughout the country.³⁷ The legislation included an initial allocation of \$3.3 billion which would be awarded to private firms for the construction of dams, bridges, schools, and hospitals.³⁸

In 1935, Sacramento officials applied for a PWA grant in the amount of \$335,454 to construct a second public high school for the city. The grant was augmented by the proceeds from the sale of \$485,000 worth of bonds.³⁹ The new school was located on Freeport Boulevard and was designed by the architecture firm of Starks and Flanders.⁴⁰ The school was officially dedicated in 1937 and was named in honor of Sacramento newspaperman C. K. McClatchy. When C. K. McClatchy High School opened in August 1937 it had an initial enrollment of 1,700 high schoolers, thereby reducing the student body at Sacramento High School to just 2,500 students.⁴¹

Establishment of Grant Union High School

At the time that Grant Union High School was established, Sacramento’s school system was under severe strain from overcrowding and lost tax revenue resulting from the Great Depression.⁴² In response, local officials encouraged areas outside of the city limits to establish their own independent high schools to alleviate the financial burden on the city school system. In May 1931, a series of petitions were circulated throughout North Sacramento and its surrounding communities asking for the organization of a union high school district.⁴³ That July, six elementary school districts—Elverta, Rio Linda, Robla, Del

³⁵ “Out of Town Students in High School Cost \$85,000,” *The Sacramento Bee*, January 27, 1931, 1.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Elliott A. Rosen, *Roosevelt, the Great Depression, and the Economics of Recovery* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2012), 74-75.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ “Site is Picked for High School to Cost \$750,000,” *The Sacramento Bee*, December 7, 1935, 1.

⁴⁰ “McClatchy High Gym Will Be Completed Soon,” *The Sacramento Bee*, February 27, 1937, 7.

⁴¹ “22,000 at School on First Day,” *The Sacramento Union*, August 31, 1937, 6.

⁴² “Out of Town Students in High School Cost \$85,000,” January 27, 1931, 1.

⁴³ “High School is Wanted by 1,303,” *The Sacramento Bee*, May 26, 1931, 13.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Grant Union High School
Name of Property
Sacramento County, California
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 8 Page 8

Paso Heights, Hagginwood, and North Sacramento—voted to form the Grant Union High School district.⁴⁴

A year later, in June 1932, more than 1,000 voters passed a \$150,000 bond issue to construct a new high school building for the district.⁴⁵ Later that month, the district's board of trustees selected William Rutherford, a former administrator of Galt High School, to serve as the school's first principal.⁴⁶ The school board also announced that it would begin immediate construction on a temporary school facility to house an estimated 300 high school students. H. W. Robertson of Sacramento was awarded the contract for the construction of the temporary school buildings, which were completed in August 1932.⁴⁷ The temporary school consisted of 16 "bungalow" type classrooms located off Marysville Boulevard in East Del Paso Heights—the approximate center of the new school district.⁴⁸ The school officially opened in September 1932, with a larger than expected enrollment of 586 students.⁴⁹



Figure 4. View of Grant Union High School, ca. 1932, showing six of the facility's 16 temporary classrooms (Photograph courtesy of the Grant Union High School Alumni Association, Sacramento).

That same month, prominent Sacramento-based architect Harry J. Devine Sr. released a preliminary sketch for the permanent Grant Union High School building. As designed, the building was to be of

⁴⁴ "Grant Union High School Sure by Vote 750 to 44," *The Sacramento Bee*, July 31, 1931, 1.

⁴⁵ "Grant Union High School Bond Issue is Approved by Five to One Vote," *The Sacramento Bee*, June 22, 1932, 20.

⁴⁶ "Rutherford to Head Grant High," *The Sacramento Union*, June 28, 1932, 1.

⁴⁷ "Board Prepares to Open School," *The Sacramento Bee*, August 8, 1932, 15.

⁴⁸ "Bids on Construction of Temporary Union High School Houses," *The Sacramento Bee*, July 11, 1932, 17.

⁴⁹ "586 Enrolled in Grant are Busily Planning Activities of School," *The Journal*, September 16, 1932, 1.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Grant Union High School
Name of Property
Sacramento County, California
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 8 Page 9

brick construction with a tile roof and had an interior floor plan consisting of 17 classrooms and a gymnasium.⁵⁰ Although originally intended to accommodate 600 students, it was intentionally designed so that an auditorium and additional classroom space could be added at a later date. Bids for the construction of the permanent school building were opened in December 1932; however, it was reported that no bids had been received by the following March.⁵¹ The reason for the lack of bids was attributed to the school board's inability to dispose of \$120,000 of the original \$150,000 bond issue passed by the district the previous year.⁵² In August 1933, the school board approached the PWA about purchasing the unsold bonds so that construction on a permanent school building could finally get underway.⁵³

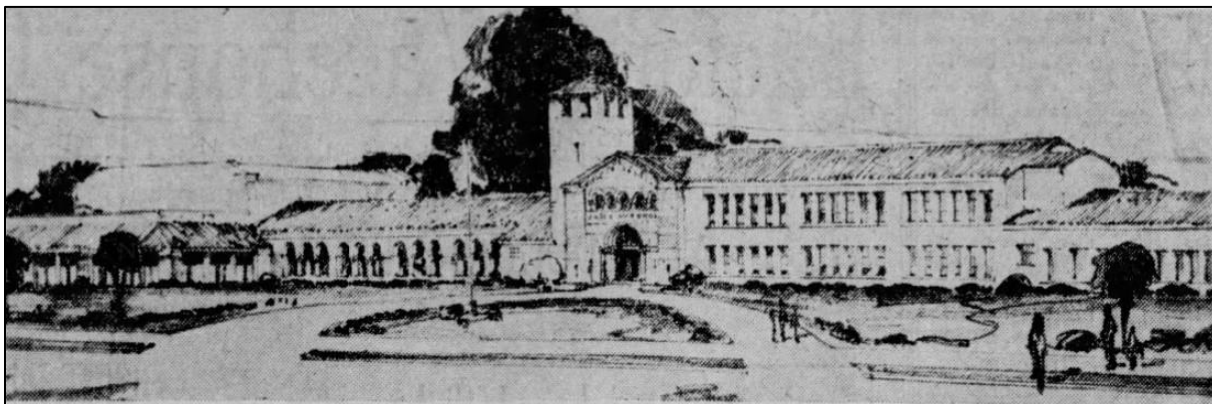


Figure 5. Preliminary sketch for Grant Union High School prepared by Harry J. Devine, Sr. (Figure courtesy of the *Sacramento Bee*, September 17, 1932).

In January 1934, PWA chief Harold Ickes granted \$164,000 to Grant Union High School for the construction of a permanent building for secondary students. The funding included \$115,000 in unsold bonds, as well as an outright grant of \$49,000.⁵⁴ Under the terms of the loan agreement, the district committed to repaying the cost of the unsold bonds at an interest rate of just 4 percent. Construction was expected to start immediately, with the goal that the new school building would be ready for the pupils and teachers before the fall term commenced.⁵⁵

In March 1934, before construction of the new building was even started, Principal Rutherford announced that the school had also received a Civil Works Administration (CWA) grant for the construction of a new swimming pool. The \$8,000 grant would pay for the construction of a 50- by 120-foot swimming pool, which would be repaid by "charging a nominal fee for swimming privileges."⁵⁶ The following month, the contract for the construction of Grant Union High School was awarded to the

⁵⁰ "The New \$120,000 Grant Union High School," *The Sacramento Bee*, September 17, 1932, 11.

⁵¹ "Grant Union Fails to Get Any Bids," *The Sacramento Union*, March 28, 1933, 5.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ "High School Will Ask U.S. to Purchase Bonds," *The Sacramento Bee*, August 25, 1933, 20.

⁵⁴ "Grant Union to Obtain \$164,000," *The Sacramento Union*, January 6, 1934, 12.

⁵⁵ "Educational Interests Have a Decided Boost," *The Journal*, January 5, 1934, 1.

⁵⁶ "CWA Workers Start Construction of Grant Union Swimming Pool," *The Sacramento Bee*, March 2, 1934, 12.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Grant Union High School
Name of Property
Sacramento County, California
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 8 Page 10

local construction firm of Azevedo & Sarmento for a total cost of \$163,000.⁵⁷ The groundbreaking ceremony for the new school building occurred in mid-May 1934.

Although the swimming pool was completed in July 1934, construction of the actual school buildings progressed much more slowly than initially anticipated.⁵⁸ The lag in construction was partially attributed to the passage of the Field Act, a state law enacted in 1933 that mandated earthquake-resistant construction for all new school buildings in the State of California. The act established the Office of the State Architect, which developed rigorous construction standards and a system of careful peer review to ensure that all new schools built in the state would be able to withstand future earthquakes.⁵⁹

In order to meet the specifications for earthquake proof construction under the Field Act, the contractors for Grant Union High School used reinforced concrete for the building's exterior, rather than the brick masonry that was originally planned for the building. The main classroom building, gymnasium, and theatre were completed in March 1935, and were reportedly the first school buildings in Northern California to be constructed using the new earthquake proof standards.⁶⁰ The dedication ceremony for the new school building was held that spring and was attended by more than 2,000 people. An important part of the ceremony was the dedication of the Carlos K. McClatchy Memorial Flagstaff, which was presented to the school by McClatchy's mother, Mrs. C.K. McClatchy.⁶¹ The flagstaff was dedicated by the Sacramento Post No. 61 of the American Legion. The school's auditorium was completed under a supplementary PWA grant a few months later.⁶² By April 1935, 680 students were attending classes in the new school building, which, at the time, was considered "the most modern in northern California."⁶³

⁵⁷ "Contract for New High School to Be Signed Tonight," *The Journal*, April 27, 1934, 1.

⁵⁸ "New Swimming Pool Will Open," *The Sacramento Bee*, July 3, 1934, 12.

⁵⁹ Stephen Tobriner, *Bracing for Disaster: Earthquake Resistant Architecture and Engineering in San Francisco, 1838-1933* (Berkeley, Heyday Books, 2006), 278.

⁶⁰ "Grant Temblor Proof School to Open Soon," *The Sacramento Union*, May 2, 1935, 5.

⁶¹ "2,000 Attend Dedication of School and Flagpole," *The Sacramento Bee*, May 27, 1935, 5.

⁶² "Contract Awarded for Finishing Grant School," *Tribune-Progress*, October 28, 1934, 1.

⁶³ "680 Attend First Class at New Grant Union High School," *The Sacramento Union*, April 23, 1935, 5.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Grant Union High School
Name of Property
Sacramento County, California
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 8 Page 11



Figure 6. View of auditorium under construction, ca. 1935 (Photograph courtesy of the Grant Union High School Alumni Association, Sacramento).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Grant Union High School
Name of Property
Sacramento County, California
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 8 Page 12



Figure 7. Overview of the completed school plant, ca. 1930s (Photograph courtesy of the Grant Union High School Alumni Association, Sacramento).

After the completion of the main school plant, enrollment at Grant Union High School reached an all-time high. According to Principal William Rutherford, by 1936, there were 861 students enrolled at the school, with regular attendance expected to reach more than 1,000 pupils by the end of the year.⁶⁴ To accommodate the surge in enrollment, the school obtained another PWA grant to construct 18 additional classrooms and a music conservatory in August 1936.⁶⁵ The \$28,000 grant was augmented by a district tax of \$34,000. The classroom addition, which was constructed on the rear of the main school building, was also designed by Harry J. Devine Sr., with construction performed by the Azevedo Construction Co.⁶⁶ By the time the new wing opened in May 1937, the school's population had reached 1,026 students.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ "Registration Hits New High," *The Sacramento Union*, September 27, 1936, 20.

⁶⁵ "Eighteen Room Addition to Grant Union High is Started," *Tribune-Progress*, October 15, 1936, 8.

⁶⁶ "Grant Union Accepts Bid," *The Sacramento Union*, October 1, 1936, 10.

⁶⁷ "Grant High School Opens its \$74,000 Wing," *The Sacramento Union*, May 9, 1937, 25.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Grant Union High School
Name of Property
Sacramento County, California
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 8 Page 13

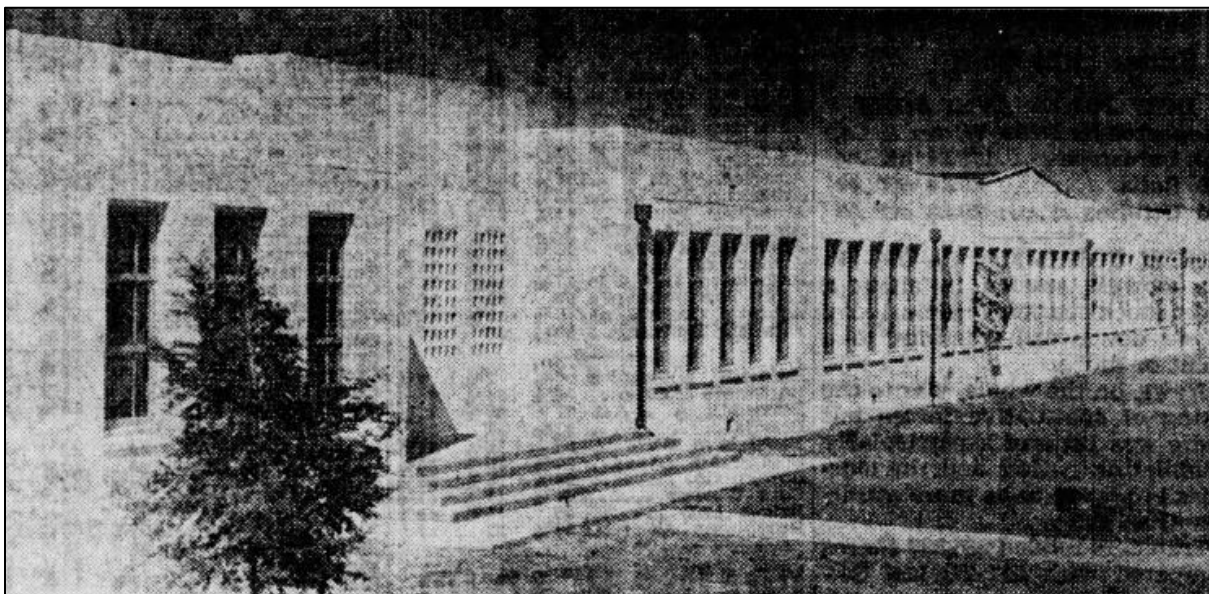


Figure 8. View of the 18-room addition to Grant Union High School (Figure courtesy of the *Sacramento Union*, May 9, 1937).

Enrollment at Grant Union High School accelerated rapidly following the construction of the Sacramento Air Depot (later McClellan Air Force Base) in 1937. The \$7,000,000 aviation repair facility recruited thousands of civilian employees and contributed to a wave of suburban development throughout northern Sacramento County in the 1930s and 1940s.⁶⁸ By September 1938, Grant Union High School was experiencing record enrollments, with more than 1,400 students registering for classes during the fall semester.⁶⁹ Once again the school was facing “an acute shortage of space,” and officials from Grant Union High School sought additional PWA funding to expand the campus and accommodate the growth in enrollment.⁷⁰

In 1938, the school received another sizable PWA grant, in the amount of \$112,500, which was further supplemented by an additional \$150,000 bond from the school district.⁷¹ New facilities constructed with this funding included a cafeteria and social hall, a gymnasium, a student store, 13 vocational classrooms, four music rooms, four domestic science classrooms, an assembly hall with two radio studios, and three shop buildings for woodworking, pottery, and metal working classes.⁷² The architect for the new facilities was Charles F. Dean and the contractor was M. R. Peterson, both of Sacramento.⁷³ The student store consisted of an adobe brick building, constructed by Grant High School students.⁷⁴ Completed in 1939, the new facilities practically doubled the size of the Grant Union High School plant.

⁶⁸ “Record Growth of Suburbs in County Is Seen,” *The Sacramento Bee*, March 6, 1937, 7.

⁶⁹ “Grant’s Enrollment Tops All Previous Records,” *Tribune-Progress*, September 15, 1938, 1.

⁷⁰ “Grant School Bond Election Set Tuesday,” *The Sacramento Union*, August 1, 1938, 7.

⁷¹ “Grant Union Bonds Okehed,” *The Sacramento Bee*, August 3, 1938, 1.

⁷² “Grant School Bids Opened,” *The Sacramento Union*, December 28, 1938, 12.

⁷³ “Charles F. Dean Prominent Architect,” *The Journal*, November 4, 1938, 8.

⁷⁴ “Grant Union High Holds Open House,” *The Journal*, November 17, 1939, 1.

Figure 9. Architect's sketch for the expansion of Grant Union High School prepared by Charles F. Dean (Figure courtesy of *The Journal*, July 29, 1938).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Grant Union High School

Name of Property

Sacramento County, California

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 8 Page 15



Figure 10. Overview of the completed shop buildings, ca. 1939 (Photograph courtesy of the Grant Union High School Alumni Association, Sacramento).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Grant Union High School
Name of Property
Sacramento County, California
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 8 Page 16



Figure 11. Overview of the new gymnasium, ca. 1940 (Photograph courtesy of the Sacramento Room Photograph Collection, Sacramento Public Library).

The final Depression-era facility constructed at Grant Union High School was the football stadium. The new stadium, which was based on the design of the Stanford University stadium, was constructed by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in 1940. The federal government paid \$69,000 towards the stadium's construction—most of which was used for workers' wages. The school district provided the remaining \$19,000.⁷⁵ The north end of the stadium featured two field houses, connected by an arch that formed the stadium's main entrance. The first game in the new stadium was held in October 1940. All major construction at Grant Union High School was completed by the end of 1940.

Harry J. Devine Sr.

The principal architect for Grant Union High School was Harry J. Devine Sr.—one of the most prominent architects in the City of Sacramento during the early to mid-twentieth century. A native of the city, Devine was born on March 11, 1894, to Harriett and James Devine. He graduated from Christian Brothers High School—a private Catholic high school located in the Oak Park neighborhood in 1912.⁷⁶ Devine studied architecture at the University of California (UC) at Berkeley and served in World War I

⁷⁵ "Where Grant High School Football Battles Will Rage," *The Sacramento Bee*, May 11, 1940, 7.

⁷⁶ Rebecca Leigh Riggs, "Harry J. Devine, Sr. and the Modernization of Sacramento Architecture" (master's thesis, California State University, Sacramento, 2017), 22.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Grant Union High School
Name of Property
Sacramento County, California
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 8 Page 17

(WWI). Following his graduation from UC Berkeley in 1919, Devine returned to Sacramento, which at that time was experiencing a period of rapid development and in need of professional architects.⁷⁷

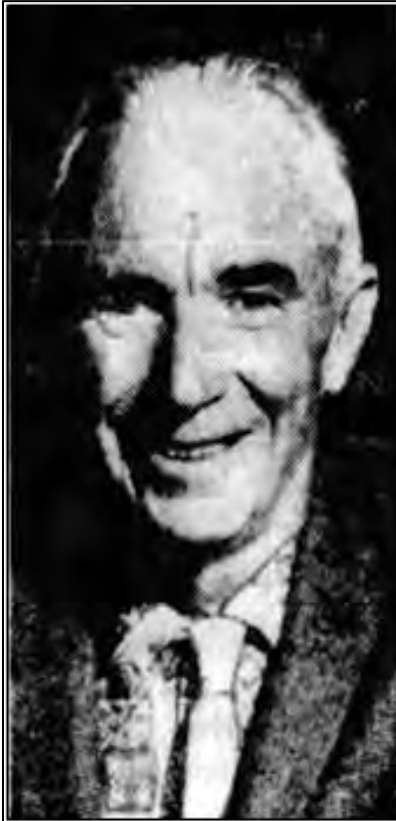


Figure 12. Photograph of Grant Union High School architect Harry J. Devine Sr. (Figure courtesy of the *Sacramento Bee*, November 21, 1963).

Devine initially joined the firm of Dean & Dean before opening his own practice in 1928.⁷⁸ One of the first buildings that Devine designed under his own firm was the Villa Marquise Apartments, located at H and 17th Streets. The two-story Spanish style apartment building was constructed for Ms. Marie Farrell in 1928.⁷⁹ In 1930, Devine moved into a new office in the California State Life Building on J Street. As a devout Catholic, many of his earliest commissions were for the Sacramento Dioceses of the Catholic Church. In 1930, he designed St. Stephen's Church (now Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish) at the corner of 39th and J Streets. The massive church building was intended to seat 800 parishioners and cost an estimated \$150,000 to construct.⁸⁰ The following year, Devine designed an even more impressive

⁷⁷ Ibid., 23.

⁷⁸ "Harry J. Devine Now Located in Enlarged Architectural Offices," *The Sacramento Bee*, April 5, 1930, 24.

⁷⁹ "Seventeenth and H Apartment Planned," *The Sacramento Bee*, February 24, 1928, 17.

⁸⁰ "St. Stephen's Church Work Starts July 1," *The Sacramento Union*, April 3, 1930, 5.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Grant Union High School
Name of Property
Sacramento County, California
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 8 Page 18

structure—the St. Patrick’s Catholic Orphanage on Franklin Boulevard—which cost a total of \$250,000 to complete.⁸¹



Figure 13. Architect’s sketch for St. Stephen’s Church (now Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish) prepared by Harry J. Devine, Sr. (Figure courtesy of *The Sacramento Bee*, May 29, 1930).

Despite the financial hardships of the Great Depression, Devine’s career blossomed in the early 1930s. He was awarded increasingly prestigious commissions throughout the decade, including the new Sacramento County Home for the Aged, located on Franklin Boulevard, and the California Junior High School at Land Park Drive and Vallejo Way in 1932.⁸² Like Grant Union High School, most of his Depression-era projects were at least partially funded through New Deal programs. For instance, in 1934, Devine designed the Sacramento Home for Aged Women, which was funded through a \$28,000 loan from the PWA.⁸³ The PWA also funded Devine’s expansion of Sacramento City College, located on Freeport Boulevard.⁸⁴

Devine’s career as an architect in Sacramento continued to flourish during World War II (WWII) and into the postwar period. By the 1940s, he was recognized as the “go-to architect” for the Sacramento

⁸¹ “Proposed \$250,000 Catholic Orphanage for Sacramento,” *The Sacramento Bee*, February 13, 1931, 2.

⁸² “New County Home Opened to Aged,” *The Sacramento Union*, December 3, 1932, 4; “California Junior High School Bids are Due Thursday,” *The Sacramento Bee*, December 24, 1932, 6.

⁸³ “Sacramento’s Home for Aged Women,” *The Sacramento Bee*, January 17, 1934, 2.

⁸⁴ Rebecca Leigh Riggs, “Harry J. Devine, Sr. and the Modernization of Sacramento Architecture,” 28.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Grant Union High School
Name of Property
Sacramento County, California
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 8 Page 19

Public School System and was eventually selected to serve as the supervising architect for the entire school district.⁸⁵ Later in his career, Devine was responsible for designing such noteworthy structures as Edmonds Field, Mercy General Hospital, the Federal Courthouse (later John Moss Federal Building), and the Sacramento County Administration Building.⁸⁶ In addition to his prolific work as an architect, Devine was also a prominent member of the local community, serving on the City Planning Commission and as President of the State Board of Architectural Examiners. As his career progressed, Devine's work moved away from the outdated Revival styles that had characterized his early work and began to embrace new Mid-Century Modern designs. Devine continued his work as an architect up until his death in November 1963, at the age of 69 years old.⁸⁷ As an architect, Devine's work left a lasting impression on the appearance of the city and played a major role in transforming Sacramento into a modern urban metropolis.

Charles F. Dean

Although not the primary architect for Grant Union High School, Sacramento-based architect Charles F. Dean was responsible for the 1938–1939 campus expansion. Born in Belton, Texas on February 1, 1884, Dean attended Texas A&M University where he studied civil engineering and drawing.⁸⁸ He later worked in San Antonio and Chicago before moving to California in 1908. Dean initially moved to San Francisco, where architects and draftsmen were sorely needed to help rebuild the city after the 1906 earthquake. A few months later, he relocated to Sacramento to take a job as chief designer in the California State Architect's office. He held this position until 1920 when he left to form an architectural partnership with his brother, James. The brothers established the firm of Dean & Dean and quickly gained recognition as leaders in the city's growing architectural community.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 33.

⁸⁶ Rebecca Leigh Riggs, "Harry J. Devine, Sr. and the Modernization of Sacramento Architecture," 37-38.

⁸⁷ "Architect Harry J. Devine Dies," The Sacramento November 21, 1963, 1.

⁸⁸ Walter G. Reed, ed., History of Sacramento County, California, 518.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Grant Union High School
Name of Property
Sacramento County, California
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 8 Page 20



Figure 14. Photograph of Grant Union High School architect Charles F. Dean. (Figure courtesy of the *Sacramento Bee*, July 2, 1956).

Together, Dean & Dean initially built a reputation throughout the region for designing elementary schools. Between 1920 and 1925, the firm worked on several school projects, including Fremont, El Dorado, Newton Booth, Bret Harte, Highland Park, and Thomas Jefferson.⁸⁹ They were also prolific residential architects, designing several impressive residences in South Curtis Oaks and East Sacramento. In 1927, Dean & Dean designed the Westminster Presbyterian Church at 13th and N Streets, which was constructed for a total cost of more than \$300,000.⁹⁰ The Dean brothers ended their professional partnership in 1930, when James took a position as the new city manager.

After his brother's departure from the firm, Charles F. Dean continued his career as one of the city's top architects. Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, Dean designed many notable structures in Sacramento including the YWCA, located at 17th and L Streets, and the Sutter Maternity Hospital, at 50th and F Streets.⁹¹ At the same time, Dean remained a prolific designer of educational buildings, designing the

⁸⁹ "Dean & Dean Gets School Contract," *The Sacramento Bee*, June 6, 1922, 14.

⁹⁰ "Construction of Presbyterian Edifice Progressing Rapidly," *The Sacramento Bee*, September 17, 1927, 26.

⁹¹ "Sutter Maternity Hospital Will Be Opened Soon," *The Sacramento Bee*, October 30, 1937, 7.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Grant Union High School

Name of Property

Sacramento County, California

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 8 Page 21

Theodore Judah Elementary School in East Sacramento in 1936.⁹² The city accepted Dean's plans for the Hiram Johnson High School just before his death in 1956, at age 72.⁹³ Like Harry Devine, Dean's work had a lasting impact on the architectural character of Sacramento in the early to mid-twentieth century.

⁹² "Board Will Seek PWA Grant for Building School," *The Sacramento Bee*, October 20, 1936, 4.

⁹³ "Charles Dean Widow Dies Unexpectedly," *The Sacramento Union*, December 19, 1956 16.