

Official Eligibility Determination

(OAHP use only)

Date _____ Initials _____

___ Determined Eligible - NR

___ Determined Not Eligible - NR

___ Determined Eligible - SR

___ Determined Not Eligible - SR

___ Need Data

___ Contributes to eligible NR District

___ Noncontributing to eligible NR District

Colorado Cultural Resource Survey Architectural Inventory Form

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I. Identification

1. Resource Number: **5PT965**
2. Temporary Resource Number: **Not Applicable**
3. County: **Pitkin**
4. City: **Aspen**
5. Historic Building Name: **Aspen Grade School and High School
Pitkin County High School**
6. Current Building Name: **Red Brick School
Red Brick Center for the Arts
Red Brick Recreation Center**
7. Building Address: **110 E. Hallam St.
Aspen, CO 81611**
8. Owner Name & Address: **City of Aspen
130 S. Galena St.
Aspen, CO 81611**

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II. Geographic Information

9. P.M. **6th** Township **10 South** Range **85 West**
SW 1/4 of the **SW** 1/4 of the **NW** 1/4 of the **SW** 1/4 of Section 7
10. UTM Reference Zone: **13** Easting: **342750** Northing: **4339600**
11. USGS Quad Name: **Aspen, Colorado**
Year: **1960 (photorevised 1987)** Map scale: **7.5'**
12. Lot(s): **N/A** Block: **64 & Pt. of 71**
Addition: **Aspen Original Townsite** Year of Addition: **1880**
13. Boundary Description and Justification: **This parcel (2737-073-13-801), defined by a lot and block description, includes all of the land and built resources that are historically associated with this property and remain in place there today.**
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III. Architectural Description

14. Building Plan: **Irregular Plan**
15. Dimensions in Feet: **100' x 400' (appx.)**
16. Number of Stories: **1**
17. Primary External Wall Material(s): **Brick, Wood**
18. Roof Configuration: **Flat Roof**
19. Primary External Roof Material: **Synthetic Roof**
20. Special Features: **Chimney**
21. General Architectural Description: **Facing toward the south onto Hallam Street, this expansive one-story school building rests upon a concrete foundation and has a compound plan with a footprint of approximately 100' x 400'. Oriented on an east-west axis, the long western wing is occupied by former classrooms now used as offices, meeting and gallery space, along with dance and art studios associated with the Red Brick Center for the Arts. The next segment east is set back to the north with a courtyard in front. This houses Aspen Public Radio, the Grass Roots Community Network, and the City of Aspen Recreation Department. The taller eastern segment is oriented on a north-south axis, and is the former school gymnasium. This is now the Red Brick Recreation Center.**

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The building's exterior walls are constructed of the pressed red bricks that provide it with its current name. Different bricks were used on different areas of the building, which was constructed in phases over many years. While some of the bricks were acquired new, others were salvaged and repurposed from dismantled historic buildings in Aspen. The brickwork is laid in a combination of common and running bond coursing. Generally, the quality of the bricks is finer on the façade and newer additions, with the scavenged bricks reserved for the rear and interior walls.

Low brick parapet walls hide the building's flat roof. A large square brick chimney rises from the ground and is attached to the north wall just east of the building's rear entrance. This terminates at the roofline, above which are metal flues. The chimney appears to house a kiln for ceramics firing.

The building is generally defined by the fact that it consists of three essential segments that are described here from west to east. Each of these has its own unique architectural characteristics and they are best described one at a time even though they are connected to one another. This reflects the fact that the building expanded over time and evolved into what is found there today.

The Original School (1941): The long low western segment of the present building was the original symmetrical, dumbbell-shaped school. Over the decades this was expanded to the north, east and west, with some of the additions now considered historic. Despite these changes, elements of the school's original footprint, design and materials remain visible today.

Much of the south wall consists of brickwork laid in common bond coursing. The two original front entrances are present there. These are symmetrically placed at the east and west ends of the recessed central segment and remain in use today. Each holds a pair of glass doors with metal frames and a fixed transom above. The doorways are recessed with brick surrounds and soldier lintels. A single-step concrete stoop is located outside.

Multi-light windows in their original metal frames are found along the entire front wall. Between the two entries, the central segment holds eight windows, each of which consists of a central four-light awning surrounded by twelve fixed lights. The two outer segments of the original school hold ten of the same type of windows on the east and fifteen on the west (an additional classroom was built to the west in 1947). All of these are separated from one another by brick pilasters that are capped with a single course of brick rowlocks.

The west side of the building is dominated by a narrow, modern rectangular masonry addition that steps back to the north from the southwest corner of the original school and rises about four feet higher. In the addition is one of the main entrances, which faces west toward Garmisch Street. The entry contains a pair of modern glass doors with metal frames and a flat awning above.

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The southwest corner of the addition is characterized by a tall glass wall consisting of large horizontal fixed windows stacked five-high with metal framing. These wrap around the corner to the south and west walls. On the south, five horizontal metal visors are mounted to the top of each window to block the sunlight. Above the windows, the walls are brick.

Composed of red brickwork, the west wall of the addition is ornamented with simple geometric features. South of the western entrance, the wall is largely covered by horizontal planks mounted to a hidden metal framework. A band of five fixed windows with metal frames is present just north of the entrance. Below these, the wall is covered by horizontal planks. Mounted outside of the window band are ten slender vertical metal fins fabricated with a pattern of small holes. A single glass door with a metal frame is located at the north end of the windows.

As the west wall continues north, it drops in height as it reaches the building's northwest corner. This corner has a recessed entry that is reached by way of a concrete stoop with metal stairs. The doorway faces west and contains a glass door along with an adjacent fixed window, both set in metal frames. Adjacent to these is another single door space that is boarded closed. The small roof above the stoop is supported at its northwest corner by a metal pole.

Turning the northwest corner, the north wall contains five one-over-one double hung sash windows set in metal frames and with brick rowlock sills. Beyond these windows the brick wall changes to older salvaged bricks that are chipped, variegated in color, and were set with rougher mortar joints. Mounted in that area is a single two-light fixed window with metal frames, set between two brick pilasters. Turning another corner to the south, the east-facing brick wall there holds a metal slab door with a small wired-glass light in its upper area.

The north wall of the central segment of the original dumbbell-shaped school holds a primary entrance off the parking lot. This is located within what is essentially a porch formed by a concrete floor, a partial brick wall, brick and metal posts, and a flat roof above. Mailboxes occupy the west side of the porch, and a concrete stairway that drops into the ground to a mechanical room is on the east. The entrance consists of a pair of glass doors with metal frames. A transom light is located above the doorway, with two fixed lights to the east.

The long wall west of the entryway holds a series of tall windows that rest upon a low concrete block wall where the blocks are set in an alternating horizontal and vertical pattern. The multiple windows above are set in wood framing and also alternate between fixed lights and others with four-light metal awnings. West of these, the shorter original brick wall of the school holds five windows that are identical to those on the front of the building, separated by brick pilasters. The short wall east of the entrance contains two of these same windows that are separated by the square chimney that holds the ceramics kiln.

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East of the kiln area, the wall turns toward the north again. The short brick wall there holds a single-light fixed window. Taking another turn to the east, the brick wall contains another multi-light window with a metal frame, along with a slab door with a narrow horizontal light. The rest of the original wall to the east of that point is hidden inside a north addition that is described below (this is part of the central segment of the building).

Projecting from the east wall of the original school, just north of its southeast corner, is a small south-facing entrance addition. This is set back to the north and marked as a primary access into the arts center and gallery. The entry holds a pair of glass doors with metal frames and a transom above. A non-historic flat metal awning projects from the entrance to provide shelter, supported from beneath by a large diameter horizontal pipe that is mounted to the adjacent walls. The entrance is into a vestibule that is located outside of the original school building footprint. Set into the vestibule's east wall is a large single-light fixed window. The brickwork above is ornamented with a band of two courses of rowlocks.

On the interior, the original school building retains some basic elements of its historic architecture. These include its wood flooring, classroom doors and spaces, and central double loaded hallway.

The Central Segment (1970s): This area of the building occupies the space between the original school (to the west) and the gymnasium (to the east). It is connected to each of these and is set back to the north of the rest of the building, with a concrete and brick-paved courtyard or plaza in front. The south wall holds three entrances that provide access to the offices and a radio studio located there. Each entry contains a pair of glass doors with what appear to be metal frames, along with tall fixed sidelights and large transoms above. The rest of the wall consists of tall single-light and two-light windows, all of which rest upon three courses of concrete blocks. The flat roof cantilevers out from the front wall, supported by a series of what appear to be exposed steel beams. The roof is finished with corrugated metal paneling.

On the north side of the building, the central segment consists of a large rectangular addition. The west end of the addition is constructed of concrete blocks that are painted red. Its west wall holds a slab door with a tall horizontal light. Next to that is a wood overhead garage door with four lights in its upper half. East of that is the larger, taller brick portion of the addition. The three entries along its north wall each hold a slab door with a narrow vertical light, next to which are either one or two tall windows. The addition's east wall contains a two-light window surrounded by brick headers and rowlocks.

The Gymnasium (1953): The large north-south eastern segment of the building is a tall metal-framed structure with masonry exterior walls constructed of concrete blocks with brick facing on the east and west and plywood with

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battens on the north and south. Its gabled roof is covered with standing seam metal paneling. The building holds a gymnasium and was originally a free-standing structure. Its primary entrance is located along the west wall next to the central segment described above. The entry is set back considerably to the north beneath a large modern canopy. It holds two pairs of glass doors, between which is a small vestibule. Each set of doors is surrounded by five large fixed lights, and the doors and windows are set in metal framing. Inside the entryway are the City of Aspen Recreation Department offices. Within this area, another set of doors to the east enters the gymnasium. High on the west wall of the gymnasium are two bands of four single-light fixed windows. These are set in wood frames and have brick rowlock sills.

The tall canopy outside the west wall is a modern feature. This consists of a long, wide shed roof that extends from the gymnasium's primary roof at the same slope. It is supported by a series of eight heavy log posts that are mounted on concrete bases and set on a diagonal tilting away from the building. As they proceed toward the north, each log is set slightly more upright until the last one near the entrance is vertical. The shed roof is constructed of heavy rafters that support wood framework, and the upper surface is finished with corrugated plastic sheeting. Below the canopy is a wide concrete sidewalk.

The north wall of the gymnasium is entirely finished with painted plywood sheeting whose seams are sealed with wood battens. Centered on the wall is a raised rear entry with a pair of slab doors. These are accessed by way of a wood stoop with metal handrails. Two window spaces above the entry are boarded closed. A third horizontal opening above the windows contains a louvered vent. Near the northeast corner is a small single-light fixed window. The basement level is accessed by way of concrete stairs that drop along the exposed concrete foundation wall. Two entries are present into the locker rooms, each containing a slab door. High on the foundation wall are four bands of small single-light fixed windows.

The gymnasium's east wall is finished with brick facing as on the west. It holds a secondary entrance that contains a pair of metal slab doors. Sheltering the entry is a gabled wood-frame roof supported by wood posts. Angled side walls covered with plywood and corrugated metal have also been placed there to keep the concrete floor free of snow and ice. The upper wall features five bands of four large single-light windows that appear to be set in wood frames.

On the south, the gymnasium's very visible front wall along the street is finished with plywood boards. These are sealed and ornamented with a repeating pattern of three vertical battens. Below the wood wall is a low band of brickwork capped with a single band of rowlocks. Centered in this lower area is a concrete block wall with the blocks laid in an alternating horizontal and vertical pattern. These surround a single-light window set in a wood frame. Also centered higher on the wall is a window space that contains a louvered

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vent. An entry located near the southeast corner of the gymnasium is used only for egress and contains a pair of glass doors with tall narrow side lights, all set in metal frames.

Several historic features of note are found inside the gymnasium. The large open space features the original wood flooring, high ceiling with exposed metal framework, and heat registers along the east and west walls. Occupying the northern area of the gym is the original raised stage, whose front wall is finished with vertical wood paneling. Today the stage is filled with a climbing wall. Two flights of wood stairs drop below the stage at its east end. This area now holds locker rooms in a space that has been remodeled and was originally used as the school's kitchen. The horizontal counter where students obtained their lunches remains at the bottom of the stairs.

22. Architectural Style / Building Type: **Modern Movement**

23. Landscaping or Special Setting Features: **This property is located in a historic residential neighborhood and is surrounded by single-family homes. The exception to this is another historic school, now known as the Yellow Brick School (5PT1382), located across the intersection to the southwest.**

The long east-west space south of the Red Brick School along the Hallam Street frontage is occupied by landscaping. This includes an open expanse of grass bordered by mature aspen and spruce trees. Sidewalks run parallel to Hallam Street and Garmisch Street, and additional sidewalks within the property provide access to the building's south entrances. The open plaza or courtyard in front of the central segment is constructed with concrete paving that forms a seating area, along with small flower beds.

West of the building, between its western addition and Garmisch Street, the open plaza there contains a paved seating area, a handicap ramp, and a wider concrete ramp that accesses the entry. This area also contains a metal sculpture. A punched sheet metal sign identifies the property as the Red Brick Center for the Arts.

The area north of and behind the original school building is filled with a paved parking. This provides access to the north primary entrance. To the east of the parking lot is a narrow east-west drive that passes behind the central segment and gymnasium.

Along the east side of the property, the area outside the gymnasium's east wall is occupied by a narrow paved north-south drive that has been designated Sheeley Boulevard. This is lined by aspen trees.

24. Associated Buildings, Features or Objects: **Not Applicable**

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IV. Architectural History

25. Date of Construction: Estimate: Actual: 1941
Source of Information: "New School Will Be Ready Jan. 5," *Aspen Times*, 25 December 1941, p. 1
26. Architect: J. Lewis Ford – Original School
Samuel Caudill – Auditorium-Gymnasium Addition
Source of Information: "Architect Begins Plans for School," *Aspen Times*, 25 July 1940, p. 1 / "School Election Date Changed to April 16," *Aspen Times*, 2 April 1953, p. 1
27. Builder/Contractor: Albert Stull (Glenwood Springs, CO)
Source of Information: "Work Was Started Yesterday on New School House," *Aspen Times*, 14 August 1941, p. 1
28. Original Owner: Aspen School District No. 1
Source of Information: "Architect Begins Plans for School," *Aspen Times*, 25 July 1940, p. 1
29. Construction History: The original school building, now the low one-story western brick segment of the enlarged facility, was constructed in 1941. In 1947, this was expanded with a single classroom addition off its southwest corner. In front of the building was a large landscaped yard that remains there today. The auditorium-gymnasium was built along with three classrooms in 1953. The classroom addition connected the auditorium-gymnasium to the original school building. Around the mid-1970s, a masonry multi-purpose room was constructed behind the classrooms erected in 1953. By the mid-1980s, an addition had also been built off the school's northwest corner.
- As the school was prepared for new use as the Red Brick Center for the Arts, it was remodeled during the summer and fall of 1994. Work completed at that time involved removal of the three classrooms dating from the early 1950s. This left the multi-purpose room to the north standing and exposed. Its south wall was renovated with new entries and windows that overlooked a new courtyard. The open porch projecting from the south wall of the auditorium-gymnasium was also removed and replaced with a new entry, window and siding. In 2001, the building was expanded to the west with a modern addition holding a lobby and conference room. The large canopy supported by logs along the west wall of the gym was installed in the early 2000s.
30. Original Location: Yes

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V. Historical Associations

31. Original Use(s): **Education: School**
32. Intermediate Use(s): **Not Applicable**
33. Current Use(s): **Recreation and Culture**
34. Site Type(s): **Public School / Arts and Recreation Center**
35. Historical background: **Throughout the late 1800s and into the early 1900s, the site under study was located in a residential neighborhood of single-family homes. Block 64 contained a small number of one- and two-story houses. The most prominent of these was a large brick house with a circular corner tower located on the northeast corner of Hallam Street and Center Street (now Garmisch Street). Behind the home to the north was a private livery barn. A landscaped yard extended to the east across several lots. The mansion and grounds were owned and occupied by prominent Aspen pioneer, mine and real estate investor, and utilities developer David R. C. Brown.**

In addition to the surrounding houses, the neighborhood held the Central School, which was built in 1882 on the northwest corner of Bleeker Street and Central Street, one block southwest of Brown's residence. The building housed students from kindergarten through twelfth grade. Between 1885 and 1891, the wood frame building was expanded twice to accommodate a growing number of students and renamed the Lincoln School. Following the Silver Crash of 1893, most of the mines closed and Aspen's population began to decline. The community entered what became known as the "Quiet Years," which lasted well into the following century.

In 1900, the small number of high school students moved out of the Lincoln School and into the mansion one block north, which D. R. C. Brown donated that year to the school district. They and their successors remained there for the next four decades, gathering to study and socialize in the house's elegant former parlors and bedrooms. In 1927, a state inspector visited Aspen and declared the Lincoln School unsafe and unfit for education. He ordered the district to either repair the building right away or cease its use. Lacking the funds to address the problem, the district shuttered the building and sold it, consolidating the students in the Washington Elementary School. This arrangement, employing one school building for the elementary grades and another for the high school, sufficed for the time being.

By the late 1930s, Aspen's two school buildings, both constructed in the preceding century, were aging and in need of repairs. In early May 1938, the school board spent two days with Grand Junction structural engineer and architect J. Lewis Ford discussing tentative plans for addressing the situation. In addition to looking at repairing the existing schools, the board and architect

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considered the possibility of constructing a consolidated school building that would house all of the community's students, from kindergarten through high school. Ford prepared preliminary plans for a new building and a committee was formed to investigate financing the project. At the school board meeting later that month, fierce opposition to the idea of a consolidated school, and any associated tax increase, arose from board members representing outlying areas of the county. All the majority were willing to consider was minor repairs to the existing buildings and the idea of a new building was shelved.

With Depression-era programs in place, almost two years later school boosters in Aspen still thought the district should take advantage of federal funding from the Works Progress Administration (WPA) before it was no longer available. In February 1940, they circulated two petitions throughout Pitkin County, one for the elementary school board and another for the high school board. These requested that they discuss the question of erecting a new facility and call a special election so the public could weigh in on the matter. The proponents believed the community needed a single building capable of housing all of the area's students rather than repairing the existing buildings in town.

Supportive of the effort, editor Lawrence Kurtz of the *Aspen Times* wrote:

“As the question of a new school house is once more brought to light for discussion, it would seem that it is the duty of every citizen of this community...to consider the situation carefully. I can think of no finer monument for the citizens of today to leave for coming generations to remember them by than a new, modern, efficient house of learning for our children and our children's children.” (15 February 1940, p. 4)

He went on to explain that the poor state of the town's schools was not only unfair to the students, but it was serving as a deterrent to families thinking of moving there. This had the effect of not only dampening population growth, but also hurting both business and tax revenues.

The petitions were delivered to the boards in early March. After confirming the validity of the signatures, they sought to consult with an architect to determine the potential cost of the building. This would allow all parties involved to understand how much might be secured from the federal government and what would be required in the way of a bond issue to cover the balance. A public meeting on the subject was called for early April at the county courthouse. Plans for the event included having a Denver representative of the WPA make a presentation and answer questions. Whether the meeting took place is unclear as it wasn't reported in the local newspaper.

The bond election was scheduled for May 6 and 20 in the Washington School and in various country school buildings around Aspen. Separate dates had been scheduled for the two districts (elementary and high school) due to their notification requirements. Prior to the election, the boards made it clear that

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they were seeking approval to issue bonds for the construction of a joint school building that would cost an estimated \$80,000. Federal funding totaling \$52,000 would be requested from the WPA. The bond indebtedness up for approval by the electorate was for \$33,000, essentially \$16,500 from each district.

On May 9, the *Aspen Times* reported on its front page that voters in the high school district had approved the bond issue. By far, the majority of those who voted in favor were from Aspen's district number one. Eleven days later, Aspen citizens in the elementary school district approved the bond issue by a vote of 164 to 3. The remaining question to be answered was whether the federal government would come through with the rest of the funding. However, the application could not be submitted until architectural plans had been prepared.

In late May 1940, the two school boards met in a joint session to discuss plans for the new building with architect J. Lewis Ford. The following month, they met with the WPA representative and a representative of the bonding company that had contracted to purchase the bonds. Concern soon emerged about the future of the WPA and its funding due to the fact that Congress had just approved massive defense appropriations in response to the war raging in Europe and the Pacific. The timing could not have been worse, as the United States was preparing to go to war. Federal funding for a new school in Aspen suddenly appeared very unsure.

Despite the situation, the boards met again in July with architect Ford, who by that time had been engaged to design the building. John Lewis Ford was born in Missouri in 1895. By 1900, his family had moved to the northwestern Colorado town of Meeker, where his father secured work as a day laborer. During the following decade, they acquired land and began farming in Powell Park west of town (the mountain park was known as the location of the 1879 Meeker Massacre). In the mid-1910s, Ford was living in Ely, Nevada and working as a carpenter at the nearby Consolidated Coppermines Corporation mine in Kimberly. He then served in the US Navy from 1917 to 1919. Following his discharge, he moved back into his parents' home.

During the 1920s, Ford married and began to pursue a career in engineering and architecture. Where, or with whom, he received training in the field is currently unknown. The earliest building attributed to him is the 1929 Neoclassical style First Church of Christ Scientist in Grand Junction. In 1930, the federal census found him residing in Grand Junction with his wife Amy and their son. Ford was listed as working in the fields of both structural engineering and architecture. City directories from around that same time showed him as a structural engineer. In 1934, he was awarded an architectural license from the State of Colorado. Ford continued to reside in Grand Junction the rest of his life, where he also based his architectural practice. While the full scope of his projects is unknown, he seems to have done most of his work in western Colorado. Ford died in 1988 and his burial place is unknown.

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In July 1940, Ford was tasked by the boards with preparing preliminary plans to be included with the districts' federal funding request. As the school year started in September, the *Aspen Times* reported that the high school's enrollment had risen to 73, the highest number since the mid-1920s. (19 September 1940, p. 1) The former D. R. C. Brown mansion was about as full as it could be.

The boards announced in October that they had secured an option on the brick chimney standing on the Marolt Ranch. Dating from the early 1890s, the 165'-tall structure was historically associated with the Holden Lixiviation Works, a large silver mill that once operated on the west side of Castle Creek. Long out of use, the districts hoped to dismantle the chimney and utilize its bricks for construction of the new school. That same month, the application for federal funding was submitted to the WPA office in Grand Junction, together with Ford's architectural plans.

Months passed as the school districts waited to hear back from the WPA. In the meantime, between mid-February and early March 1941, a series of earthquakes rattled the Aspen area. Locals worried about the impact the tremors might have upon the stability of the Washington School, which already had cracks in its brick walls. The stress added by the quakes underscored the need to get the new building started. Some argued that community representatives should be sent to the WPA office to push the request forward.

In late March, two staff members from the WPA's Grand Junction office traveled to Aspen to meet with the school boards. They informed the boards that the grant request, together with the plans and specifications prepared by the architect, looked fine. These would be forwarded to the state WPA office in Denver to be checked again prior to being sent to Washington, DC for final approval. In early April, the *Aspen Times* reported for the first time that the plan was to construct the building on the grounds of the Aspen High School at Center Street and Hallam Street. (3 April 1941, p. 1) Bricks would be salvaged from demolition of the Holden Lixiviation Works chimney, the Washington School, and the Aspen High School.

A shift in the concept for the project took place around the beginning of July, when it was determined that the WPA would not be involved in the effort. The districts had stated in their grant application that the building would be constructed in phases over three years. Due to this approach, the Denver WPA office turned the project down, stating that it would never be approved by Washington. Within days, the WPA announced that it was halting all aid projects in twenty-four of Colorado's counties, including Pitkin County, because unemployment rates had fallen below the required threshold. With these developments, the effort to secure federal funding for the new school building was finished and a new approach had to be found.

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Seeking another way to get the school built, it was suggested to the boards that they stick with the phased approach. This would involve initially erecting the two outer wings, one for the elementary school and the other for high school. Cost savings would come from using salvaged materials. As funds became available, the wings would be joined together with a central segment designed to hold an auditorium and gymnasium. The concept was approved and without further delay the entire effort suddenly moved forward at a rapid pace.

Ground was broken for the combined Aspen Grade School and High School in mid-August 1941, and building supplies began to be stockpiled on the site. Albert Stull of Glenwood Springs was awarded the construction contract with instructions to erect the two wings along with the front area of the middle section, creating a dumbbell-shaped building. A total of \$37,500 was allocated for the work, including the architect's fees. The bond sale proceeded with assistance from the Denver investment banking firm of Brown, Schlessman & Owens. This raised \$33,000 of the necessary funds. Cash reserves held by the district for repairing the Washington School made up the \$4,500 difference.

The salvaged bricks from the two schools were to be used on the back of the building and in other less visible locations. On the front, the district would use new pressed bricks. Whether any were salvaged from the mill chimney is unknown. Plans for the interior brick walls called for them to be finished with glazed tiles. However, at the last minute a government project claimed all of the tiles that were available and another finish had to be used. Instead, the interior walls were constructed with salvaged bricks and then plastered. This required cleaning the bricks and delayed completion to the end of the year. It also increased the cost of the project by \$300 more than expected.

Phasing of work on the new building required careful planning. By starting with the east wing and working toward the west, the project would allow the old D. R. C. Brown mansion to remain in use as long as possible. Once the east wing was completed, the elementary students would move in so the Washington School could be fully demolished and its bricks salvaged. Eventually, the east wing would house the high school and the west wing the elementary school when the building was finished. Local laborers and craftsmen were intentionally employed for the project, providing jobs to Aspen-area residents and keeping as much of the funding in the community as possible.

Although demolition of the Washington School was to be put off for some time, removal of its west wing began in the middle of August. Suddenly the districts had to plan for where to house some of the classes as the school year was about to begin. Arrangements were made for the first through fourth grades to meet in the main floor pool room that occupied the northeast corner of the Hotel Jerome. This was partitioned into two temporary classrooms. The fifth through eighth grades met in the high school together with the high school students, adding to a facility already filled to capacity.

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During the last week of August, about a dozen men were busy pouring the concrete foundation. In the northern area of the block, an excavation was prepared for the heating plant, which would be located beneath the future auditorium stage. For the time being, the steam pipes would run through a trench into the school. Other workers continued with demolition of the Washington School and hauled the bricks to the site. In September, four masons made headway on the brick walls. Although the contractor had planned to finish the east wing first, progress was made across much of the building, except for the western end closest to the existing high school.

By early October, six to eight masons were at work, along with a crew of carpenters, plumbers and electricians. The Washington School was fully dismantled, providing the new building with all the bricks that were needed (none appear to have been used from the mill chimney). Almost all of the walls, both interior and exterior, were completed by the middle of the month. Within a few more weeks, the roof was finished, along with the electrical wiring and installation of the windows. In late October and early November, plasterers were busy inside the building and three temporary stoves prevented the plaster from freezing before it set. With the building sealed against the weather, the workers could continue despite the conditions outside.

In late November, the heating plant was installed, including radiators throughout the rooms, and the building was brought up to a comfortable temperature. Carpenters were busy hanging blackboards and doors in the classrooms. By the second week in December, just two days after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, contractor Stull predicted that the school would be completed shortly as long as the remaining materials arrived on time. The last important item was the wood flooring, which was installed during the middle of month. Over the winter holiday, desks and school supplies were moved into the building.

With most of the major work finished by the end of the month, the spring semester began on 5 January 1942 with all of Aspen's elementary students, grades one through eight, transferred to the new facility. All that was left to do was to tear down the old high school and finish a classroom and small auditorium on the building's west end. With that, the high school students could move in. Several days after the semester started, the *Aspen Times* wrote:

“A dream which a lot of progressive people of Pitkin county have had for a great number of years was realized, at least in part, Monday morning of this week when the eight grades of the Aspen school started their classes for the first time in the new school house. Teachers and pupils alike are mighty proud of their new school house, as well as the school boards, the patrons and most everyone else in the county. Everyone who has been there agrees that it is one of the very nicest things that has ever happened here.” (8 January 1942, p.1)

In June 1942, something not quite as nice occurred. Early that month, contractor Stull started razing the Aspen High School, the old D. R. C. Brown

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mansion. Not everyone viewed its disappearance with pleasure. One writer, commenting in the *Aspen Times*, expressed thoughts and sentiments about its loss that still resonate today:

“The present tendency is to tear down the old to make room for the new. Old places with happy memories and associations could be a lasting memorial of the glorious days when Aspen was a city. Now the old Aspen High school is the next one to go. And many people are asking for a bit of wood, to be made into trays, bookends etc. that can be cherished always. There comes a tightening of the throat and a tear for the passing of the days of happy childhood and with it the passing of the stepping stones of days of yesteryears.” (2 July 1942, p. 8)

When the new school year started in September, the high school students moved into the building. However, at fifty-three their number was smaller than the previous year’s enrollment of seventy. There was also a teacher shortage taking place. Presumably, these issues were due, at least in part, to the fact that the country was fully engaged in war and families were moving to different locales for jobs and military service. Aspen’s “Quiet Years” would continue for a short time longer.

As the building was prepared for the 1945-46 school year, which began just after World War II had ended, it received some improvements. Among these was the construction of a large belowground coal bin adjacent to the boiler room at the back of the building that could handle the entire winter’s supply. The school’s floors were also refinished, the restrooms redecorated, new grade school teacher’s desks were installed, and the roof received a new coat of asphalt.

Although downhill skiing had started on Aspen Mountain in the late 1930s, further development was delayed by World War II. In the years immediately following the war, the town began to emerge from its long slumber as recreationists, tourists and other visitors began to arrive in the still small but once-again growing community. Outdoor sports and the healthy, scenic environment drew many new residents to Aspen. Others came to participate in events organized by the Aspen Music Festival and School, founded in 1949, and the Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies, founded in 1950. As the number of residents increased, so did the number of children enrolled in the single school.

By the spring of 1947, concerns were being raised about overcrowding in the elementary classrooms. Architect Ford and contractor Stull met with the school board to discuss preliminary plans for expansion of the building. Ford recommended that a single classroom be added to its west end. The addition would cost an estimated \$5,000 to \$6,000, funds the district had available in its coffers. Also taken into consideration was a bond issue to construct the auditorium-gymnasium. However, this larger project would have to wait a few more years. In the meantime, contractors were invited to submit proposals for the classroom addition and as the only bidder Stull secured the award. Work began in July and appears to have been finished in September.

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Unwilling to give up on the idea of constructing the auditorium-gymnasium addition to the school, the board continued to discuss and promote the idea into the early 1950s. On 6 July 1950, the *Aspen Times* published an architect's rendering of what the addition might look like. Prepared by Denver architect Henry A. Koch, this showed an interior view of the space, which featured a high gabled roof and a stage to the side rather than at one end as it was eventually built. The accompanying article discussed the desire of the school board to have the addition placed north of the existing school, as originally planned. However, the timing of its construction was delayed in large part by a need to settle the lingering question of school district consolidation.

In the summer of 1951, the school board posted a notice in the *Aspen Times* that it was seeking bids for the construction of an addition to the school (26 July 1951, p. 5). Momentum seems to have come to a halt shortly afterward as the district was not quite ready to take on the project. Concerned about increasing crowding in the school caused by the first wave of the post-war Baby Boom, in 1952 the board prepared a study of Aspen's educational requirements, including an assessment of the growing student population and the need for modernization. Spurring this concern was the fact that the number of students had increased by one-third in the previous two years alone and the building lacked adequate space to accommodate the activities that took place there.

Meeting in January 1953 to discuss the results of the study, the board determined that the school would need to be enlarged soon with a new auditorium-gymnasium or an entirely new facility would have to be constructed at another location. A community discussion ensued and architect Thomas Moore of Denver and then Grand Junction was hired to prepare preliminary plans. In March, the board decided to seek approval for a \$120,000 bond issue to finance construction of the auditorium-gymnasium on the present site, along with three additional classrooms. The special election was scheduled for April 16. In the meantime, architect Samuel Caudill was engaged by the school board to design the building and oversee its construction (he may have been working for Moore at the time). He left for Denver to tour the city's school facilities and gather ideas for the project.

Samuel Jefferson Caudill, Jr. was born in Tulsa, Oklahoma in 1922 and then grew up in the mountains of Kentucky. After serving for two years with the US Army in China during World War II, in 1946 Caudill graduated from Cornell University's College of Architecture. The following year he joined the practice of prominent architect Jan Ruhtenberg, who was active in both New York and Colorado Springs, and specialized in International Style buildings. Caudill worked for him in his Colorado Springs office before taking a series of jobs with construction and architecture firms in Tulsa, Oklahoma and then Denver. There he began to gain experience with school projects.

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In Denver, Caudill became associated with architects Roland Linder and then Thomas Moore during the late 1940s and early 1950s. The auditorium-gymnasium addition to the Aspen Grade School and High School was his first project in Aspen. Although he had arrived there two years earlier, in the spring of 1954 Caudill opened his own office in Aspen. Over the following decades he designed numerous residential, commercial and school buildings throughout western Colorado. In Aspen, he filled some of the town's vacant lots with buildings of visual interest and became one of its most celebrated twentieth century designers of modern architecture.

Prior to the April 1953 special election, a citizens' committee posted a large half-page advertisement in the *Aspen Times* that presented a detailed argument for why voters should approve the bond issue. (2 April 1953, p. 8) A majority voted in favor of the request and over the following months the project moved forward at a rapid pace. In September and October, the steel framework for the auditorium-gymnasium and classrooms was assembled, the masonry walls were rising from the foundations, and the roofs were being installed. With the auditorium-gymnasium located on the eastern edge of the site rather than north of the school as originally conceived, the new south-facing classrooms would serve as a connection to the school building to the west. By the end of the year, the addition was largely completed and ready to be occupied.

Dedication of the addition took place in early February 1954, attended by about 150 citizens. The guests toured the facility, enjoyed snacks provided by the PTA, were entertained by the school band, and heard speeches by architect Caudill and board president Dr. Robert C. Lewis, Jr. From that point on, the auditorium-gymnasium began hosting basketball games, school rallies, prom dances, gym classes, and a variety of community events. By the late 1950s, the auditorium-gymnasium building was modified with the addition of a gabled front porch that extended almost to the sidewalk along Hallam Street.

In the spring of 1956, the board was struggling again with growth of the student population and the reemergence of crowding. A new facility would have to be constructed to handle at least some of the classes. Aspen's city council recommended that the district acquire the north half of Block 57 southwest of Hallam Street and Center Street, clear the lots, and lay plans for a new building at that location (the district still owned the south half of the block, where the Lincoln School had once stood). However, the suggestion failed to take root right away and the board remained unsure about what it would do.

Over a year later, in July 1957, the board selected a Denver architectural firm to prepare plans for the project. However, no site had been secured and no determination made regarding which grades would move into the new building. These questions had to be answered before the architects could proceed with their plans. As the months passed, seemingly endless meetings, newspaper articles and editorials, and public discussions tackled the issue.

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A bond election was scheduled for December 1958, with a single polling place in the auditorium-gymnasium at the school. The following day, the *Aspen Times* reported on its front page that “Stunning nearly everyone, the much-discussed school bond issue election passed yesterday by a margin of 39 votes. 169 voters approved the issuance of bonds and 130 opposed it in a surprisingly light turn-out.” With the question settled, the school district proceeded to acquire the north half of Block 57 from its owners and cleared the site for construction to start on a new elementary school building.

Additional delays, including one caused by possible school district consolidation, pushed commencement of the project out for many months. In September 1959, the new school year began with record enrollment of 396 students, causing the Aspen Grade School and High School to reach, and perhaps even exceed, its maximum capacity. Work finally began on the new school in October 1959. By late December, all that existed there was a hole that would eventually become its basement. Although preparation of the foundation had begun, the onset of winter caused the project to be delayed until spring.

Construction started back up in April 1960, with an expected completion date near the end of December. Substantial progress was made through the summer and into the fall as the block-long, one-story International Style building began to take shape. As school began in September, the number of students enrolled in the Aspen Grade School and High School swelled again. To relieve overcrowding, the kindergarten classes were moved to the basement of the Aspen Community Church, where they remained through the end of the semester. The new school was designed to accommodate 300 to 325 students its first year, with a planned capacity of 450. For the students, parents, teachers and administrators, it couldn't be finished soon enough.

Development of the Aspen Elementary School was largely finished by the third week in November and the building was formally opened for use. Even though the semester was still in progress, the elementary age students, together with their teachers and administrators, moved into the facility. With that, the 1941 building across the intersection became the Pitkin County Junior and Senior High School. Emptied of its elementary classes, the facility seemed to have adequate room for the older students, at least for the time being.

In January 1961, with the new elementary school up and running, the board met to discuss the need for advance planning to handle space requirements in the coming years. Enrollment in the two schools was up to almost 480 students. Four years earlier, there were only 280. Of the 480, about 150 of them were attending classes in the Pitkin County Junior and Senior High School. Expectations were that the number of older students would double in the next four years. Plans needed to be made for the construction of new facilities that could handle them before the current buildings were beyond their capacities. The problem was understood, yet progress moved at a glacial pace.

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More than two years later, on 27 September 1963, the editor of the *Aspen Times* addressed the still unresolved issue:

“A phenomenon which never ceases to amaze old-time Aspenites is the constant increase in the school population. A decade ago less than 200 pupils attended one small school. Today 670 students are beginning to crowd two large buildings. Almost before the new school was completed...it was apparent that more room would be needed within six or seven years. Unless the pattern of growth suddenly changes there will be too many pupils within two years for efficient use of existing buildings. What then?”

Despite perennial crowding, the Pitkin County Junior and Senior High School would have to remain in use for a few more years before they would receive a new facility.

Over the next decade and through much work on the part of the citizens and their school board, new high school and middle school facilities were constructed on a spacious campus established along Maroon Creek Road west of Aspen. The high school, designed by Caudill Associates, was completed in the summer of 1966. When the school year began that September, the district found that it had a total of 797 students enrolled in all grades. The older students moved out of the school in town and into the new facility, leaving the 1941 building to the middle school students (it then became known as the Aspen Middle School).

In 1972-73, the district constructed a new middle school on the Maroon Creek campus. The board retained Caudill Associates in May 1972 to prepare plans for remodeling the aging building in town. This work, valued at \$134,300, was completed during the summer of 1973 and focused upon the original part of the building that had been constructed more than thirty years earlier. Tasks completed at that time included the installation of a new roof, electrical system, and plumbing and heating systems. New ceilings, carpeting and doors were installed, and repairs were made to the brick walls where needed.

With the building vacated and remodeled over the summer, in September 1973 the middle school students moved into their own Maroon Creek facility and the district split the elementary grades between the two adjacent school buildings in town. K-2 remained in the 1960 Aspen Elementary School and 3-4 moved into the 1941 facility. From that point on, the buildings were known as the Lower Elementary and Upper Elementary. Between the mid-1970s and mid-1980s, the Upper Elementary building was expanded again when masonry additions were constructed off its northwest corner and behind the three classrooms built in 1953. The large space behind the classrooms served for many years as a multi-purpose room.

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In 1991, a new elementary school was built on the Maroon Creek campus and the Upper Elementary School was vacated again. As the property ended its fifty-year run as a public school, it also entered the next phase of its history. It also came to be known as the Red Brick School at that time. In 1973, a group of prominent directors of area non-profit arts organizations joined forces to form the Aspen/Snowmass Council for the Arts. When the school was vacated in the early 1990s, the district planned to demolish the building and sell the valuable land in the middle of town. Arts Council director Mary Apple suggested that the City of Aspen purchase the site so it could be turned into a community arts center. The City's financial help was critical for the acquisition and remodel that would be necessary. The idea was presented to the citizens of Aspen in a 1992 bond election and passed by just three votes.

This led to founding of the Red Brick Center for the Arts, which opened to the public in October 1994 following renovations designed by Pember & Reid Architects and Glenn Rappaport, Black Shack Architects. That summer and fall, the three classrooms built in 1953 between the original school building and the auditorium-gymnasium were removed, leaving in place the 1970s multi-purpose room that had been erected to the north. A new façade was installed on the south wall of the multi-purpose room that looked out onto a landscaped courtyard. The open porch was also removed from the south end of the auditorium-gymnasium, which was re-sided and received a new window and entry. Improvements were made to the building's interior to freshen it up and prepare it for new use. In 1996, a climbing wall was installed in the stage area of the auditorium-gymnasium.

The Aspen/Snowmass Council for the Arts was tasked with managing the facility and changed its name to the Red Brick Council for the Arts to reflect its new mission. Over the past few decades, space in the building has been leased to a number of non-profit organizations. These have included the Aspen Community Foundation, Aspen Film, Aspen Public Radio, the Aspen Writers' Foundation, Grassroots Community Television, Jazz Aspen Snowmass, and Theater Aspen. The eastern end of the building adjacent to the gymnasium contains the offices of the City of Aspen Recreation Department.

The former classrooms in the original school building are rented to artists at affordable rates for use as studios. A rehearsal studio is also available for the performing arts. The central hallway serves as gallery space and hosts special events. In 2001, a modern brick and glass addition with large fixed windows was constructed on the west end of the original school. This contains a conference room and lobby area. West of the addition, between the building and the sidewalk along Garmisch Street, a landscaped plaza area was created for seating and to enhance the new formal entry. Running along the west wall of the auditorium-gymnasium, the large canopy supported by heavy logs was installed in the early 2000s and was designed by Glenn Rappaport, Black Shack Architects.

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Sladek, Ron D. Architectural Inventory Form for the Aspen Elementary School/Yellow Brick School, 215 N. Garmisch St., Aspen, Colorado (5PT1382). Prepared for the City of Aspen, 8 January 2017.

Smith, Margaret Supplee. *Aspen's Twentieth-Century Architecture: Modernism 1945-1975.* Prepared for the City of Aspen, September 2010.

The Snowflake Annual, Aspen High School and Grade School. Aspen, CO:
Published by the Class of 1950.

State of Colorado, Department of Regulatory Agencies, Architectural License for J. Lewis Ford, Issued 1 January 1934 (ARC.00100190).

United States Census Records for John Lewis Ford. Meeker, CO (1900); Powell Park, Rio Blanco County, CO (1910 and 1920); Grand Junction, CO (1930); Redlands, Mesa County, CO (1940).

United States Department of Veterans Affairs, BIRLS Death File for J. Ford. Navy Enlistment Date, 7 July 1917 and Release Date, 15 August 1919.

Wentworth, Frank L. *Aspen on the Roaring Fork.* Denver, CO: Sundance Publications, 1976.

VI. Significance

37. Local landmark designation: **None**

38. Applicable National Register Criteria:

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

Qualifies under Criteria Considerations A through G

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Does not meet any of the above National Register criteria

39. Area(s) of significance: **Education / Architecture**
40. Period of significance: **1941-1967 (Education) / 1941-1953 (Architecture)**
41. Level of significance: National **No** State **No** Local **Yes**
42. Statement of significance: **The Aspen Grade School and High School, now known as the Red Brick School, Red Brick Center for the Arts and Red Brick Recreation Center, remained in continuous use a public school from 1941 to 1991. Since 1994 it has been returned to use as a community arts and recreation center. In addition to serving for fifty years as a key educational facility in the city, the building was designed by a skillful Western Slope architect whose background and body of work are just being discovered. Today the site represents not only his professional legacy, but provides an example of the Modernist Style of architecture that characterized the middle decades of the twentieth century. Of particular interest, the 1941 school exhibits a transitional style that connects the architectural eras that occurred before and after World War II.**

Although it pre-dates the chronological scope of the study by four years, the property appears to meet the registration requirements that are outlined in the National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form titled *Colorado's Mid-Century Schools, 1945-1970*.

Criterion A: Aspen's first life as a booming mining town began in the early 1880s and came to an end following the 1893 Silver Crash as the mines closed, business declined, and residents began to drift away. The community entered what became known as its "Quiet Years," which lasted for five decades. By the late 1930s, the Great Depression still impacted the town and its surrounding ranches. Funds were tight and people got by however they could. A glimmer of future revitalization emerged when downhill skiing enthusiasts discovered the area. However, America's entry into World War II delayed the development of skiing and resort facilities, along with Aspen's revival, for a few more years.

Prior to 1940, students from Aspen and the countryside close to town attended classes in a handful of buildings that were constructed and enlarged during the last two decades of the previous century. The elementary students were housed in the Lincoln, Garfield and Washington schools, and the high school students in an 1885 mansion on the northeast corner of Hallam Street and Center Street (later Garmisch Street). After decades of use, the buildings were in dire need of either substantial repairs or outright replacement. In 1938, the school board began working with Grand Junction architect John Lewis Ford to prepare plans that would be used to secure a WPA grant. Although the grant fell through, the community moved forward to erect the best building it could with the funds that could be raised.

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Ground was broken for the combined Aspen Grade School and High School in August 1941 and the building was completed by the end of the year. The shared facility worked well for some time. However, problems began to emerge not due to the consolidation of ages into one facility, but due to rapid growth of the town's population that led to perennial crowding in the building during the decades following World War II. Every solution seemed to be defeated within a few years by the wave after wave of Baby Boomers who swelled the number of students that needed to be accommodated.

Aspen's revitalization in the post-war era was due to the development of skiing on Aspen Mountain, combined with the emergence of the town as a center of recreation, culture and the arts. A new period of economic expansion was underway and the city was being rebuilt. With sizable numbers of new residents moving in for the first time in decades, overcrowding in the school worsened with each passing year. A modest attempt to add space took place in 1947 when a small addition containing a single classroom was built off the building's southwest corner.

In the early 1950s, the school board continued to grapple with how they were going to remedy the situation. The building was expanded in 1953 with a much larger addition that contained three classrooms and an auditorium-gymnasium. In 1960, the district constructed a new elementary school nearby to relieve what seemed to be endless crowding in the Aspen Grade School and High School. A new high school, developed west of the city in 1966, took additional pressure off the facility. In 1972-73, the construction of a new middle school removed the remaining older students from the building. It continued to be used through 1991 as an elementary school.

Throughout the half century from 1941 to 1991, the Aspen Grade School and High School served the city's families well as an important element of its educational system. Over the past twenty-three years, it has continued to be used as a center for arts and recreation, a repurposing of the building through historic preservation that has been hailed as a great success in the community.

Due to its long history of use, the Aspen Grade School and High School is NRHP eligible under Criterion A on the local level for its association with Education in Aspen. However, its period of significance is limited to 1941-1967, the fifty-year mark, despite the fact that it continued to be used as a public school through the early 1990s.

Criterion C: The building erected on this property in 1941 was designed in the Modernist Style of architecture that emerged in Europe in the 1920s and 1930s, and then spread across the United States. Although often associated with skyscrapers, the style was also employed on numerous commercial and institutional buildings of lower height, including offices, churches and schools. The Aspen Grade School and High School is a transitional example the style.

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Urban schools built in the United States during the late 1800s and early 1900s were typically two to three stories in height with what might be described as substantial vertical massing. These Victorian Era buildings were designed in popular styles of the day, including the Queen Anne style of architecture. They employed ornamental brickwork, decorative wood trim, double-hung windows, bell towers, and steeply pitched roofs with intersecting gables or hips. The interiors typically held central stairways and large classrooms with high ceilings. The 1890 Washington School in Aspen fit this mold, as did the 1882 Lincoln School, although it was constructed of wood rather than masonry.

During the 1920s, many districts constructed new facilities to replace their aging buildings and to handle increased numbers of students due to population growth and school consolidation. Buildings of the era often exhibited elements of Classical Revival architecture, were typically symmetrical and simple in geometric form, and had flat roofs. This reflected changing attitudes about education, combined with the early influence of the Modernist movement. Many of the facilities constructed during the 1930s were funded by the federal government's Depression Era aid programs, particularly the Works Progress Administration, and continued this design trend.

Breaking from tradition, at least in part, the Aspen Grade School and High School represents a transitional application of the Modernist Style that includes characteristics of 1920s and 1930s architecture together with elements of how later Modernist / International Style schools would look in the years following World War II. Design elements of Modernist architecture that appear on the building include its long one-story horizontal profile, simple geometric form, minimal ornamentation, and flat roof. On the interior, it featured multiple classrooms flanking a long central hallway. While the building was modern for its time, its symmetrical composition, multi-light windows set in metal frames, brick pilasters separating the windows, and dark brickwork were architectural features that also reflected the pre-World War II era in which it was built.

Over the following years, the school was expanded with additional classrooms and a tall auditorium-gymnasium. These created necessary space for the growing student population and are considered historic expansions of the facility. Working with a tight budget during difficult economic times, the school board and its architect created the best educational facility that they could. It served the community's needs for many years and has endured to the present time through a compatible reuse.

Two architects of note are associated with the Aspen Grade School and High School. The first of these is its original designer, John Lewis Ford, who worked in both structural engineering and architecture. Based in Grand Junction, he is just being discovered. Ford's earliest known work was on the 1929 Neoclassical First Church of Christ Scientist in Grand Junction. In 1934, he was

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awarded an architectural license from the State of Colorado. While the full scope of his projects is not yet assembled, scattered references indicate that his work is found throughout western Colorado and many of his projects involved schools. Future research into his buildings will help place the Aspen project within the context of his body of work.

The other architect involved with the school was Samuel Jefferson Caudill, Jr., who arrived in Aspen in 1952 and prepared plans for the building's 1953 expansion. A 1946 graduate of Cornell University's College of Architecture, he first worked in the Colorado Springs office of prominent Modernist architect Jan Ruhtenberg, who specialized in International Style buildings. Caudill then moved to Denver, where he was associated with architects Roland Linder and Thomas Moore. The auditorium-gymnasium addition to the Aspen Grade School and High School was his first project in Aspen.

In 1954, Caudill opened his own office and over the following decades he designed numerous residential, commercial and school buildings throughout western Colorado. He also served on a number of board and commissions, and was integrally involved in the environmentally sensitive design of Interstate 70 through Glenwood Canyon. In Aspen, Caudill filled many of the town's vacant lots with buildings of great visual interest and became one of its most celebrated twentieth century designers of modern architecture.

For these reasons, this property is NRHP eligible under Criterion C on the local level in the area of Architecture for embodying the distinctive characteristics of the twentieth century Modernist Style of architecture and for its association with architects John Lewis Ford and Samuel Jefferson Caudill, Jr. Its period of significance is limited to 1941-1967, extending from the year the building was completed to the fifty-year mark in accordance with NRHP guidelines.

City of Aspen Significance: The Aspen Grade School and High School retains a reasonable degree of integrity despite the changes that have taken place there in recent decades. According to architectural historian Margaret Supplee Smith's 2010 context titled *Aspen's Twentieth-Century Architecture: Modernism 1945-1975*, the building exhibits a preponderance of the style's characteristic features. She even includes it in her discussion of public buildings (page 27), despite the fact that it predates the period of her study by four years.

Although several non-historic changes have been made to the site, the property meets a preponderance of the integrity and significance criteria established by the City of Aspen in terms of methods and materials of construction, along with its surviving architectural detailing and overall appearance. Consequently, it meets the City of Aspen's guidelines for the character-defining features of the Modernist (International) style of architecture. These include all of the same architectural features and historical associations that are described above in relation to NRHP eligibility.

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Today the school building contributes to Aspen's historic built environment and remains an important feature that is characteristic of its mid-twentieth century period of renewal and rapid growth. It is also representative of two architects of note, as described above. For all of these reasons, the property is eligible for local landmark designation under criterion A and C.

Applicable City of Aspen Criteria (Section 26.415.030.C.1, Aspen Municipal Code):

- A. The property is related to an event, pattern, or trend that has made a contribution to local, state, regional or national history that is deemed important, and the specific event, pattern or trend is identified and documented in an adopted context paper
- B. The property is related to people who have made a contribution to local, state, regional or national history that is deemed important, and the specific people are identified and documented in an adopted context paper
- C. The property represents a physical design that embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction, or represents the technical or aesthetic achievements of a recognized designer, craftsman, or design philosophy that is deemed important and the specific physical design, designer, or philosophy is documented in an adopted context paper
- D. The property possesses such singular significance to the City, as documented by the opinions of persons educated or experienced in the fields of history, architecture, landscape architecture, archaeology or a related field, that the property's potential demolition or major alteration would substantially diminish the character and sense of place in the city as perceived by members of the community
- E. The property or district possesses an appropriate degree of integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship and association, given its age.

Does not meet any of the above City of Aspen criteria

43. Assessment of historic physical integrity related to significance: **This property was redeveloped in 1941 with the public school that remains there today. It was expanded in 1947 when a single classroom was added to its southwest corner. In 1953, the building received a much larger addition to the east that included three classrooms and an auditorium-gymnasium. Today, all of these are considered historic alterations to the building. The front lawn with its extensive landscaping was also original to the site's development in the early 1940s and contributes greatly to its historic setting.**

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Over the past fifty years, changes have continued to take place on the property. In 1973, the building was renovated while it was still in use as a school. Work completed at that time included replacement of the doors, which were originally wood with multiple lights. Between the mid-1970s and mid-1980s, a multi-purpose room was constructed behind the three classrooms that were added in the early 1950s, along with a masonry addition to the northwest corner of the original school building. These were essentially placed on the back of the building and minimally impacted its historic appearance.

A decade later, in 1994, the building was undergoing renovation for new use as an arts and recreation center. The most substantial change made at that time involved removal of the 1953 classrooms, leaving the multi-purpose room behind it standing. The south wall of the multi-purpose room was remodeled to include entries and windows that looked out onto a new courtyard. On the auditorium-gymnasium, the centered open porch and entry on the south were removed and replaced with a window. The south wall was re-sided, with the introduction of additional vertical battens. A window located above the louvered vent high on the south wall has been closed (it remains visible on the interior). Finally, a new entrance was located near the structure's southeast corner at a later date.

In 2001, the building was expanded one final time with the construction of a narrow modern brick and glass addition on the west that holds a lobby and conference room. This provided the building with a formal western entrance that did not previously exist but is separate from its original west wall. A small plaza area was created outside of the entry. The addition is stepped back from the original school façade and the 1947 classroom addition was retained, leaving the southwest corner of the original school visible and intact. Finally, the open canopy supported by log posts that runs along the auditorium-gymnasium's west wall was added within the past fifteen years. This is minimally attached to the building, allowing its original architecture to be seen.

Today, the 1941 school building's overall shape and massing survive, retaining its characteristic symmetry and long, low, one-story profile. Also present are its metal-framed windows with central awnings, brick walls and pilasters, two main entries, and its flat roof. The building continues to front onto its original schoolyard and the view from the south is of a mid-century Modernist building. On the inside, it still contains its wood flooring and layout with a central hallway flanked by classrooms.

The eastern addition, constructed in 1953, has lost its three classrooms but retains the auditorium-gymnasium. Despite the changes that have been made there, this also continues to display its original shape and massing, along with its high windows, masonry walls, and gabled roof. On the interior, the space most notably contains the gym space with wood flooring and the stage at its north end.

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These characteristics underscore the fact that although the school has been added onto and remodeled several times, it exhibits a reasonably good level of architectural integrity in relation to the aspects of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. It continues to convey its 1941 origin, its 1953 expansion, and its long use by the community as an important venue for education.

VII. National Register Eligibility Assessment

44. National Register eligibility field assessment: **Eligible**

45. Is there National Register district potential? **Yes**

Discuss: This property is located within a neighborhood of historically and architecturally significant resources from the same era (this appears to be the mining era of the late 1800s) that are contiguous or close to one another and might allow for the creation of a National Register, State Register, or local landmark district.

If there is National Register district potential, is this building contributing? **No**

46. If the building is in an existing National Register district, is it contributing? **N/A**

VIII. Recording Information

47. Photograph numbers: **110 E. Hallam Street, #1577-1618 and #1655-1751**

Negatives filed at: **Tatanka Historical Associates, Inc.
P.O. Box 1909, Fort Collins, CO 80522**

48. Report title: **Intensive-Level Survey of Five City-Owned Historic Properties in Aspen, Colorado**

49. Date(s): **15 February 2017**

50. Recorder(s): **Ron Sladek, President**

51. Organization: **Tatanka Historical Associates, Inc.**

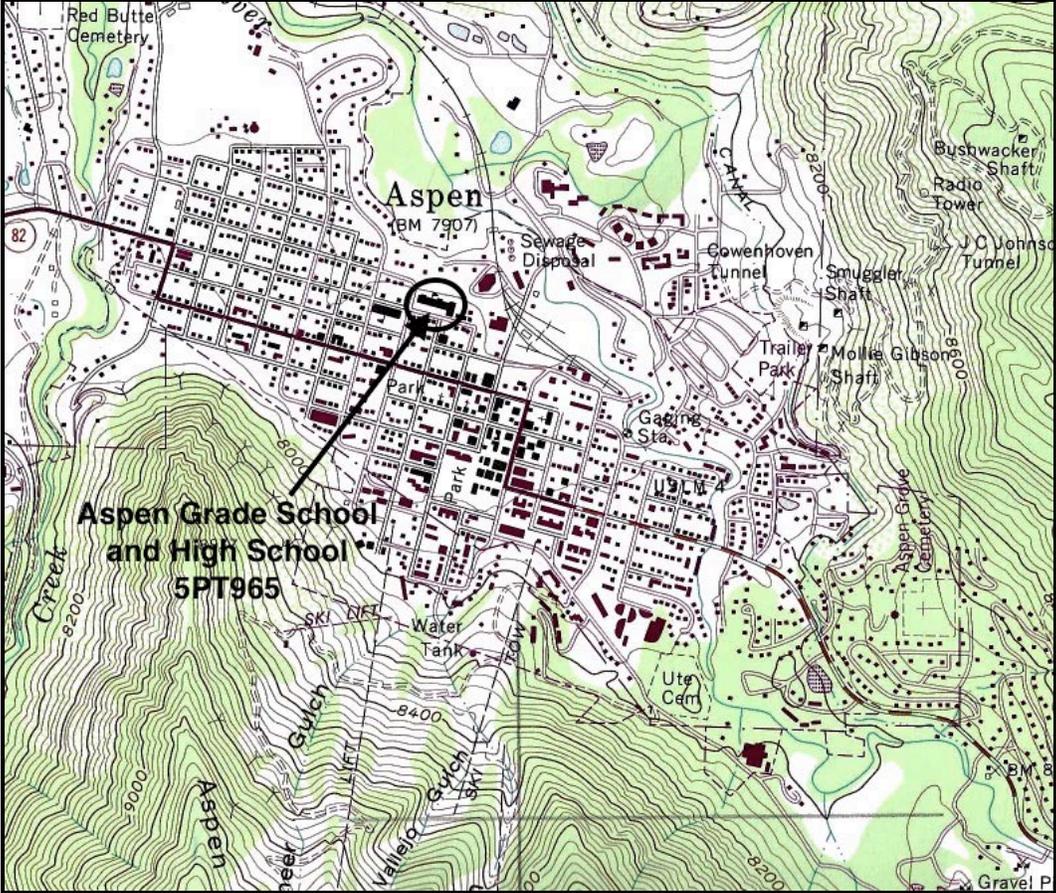
52. Address: **P.O. Box 1909, Fort Collins, CO 80522**

53. Phone number(s): **970/221-1095**

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Site Location Map



USGS Aspen 7.5' Topographic Quadrangle Map
1960 (revised 1987)

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Aerial Map



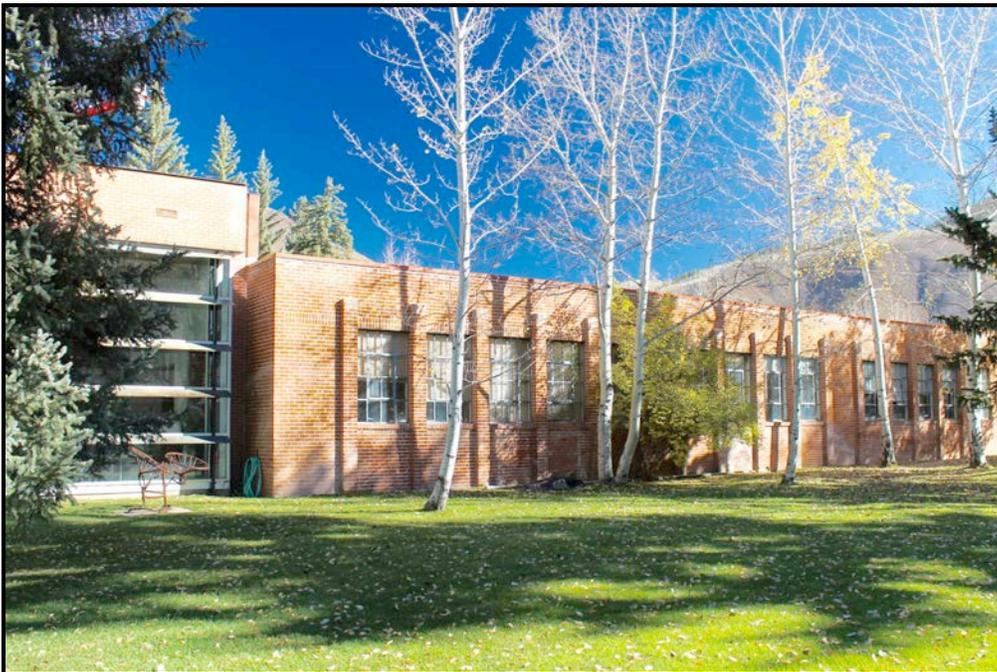
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Current Photographs



**The 1941 School's South Facade from the Southeast
View to the Northwest**



**The Western Area of the 1941 School from the Southwest
View to the Northeast**

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Current Photographs



**Central Area of the 1941 School with the Original Main Entries
View to the North**



**The 1953 Auditorium-Gymnasium Addition from the Southwest
View to the Northeast**

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Current Photographs



**1953 Auditorium-Gymnasium Addition from the Southeast
View to the Northwest**



**The Remodeled 1970s Multi-Purpose Room Addition and Courtyard
View to the North**

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Current Photographs



**The North (Rear) Wall of the 1941 School Building
View to the South**



**The 2001 West Addition to the 1941 School Building
View to the Northeast**

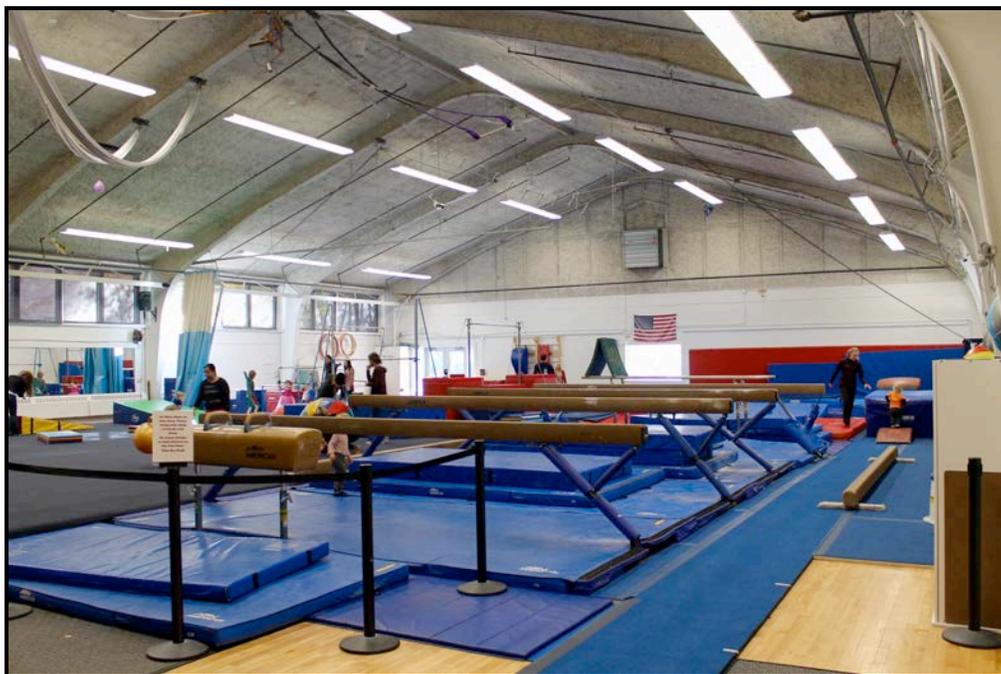
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Current Photographs



The Central Hallway in the 1941 School
View to the East



The Interior of the 1953 Auditorium-Gymnasium
View to the Southeast