

National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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

## 1. Name of Property

Historic name: S.A. Wilson Elementary SchoolOther names/site number: S.A. Wilson Center/ 5EP.7894

Name of related multiple property listing:

Colorado's Mid-Century Schools, 1945-1970

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

## 2. Location

Street & number: 930 Leta DriveCity or town: Colorado Springs State: CO County: El PasoNot 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 x 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 x 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               x local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

   x A                B               x C                D

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**Signature of certifying official/Title:**
**Date**

State Historic Preservation Officer, Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation,  
History Colorado

**State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government**

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**

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#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

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#### 5. Classification

##### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

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

##### Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

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



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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Modern Movement

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

Principal exterior materials of the property: Brick

## Narrative Description

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### Summary Paragraph

Located in Security-Widefield, an unincorporated area south of Colorado Springs, the S. A. Wilson Elementary School was constructed in 1959 and expanded in 1961. A predominantly agricultural area until the mid-1950s, Security-Widefield quickly developed into a residential suburb with the expansion of nearby Fort Carson military base. Between 1954 and 1961, the Widefield School District grew from 125 students to more than 3,500 students. The S.A. Wilson Elementary School was one of six new schools constructed during this boom period. All of the schools were constructed by the architectural firm of Francis & Guy, based in Colorado Springs. The S.A. Wilson Elementary is an excellent example of mid-twentieth century school design. Character-defining features include: a flat-roofed, single-story design; U-shaped plan with a central courtyard; steel-frame construction with brick facing; large bands of windows; minimal ornamentation; exterior doors on classrooms; covered exterior walkways; and inclusion of a multi-purpose room. With schools typically undergoing frequent alterations to accommodate changing district needs and enrollments, the S.A. Wilson Elementary retains an unusually high degree of integrity and is the most intact of the Widefield School District's midcentury schools.

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## Narrative Description

The S.A. Wilson Elementary School is at the north end of the Security-Widefield community, at the northwest corner of the intersection of Main Street and Leta Drive. Paved parking lots (not original) are on the south, west, and north sides of the school (photo 2). A grass lawn separates the school from Main Street on the east. The Widefield School District administration building is northwest of the school, across the north parking lot (outside the nomination boundary). Renamed the S.A. Wilson Center, the school building currently holds a variety of district services including D3 My Way online school, Teaching and Learning Resource Services, Transition Link Services, and the Employer Benefit Trust Health Wellness Center. The main entrance faces east.

The S.A. Wilson Elementary School is composed of three separate buildings arranged in a U-shaped plan around a central courtyard. Designed by architectural firm Francis & Guy, the school was constructed in phases. The east building was built first, in 1959. In 1961, in keeping with the original plan, classrooms were added to the north end of the east building and the west and north buildings were added. The west and east classroom buildings both measure 205' x 61'. The north multi-purpose building measures 83' x 48'. The central courtyard is 61' wide. An aerial photograph from 1972 shows that the school originally featured grass in the central courtyard and along the east side of the school, adjacent to Main Street. The rest of the lot appears to be undeveloped, without any playgrounds or other site features. The original site plan shows a chain-link fence enclosing a play yard on the south end of the west building, connected to the kindergarten, but it is unknown if this was ever completed. The site plan and a 1960 aerial photograph show car parking in front of the building to the south, but there were no paved lots. The school was at the northern edge of Security-Widefield. A subdivision was directly south of the school with vacant land to the west, north, and east.

The three school buildings are connected by covered walkways (photo 4). The concrete walks are sheltered by flat roofs (wood covered metal) supported by 4" x 4" steel tubes. The buildings are irregular in plan, though predominantly rectangular. All buildings are single-story. The west and east buildings feature flat roofs covered with built up roofing. Deep eave overhangs project over long bands of windows extending along the east and west walls of the classroom buildings (photo 9). The windows are steel framed. The bands of windows are composed of a combination of large, single-light fixed windows and smaller, single-light fixed windows with two rectangular hopper windows beneath them (photo 10). Interspersed with the windows are doorways providing exterior access from each classroom. The original wood flush doors have been replaced with metal flush doors. The north building features a flat metal roof (photo 13). The metal, standing-seam roofing encases the original folded plate concrete roof. It was enclosed in 1973 after problems with leaking. The steel-framed buildings are faced with textured blond brick laid in a stretcher bond pattern with tan mortar. Building trim has been painted blue.

The east and west classroom buildings feature central hallways with classrooms on either side (photo 17). The east building held offices and a first aid room at the projecting south end of the building. Four rooms were on either side of the central corridor: restrooms and a library to the south and six classrooms to the north. On the west building, the kindergarten was at the south end. It was self-contained with its own cloakroom and restroom in the projecting south end of the building. Four rooms were located on either side of the central corridor: the kindergarten and restrooms at the south end with six classrooms to the north. Some of the interior walls have been altered to accommodate new uses (such as the health clinic offices at the southwest corner), but the original configuration of a central hallway with rooms on either side has been retained. The north building held a multi-purpose room (photos 19 and 20). This space was designed to be used as a gymnasium, cafeteria, and auditorium. A stage is on the west end. Tables with attached seating pull out from the walls. To the north of the multi-purpose room are a music and audio-visual room, a kitchen, and an entrance and vestibule for those entering from the north after school hours. A science room was in the basement beneath the kitchen. Currently the north building is used for conferences and programs, such as a cooking class for transition students. It also serves as a storage space. The north building has retained its original interior configuration.

The central courtyard (see Photo 7), created by the three buildings, features gravel and twelve newly, symmetrically planted deciduous saplings. Concrete paths with spurs to individual classrooms run north to south on both the east and west sides of the courtyard. A central path crosses from east to west and a diamond shape of angled paths leads from this central path to the north and south respectively. Two short east-to-west half-spurs exist in the upper and lower portions.

### *Integrity*

The S.A. Wilson Elementary School retains a high degree of integrity of location, design, association, and feeling. The integrity of setting, materials, and workmanship have been diminished by some alterations but are still good. The school retains its original location on the northern edge of Security-Widefield. The integrity of association is high due to it having been in continuous use for education purposes since its construction. The integrity of design is high because the original form of the school is unaltered, with no exterior additions. The historic feeling of the school is intact, retaining its mid-twentieth-century character.

The school has undergone some modifications, but these are minor compared to other midcentury schools in Security-Widefield and across Colorado. The neighborhood setting is minimally altered with the original Ranch house subdivision intact to the south, on the opposite site of Leta Drive. Some newer houses have been constructed to the west of the school, and there has been some commercial construction along Main Street, but open space still remains to the

north of the school. On the school site, paved parking lots have been added to the north and south of the school with an unpaved lot on the east. The paved lot is in the location of the original parking lot. No site features were present on the west or north originally, so the new parking lots did not replace any original features. An administration building has been added to the northwest. The original lawn is intact on the east side of the building. The original courtyard lawn has been replaced with gravel and concrete paths.

### *Alterations*

Only three significant alterations have been made to the school buildings: encasing the folded-plate roof of the multi-purpose room with metal roofing, replacement of the original wood doors with metal doors, and covering some of the original window openings with wood panels (photo 9). The roof was altered due to leaking, and the original roof remains intact beneath the metal roofing, visible from the interior of the multi-purpose room. The doors were replaced to meet current safety standards, but the retention of the exterior door openings keeps the most important element of the school design. Some of the original window openings have been covered due to the reconfiguration of interior spaces and new interior uses. But the window openings have not been altered, so the original pattern of openings is still clearly evident.

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## **8. Statement of Significance**

### **Applicable National Register Criteria**

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

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

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

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

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Education  
Community Planning and Development  
Architecture  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1959-1967  
1959-1961  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1961  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

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\_\_\_\_\_  
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**Cultural Affiliation**

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**Architect/Builder**

Francis & Guy

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph**

The S.A. Wilson Elementary School is significant at the local level under Criterion A for Education as a representation of mid-twentieth century educational trends in the Colorado Springs region, including the construction of new schools to meet the demands of an expanding population as well as the needs of Progressive educators. The school is locally significant under Criterion C for Community Planning and Development for its association with the 1950s development of Security-Widefield. Located at the northern end of Security-Widefield, S.A. Wilson was built to serve the rapid suburban growth of the region. And finally, the S.A. Wilson Elementary is locally significant under Criterion C for Architecture as an excellent example of mid-twentieth century school design as well as an example of the work of Francis & Guy. Under Criterion A, the period of significance is 1959-1967, in keeping with National Register guidelines. Under Criterion C, the period of significance is 1959-1961 when the school was planned, designed, and constructed. The S.A. Wilson Elementary School meets the registration requirements for the school building property type outlined in Colorado Mid-Century Schools, 1945-1970 Multiple Property Documentation Form.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance**

The S.A. Wilson Elementary School is significant under Criterion A for Education for its association with the history of public education in Security-Widefield. A small-scale, neighborhood-oriented school, the S.A. Wilson Elementary School reflected the philosophies of the Progressive education movement. The Progressive movement encouraged an educational experience that was practical, informal, and child-centered. The elementary school created a comfortable, homey environment for children. Classroom methods were less proscribed, encouraging more creativity and engagement from teachers and students, and curriculum emphasized the social development of the child as well as intellectual development. The S.A. Wilson Elementary reflected these trends in its single-story design, orientation around a central courtyard, and exterior doors on each classroom. The multi-purpose room also provided a space for flexible programming.

The S.A. Wilson Elementary School is also significant under Criterion C for Community Planning and Development for its association with the midcentury development of Security-

Widefield and the larger Colorado Springs region. The Security-Widefield area transformed from an agricultural community of ranches, dairies, and truck farms to a Colorado Springs suburb during the 1950s. The military brought many new residents to the region, with a large percentage of Security-Widefield's new homeowners associated with Fort Carson. The S.A. Wilson Elementary is representative of midcentury development patterns and the association of new school construction to the development of new subdivisions. The school was one of six constructed by the Widefield School District between 1955 and 1961 as it tried to keep pace with the region's booming population.

Finally, the S.A. Wilson Elementary School is significant under Criterion C for Architecture as an excellent example of Modern Movement mid-twentieth century school design representative of the work of Francis & Guy. The plan, materials, and design features clearly reflect prevailing midcentury ideas about curriculum, child development, and the role of schools in the community. Characteristic Modern Movement features include: steel construction with brick facing; a U-shaped plan; a central courtyard; horizontal emphasis created by its single-story design, flat roof, horizontal bands of windows; deep eave overhangs; child scale; multi-purpose room; exterior classroom doors; covered walkways connecting the school's three buildings; and flexible interior spaces. Established in 1950, Francis & Guy established a long term relationship with the Widefield School District, constructing schools for them from the mid-1950s through the mid-1960s. The S.A. Wilson Elementary School is the most intact example of the firm's work in the Colorado Springs area.

## **Historical Background**

### *Security-Widefield*

The Widefield School District No. 3 covers an unincorporated area commonly referred to as Security-Widefield. Lying in the Fountain Valley between Colorado Springs and Fountain, this was a sparsely populated agricultural area until the mid-twentieth century. The first homesteaders arrived in the 1860s, and successful cattle ranches were soon established. As Colorado Springs grew to the north, dairies and truck farms developed to supply the city. Change began with the War Department's establishment of Camp Carson (roughly two miles to the west) in 1942. During the war, more than 100,000 soldiers passed through the camp for training. After the war, activity at the camp initially declined but ramped up again during the Korean War. In 1954, the camp was converted to a permanent installation, Fort Carson. By 1961, 23,000 soldiers were stationed at the fort (School board minutes September 16, 1961).

Colorado Springs and the surrounding communities grew rapidly in the mid-twentieth century, aided by the growth of Fort Carson as well as the United States Air Force Academy, Peterson Field, and the North American Air Defense Command. In addition to bringing an influx of military personnel to the region, these installations also advanced the development of a local defense industry. Before World War II, El Paso County had a population of 54,025. By 1950, the population had risen to 74,523. Over the next decades the growth continued, reaching 143,774 in

1960 and 235,972 in 1970. New residential suburbs were built across the Colorado Springs region to house the booming population.

In 1953, Edwin W. Hayes bought a ranch in the Fountain Valley and established the Security Development Corporation to develop the land. The goal was to create Security Village, a new subdivision that would provide affordable homes for families close to Colorado Springs. The name was chosen to promote the purchase of a house in the subdivision as a secure investment in the future (Hahn 2014, 8). An investment banker engaged in real estate, oil, and mining, Hayes moved to Colorado Springs in 1950. He quickly became a mover and shaker in the Colorado Springs business community. According to a profile from 1967, Hayes “has his financial finger in most of the big enterprises going on or planned. You name it and Hayes is involved somewhere” (*Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph*, July 25, 1967). Hayes believed that “home is the symbol of this country, the ownership of it the pride” (*Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph*, July 25, 1967). In addition to Security, Hayes was also involved in the development of several other Colorado Springs subdivisions including Cimarron Hills, Chapel Hills, and Skyway Park (*Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph*, November 15, 1970.)

Plans for the Security development were announced in *The Free Press* in November 1953. The new community would be a “multi-hundred thousand dollar, 800-acre suburban development five miles south of Colorado Springs” that grew into a “rural community with a business and industrial district, schools, churches, and homes of varied price ranges” (*The Free Press*, November 22, 1953). Security had all the essentials for a successful suburban project: “proximity and convenience to Colorado Springs, plenty of water, natural gas, electricity, and sewer system” (*The Free Press*, November 22, 1953). When platting the subdivision, the developer set aside land for schools, parks, an industrial area, a shopping center, community hall, and community horse stables (*The Free Press*, November 22, 1953).

Construction began with laying out Security Boulevard, Hayes Street, and Easy Street. The first model homes in Security opened in January 1955. Fred Sproul, owner of American Builders, took over the development and increased the pace of construction, completing seven homes per week. Sproul also established four park sites in the new community and provided shrubbery, trees, flowers, and grass, leading *The Free Press* to call Security the “Garden City” (*The Free Press*, July 14, 1957). In 1957, the creation of a second subdivision began when Arizona land developer Jules Watson purchased ranch land to create the adjacent Widefield Homes development (Hahn 2014, 8; Widefield School District n.d. 2).

The new subdivisions were marketed to young families. American Builders even provided entertainment for children while their parents looked at homes. A member of the American Builders sales staff later became the well-known Colorado figure Blinky the Clown (Russell Scott). The clown and his troop became a fixture of all openings of new home models, providing

entertainment, ice cream, and sodas to kids. The builder also set up a playground with a merry-go-round, ferris wheel, swings, teeter-totter, and slides where children could play while their parents visited the models. This gave the parents time to leisurely examine the homes and ask questions (*The Free Press*, July 15, 1957). For these families, proximity to schools were a key selling point. Schools quickly became the focal point of socializing in the new community. In October 1956, community activities held in the schools included a meeting of the Security Women's Club, a Halloween Carnival, a cub scout organizing meeting, and a teen dance (*The Free Press*, October 19, 1956).

### *Widefield School District No. 3*

The creation of the Security and Widefield housing developments brought a huge influx of new families into the Widefield School District. Established in 1874, the district had a single one-room school until 1912, when a brick two-room school was constructed. Through the mid-1950s, grades one-six attended the two-room school, though students had to go to Fountain if they wanted to continue to upper grades (Hahn 2014, 11, 19).

As the area transformed from a farming community to a suburb of Colorado Springs, new schools became essential. In 1954, the Widefield School District had about 125 students. By the beginning of 1955 enrollment had grown to 240 students and ten teachers, with six houses used as temporary classrooms. By the end of 1955, there were 550 students and sixteen teachers (Widefield School District n.d., 2-3).

In April 1955, local voters approved a bond issue for \$120,000 for the construction of a new school. The federal government also provided a grant of \$79,200, due to the large number of military families in the Widefield District (Widefield School District n.d., 2). Passed in 1950, Public Law 81-874 provided aid for school districts impacted by federal defense efforts, including increased enrollments due to families moving into the area for federal jobs and loss of local taxes due to federally-owned lands. The amount of funding depended on the number of federally connected children enrolled in local schools.

The district's first modern school, Widefield Elementary (5EP.658), was completed in late 1955. The school offered grades one to eight for children in Security Village. Students living outside of Security continued to attend the old two-room school while high school students continued to go to Fountain (Hahn 2014, 60). Widefield Elementary was followed in quick succession by North Elementary (1956), South Security Elementary (1957), and Widefield High School (1958) (Hahn 2014, 60-62).

The design and curriculum of the district's new schools reflected national educational trends. The Progressive Education Movement emphasized individual students needs and personal

growth. Early twentieth -century classroom designs were criticized for encouraging conformity and stifling creativity. The Progressive School of the mid-twentieth century had a broader conception of its role, which encompassed the general welfare of its students, not just their intellectual development. Experiential and cooperative learning were encouraged over rote memorization. As a result, classrooms became more flexible, with furniture that could be moved to adapt to a variety of classroom activities. In the elementary schools, Progressive educators focused on ways to create a child-centered, comfortable, homey environment for students. Curriculum emphasized the psychological development of the child. Elementary schools became more informal with socializing, group work, and play incorporated into the school day. New schools had to meet both physical needs (sanitary, safe, quiet, well-lit) and emotional needs (pleasant, secure, inspiring, friendly, restful) (Caudill 1954, 2).

### *S.A. Wilson Elementary School*

By the beginning of the 1957-1958 school year, the district had the fifteenth largest enrollment in the state. But despite the new schools being constructed, there still was not enough classroom space, so many classes were held in split sessions (Widefield School District n.d., 5). In 1959, the district was awarded \$178,640 in federal funds to assist with the construction of the S.A. Wilson Elementary School and Sproul Jr. High School (School Board minutes, September 12, 1959). Architect Carlisle B. Guy presented plans for the S.A. Wilson Elementary School and Sproul Jr. High School to the school board in March 1959. Both were to be six-room buildings (School board minutes March 14, 1959). An addition to South Security Elementary School was also underway in 1959. With a desperate need for classrooms, but limited funds, the Widefield District looked for all possible efficiencies. One option was to save money on design costs, by using similar designs throughout the district. The district hired a single architectural firm, Francis & Guy, for a decade of school construction. Instructing the architects to reuse elements of design across multiple schools reduced costs. For example, for the S.A. Wilson and Sproul Jr. High School, which were designed and constructed concurrently, the district paid Francis & Guy a six-percent commission on the first school and a three percent commission on the second school (School board minutes May 11, 1959). For the addition to the South Security Elementary underway at the same time, Francis & Guy received a four-percent commission (June 13, 1959). The contracting for these projects was also combined. The general construction contract was awarded to Bruce Hughes Construction Co. for \$183,697. Jolly Plumbing & Heating Co. won the mechanical contract for \$62,262 (School board meeting June 13, 1959).

With pressure to provide schools for the area's rapidly growing subdivisions, the district built what they could afford as quickly as possible, planning to add more classrooms when funding became available. Phased construction helped districts spread out the cost of new buildings, and many new schools were specifically designed to be built in segments. Districts built sufficient classroom space for current needs and/or budgets and then could add on to a school as needed in

the future. The sprawling and modular designs of midcentury schools were well-suited for future expansion. S.A. Wilson Elementary School began as a simple rectangular-plan building with plans for expansion. Only after expansion did it achieve the U-shaped plan popular for midcentury schools.

### *Architects*

The Widefield District hired Francis & Guy, a local architectural firm, to design the new schools they needed. Born in La Junta in 1905, Edwin A. Francis grew up in Denver, graduating from South High School. Francis received his architectural training at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and then returned to Colorado to begin his architectural career. Francis worked as a draftsman for Jules Jacques Benois Benedict and then as an associate architect for Harry J. Manning, before establishing his own firm in 1932. Francis was an advocate of the International Style popular in Europe. During World War II, Francis left his architectural practice to join the Army Corps of Engineers. Returning to Denver after the war, he reestablished his practice, continuing to develop his Modernist style. Projects included the Van Hummel Insurance Building at 444 Sherman (extant), addition to the Capitol Life Insurance Building at 1600 Sherman Street (5DV.2686, National Register), several buildings for the University of Denver, and the Cherry Hills Country Club (extant) (Denver Public Library Archives WH1353). The Edwin A. Francis/Nicholas Petry House in Cherry Hills Village is listed in the Colorado State Register of Historic Properties.

Born in Colorado Springs in 1919, Carlisle B. Guy graduated from Colorado Springs High School. He began his career working for the architect John Gaw Meem. During World War II he served in the Army Corps of Engineers. Returning to Colorado after the war, he worked as a draftsman for C.E. Thomas and then Grant A. Wilson (Koyl 1962, 274). In 1950, he established his own firm as well as a partnership with Edwin A. Francis, headquartered in the Mining Exchange Building in Colorado Springs. Francis maintained his own firm in Denver, working with Guy for projects in Colorado Springs. The Widefield School District selected the firm to design the Widefield Elementary School. Apparently happy with their decision, the district continued to use the firm for the next decade, designing new schools and additions. As the local partner, Guy was the one directly involved with the schools, attending school board meetings and supervising construction. The firm designed other schools in the Colorado Springs area including Steele Elementary School for the Colorado Springs district (1954) and Skyway Elementary School for the Cheyenne Mountain District (1956). They also designed several buildings at the Broadmoor Hotel (5EP.368) as well as the Great Ape House at the Cheyenne Mountain Zoo (5EP.2699). The partnership lasted until the death of Francis in 1966 (Gane 1970, 359).

### *S.A. Wilson Elementary School*

The S.A. Wilson Elementary School opened on December 5, 1959. Named for a member of the school board, the school contained six classrooms, a library, office, and a teacher's lounge. The district anticipated an enrollment of 172. Delpha McGlug served as the first principal. The teaching staff were all women (Mrs. Pat Clowers—first grade, Miss Phoebe Eaton—second grade, Mrs. Pat Edwards—third grade, Mrs. Beatrice Wilwert—fourth grade, Mrs. Doris Marshall—fifth grade, and Mrs. Bill Conrod—six grade). Mrs. Vi Emrich was the secretary, and the only male member of the staff was the custodian, Gordon Broster (*Security Advertiser & Fountain Valley News*, December 18, 1959).

The six-room schools were clearly not large enough to accommodate the district's growing enrollment, so plans for additions were soon discussed. Francis & Guy were hired to design additions for the S.A. Wilson Elementary School as well as the Sproul Jr. High School. Guy presented plans for the additions at a school board meeting in March 1960. The board decided that it would be more economical to just add the needed classrooms to one building and voted to have Guy revise the plans to place the additional classrooms on the Sproul Jr. High School rather than S.A. Wilson Elementary School (School board minutes March, 12, 1960). But when Guy returned the following week to present plans for the Sproul addition, the board approved them along with a four-classroom addition to S.A. Wilson Elementary School (School board minutes March 18, 1960). In May, Guy presented updated plans for both the S.A. Wilson and Sproul additions, but in June the board again decided to focus on the Sproul addition and place the S.A. Wilson addition on hold (School board minutes May 11, 1960 and June 11, 1960). By the beginning of 1961, plans to expand S.A. Wilson were again underway, with plans for an additional building and multi-purpose room presented at the January school board meeting (School board minutes January 14, 1961).

By 1961, enrollment in Widefield schools had grown to over 3,500 students, a 300-percent increase over the previous year (*Security Advertiser & Fountain Valley News*, September 22, 1961). In February 1961, district residents approved a \$750,000 bond issue for the construction of new school facilities to address overcrowding. The bond covered construction of additions at the high school and S.A. Wilson Elementary School as well as a new central administration building. The 1,000 students enrolled at the high school were currently attending on a split shift schedule. Additional facilities planned for the high school accommodated 500-750 students and included two vocational classrooms, a library, and a study hall. The addition to S.A. Wilson Elementary School added thirteen classrooms, an all-purpose room, and a kindergarten room. Francis & Guy completed all three projects (*Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph* February 10, 1961).

Construction of the S.A. Wilson addition began on March 24, 1961 and was scheduled for completion by the start of the next school year in September (*Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph* March 26, 1961). Land Construction Ltd. was awarded the general contract of

\$233,674 and Benbow Plumbing & Heating was awarded the mechanical contact for \$60,441 (School board minutes March 16, 1961).

Though completion of the expanded S.A. Wilson Elementary aided overcrowding issues, it did not solve them. In January 1962, Superintendent Richard Taylor announced that a new elementary school and a new junior high school were needed to keep pace with the district's increasing enrollment. Since the start of the school year, 173 new students had enrolled, bringing the total enrollment to 3,670. To accommodate some immediate overcrowding, in the spring semester thirty second-grade students were transferred from North Security Elementary School, where there were thirty-seven students per class, to S.A. Wilson Elementary School, where a music room could be converted to an additional classroom. According to the school board, even if no new homes were built and no new families moved into the district, the district was still expected to gain at least 400 students by the next school year. Taylor said that if new schools were not constructed then the district would have to return to split sessions for some students. Some of the funding for new schools were raised by increasing the mill levy. The district expected to receive partial funding for the schools from the federal government in compensation for the large number of military families in the district. In 1962, fifty-five percent of students in the district had fathers serving in the military. This percentage was expected to increase as the activation of the Fifth Infantry Division at Fort Carson was anticipated to bring nearly 5,000 families to the region (*Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph*, January 14, 1962).



S.A. Wilson Elementary School  
Colorado's Mid-Century Schools, 1945-1970 MPDF  
Name of Property

El Paso, CO  
County and State

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

### Bibliography

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- “Construction Begun on Wilson School Addition.” *Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph*. March 26, 1961.
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- “Garden City Is New Nickname for Town.” *The Free Press*. July 14, 1957.
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- Martin, Claire. “Blinky the Clown, Denver TV icon for more than 40 years, dead at 91.” *Denver Post* (27 Aug 2012).
- “New S.A. Wilson School in Security Opens.” *Security Advertiser & Fountain Valley News*. December 18, 1959.
- “Phantom Man in Motion Is Praised, Reviled but Always Building in Area.” *Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph*. July 25, 1967.
- “Russ Scott Has a Mission.” *The Free Press*. July 14, 1957.
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- Widefield School District. School Board Minutes. On file at District Administration office, Colorado Springs.

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

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State agency
  - Federal agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** 5EP.7894

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 3.48 acres

**UTM References**

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or  NAD 1983

A) Zone 13	Easting 522535mE	Northing 4291025mN
B) 13	522643mE	4291025mN
C) 13	522644mE	4290899mN
D) 13	522591mE	4290878mN
E) 13	522535mE	4290932mN

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

This property is located along Main Street between Leta and Gladiator drives. The boundary of the nominated property is delineated by the polygon whose vertices are marked by the above UTM reference points.

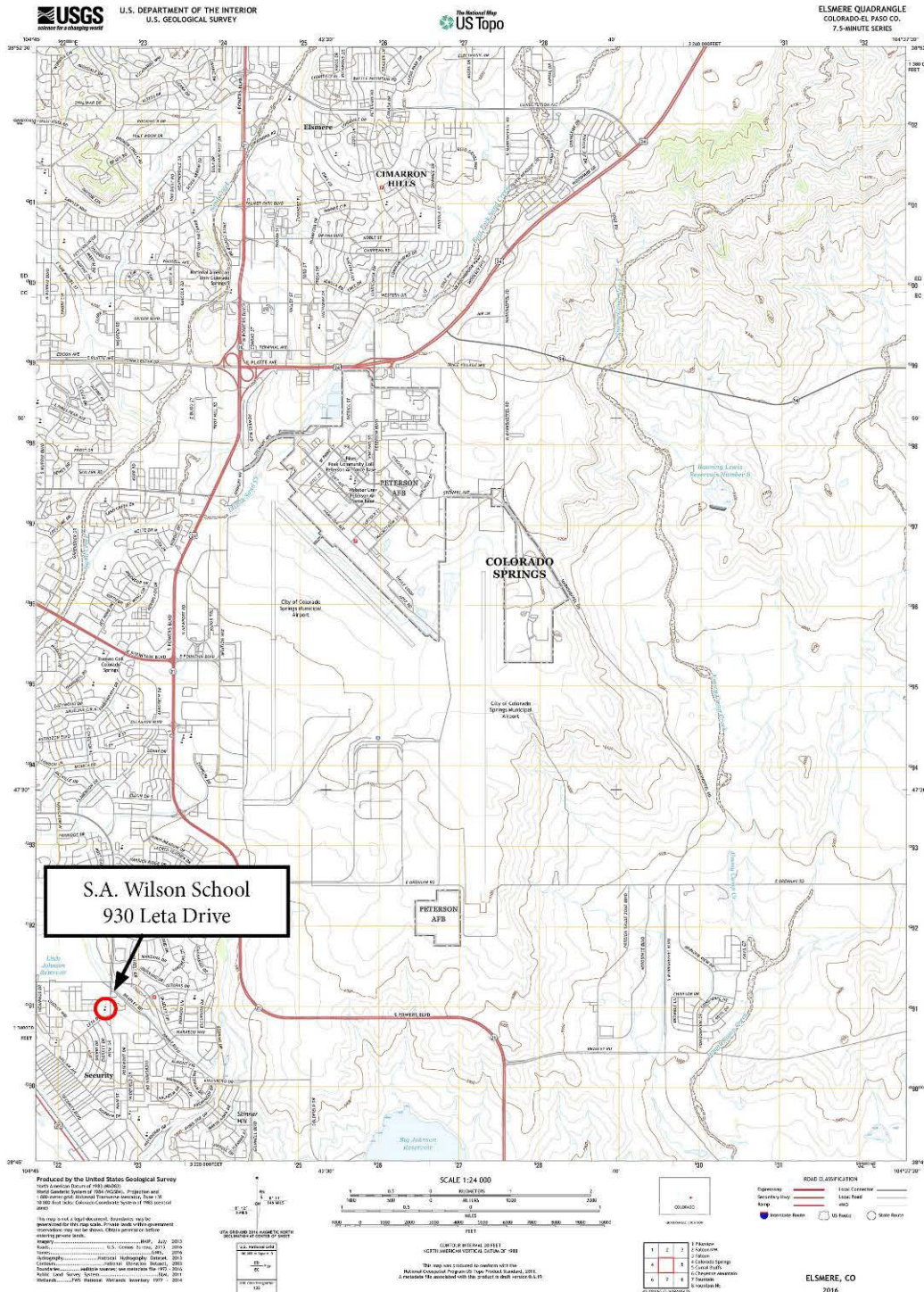
**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary includes the 1959 school building with its 1961 addition along with the surrounding land and parking lots that have been historically associated with the S.A. Wilson school. The small outbuildings are temporary sheds and are thus not counted for the purposes of this nomination.

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### USGS 7.5 minute Topographic Map Elsmere Quadrangle



P.M. 6th Township 15S Range 66W Section 2 SE SE SE SE and Section 11 NE NE NE NE

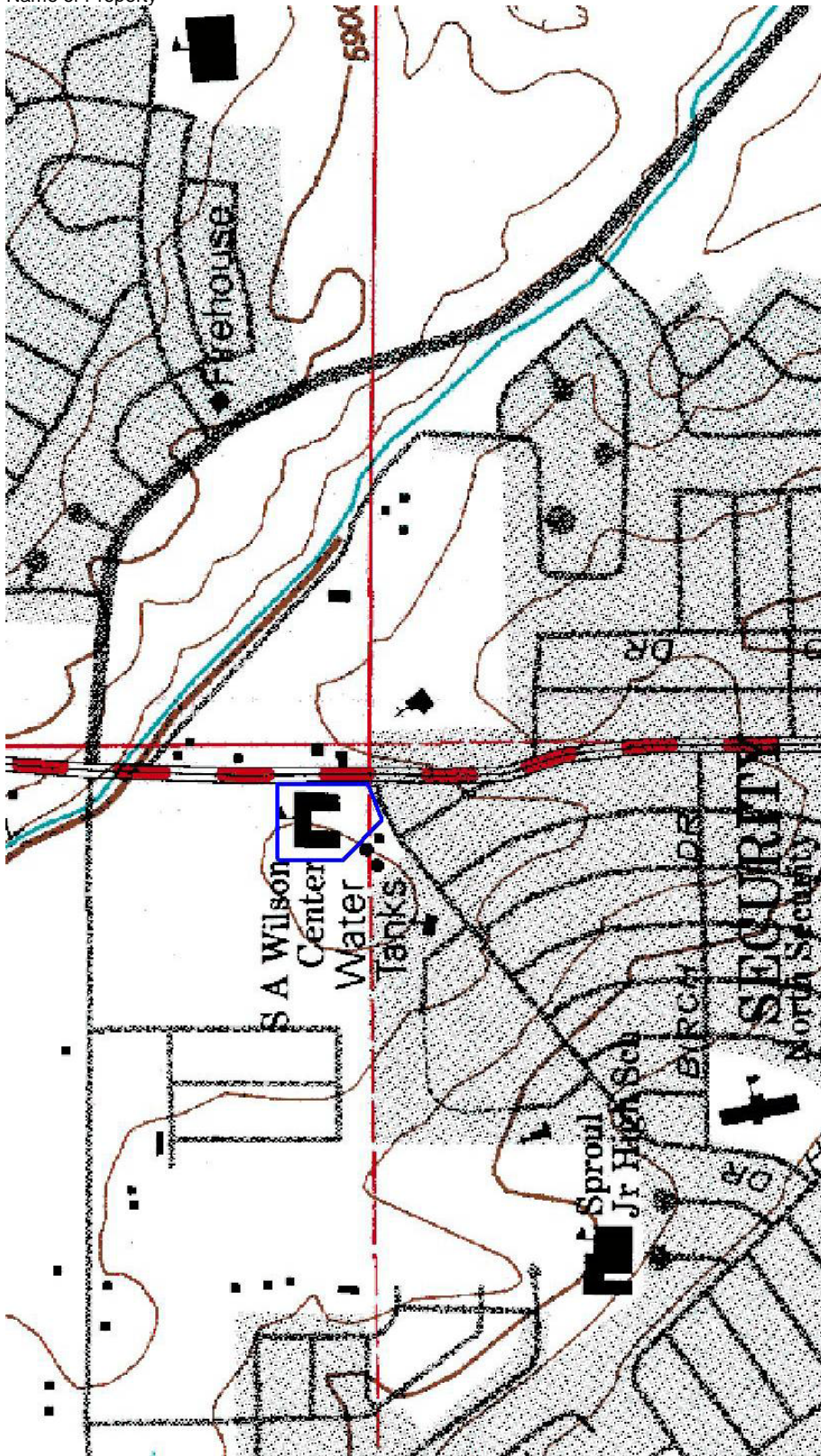
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5840' elevation

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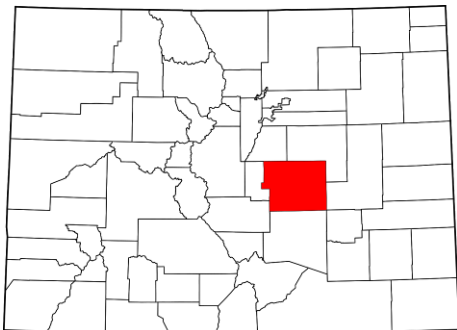
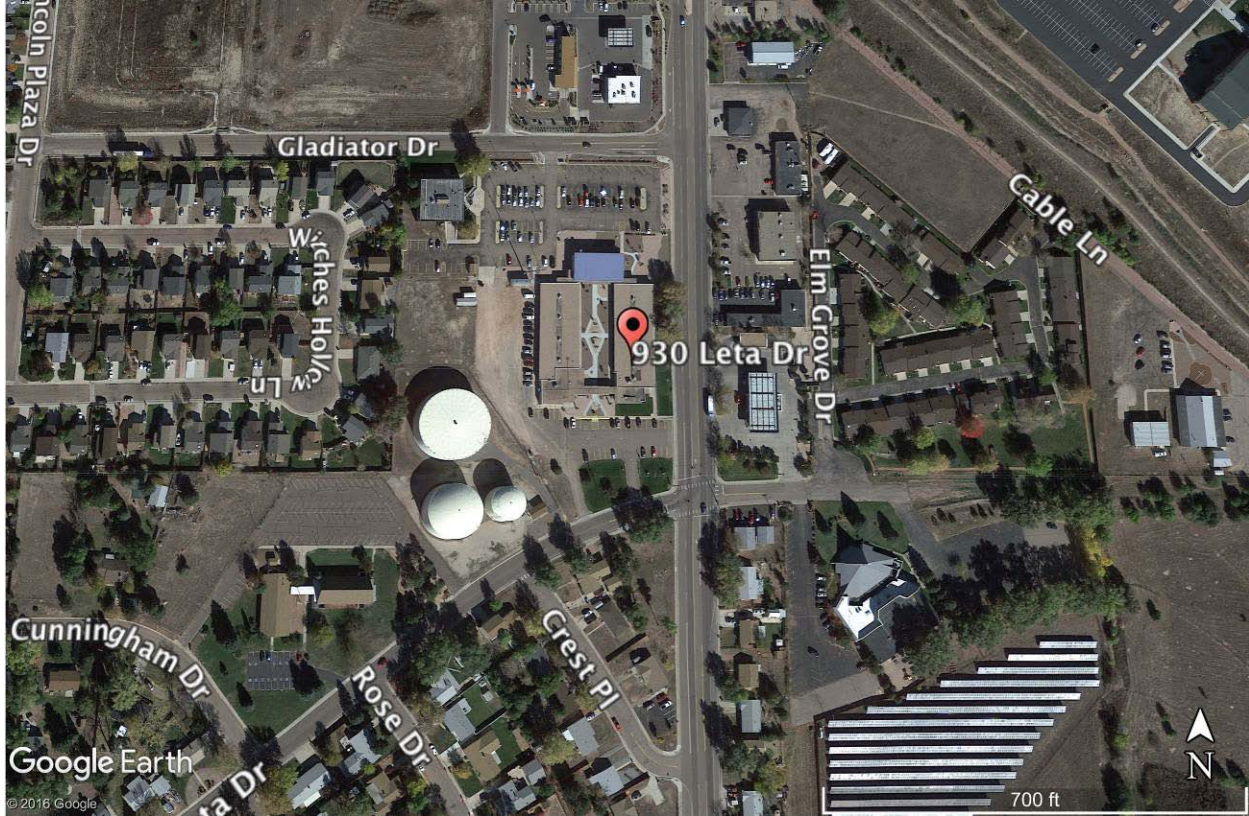
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### Close-up Perspective: Google Earth

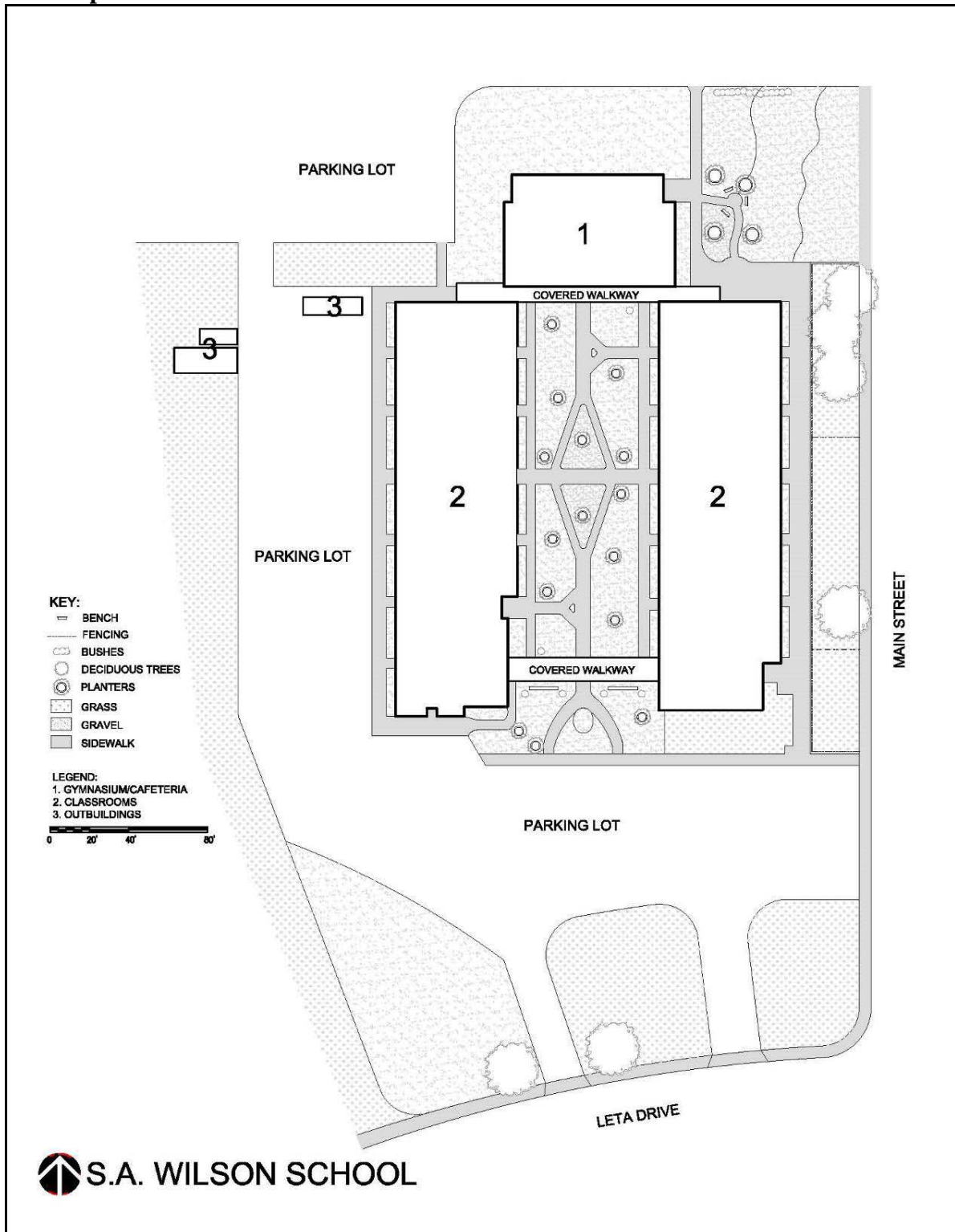


Location: El Paso County

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### Site Map





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### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Abigail Christman/ consultant (prepared for property owner)  
organization: Center of Preservation Research, University of Colorado Denver  
street & number: 1250 14<sup>th</sup> Street  
city or town: Denver state: CO zip code: 80202  
e-mail \_\_\_\_\_  
telephone: \_\_\_\_\_  
date: October 2016

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### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

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

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### **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: S.A. Wilson Elementary School

City or Vicinity: Colorado Springs

County: El Paso State: CO

Photographer: Abigail Christman

Date Photographed: March 2015

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

Photo 1

Southeast corner of east building (main entrance), camera facing northwest.

Photo 2

South elevation, camera facing northwest.

Photo 3

Courtyard, camera facing north.

Photo 4

Courtyard, camera facing northeast.

Photo 5

Walkway at south end of courtyard, camera facing east.

Photo 6

West elevation of courtyard, camera facing southwest.

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Photo 7

Courtyard, camera facing south.

Photo 8

Southwest corner, camera facing northeast.

Photo 9

West elevation, camera facing northeast.

Photo 10

West elevation detail, camera facing east.

Photo 11

Covered walkway at northern end of school, camera facing east.

Photo 12

Northwest corner, camera facing southeast.

Photo 13

East elevation and covered walkway at northern end of school, camera facing west.

Photo 14

Covered walkway at northern end of school, camera facing west.

Photo 15

East elevation, camera facing southwest.

Photo 16

East elevation, camera facing northwest.

Photo 17

Interior hallway.

Photo 18

Interior classroom.

Photo 19

Interior classroom and gymnasium.

Photo 20

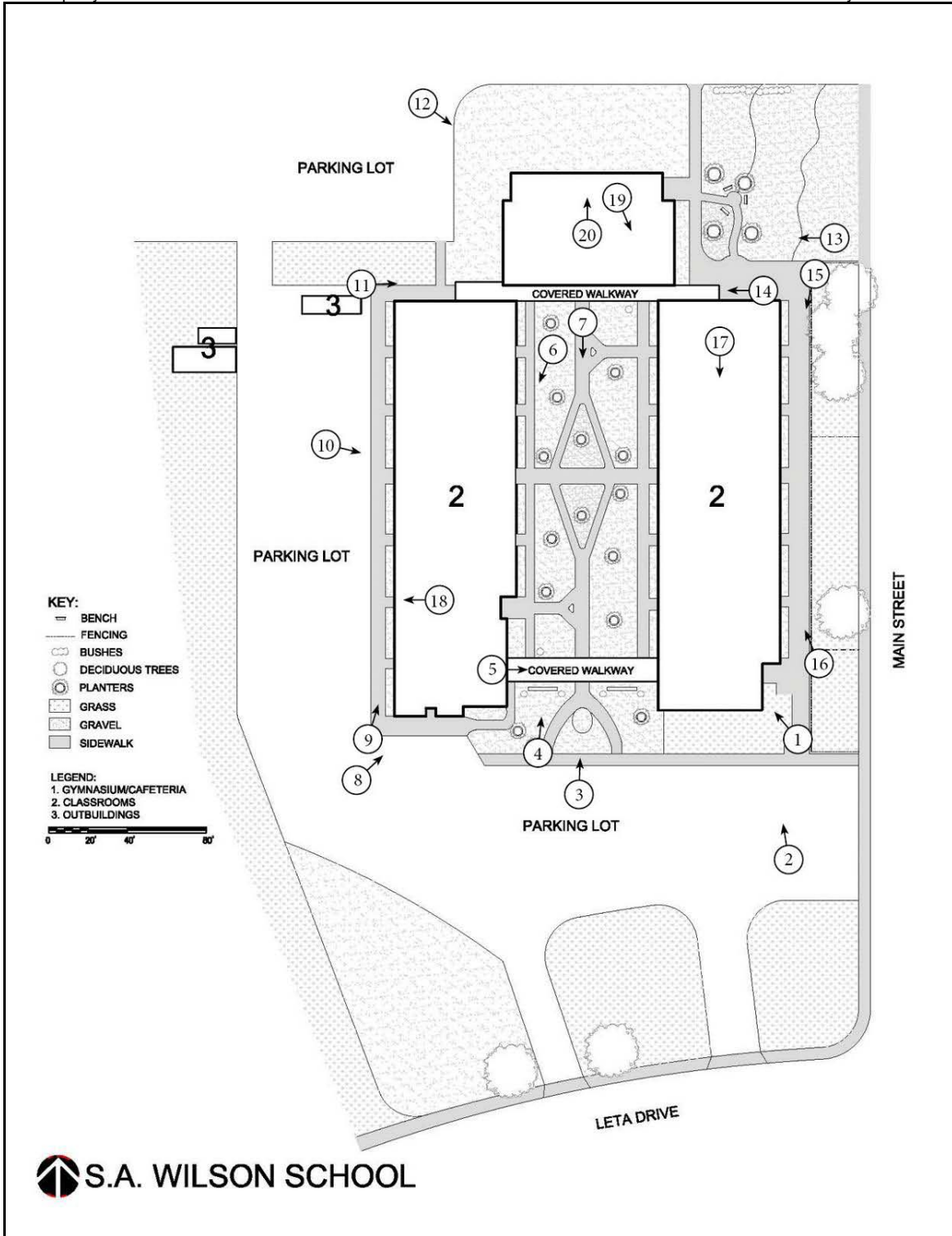
Interior classroom and gymnasium, alternate view.

### **Photo Key Site Map**

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**Additional Items Log:**

Figure 1: View of school from 1961 architectural drawing by Edwin Francis and Carlisle Guy Associate Architects. Source: Denver Public Library, Denver Public Schools Collection.

Figure 2: 1953 Aerial Image of Southeast Colorado Springs, Colorado. Future location of S.A. Wilson School circled. Source: U.S. Geological Survey, [https://lta.cr.usgs.gov/Single\\_Frame\\_Records](https://lta.cr.usgs.gov/Single_Frame_Records).

Figure 3: 1960 Aerial Image of Southeast Colorado Springs, Colorado. Location of S.A. Wilson School mid-construction circled. Source: U.S. Geological Survey, [https://lta.cr.usgs.gov/Single\\_Frame\\_Records](https://lta.cr.usgs.gov/Single_Frame_Records).

Figure 4: 1972 Aerial Image of Southeast Colorado Springs, Colorado. Location of S.A. Wilson School circled. Source: U.S. Geological Survey, [https://lta.cr.usgs.gov/Single\\_Frame\\_Records](https://lta.cr.usgs.gov/Single_Frame_Records).

Figure 5: Close up of 1972 Aerial Image of Southeast Colorado Springs, Colorado. Location of S.A. Wilson School circled. Source: U.S. Geological Survey, [https://lta.cr.usgs.gov/Single\\_Frame\\_Records](https://lta.cr.usgs.gov/Single_Frame_Records).

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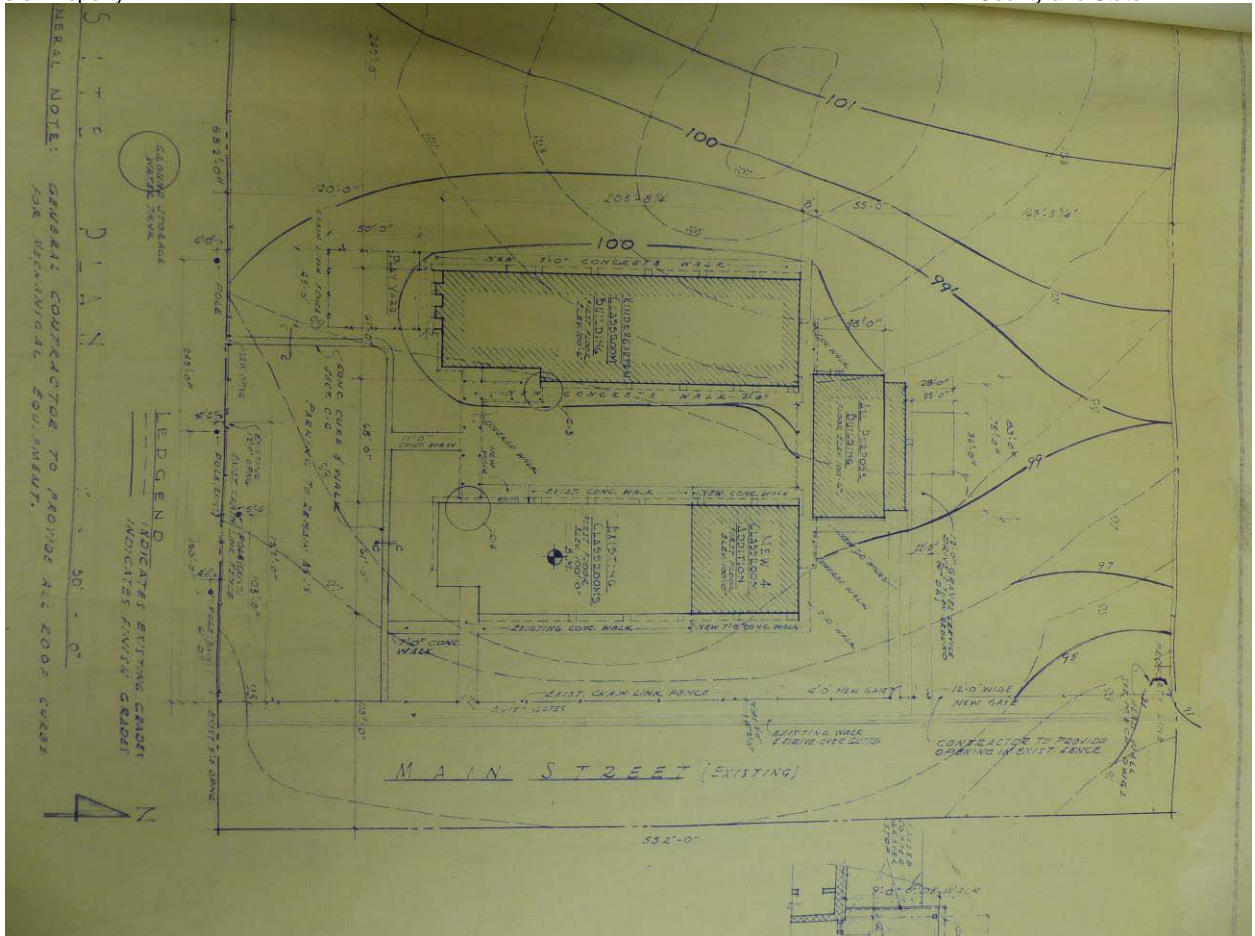


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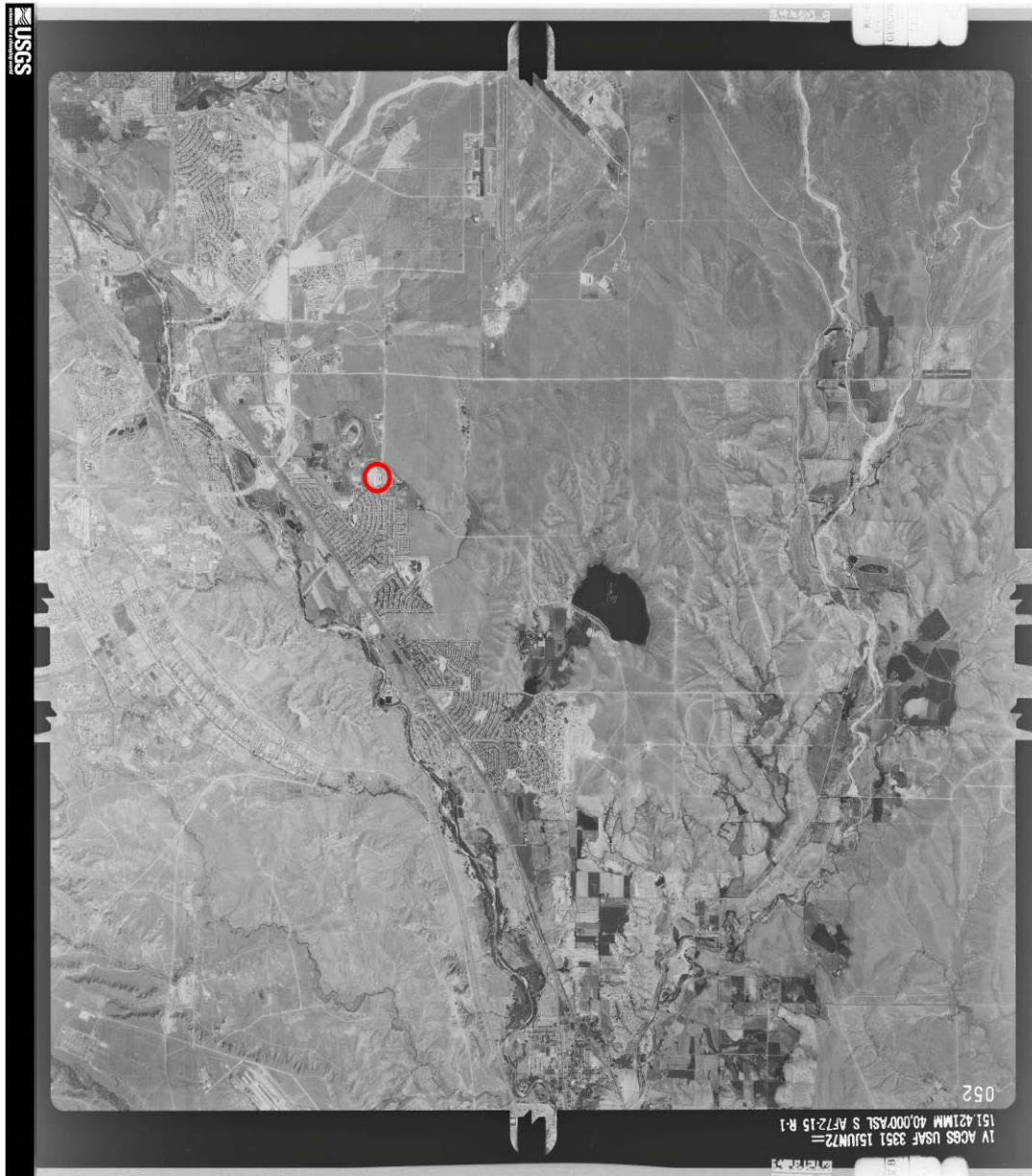


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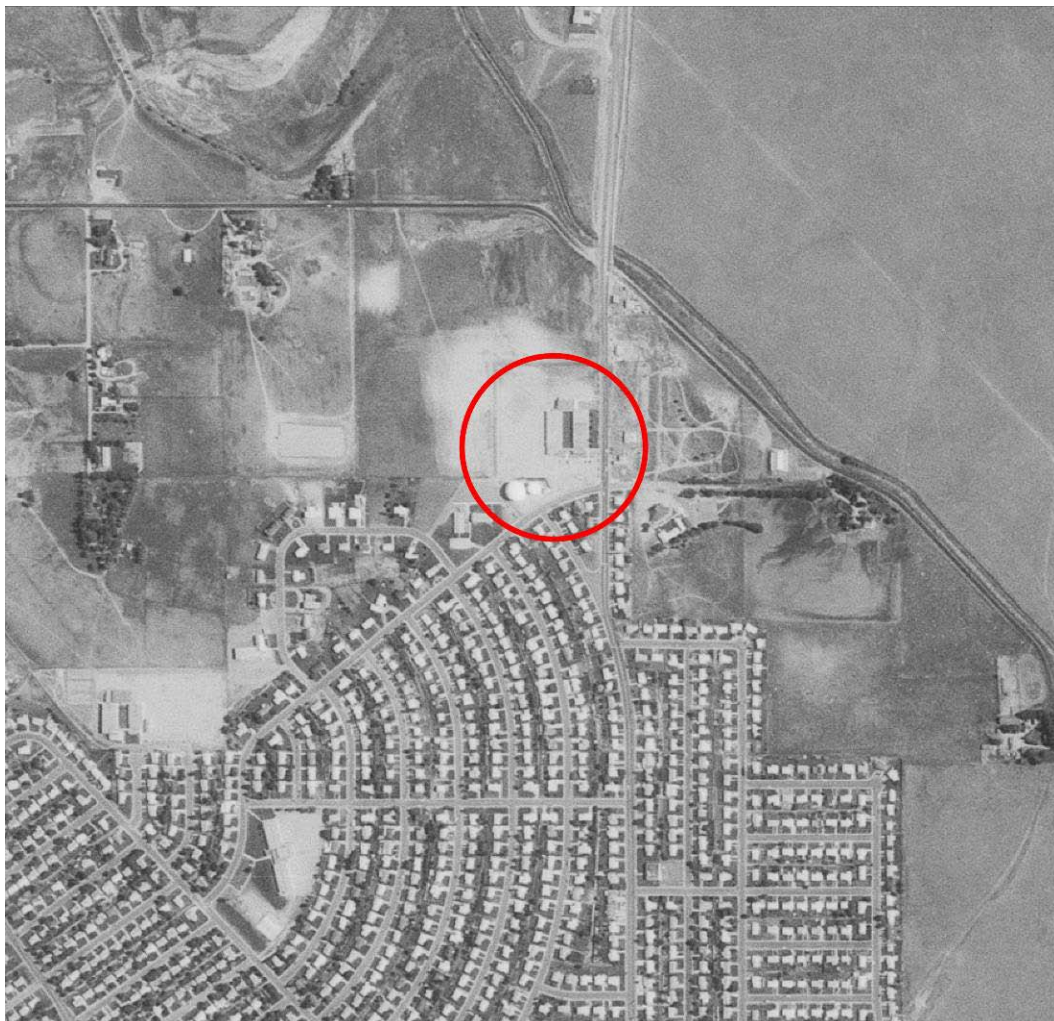


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**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.