

DPR FORM



Brewster
Historic
Preservation

BHP Sample Report



Page 1 of 17 *Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) Davidson Middle School

P1. Other Identifier: _____

*P2. Location: Not for Publication • Unrestricted

*a. County Marin and _____ (P2c, P2e, and P2b or P2d. Attach a Location Map as necessary.)

*b. USGS 7.5' Quad San Rafael Date 1999 T ; R ; of of Sec ; B.M.

c. Address 280 Woodland Avenue City San Rafael Zip 94901

d. UTM: (Give more than one for large and/or linear resources) Zone , mE/ mN

e. Other Locational Data: (e.g., parcel #, directions to resource, elevation, decimal degrees, etc., as appropriate)

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

Originally built in 1954 with numerous additions through 2007, Davidson Middle School is located on an approximately 18-acre campus at 280 Woodland Avenue in San Rafael, California. The campus is comprised of a number of structures including five classroom wings or groupings of classroom buildings, each labeled 10s, 20s, 30s, 40s, and 50s, an administrative building, library, gymnasium, a music building, band building, and a shop building. Covered walkways connect the majority of these structures to one another, but are otherwise considered separate buildings. A series of portable/relocatable classrooms (70s) are located the eastern edge of the campus, separating it from the playfields further east. (See Continuation Form)

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

P5a. Photograph or Drawing (Photograph required for buildings, structures, and objects.)



*P4. Resources Present: Building

• Structure Object Site District Element of District Other (Isolates, etc.)

P5b. Description of Photo: (view, date, accession #) Gymnasium
2/12/18

*P6. Date Constructed/Age and Source: • Historic Prehistoric

Both
1954-2007 (Plans on file)

*P7. Owner and Address:

San Rafael City Schools
310 Nova Albion Way
San Rafael, CA 94903

*P8. Recorded by: (Name, affiliation, and address) Brad Brewster,

Brewster Historic
Preservation, 141 Pierce St
San Francisco, CA 94117

*P9. Date Recorded: 3/1/18

*P10. Survey Type: (Describe)
Intensive

*P11. Report Citation: (Cite survey report and other sources, or enter "none.") San
Rafael City Schools, Davidson
Middle School and Laurel Dell

Elementary School Draft EIR.

*Attachments: NONE Location Map • Continuation Sheet • Building, Structure, and Object Record Archaeological Record District Record Linear Feature Record Milling Station Record Rock Art Record Artifact Record Photograph Record Other (List): _____

State of California The Resources Agency Primary # _____ DEPARTMENT
 OF PARKS AND RECREATION HRI# _____ **BUILDING,**
STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD

*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) Davidson Middle School *NRHP Status Code 6Z
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- B1. Historic Name: San Rafael Intermediate School
 B2. Common Name: Davidson Middle School
 B3. Original Use: Education B4. Present Use: Education
 *B5. Architectural Style: Mid-Century Modern, Contemporary, and Utilitarian
 *B6. Construction History: (Construction date, alterations, and date of alterations)

Originally built in 1954, there were major additions or alterations nearly every decade since, until 2007. See B10 (Continuation Sheet) for a full construction chronology.

*B7. Moved? No Yes Unknown Date: _____ Original Location: _____ *B8.
 Related Features:

Playfields to the east of the campus, parking lot to north. Davidson Annex to south.

- B9a. Architect: See B10 (Continuation Sheet) b. Builder: Herbert A. Crocker & Co
 *B10. Significance: Theme Post-War Growth and Education Area San Rafael
 Period of Significance 1945 - 1970 Property Type Educational Applicable Criteria
A, C (Discuss importance in terms of historical or architectural context as defined by theme, period, and geographic scope. Also address integrity.)

History of San Rafael Public Schools. In 1817, Mission San Rafael Arcangel, an adjunct of the Mission San Francisco de Dolores in San Francisco, was established in the region that would become the City of San Rafael. The mission was established as a hospital for ill Native American neophytes. Following the secularization of the Mexican missions, a land grant known as Rancho San Pablo that contained the former Mission San Rafael Arcangel was given to Timoteo (Timothy) Murphy. The town of San Rafael began to develop in the mid- 1800s as an agricultural center for the region. After California achieved statehood in 1848, Marin County was established as one of the state's first 27 counties, and San Rafael was identified as one the county's four original townships and as the county seat. In 1866, the editor of the Marin County Journal published the following recollection of San Rafael circa 1851: (See Continuation Sheet)

- B11. Additional Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes) HP15 (Educational Building)
 *B12. References:

See B10 (Continuation Sheet)

B13. Remarks:

None

- *B14. Evaluator: Brad Brewster,
Brewster Historic Preservation Consulting
 *Date of Evaluation: 3/1/2018

(Sketch Map with north arrow required.)

(This space reserved for official comments.)

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P3a. Description (Continued):

The interior of the campus is largely comprised of a series of paved courtyards, with some areas of landscaping adjacent to the buildings. Access to the campus is provided by a driveway connecting Woodland Avenue to an internal parking area with approximately 95 parking spaces and two drop-off areas in front of the administration building and gymnasium.

The administration, classroom wings (10s - 40s) and library are single-story structures with rectilinear plans and flat, shed, and sawtooth roof forms, oriented in a generally east-west arrangement with courtyards formed between them. The construction type is wood framing over a concrete slab or perimeter foundations. Typical cladding is painted plaster with wood fascia trim and metal flashing, and typical fenestration consists of rows of fixed, wood frame windows with divided transoms (2 over 1 panes), and solid wood doors in wood frames. Rows of fixed, wood frame windows can also be found along the upper clerestories provided by the angled, sawtooth roof forms atop most classroom buildings. Aluminum frame awnings with horizontal fins are fixed above many of the south-facing windows. Wood frame covered walkways supported on steel poles interconnect the classroom, administration, and library buildings. Other buildings, such as the gymnasium, a music building, band building, and a shop building, are free-standing.

To the north of the classroom, administration, and library structures is the gymnasium. This two-story, high-bay building has an end gable roof, a rectilinear plan, and is constructed of a mixture of concrete block, wood, and steel framing over a concrete slab and/or perimeter foundation. Typical cladding is scored and painted plaster or painted concrete block. Single-story side wings with flat or shed-style roofs form the locker rooms, bathrooms and office uses. The building entry, which faces west, features a wood frame covered walkway/entryway supported on steel poles which extend the width of the building. Fenestration is generally limited to a row of metal-frame clerestory windows with fixed glazing running along the upper level of the northern and southern elevations of the central gymnasium structure, and a series of steel frame double doors found on the north, south, and west, elevations.

On the southeast corner of the campus is the music building which features a hexagonal plan and pyramidal roof clad in asphalt shingles with a central domed skylight, painted plaster siding with wood trim, and a single window-wall of wood-framed windows with fixed glazing and a solid wood double-door. The shop and music buildings are also located in the southeast corner of the campus, and are comprised of two, single-story buildings with gable roofs, plaster siding, with wood trim, and limited fenestration, connected by a covered walkway. Located on the southern boundary of the campus is a cluster of six modular classroom buildings (50s wing) featuring rectilinear plans, gable roof forms, painted plaster siding with wood fascia trim and limited fenestration. (See Continuation Sheet)

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P3a. Description (Continued):

Finally, a row of approximately 13 portable/relocatable classrooms (70s) are located on the eastern edge of the campus. Oriented generally north-south, this row of portable classroom each have rectangular plans approximately 25' x 45' in size, flat roofs clad in standing metal seam roofing materials, and vertically-scored and painted wood siding with wood trim. Roofs eaves project about 5 feet beyond the front (west) elevations, providing an awning over the entry doors and sun shading over the front windows. Fenestration is limited to these western elevations, and are comprised of fixed and sliding aluminum frame windows and solid, metal frame door. All of the portable classrooms are constructed on steel frames.

B10. Significance (Continued):

San Rafael boasted ten houses besides the Mission buildings; one store, one boarding house, and one whiskey mill. The buildings were all makeshifts except the residence of the late Timothy Murphy once owned and used by the county as a Court House; no fencing or other improvements were visible save a corral or two. (Interactive Resources, 2016).

The first public school districts were established in Marin County in 1855. San Rafael was included in District 2 along with Sausalito, Corte Madera, Novato, Bolinas, and Punta de los Reyes. While schools opened in neighboring towns, a public school was not organized in San Rafael until 1861, at which time The San Rafael Institute was converted from a private school to a public school, serving only the primary grades. The first public school in San Rafael was completed in 1862 at the corner of Fifth and B Streets.

San Rafael grew slowly due its lack of industry and isolation from San Francisco. The coming of the ferry and the railroad in the late 1800s changed the character of San Rafael, as commuting to San Francisco became a possibility. The area was no longer available to just a few wealthy residents and vacationers looking for good weather, but now to people of more moderate means who could work in San Francisco and permanently reside in Marin County. (Ibid)

The population jumped from 841 people in 1870 to 2,276 in 1880 due to easier access across San Francisco Bay. The development of San Rafael centered around Timothy Murphy's former adobe at 4th and C Streets, which would serve briefly as the county courthouse until a new courthouse was constructed in 1872. The town was laid out in a typical block pattern, and 4th Street became the primary commercial corridor. (Ibid)

The Fourth Street Grammar School opened in 1886, and by 1888 it was offering high school courses until the first high school was completed in 1899 at Fourth and E Streets. The present San Rafael High School was opened in 1925 at a cost of \$300,000 and was designed by Shea and Shea Architects. (Marin County Historical Society, 1989).

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B10. Significance (Continued):

By 1920, the city of San Rafael had grown to 5,512, and the San Rafael City Schools had grown to include four elementary schools and one high school serving approximately 800 students. Laurel Dell Elementary School, West End School, and the new E Street School were all built in the early 1930s to accommodate the rising population. Another population boom following World War II necessitated a new phase of rapid school building including six new public schools in the 1950s alone, such as Sun Valley Elementary School (1951), San Venetia Middle School (1951), Davidson Middle School (1954), Hartzell School (1955), McPhail School (1956), and San Pedro Elementary School (1956). San Rafael added another eight public schools in the 1960s due to an increasing Post-War population boom during this decade, including Terra Linda High School (1960), Gallinas School (1960), San Quentin School annexed (1961), Laurel Dell Intermediate School (1961), Glenwood Elementary School (1961), Madrone High School (1965), Bahia Vista Elementary School (1967), and Short Elementary School rebuilt (1969). The school population in San Rafael grew from 3,800 to 4,500 students between 1960 and 1970 alone. (Ibid)

By the mid-1970s, however, student enrollments declined and it became necessary to close schools including Laurel Dell Intermediate School, McPhail, San Pedro, Hartzell, Short and West End Elementary Schools. In the early 1980s, Davidson and Santa Venetia Middle Schools consolidated. In the 1990s, as enrollment began to increase once again, some schools were reopened, including San Pedro and Gallinas elementary schools. In 1999, San Rafael voters passed school bond measures to begin modernization of San Rafael City Schools, and by 2002, voters approved two more school bond measures authorizing nearly \$10 million to fund the completion of modernization projects. Today, the San Rafael City Schools is comprised of eleven schools that serve approximately 5,400 students. (San Rafael City Schools, no date)

History of Davidson Middle School. A study commissioned by the San Rafael School District in 1950 regarding its future school building program provided a strong rationale for the construction of a number of new or expanded K-8 public schools, including Davidson Middle School, primarily due to rising student enrollment based on increasing population projections in San Rafael and Marin County in general (San Rafael School District, 1950).

The study found that without the construction of new or expanded K-8 schools in the near future, rising enrollment would mean greater classroom sizes, greater pupil loads on teachers, additional stress on inadequately sized existing schools, deterioration of play areas, loss of special subjects such as art and crafts, and an overall lowered educational standard for all students. The report found that the lack of adequate educational facilities would be especially acute for middle school students grades 6 - 8 in the early 1950s, by stating: (See Continuation Sheet)

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B10. Significance (Continued):

Next year's eighth grade will probably exceed the graduating class of 1950 by more than 25%. In 1951-52, the sixth grade will total an estimated 162 as compared with 135 pupils now enrolled in that grade. And, in 1953-54, when the total enrollment for grades six, seven and eight reaches an estimated 579 it would seem apparent that no educational program worthy of the name could be carried on without additional classrooms and play areas. (Ibid)

The District proposed the expenditure of nearly \$2 million in 1951-52 for the construction of new or expanded K-8 schools in San Rafael, including the construction of Davidson Middle School (then called San Rafael Intermediate School) and an addition to Laurel Dell Elementary School, among other improvements to the District's physical plant. It was anticipated that the financing for these efforts would come from three sources: receipts from the sale of the B and E Street Schools (\$250,000), a bond issue (\$646,000), and state school building aid apportionments (\$1,027,500). The program recommended a minimum 15-acre site for a new intermediate school with for room to grow over time and the ability to serve at least 800 students by the 1955-56 school year. The program also indicated the intermediate school should be a 'modern school construction which emphasizes utility and economy.' (Ibid) It is within this context of rapid population growth and increasing student enrollment projections that Davidson Middle School was designed and constructed. San Francisco-based architects Donald B. Kirby & Thomas B. Mulvin, along with structural engineer Harold M. Engle and mechanical engineer Clyde E. Bentley, all of whom had worked for the District on prior construction projects at San Rafael High School beginning in the 1940s, were selected by the District to draw up the plans for the new middle school on 18 acres of undeveloped land adjacent to Woodland Avenue which had been recently purchased by the District. Initial plans for an administration building and classroom wing (10s), a second classroom wing (20s), a gymnasium, and shop and boiler buildings were completed in July 1952 (Architectural Plans, 1952).

Hebert A. Crocker & Co. of San Rafael won the contract to build the school, estimated to cost just over \$1 million, including about \$800,000 for the school plant and \$200,000 for site acquisition and preparation, funded entirely by state aid (Daily Independent Journal, September 19, 1952). Construction began in December of 1952 and lasted approximately 18 months. The new school was dedicated to 'Truth, Liberty, and Toleration' by the Native Sons of the Golden West on March 28, 1954, and was fully ready to receive new students, teachers, and administrative staff by the beginning of the school year of 1954-55 (School plaque, Administration Wing). Following the building's dedication, it was renamed from San Rafael Intermediate School to Davidson Middle School after James B. Davidson (1857 - 1940), who was a Marin County educator and served as a county school superintendent for 32 years, retiring in 1935 with numerous accolades (Sausalito News, 1935). (See Continuation Sheet)

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B10. Significance (Continued):

Immediately following completion of the initial campus buildings in 1954, the school continued to grow with new or expanded buildings nearly every decade until 2007. By 1956, a new classroom wing (40s) was constructed immediately south of the administration building and 10s classroom wing. By 1965, another classroom wing (30s) and attached library were added immediately east of the 40s classroom wing, and an addition to the rear of the gymnasium was completed by 1966. These buildings or additions were designed by architects Carl Gromme, Thomas Mulvin, and Ralph Priestly. Near the southeastern end of the campus, a new woodshop and music building were completed in 1968 and 1972, respectively. Both of these buildings were designed by San Francisco-based architects Richard C. Marshall and Chester Bowles. Approximately 13 portable/relocatable classrooms (70s) were added along the eastern edge of the campus by 1995, and a new cluster of modular classrooms (50s) to the south of the campus by 2002. Finally, an addition to the administration building was completed by 2007. (Architectural Plans, 1952-2004).

Davidson Middle School Campus Chronology. The following provides a general construction chronology based on known or approximated completion dates, as well as the architects associated with each building or building addition. Construction plans for nearly all buildings or additions were made available at the Map Room in the Maintenance and Operations trailer at San Rafael High School. Dates for architectural plans are typically 1-2 years prior to building completion dates.

- 1954 Gymnasium, administration building, 10s and 20s classroom wings, boiler and shop buildings (Kirby & Mulvin Architects)
- 1956 40s classroom wing (Gromme, Mulvin & Priestly Architects)
- 1965 30s classroom wing and library (Gromme & Priestly Architects)
- 1966 Addition to rear of gymnasium (Gromme & Priestly Architects)
- 1968 Woodshop (Marshall & Bowles Architects)
- 1972 Music Building (Marshall & Bowles Architects)
- 1995 70s portable/relocatable classrooms
- 2002 50s modular classrooms
- 2007 Administration building addition (Gelfand RNP Architects)

(See Continuation Sheet)

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B10. Significance (Continued):

Significance

Criteria A - Association with Historic Events. Although public school education began in San Rafael as early as 1861, Davidson Middle School was constructed nearly 100 years later during a Post-War population boom of middle school-age students. Built in phases between 1954 and 2007, the majority of its buildings at Davidson Middle School were completed by the late 1960s. Later additions included a music room in the early 1970s, portable and/or modular classrooms in the mid-1990s and early 2000s, as well as an addition to the administration building completed by 2007. While Davidson Middle School is an important community asset with long-standing roots in the City of San Rafael, and has educated thousands of middle school students in its nearly 65 years of existence, research revealed no significant historic events which occurred at the campus. The need to accommodate a growing student body, as well as changing educational and life/safety requirements, is reflected in a campus that has physically expanded and changed over time. These changes represent a more typical, rather than significant, event in the evolution of a school which has operated in a single location for nearly 65 years. Similarly, the urgent need for a new middle school to accommodate a growing student body during the Post-War population boom occurred not only in San Rafael, but throughout the Bay Area, the state, and the country between 1945 - 1970. For these reasons, Davidson Middle School does not appear to be historically significant under Criteria A.

Criteria B - Association with Historic Persons. Although the school is named after James B. Davidson, a revered Marin County educator who served as a county school superintendent for 32 years, the fact that the building is named in honor of this man does not indicate that it is significantly associated with the life and work of this important local individual. Research revealed no significant associations with important persons at Davidson Middle School. As such, the school does not appear to be historically significant under Criteria B.

Criteria C - Embodiment of a Particular Style of Architecture or Designed by a Master Architect. Although Davidson Middle School has operated continuously at the present site on Woodland Avenue for nearly 65 years, the majority of the buildings which comprise the campus were constructed during the Post-War period (1945-1970), with a number of later buildings constructed within the last 20 years, including many portable/relocatable and modular classrooms. As such, the buildings which currently comprise campus exhibit a range of construction styles and dates. The buildings which date to the initial period of construction, between 1954 and 1966, including the 10s - 40s classroom wings and portions of the gymnasium were primarily designed in restrained Mid-Century Modern style of architecture that was prevalent during the Post-War period. (See Continuation Sheet)

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B10. Significance (Continued):

Although these buildings exhibit varying degrees of the elements which comprise the style, such the straightforward use of modern materials, a minimum of architectural embellishment, rectilinear forms and volumes, continuous window-walls and clerestories, and a limited degree of structural expressionism, neither the campus as a whole or any of its individual buildings would be considered the embodiment of the style. The buildings represent a more standard or typical approach to the style, rather than a 'high-style' application which would meet the requirements of Criteria C. The earliest school buildings completed between 1954 and 1966 are similar in style to many of the K-8 school buildings built throughout the state during the Post-War period, and do not appear to distinguish themselves among them. New buildings or additions to the campus after 1968 significantly departed from the Mid-Century Modern style of architecture prevalent during its initial years. Research has not revealed the presence of a unified campus master plan guiding the development and architectural style of campus buildings, but rather it reflects a somewhat ad-hoc approach to the planning and construction of new buildings at Davidson Middle School as extra room on the southern and eastern edges of the campus was available.

The San Francisco-based architects involved in the initial phases of campus construction were Donald B. Kirby, Thomas B. Mulvin, Carl Gromme, and Ralph Priestly. Although these architects had worked for the District on prior construction projects at San Rafael High School beginning in the 1940s, and undoubtedly designed other San Rafael public schools during the Post-War period, research did not reveal an abundance of information about the lives or work of any of these architects. For this reason, none of the architects associated with the initial buildings at Davidson Middle School would be considered 'master architects' as defined under Criteria C. For these reasons, neither the school campus as a whole or any of its individual buildings appear to be historically significant under Criteria C.

B12. References

Daily Independent Journal, *State Raises Aid Ante, Assures New S.R. School*, September 19, 1952.

Interactive Resources, *Historic Resource Evaluation, San Rafael High School*, December 2016.

Marin County Historical Society Bulletin, *The Schools of San Rafael, Part 1*, July, 1989. Available at the reference desk of the San Rafael Public Library.

Nationwide Environmental Title Research (NETR), Historical aerial photographs of San Rafael (1946-2012). Available online at www.historicaerials.com.

Sausalito News, *James B. Davidson, From Pharmacist to Pedagogue*, January 11, 1935.

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B12. References (Continued)

San Rafael City Schools, Marin County Resources Unit Grade 3, *A History of San Rafael Schools and Colleges*, 1961. Available at the reference desk of the San Rafael Public Library.

San Rafael City Schools, *A History Worth Remembering*, no date. Available online at <https://www.srcs.org/history>.

San Rafael School District, *Brochure of the Proposed School Building Program*, January 24, 1950. Available at the Anne T. Kent History Room of the Marin County Library, San Rafael City School Folder.

Architectural Plans

Donald B. Kirby and Thomas B. Mulvin Architects, *San Rafael Intermediate School*, Plans, Elevations, and Details, July, 1952.

Gromme, Mulvin, & Priestly Architects, *Classroom Building #6 Addition to the James B. Davidson School*, Plans, Elevations, and Details, December, 1954.

Carl F. Gromme & Ralph B. Priestly Architects, *New Library and Classroom Addition, Davidson Junior High School*, June, 1964.

J. B. Davidson Junior High Gymnasium Additions, September, 1965.

Richard C. Marshall and Chester Bowles Architects, *San Rafael City Schools, Davidson Music Building*, Plans, Elevations, and Details, July, 1971.

Gelfand RNP, *Davidson Middle School Increment 2, Building Modernization, Addition, and New Construction*, Plans, Elevations, and Details, December, 2004.

(See Continuation Sheet)

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10s Classroom Wing (1954) left, Administration Building (2007) right, looking southeast



Back of 20s Classroom Wing, looking northeast

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Front of Gymnasium (1954), looking northeast



Back of Gymnasium (1966 addition) looking northwest

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Music Building (1972), looking south



Library entrance (1954, remodeled), looking east

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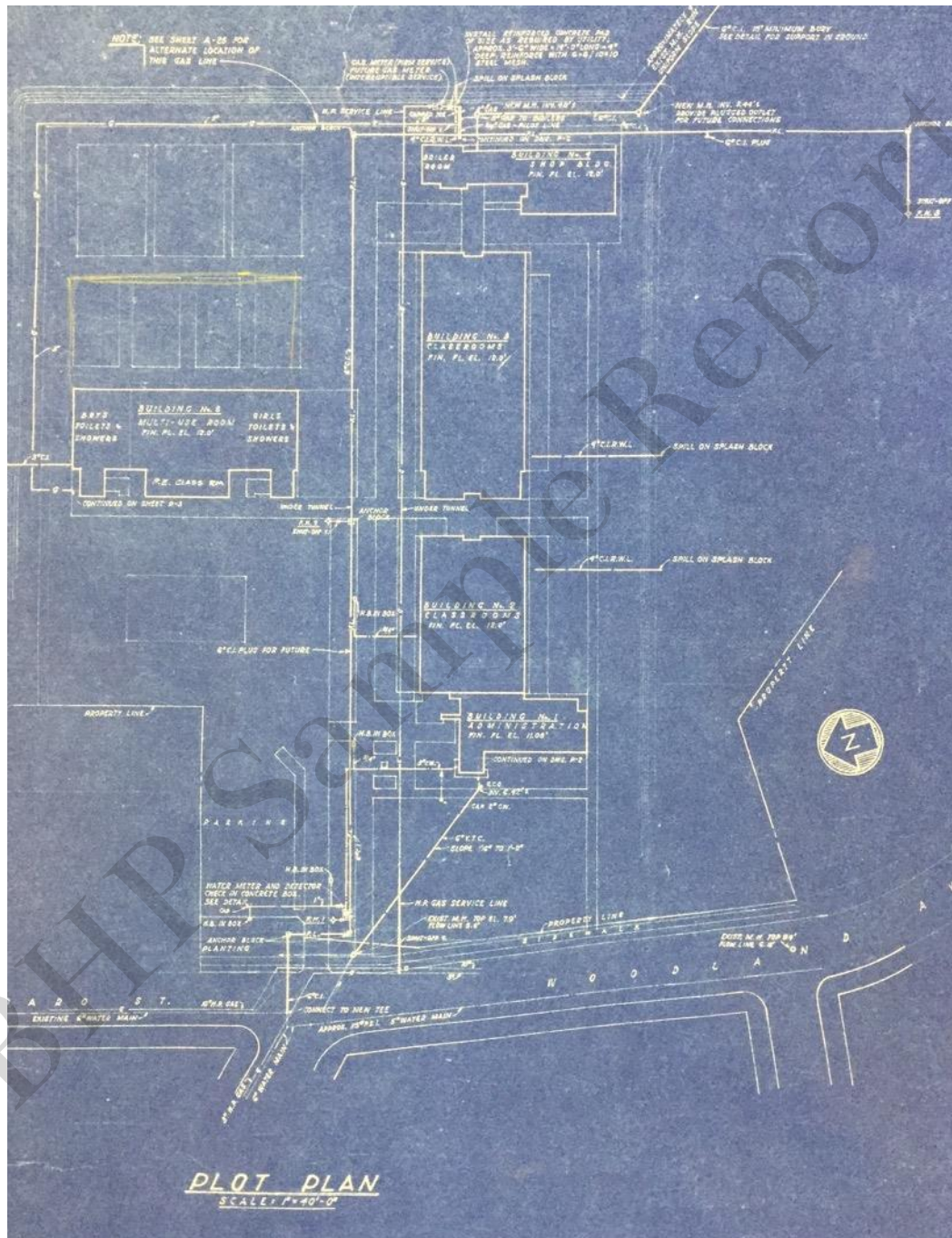
Shop Building (1968), looking southeast



Portable/Relocatable Classrooms (1995), looking northeast

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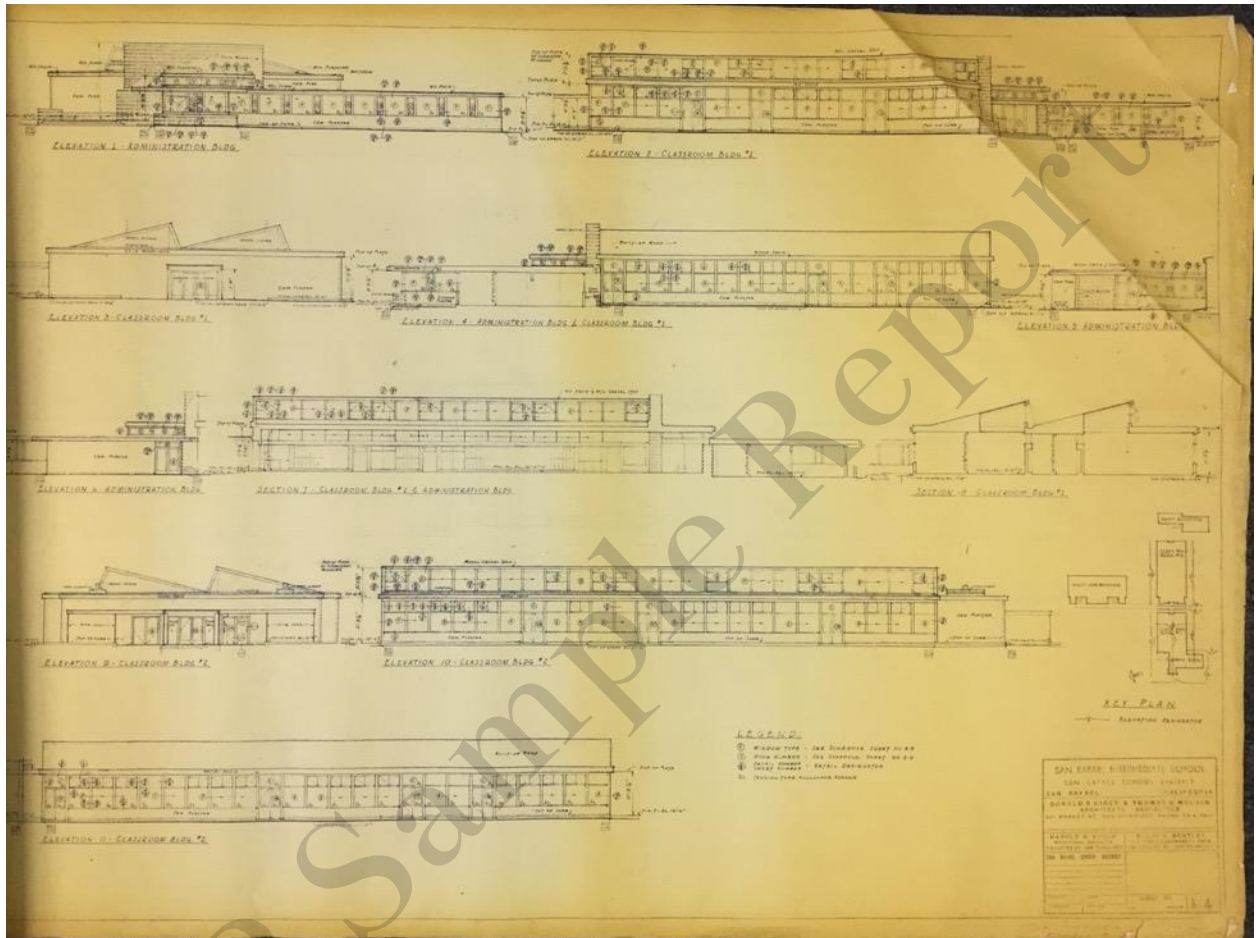
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Donald B. Kirby and Thomas B. Mulvin Architects, San Rafael Intermediate School, Plot Plan, July, 1952.

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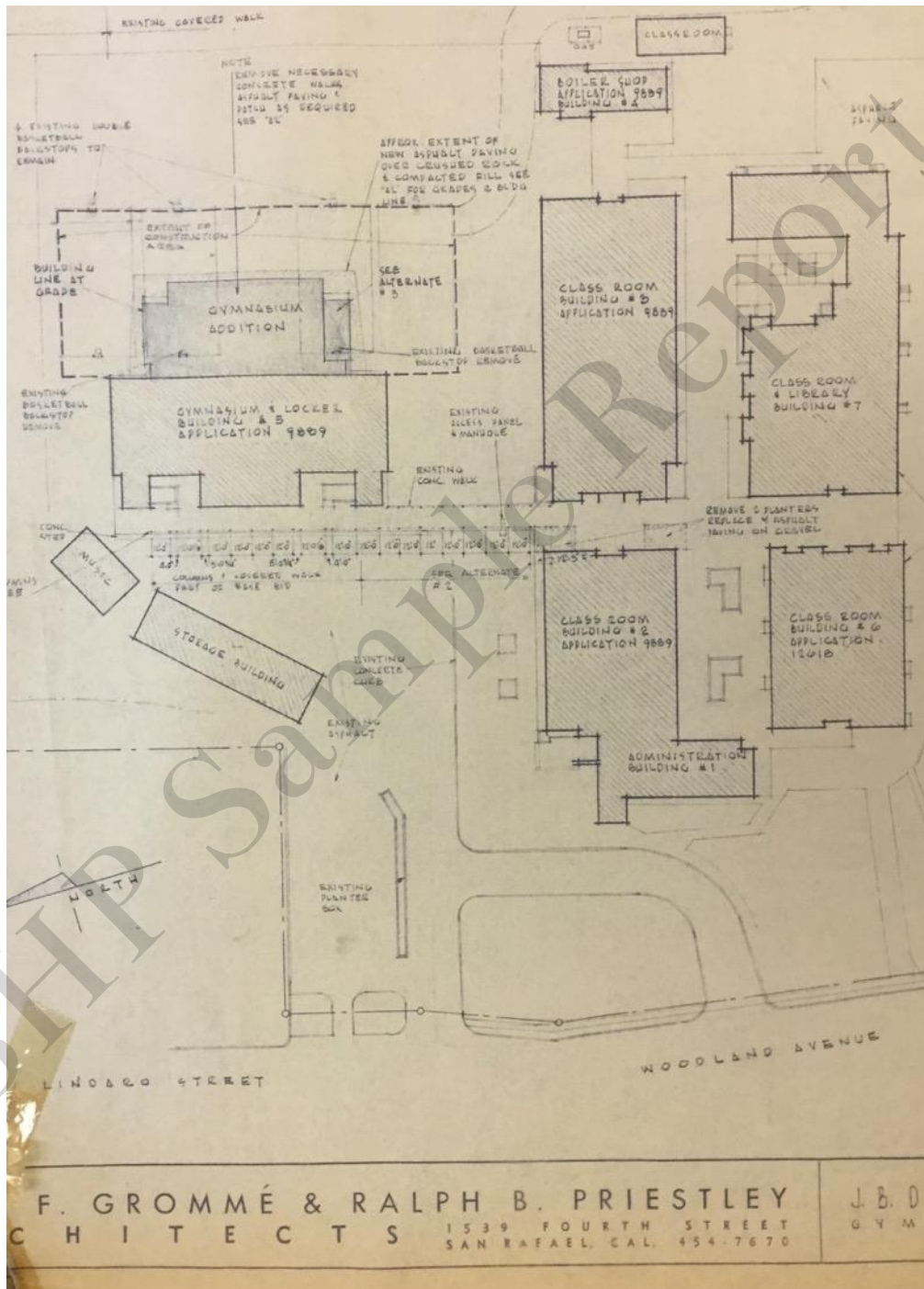


Donald B. Kirby and Thomas B. Mulvin Architects, *San Rafael Intermediate School*, Elevations, July, 1952.

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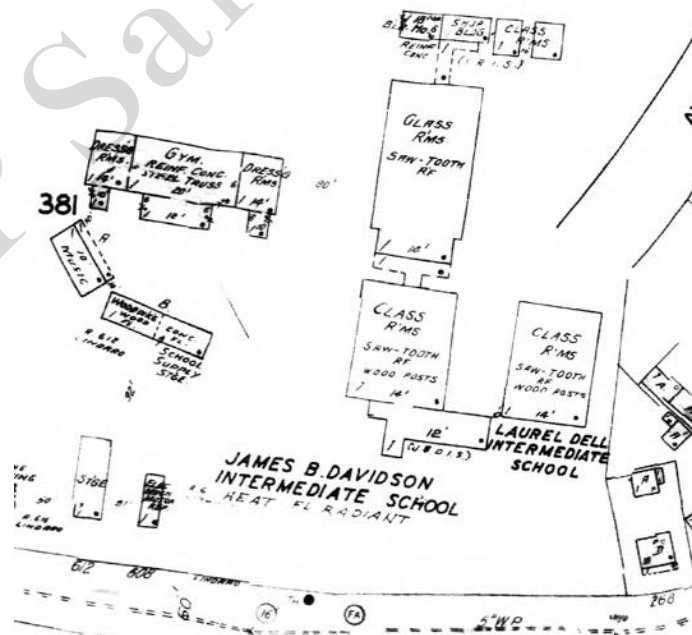
Carl F. Gromme & Ralph B. Priestly Architects, J. B. Davidson Junior High Gymnasium Additions, Plot Plan, September, 1965.

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1956 Aerial Map of Davidson Middle School (center) and Laurel Dell Elementary School (lower left)



1957 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Davidson Middle School