

Inventory Number: RA-RVC-00063
Historic Name: North Heights School

Address: 2651 Rice Street

Description Narrative

The North Heights School, now North Heights Christian Academy, is located at 2651 Rice Street in Roseville, Ramsey County. It occupies the eastern half of an approximately 8.39-acre, square-shaped parcel at the northwest corner of the intersection of Rice Street and County Road C West (see Figure 1). Paved parking lots encompass portions of the north, south, and east sides of the parcel, with entrance drives from both Rice Street and County Road C West. A series of paved sidewalks flank the eastern side of the school building and connect to both parking lots. The western portion of the parcel, enclosed by a metal chain-link fence, consists primarily of grassy lawn, with a sports field, baseball diamond, basketball court, and a ca. 2000 playground space sheltered by a cluster of large, mature trees.¹ A row of four trees line a portion of the eastern edge of the parcel along Rice Street, and a line of small, newly planted trees flank the southern portion of the building. The parcel is surrounded by single-family homes to the west and south, a historically associated mid-twentieth-century church to the north, and suburban commercial development to the east along Rice Street. A metro bus stop with a small metal pavilion and an uncovered bench is located near the southeast corner of the parcel on Rice Street. The North Heights School building complex reflects several distinct phases of development from the 1930s through the mid-1970s (see Figure 2).



Figure 1. Current Google Earth aerial of the North Heights School (North Heights Christian Academy) depicting the location of the school building complex and associated parking lots, playing fields, and playground.

¹ "Aerial Image, Ramsey County, Minnesota," *Historic Aerials by NETROnline*, 2003, <https://www.historicaerials.com/viewer>.

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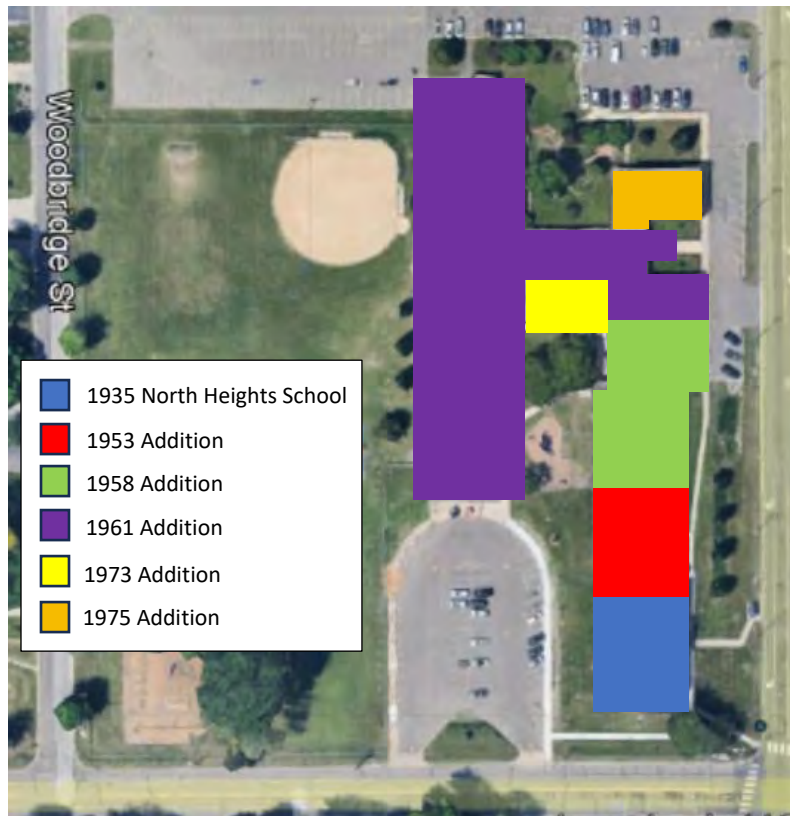


Figure 2. Original 1935 North Heights School (blue) and subsequent additions.

Original Building

The original southernmost section of the school complex, constructed in 1935, is a modest Art Deco-influenced, rectangular-plan building with a flat roof and metal-capped parapet (see Figure 3). The roof materials are not visible. The building includes a raised basement with a primary floor above grade, two at-grade entrances on the primary (east) facade, and a lower level that is partially below grade to accommodate the sloping site. Exterior walls are clad in variegated brown brick. The facade is symmetrical, with a slightly projecting central entrance bay flanked by two bays on either side with large window openings at both levels. The entrance bay includes a replacement double door, a two-light replacement metal transom, a large overhead window opening, and single window openings on either side at both floors. Windows on the primary floor are partially enclosed with metal panels in the top half of the openings and replacement horizontal sliding sash units in the lower half. The lower-level window openings are enclosed with metal panels. Window openings feature brick soldier course lintels and concrete sills. A small projection at the southern end of the building represents an original stairwell. It features a secondary at-grade entrance on the facade with a single, replacement metal door.

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Figure 3. Facade of original 1935 North Heights School, view facing west.

Modest Art Deco-style elements include brown, dogtooth, soldier course brick pilasters with concrete capitals flanking the entrance and each window bay, a stepped parapet at the entrance bay, and a stepped brickwork design over the stairwell entrance at the southern end of the building. Additional brick details on the facade include brown brick soldier courses at the cornice lines of the window bays, and variegated, patterned brickwork at the cornice lines at the central entrance bay and southern projection. The foundation is not visible but includes a concrete water table. A concrete date stone etched with “1935” is located above the water table at the right side of the central entrance bay (see Figure 4 and Figure 5).



Figure 4. Front (east) facade of original 1935 North Heights School, view facing southwest.

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Figure 5. Front (east) facade of original 1935 North Heights School, view facing northwest.

The side (south) elevation is devoid of fenestration but features the same brick pilasters as the primary facade. The side (north) elevation has been altered by an early 1950s addition (see Figure 6). The rear (west) elevation includes an original one-story brick projection with the same flat roof and parapet. Two large, former lower-level doors or window openings at ground level are enclosed with corrugated fiberglass panels. The rear elevation includes the same partially enclosed window openings on the upper floor with metal sliding sash units. Two of the lower-level window openings have been enclosed with metal louvers. Three rear entrances include the same replacement metal doors. One of the doors at the southern end of the rear elevation is accessed via a concrete staircase with a stone stair wall (see Figure 7 and Figure 8).



Figure 6. Side (south) elevation of original 1935 North Heights School, view facing north.

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Figure 7. Rear (west) and side (south) elevations of original 1935 North Heights School, view facing northeast.



Figure 8. Rear (west) elevation of original 1935 North Heights School with portion of 1953 addition (left), view facing east-southeast.

First Addition: 1953

At the north (side) elevation of the original 1935 building is a 1953 addition, representing the first phase of expansion (see Figure 9 and Figure 10).² The addition replaced an original, small, northern projection, similar in appearance to the extant stairwell projection at the southern end of the 1935 building. The one-story addition has mottled tan brick cladding, ribbon windows, a flat roof with a deep overhang, and a large interior brick chimney. A recessed double-door entrance is located at the southern end of the front (east) facade and likely served as the school building's new primary entrance upon completion. The recessed entrance includes replacement metal and glass doors, large sidelights, and an original, exterior, metal industrial door accessing an adjacent boiler room. Immediately west of the entrance is a

² Margaret Eubanks, *North Heights Elementary School 1886-1981: A History*, 1981.

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two-story stairwell projection connecting to the upper level of the original 1935 building. The stairwell projection features the same tan brick cladding, a flat roof, and replacement, metal, fixed-light windows (see Figure 11). The facade of the 1953 addition includes a solid brick expanse near the entrance and a single secondary entrance with a replacement metal door. A band of original, one-over-one, wood sash windows spans the remaining extent of the facade (see Figure 12). The rear (west) elevation features the same mottled tan brick cladding but includes a series of replacement, metal, three-light windows separated by brick wingwalls below the roof overhang. A shed-roof clerestory window enclosed with corrugated fiberglass panels spans the rear (west) elevation of the roof (see Figure 13).



Figure 9. Front (east) facade of 1953 addition at north end of original 1935 school building, view facing west.



Figure 10. Facade of 1953 addition, view facing northwest.

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Figure 11. Facade of 1953 addition and entrance at north end of original 1935 school building, view facing west.



Figure 12. Facade of 1953 addition with original 1935 school building (left), view facing southwest.

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Figure 13. Rear (west) elevation of 1953 addition, view facing northeast.

Second Addition: 1958

Immediately to the north is a second, one-story, linear addition completed in 1958 (see Figures 14-17).³ It blends seamlessly with the earlier 1953 addition but represents an additional phase of expansion. The 1958 addition features the same tan brick cladding, flat roof with overhang, and three wide bays of windows spanning the front facade. The bands of windows alternate between original, wood, one-over-one and fixed-light units separated by brick wingwalls. A non-historic-age concrete-block planter extends below the window bays. The northern end of the addition includes a large, brick-clad projection with no fenestration and a single, recessed metal door. The projection represents part of the current cafeteria space. Historic-age metal lettering on the brick facade reads “North Heights School.” The rear (west) elevation of the 1958 addition mimics the 1953 addition with the same replacement, metal, three-light windows and brick wingwalls separating the bays (see Figure 17).



Figure 14. Facade of 1958 addition at north end of 1953 addition, view facing west.

³ Eubanks, *North Heights Elementary School 1886-1981: A History*.

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Figure 15. Facade of 1953 addition (left) and 1958 addition (center and right), view facing northwest.



Figure 16. Detail of facade of 1958 addition, view facing northwest.



Figure 17. Rear (west) elevation of 1958 addition with replacement windows, view facing northeast.

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Third Addition: 1961

A large, T-shaped addition at the north end of the complex was incorporated in 1961.⁴ It included two, linear classroom wings constructed parallel to the 1950s additions and connected by a hyphen to the north end of the 1958 addition. The hyphen encompassed a library, administrative offices, a new primary entrance, and an expansion of the original cafeteria space (see Figures 18-24). The 1961 addition features similar mottled tan brick cladding and a flat roof with a metal coping, but the roofline is tightly capped with no overhang. Windows are replacement, metal, fixed units with central hoppers and fixed transoms. A small projecting ell at the north end of the classroom wing features recessed entrances on the east and west elevations, with replacement metal and glass double-doors. The brick-clad side (south) elevation of the linear classroom addition includes a single metal door and sidelight, a former entrance enclosed with metal louvers, and two large exterior metal smokestacks (see Figure 22). The new primary entrance on the front (east) facade of the 1961 addition includes a front projection with metal doors and sidelights (see Figures 18-19). The entrance is flanked by the same replacement, metal, fixed and hopper window units, with metal panels below the window frames. A flat metal canopy with square supports shelters the entrance doors. The cafeteria addition or expansion, located south of the primary entrance at the north end of the 1958 addition, features the same replacement metal windows on the side (north elevation) and no fenestration along the front (east) facade. Evidence of the addition is visible on the facade in the slightly different brick cladding between the two halves of the cafeteria projection. Non-historic-age signage on the facade of the 1961 addition denotes “North Heights Christian Academy K-8” and “North Heights Christian Preschool & Child Care” (see Figure 18).



Figure 18. Facade of 1961 addition with cafeteria expansion (left) and new primary entrance, view facing west.

⁴ Eubanks, *North Heights Elementary School 1886-1981: A History*.

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Figure 19. Facade of 1961 addition with new primary entrance, view facing west-northwest.



Figure 20. Side (north) and rear (west) elevations of 1961 linear classroom addition, view facing southeast.



Figure 21. Rear (west) elevation of 1961 linear classroom addition, view facing northeast.

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Figure 22. Side (south) elevations of 1961 linear classroom addition (left) and library hyphen addition (right), view facing north.



Figure 23. Side (north) elevation of 1961 linear classroom addition (right) and library hyphen addition (background left), view facing south.



Figure 24. Side (north) elevation of 1961 library hyphen addition, view facing south.

Library/Media Center and Gymnasium Additions: 1973 and 1975

In 1973, an addition to the existing library was incorporated along the side (south) elevation of the hyphen between the 1950s and 1960s linear sections of the complex. It features the same mottled tan brick cladding, a flat roof, and no visible window openings. The library addition was partially obstructed

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from view during the field survey due to the presence of a secondary playground immediately south that is enclosed by a chain-link fence (see Figure 25).

A final addition was incorporated in 1975 with the completion of a large gymnasium at the north end of the primary entrance (see Figures 26-27). The double-height gymnasium features the same tan brick cladding, a flat roof with a metal coping, and no fenestration. A one-story rear projection connects to the 1961 hyphen and includes a metal double door on the north elevation. A small hyphen extending north from the primary entrance also connects to the gymnasium. The gymnasium's front (east) facade includes a large metal cross and metal lettering depicting part of a bible scripture. The side (north) elevation features a single metal door.



Figure 25. Obstructed view of side (south) elevation of 1973 library addition, view facing north.



Figure 26. Side (south) elevation and front (east) facade of 1975 gymnasium addition (right) immediately north of 1961 addition and entrance (left), view facing northwest.

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Figure 27. Side (south) elevation and front (east) facade of 1975 gymnasium addition, view facing northwest.

Interior

Historians toured portions of the building's interior during the field survey, but at the request of the school's principal, no interior photographs were taken. The original gymnasium remains in place in the lower level of the original 1935 school building. Interior sliding, metal, industrial doors separate the original building from the 1951 addition and stairwell projection. The two 1950s additions and the large 1961 addition feature double-loaded corridors with classrooms flanking either side. The interior hallways include glazed brick walls, original wooden doors with transoms, and asbestos tile floors. Some of the hallways feature wooden cubbies with benches and coat hooks, while others are lined with metal lockers. The cafeteria is located within the facade projection immediately south of the primary entrance. The administrative offices are located adjacent to the main entrance within the hyphen connecting the 1961 linear classroom addition.

The school building complex reflects the original 1935 building and several phases of expansion from 1953 to 1975 (see Figures 28-30). Material alterations include replacement windows on the original 1935 building, on the rear elevations of the two 1950s additions, and on the 1961 addition, as well as replacement metal doors on all sections of the building.

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Figure 28. Facade of original 1935 building (left), with 1953 addition (center), and 1958 addition (right), view facing southwest.



Figure 29. Facade of 1953 addition (left) and 1958 addition (right), view facing northwest.



Figure 30. Original 1935 building (far left), 1953 addition (left), 1958 addition (center), and part of 1961 addition (right), view facing southwest.

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Significance Narrative

A detailed historic context is presented in *Phase I Survey/Phase II Evaluation of the G Line Bus Rapid Transit Corridor, Ramsey and Dakota Counties, Minnesota*.

Roseville and Rose Township

Rose Township, incorporated in 1850, included today's city of Roseville, as well as portions of the current communities of Lauderdale and Falcon Heights.⁵ Located northwest of Saint Paul in west-central Ramsey County, much of the township remained primarily undeveloped and in agricultural use through the early twentieth century. Local farming included swine, poultry, and cattle production, as well as small-acreage fruit and vegetable cultivation.⁶

Initial commercial development of the area began in the 1930s, followed by a significant period of growth after World War II. In 1948, part of Rose Township incorporated into the Village of Roseville. Shortly thereafter, the neighboring communities of Falcon Heights and Lauderdale also incorporated, annexing the remaining portions of Rose Township.⁷ Commercial development during this period largely occurred around existing major road corridors extending north from Saint Paul, such as Rice Street. Residential development in Roseville also skyrocketed in the 1950s, but it was more dispersed within new, large, scattered subdivisions.⁸ In response to the rapid population growth, Roseville's housing stock doubled in the first half of the decade, with the construction of approximately 1,600 new single-family homes between 1950-1954.⁹ Roseville's population reached nearly 35,000 by the early 1970s, and the village became a city in 1974.¹⁰

Ramsey County School District Number 31

Prior to significant regional growth and development in the early to mid-twentieth century, Rose Township comprised part of Ramsey County's rural school system. The immediate vicinity encompassed part of School District 31, which organized in 1886. That same year, the school board purchased property from Emil Olsson, and a wood-frame schoolhouse was constructed near the site of the subject building at today's Rice Street and County Road C West intersection. The first classes began in 1887.¹¹ A decade later, in 1897, the school board raised money "to improve the schoolhouse."¹² An 1898 *Plat Book of Ramsey County, Minnesota* depicts an unnamed schoolhouse at this location on a 10-acre parcel

⁵ "A Brief History of Roseville," *City of Roseville*, n.d., <https://www.cityofroseville.com/300/History>.

⁶ "Historical Agriculture," *Roseville Historical Society*, 2023, <https://www.rhsmn.org/roseville-minnesota-historical-agriculture/>.

⁷ "A Brief History of Roseville."

⁸ City of Roseville, "Roseville 2040 Our Future Together: 2. The Land - Geographic and Development History," accessed April 23, 2024, <https://www.cityofroseville.com/DocumentCenter/View/30103/9-CH3-Community-Profile-First-Resubmittal>.

⁹ "Community Pride - Roseville at 75," *City of Roseville*, accessed April 23, 2024, <https://www.cityofroseville.com/3800/Community-Pride-Roseville-at-75>.

¹⁰ Roseville Historical Society, *Roseville, Minnesota: The Story of Its Growth 1843-1988*, 1988.

¹¹ Eubanks, *North Heights Elementary School 1886-1981: A History*.

¹² Eubanks, *North Heights Elementary School 1886-1981: A History*, 2.

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under the ownership of E. Olsson. The map identifies the surrounding area as “Sch. Dis. No. 31.”¹³ The school was reportedly known by multiple names, including Rice Street School, Rose Town School, and Fairchild School (the former street name of today’s adjacent County Road C West).¹⁴ In 1914, the school board voted in favor of purchasing an additional 0.5-acre parcel “for school grounds” from E. Olson [*sic*], who may have been the same owner from the 1886 purchase of the school site.¹⁵ The original schoolhouse remained in use through the early twentieth century (see Figure 31).¹⁶ Ramsey County maps depict it as an unnamed school in 1916, and as “School District No. 31” in 1931.¹⁷ The school is first identified in city directories in 1934 as North Heights School.¹⁸



Figure 31. Undated photograph of original 1886 school (nonextant).¹⁹

¹³ Peter Dahl, “Rose Township Plat Map,” Plat Book of Hennepin County, Minnesota; Plat Book of Ramsey County, Minnesota (Minneapolis: Northwestern Map Publishing Company, 1898), <https://collection.mndigital.org/catalog/mhs:1299#?c=&m=&s=&cv=97&xywh=959%2C2092%2C766%2C490>.

¹⁴ Eubanks, *North Heights Elementary School 1886-1981: A History*.

¹⁵ Eubanks, *North Heights Elementary School 1886-1981: A History*, 2.

¹⁶ Eubanks, *North Heights Elementary School 1886-1981: A History*, 8.

¹⁷ “Ramsey County, Minn Plat,” Plat Book of the State of Minnesota - Ramsey County, 1916, University of Minnesota Libraries, https://geo.lib.umn.edu/plat_books/stateofmn1916/counties/ramsey.htm; “Rose - Section 1, T. 29, R. 23 Plat Map,” Atlas of Ramsey County, Minnesota (St. Paul Real Estate Board, 1931), <https://historicmapworks.com/Map/US/487832/Rose+++Section+1++T++29++R++23/Ramsey+County+1931/Minn+esota/>.

¹⁸ *Saint Paul City Directories 1890-1980* (Saint Paul, Minn.: R.L. Polk & Co., n.d.), 134.

¹⁹ Eubanks, *North Heights Elementary School 1886-1981: A History*.

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By the early 1930s, however, the aging schoolhouse could no longer accommodate the growing student population.²⁰ Plans for a new school building developed at least partially in response to opportunities created by President Franklin D. Roosevelt's federal New Deal programs, specifically the Works Progress Administration (WPA). The WPA provided unemployment relief during the Great Depression through public works projects across the United States. The program funded and employed thousands of Americans in the construction of schools, libraries, hospitals, bridges, airfields, road repairs, and other infrastructure projects.²¹ Local newspapers in the early 1930s indicate the construction of numerous rural schools in Ramsey County during this period. An August 1935 *Minneapolis Star* article noted that, "St. Paul has over \$600,000 worth of [WPA] projects in the list approved by the president today...[including] construction of school house district No. 31."²² Anticipated provisions for the new District No. 31 school building at that time included \$2,567 in federal funds and \$7,651.72 in local "sponsor's contribution."²³

A new brick school building for District 31 was constructed in 1935. Although building permit indices and research conducted to date did not identify an individual architect, the building was constructed through the efforts of the WPA. Margaret Eubank's 1981 publication, *North Heights Elementary 1886-1981: A History* provides a timeline of development and expansion of the new school. Eubanks references a *St. Paul Pioneer Press* article highlighting the dedication of the new building in March 1936. The article noted that the new "District 31 School at Rice Street and County Road C" was constructed "through the use of \$16,000 sponsor funds and \$32,000 WPA money," representing a considerably larger sum than initially anticipated in 1935.²⁴ The new school building included four classrooms, a combination gymnasium and auditorium in the lower level, and a 4-H clubroom.²⁵ An early (undated) photograph of the school building shortly after construction reveals the original multi-light windows and doors, which have since been replaced. The photograph also depicts a large flagpole near the southern end of the building and a low stone wall along the front (east) property line, both of which are nonextant (see Figure 32).²⁶ The original 1880s schoolhouse, referenced in the article as "one of Ramsey County's oldest landmarks," remained standing after completion of the new school building, but it was later demolished or relocated at an undetermined date.²⁷

²⁰ Eubanks, *North Heights Elementary School 1886-1981: A History*.

²¹ "Works Progress Administration (WPA)," *History Channel - A&E Television Networks, LLC*, 2023, <https://www.history.com/topics/great-depression/works-progress-administration>.

²² "Compromise on WPA Is Drafted," *The Minneapolis Star*, August 5, 1935, 4.

²³ "Compromise on WPA Is Drafted," 4.

²⁴ Eubanks, *North Heights Elementary School 1886-1981: A History*, 5.

²⁵ Eubanks, *North Heights Elementary School 1886-1981: A History*.

²⁶ "North Heights Elementary, 1935. Ramsey County School District Building," *Pinterest*, accessed April 23, 2024, <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/573505333773308410/>.

²⁷ Eubanks, *North Heights Elementary School 1886-1981: A History*, 6.

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Figure 32. Undated photograph of the school shortly after completion in 1935.²⁸

The 1935 brick school building, representing the extant Art Deco-influenced southernmost portion of the current school complex, includes a “1935” concrete date stone at the right side of the central entrance (see Figure 32). However, no WPA stone or plaque was identified on the facade or elsewhere on the building’s exterior during field survey. The previously referenced undated photograph of the school building taken shortly after completion shows no evidence of a WPA plaque, although the date stone is clearly depicted. For comparison, a similar Art Deco-influenced school building is located approximately 1.4 miles south at 211 McCarrons Boulevard North (see Figure 36 below). Constructed in 1936 as the former Ramsey County Rural School District No. 29, it was later known as McCarrons Lake Elementary School. It features a similar inscribed date stone on the facade but includes an additional inscribed concrete plaque on the opposite side of the entrance reading, “Erected by WPA.”

North Heights School and Rural District Consolidation

At the time of construction, the 1935 District Number 31 school building served a primarily rural population. Aerial imagery in 1937 depicts the solitary school building and stone wall at the front (east) edge of the property surrounded by active agricultural land (see Figure 33).²⁹ A small number of scattered farmsteads and houses are depicted along portions of Rice Street and County Road C. To the north, a railroad line extended generally north-south flanking the eastern side of nearby Round Lake. Additional adjacent roads visible at that time included today’s Western Avenue North to the west and Little Canada Road extending east from Rice Street. Although it remained a rural district, a committee voted to officially change the school’s name to North Heights in 1941.³⁰ Numerous local newspaper articles from the 1940s, however, still refer to the building as the District 31 School.

²⁸ “North Heights Elementary, 1935. Ramsey County School District Building.”

²⁹ “Aerial Image, Ramsey County, Minnesota,” *University of Minnesota - Minnesota Historical Aerial Photographs Online*, 1937, https://geo.lib.umn.edu/ramsey_county/y1937/WO-1-70.jpg.

³⁰ “North Heights Elementary, 1935. Ramsey County School District Building.”

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Figure 33. Aerial imagery in 1937 depicting the original 1935 school building (circled) and surrounding rural area.³¹

In 1947 imagery, the school building retains its original 1935 footprint, and the area remains largely unchanged, with only a few additional dwellings on Country Road C near the Rice Street intersection.³² However, following incorporation of the Village of Roseville in 1948, increased residential and commercial development began in the vicinity. In December 1948, District 31 (North Heights) merged with eight other rural districts to form Independent School District Number 3.³³ The consolidated District 3 encompassed the Village of Roseville, the remaining portions of Rose Township, and parts of Mounds View and New Canada Townships. According to the *Minneapolis Star*, the consolidation represented “the state’s first test of the school district reorganization law passed by the 1947 legislature.”³⁴ District 3 would later become District 623, although research did not reveal when or why this subsequent change occurred.

After World War II, residential development that began in Saint Paul quickly spread into neighboring communities, including Roseville. By the early 1950s, the area’s growing population necessitated the first of several additions to the school, by that time known officially as North Heights Elementary. In 1950, Ramsey County proposed a \$3.2 million program for improvements to District 3 schools, including North Heights.³⁵ A 1953 newspaper article noted an upcoming dedication for the completion of a \$144,000 addition, representing ‘the sixth of seven elementary projects put into operation by

³¹ “Aerial Image, Ramsey County, Minnesota,” 1937.

³² “Aerial Image, Ramsey County, Minnesota,” *Historic Aerials by NETROnline*, 1947, <https://www.historicaerials.com/viewer>.

³³ Eubanks, *North Heights Elementary School 1886-1981: A History*.

³⁴ “9 Districts Vote Ramsey County School Merger,” *The Minneapolis Star*, December 22, 1948, 9.

³⁵ “\$3,200,000 Schools Project Proposed,” *The Minneapolis Star*, December 6, 1950.

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Independent School District 3.”³⁶ The addition was designed by the Minneapolis architectural firm of Magney, Tusler, and Setter, with Davis and Davis, Inc. of Saint Paul as general contractors. The rectangular-shaped addition at the north end of the original 1935 building approximately doubled the footprint of the school. It included two classrooms and a kindergarten room, bringing the total number of school classrooms to seven.³⁷ The addition is visible in available 1953 aerial imagery (see Figure 34).³⁸

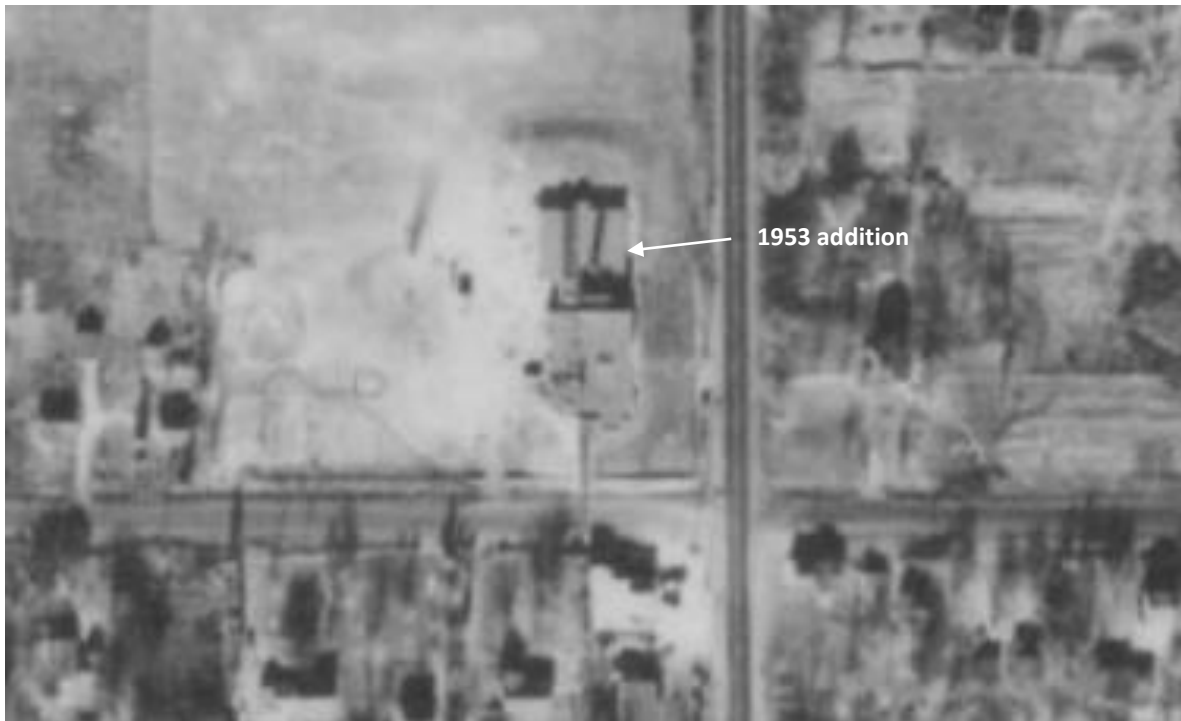


Figure 34. Aerial imagery in 1953 depicting the first (1953) addition at the north end of the original school building.³⁹

In 1957, aerial imagery depicts the same footprint with the 1953 addition, the original stone wall at the front (east) edge of the property, and a new baseball diamond west of the school.⁴⁰ Within the broader vicinity, aerial imagery also depicts a small commercial node immediately south of the school at the southwest corner of Rice Street and County Road C, as well as additional residential and commercial development north on Rice Street and east on County Road C. Two small residential subdivisions are depicted along today’s Galtier and Matilda Streets to the west, and on County Road C 2, Maple Lane, and Woodbridge Street to the north.⁴¹

³⁶ “North Heights Will Dedicate School Annex,” *The Minneapolis Star*, April 8, 1953, 71.

³⁷ Eubanks, *North Heights Elementary School 1886-1981: A History*.

³⁸ “Aerial Image, Ramsey County, Minnesota,” *University of Minnesota - Minnesota Historical Aerial Photographs Online*, 1953, https://geo.lib.umn.edu/ramsey_county/y1953/WO-6M-126.jpg.

³⁹ “Aerial Image, Ramsey County, Minnesota,” 1953.

⁴⁰ “Aerial Image, Ramsey County, Minnesota,” *Historic Aerials by NETROnline*, 1957, <https://www.historicaerials.com/viewer>.

⁴¹ “Aerial Image, Ramsey County, Minnesota,” 1957.

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Mid-Twentieth-Century Growth and Expansion

Area development and population growth continued to soar through the 1950s and 1960s. Numerous local newspaper articles of the period addressed the overcrowded conditions in District 3 and other suburban school districts and reported numerous proposed school additions and new construction. According to the *Minneapolis Star* in 1955, Ramsey County's Independent School District 3 anticipated approximately 5,950 students for the 1956-1957 school year, representing an increase of almost 17 percent from 5,100 students the previous year.⁴² In actuality, however, the total number of students reached nearly 6,400 by September 1957 and continued to grow steadily over the next decade.⁴³ To meet this demand, the district approved the construction of a second addition to North Heights completed in 1958. It was designed by architect John Lindstrom, a partner in the firm of Magney, Tusler, and Setter that had designed the previous 1953 addition. The large, linear addition at the north end of the school building included six classrooms, administrative offices, a lunchroom and kitchen, a nurse's room, and a faculty lounge.⁴⁴ The linear addition is not yet visible in 1957 aerial imagery.⁴⁵ Its nearly identical appearance to the adjacent 1953 addition suggests that it may have been planned as part of the original early 1950s improvements.

Enrollment at North Heights continued to rise with the ongoing suburban expansion of Roseville, and within five years, the school had outgrown its 1958 layout. The district proposed construction of another largescale addition, with completion in December 1961 at a cost of more than \$420,000.⁴⁶ The large, linear addition featured 16 classrooms and a new entrance at the north end of the 1958 addition. A library wing hyphen, completed in 1962, connected the addition to the new north end entrance.⁴⁷ The addition significantly enlarged the school's footprint, giving it its characteristic "H" shape that it retains today. Following completion of the addition, approximately 160 elementary students from at least one other area District 3 school transferred to North Heights. Enrollment peaked during the 1966-1967 school year, when North Heights represented Roseville's largest elementary school. Even with all 30 classrooms in use that year, the school's eight kindergarten classes were forced to operate in three area churches due to space constraints.⁴⁸ Aerial imagery in 1966 depicts both the second 1958 linear classroom wing addition and the larger adjacent 1961 addition and library hyphen (see Figure 35). Site changes include the incorporation of a parking lot and sidewalks at the east side of the school and a horseshoe-shaped drive at the south end of the school building. Two baseball diamonds are also depicted at the west side of the parcel. However, the original stone wall at the front of the property no longer appears to be extant. The surrounding area reflects a much larger residential neighborhood west and north of the school.⁴⁹

⁴² "Here's Where Minneapolis Area Schools Stand for This Fall," *Star Tribune*, August 26, 1956.

⁴³ "Suburban Schools Rolls About Equal to Cities'," *The Minneapolis Star*, September 19, 1957.

⁴⁴ Eubanks, *North Heights Elementary School 1886-1981: A History*.

⁴⁵ "Aerial Image, Ramsey County, Minnesota," 1957.

⁴⁶ "Opening Data on Area Schools Listed," *Star Tribune*, August 27, 1961, 2.

⁴⁷ Eubanks, *North Heights Elementary School 1886-1981: A History*; "Opening Data on Area Schools Listed."

⁴⁸ Eubanks, *North Heights Elementary School 1886-1981: A History*.

⁴⁹ "Aerial Image, Ramsey County, Minnesota," *Historic Aerials by NETROnline*, 1966, <https://www.historicaerials.com/viewer>.

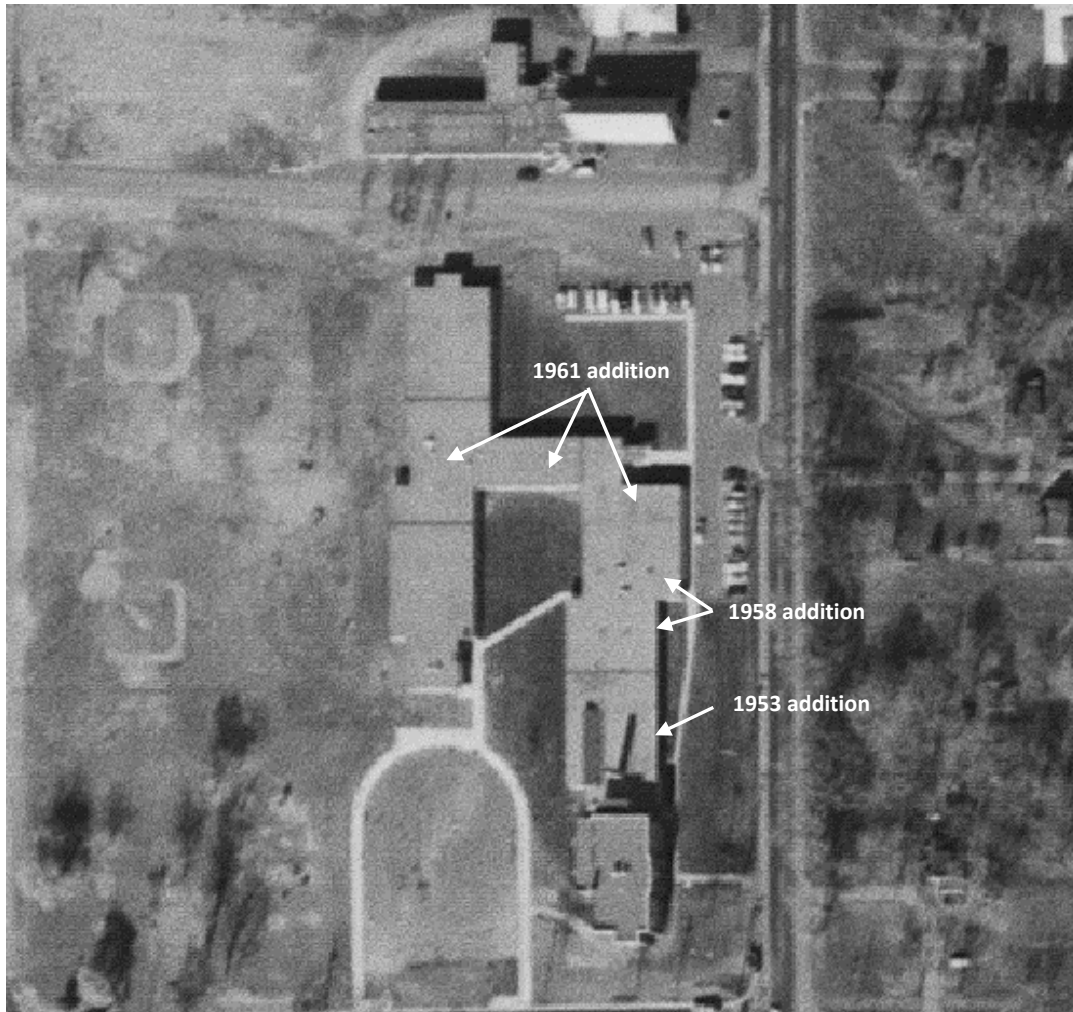


Figure 35. Aerial imagery in 1966 with original 1935 school building (southern end) with 1953, 1958, and 1961 additions.⁵⁰

North Heights' enrollment fluctuated over the next decade with the construction and expansion of additional District 3 schools. Additions to the North Heights School during this period include a library and media center addition in 1973 and a new gymnasium at the north end of the main building in 1975.⁵¹ A 1974 newspaper article identified the proposed gymnasium as part of a \$1.5 million Roseville district building program.⁵² Both additions are depicted in aerial imagery in 1980, along with a curved parking lot at the south end of the building.⁵³

⁵⁰ "Aerial Image, Ramsey County, Minnesota," 1966.

⁵¹ Eubanks, *North Heights Elementary School 1886-1981: A History*.

⁵² "Roseville OKs School Plans," *The Minneapolis Star*, June 18, 1974.

⁵³ "Aerial Image, Ramsey County, Minnesota," *Historic Aerials by NETROnline*, 1980, <https://www.historicaerials.com/viewer>.

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Historic Name: North Heights School Address: 2651 Rice Street

Public School Closure and North Heights Christian Academy

North Heights officially closed as a public educational facility in June 1981.⁵⁴ However, the building did not remain empty for long. By October of that year, an adjacent Lutheran church immediately north of the school property purchased the building. Initially known as North Heights Community Lutheran, the congregation reportedly began holding services as a Sunday school class in the North Heights school building in 1946.⁵⁵ By 1951, the congregation worshipped at a basement building on the parcel immediately north of the school.⁵⁶ The extant church building was constructed ca. 1960, based on aerial imagery review. By that time, the congregation identified as North Heights Lutheran and included 3,100 members.⁵⁷ With its 1981 acquisition of the former school, the church planned to use the building for its education program.⁵⁸ City directories in 1983 identify the school building as North Heights Lutheran Church Community Center Office.⁵⁹ In 1988, the church established the North Heights Christian Academy, a private Christian school for kindergarten through eighth grade in the former public school building. The school building remains in use today as North Heights Christian Academy and North Heights Christian Preschool.⁶⁰ The adjacent church is currently known as North Heights Church and is affiliated with the Alliance of Renewal Churches.⁶¹

Regional Schools and the WPA

The original 1935 North Heights School was constructed with WPA funding. Established in 1935, the WPA represented one of President Roosevelt's New Deal work relief programs during the Great Depression. According to the National Register of Historic Places (National Register) Multiple Property Documentation Form "Federal Relief Construction in Minnesota, 1933-1941" (Federal Relief MPDF), educational facilities represented one of the most significant and commonly constructed building types under the WPA and other federal work-relief programs. In 1938, just three years after the establishment of the WPA, the State of Minnesota had utilized \$96 million on work relief projects, with 405 school projects undertaken statewide. This included the construction of 52 new school buildings (including North Heights), the demolition of six former schools, and repairs and additions to 347 schools. By 1943, when the WPA program officially ended, Minnesota had constructed a total of 126 new schools using WPA funds. Most of these school buildings were of brick and concrete construction.

The WPA did not specify architectural styles for projects, but often recommended simplified designs to facilitate construction by primarily unskilled WPA workers. The popular Moderne style was often employed for WPA and other work-relief program buildings due to its simplicity of design.⁶² North Heights School represents one of the earlier WPA-funded schools in Minnesota with its construction date of 1935, the same year that the WPA program was established. Although not designed in the

⁵⁴ Eubanks, *North Heights Elementary School 1886-1981: A History*.

⁵⁵ "Church Buys Back Roots in Roseville," *The Minneapolis Star*, October 1, 1981.

⁵⁶ "North Heights Community Church 200 Worship Inside," *The Minneapolis Star*, March 26, 1951.

⁵⁷ "North Heights Lutheran Church Dedication of Parish Hall," *The Minneapolis Star*, March 2, 1963.

⁵⁸ "Church Buys Back Roots in Roseville."

⁵⁹ *Saint Paul City Directories 1890-1980*, 298.

⁶⁰ "Home," *North Heights Christian Academy*, 2024, <https://northheights.academy/>.

⁶¹ "Home," *North Heights*, accessed April 23, 2024, <https://northheights.church/>.

⁶² National Register of Historic Places, Multiple Property Documentation Form, "Federal Relief Construction in Minnesota, 1933-1941," Statewide, Minnesota.

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Moderne style, North Heights reflects a modest, streamlined interpretation of the Art Deco style, in keeping with the WPA's general recommendation for simplicity.

Specifically, within Roseville, a comprehensive list of WPA-funded schools of the 1930s and 1940s is not known. A review of current Roseville Area Schools (District 623) indicates that no WPA-era school buildings remain extant within the Roseville public school system.⁶³ However, as previously noted, a 1936 WPA-constructed school building similar to North Heights remains standing at 211 McCarrons Boulevard North in Roseville (see Figure 36). Built in 1936 according to the date stone, the school replaced an earlier School District No. 29 building at that location, and the parcel is identified as School District (3) 623 on a 1960 plat map.⁶⁴ The building was later known as McCarrons Lake School or McCarrons Lake Elementary. Today it operates as Hand in Hand Christian Montessori School. Concrete plaques on the facade denote the building date of 1936 and state "Erected by WPA."



Figure 36. McCarrons Lake School (Hand in Hand Christian Montessori School) with recent facade alterations, view facing northwest.

A review of Google Street View imagery indicates that through ca. 2019, the 1936 Art Deco-influenced McCarrons Lake School building resembled North Heights with its variegated brick construction, areas of patterned brickwork, brick pilasters with concrete caps, stepped central entrance, original paired window openings on both levels of the facade, and a raised basement with the primary entrance at ground level and the lower level partially below grade. The original McCarrons Lake School building featured a square plan that has since been wrapped on both side (east and west) and rear (north) elevations with several large additions from ca. 1955 through ca. 2005.⁶⁵ Today, the front (south) facade

⁶³ "Roseville Area Schools," accessed April 23, 2024, <https://www.isd623.org/>.

⁶⁴ "Plate 263 (Ramsey County)," Ramsey, Dakota, Washington Counties and St. Paul (Carson Map Company, 1960), <https://historicmapworks.com/Map/US/487582/Plate263/Ramsey+-+Dakota+-+Washington+-+Counties+and+St+Paul+1960/Minnesota/>.

⁶⁵ "Aerial Image, Ramsey County, Minnesota," *Historic Aerials by NETROnline*, 2008, <https://www.historicaerials.com/viewer>.

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has been extensively altered. The brick cladding has been painted a single color, concealing the original patterned brickwork, pilasters, and concrete caps. Furthermore, all original window openings on the facade have been enlarged into three single openings spanning both levels, and infilled with large, replacement, vinyl, fixed windows with faux muntins. The front entrance door has also been replaced with a new metal and glass double door. The extent of facade alterations and the series of large additions that have wrapped the original school building on three sides have compromised its integrity as an intact or significant example of a WPA-constructed school in Roseville.

Research efforts identified an additional WPA-funded, 1930s-era school constructed in Roseville that is nonextant. Depicted as the School District No. 32 on historic plat maps, it was constructed in 1936 on the north side of today's County Road B West slightly east of the Snelling Avenue intersection. The brick school building featured similar Art Deco influences, such as a stepped facade, patterned brickwork, and concrete and brick pilasters flanking the entrance (see Figure 37). Following a series of additions, the school was demolished in the 1970s.⁶⁶



Figure 37. Former WPA-constructed School District No. 32 School in Roseville (nonextant).⁶⁷

Although other WPA-funded schools may have been constructed in Roseville, the North Heights and McCannon Lake school buildings remain the only identified extant examples within the community.

⁶⁶ Joe Reimringer, "Reimringer Family History as Told by Joe Reimringer in 1985" (Roseville Historical Society, February 2023), <https://www.rhsmn.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Newsletter-Feb.-2023.pdf>.

⁶⁷ Reimringer, "Reimringer Family History as Told by Joe Reimringer in 1985."

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Historic Name: North Heights School Address: 2651 Rice Street

Evaluation

The North Heights School was evaluated for the National Register under *Criteria A, B, and C*. The Federal Relief MPDF provided part of the historic context within which the school building was evaluated.

Criterion A

To be eligible under *Criterion A: History*, a property must be associated with a significant event or pattern of history, in this case specifically within Roseville, Ramsey County, or Minnesota. According to the Federal Relief MPDF, to be eligible under *Criterion A* for its association with federal relief programs of the Great Depression, an educational facility must have been financed through federal funds, completed by the end of 1941, and should “represent a contribution to the community by providing a new and modern building which offered programs, community services, etc. that were previously not available.”⁶⁸ Additionally, per the MPDF, the building should “represent the only known example of a particular category of resource...or one of the few remaining buildings associated with a specific work program.”⁶⁹ Lastly, the MPDF notes that “original materials and prominent features should remain intact, and any alterations should be modest in scale without impacting or obscuring major facades, elements, or design features.”⁷⁰

The Ramsey County School District Number 31 proposed construction of the North Heights School to replace an earlier 1880s school building that was outdated and no longer adequately served the rural student population. The North Heights School was constructed through WPA funding in 1935 and opened in 1936, representing an early example of a WPA-funded school built during the federal program’s initial year of operation. The school building provided new amenities to the community, including a combination gymnasium and auditorium, a 4-H clubroom, and four classrooms.⁷¹ The North Heights School represents one of only two known extant WPA-constructed school buildings within the city of Roseville. The other previously noted example, the former McCarrons Lake School (now a Christian Montessori school), has been extensively altered by facade changes and additions that have enveloped the original school building on three sides, and it no longer conveys its historical significance as a WPA-constructed school building. In contrast, at the North Heights School, the linear configuration of post-World War II (postwar) additions in 1953, 1958, 1961, 1973, and 1975 has largely preserved the original massing and design of the WPA-constructed school. The main block of the original building remains intact and clearly distinguished from the subsequent additions. The original building’s front (east) facade and side (south) and rear (west) elevations are largely unaltered, with original brick design features and the original configuration of window and door openings. As such, the original 1935 building continues to convey its significance as a small, WPA-constructed, rural school.

North Heights School initially encompassed part of Ramsey County’s rural school district system serving a primarily undeveloped agricultural portion of Rose Township. However, the school played an

⁶⁸ National Register of Historic Places, Multiple Property Documentation Form, “Federal Relief Construction in Minnesota, 1933-1941,” F14-15.

⁶⁹ National Register of Historic Places, Multiple Property Documentation Form, “Federal Relief Construction in Minnesota, 1933-1941,” F14-15.

⁷⁰ National Register of Historic Places, Multiple Property Documentation Form, “Federal Relief Construction in Minnesota, 1933-1941,” F15.

⁷¹ Eubanks, *North Heights Elementary School 1886-1981: A History*.

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important role in both local education and the growth and suburbanization of Roseville throughout the mid-to-late twentieth century. As the surrounding area transformed with extensive postwar residential and commercial development, the school evolved through a series of linear additions to meet the needs of a growing community. The distinct phases of expansion clearly reflect the property's evolution from a small, rural, WPA-constructed school to the largest elementary school in Roseville (1966-1967) in response to unprecedented regional growth.⁷² Collectively, the original 1935 school building and series of additions visually demonstrate changes in educational needs over the mid-to-late twentieth century and convey the school's longstanding contribution to local primary education.

Therefore, the North Heights School meets the Federal Relief MPDF registration requirements and possesses significance under *Criterion A* for its association with the WPA federal work-relief program of the Great Depression as the most intact extant example of a WPA-constructed school in Roseville. Additionally, the North Heights School possesses local significance under *Criterion A* in the areas of Education and Community Planning and Development in Roseville throughout the mid-to-late twentieth century. The period of significance extends from 1935 to 1981, from the initial WPA-funded construction, through subsequent additions and its continued operation as a local elementary school, to its final closure as a public school.

Criterion B

To be eligible under *Criterion B: Significant Person*, the property must be associated with a person who individually made an important contribution within the subject property's associated historic contexts of history, education, or politics/government. Research did not reveal an association with individuals significant in the history of Roseville, Ramsey County, Minnesota, the field of education, or the WPA federal relief program. As such, the North Heights School does not possess significance under *Criterion B*.

Criterion C

To be eligible under *Criterion C: Architecture*, the property must represent the work of a master, possess high artistic value, or embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction. Specifically, under the requirements of the Federal Relief MPDF, for an educational facility to be eligible under *Criterion C*, "this criterion may be met if a building is constructed with...a distinctive construction method often associated with specific federal work programs such as the Works Progress Administration."⁷³

The original 1935 North Heights School at the southern end of the complex represents a largely intact example of a modest Art Deco-influenced school building constructed through WPA funding. This somewhat streamlined version of the popular Art Deco style was commonly applied to WPA-constructed school buildings of the 1930s for its design simplicity and ease of construction by largely unskilled WPA workers. Distinctive, intact Art Deco design elements include the dogtooth, soldier course, brick pilasters with concrete capitals flanking the facade; the stepped parapet at the entrance bay; and the stepped

⁷² Eubanks, *North Heights Elementary School 1886-1981: A History*.

⁷³ National Register of Historic Places, Multiple Property Documentation Form, "Federal Relief Construction in Minnesota, 1933-1941," F15.

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brickwork design over the stairwell entrance at the southern end of the building. The 1935 building represents one of only two identified WPA-constructed schools remaining in Roseville. However, the other example (the former McCarron Lake School) has been significantly altered through facade changes and a series of large additions that have wrapped around three sides of the building. Despite replacement windows and doors and a linear series of postwar additions at the side (north) elevation, the original 1935 North Heights School building retains many of its character-defining features, including original brick detailing and the original configuration of window and door openings. The linear alignment of the additions has preserved the original massing and footprint of the 1935 school building, and the additions, although large, do not obscure the original facade or design features in accordance with the Federal Relief MDPF requirements.

The additions of 1953, 1958, 1961, 1973, and 1975 represent utilitarian examples of mid-twentieth-century school designs commonly seen throughout Roseville and the state that do not individually possess high artistic value or represent the work of a master. However, they each clearly embody the distinctive characteristics of their individual periods of construction. Collectively, the additions convey significant changes in educational needs from the mid-to-late twentieth century. Both the original 1935 school building and the series of distinct linear additions retain most of their character-defining features. The complex visually and architecturally tells the story of its evolution from a small, rural school to a large, suburban, educational facility.

As such, the North Heights School possesses significance under *Criterion C: Architecture* as both a largely intact example of a 1930s Art Deco-influenced rural school constructed with WPA funding, and in its entirety, as an embodiment of changing trends in educational design over the course of the twentieth century. Under *Criterion C*, the period of significance extends from 1935 to 1975, from initial WPA construction through the subsequent series of mid- to late-twentieth-century additions.

The property was not assessed under *Criterion D* as part of this evaluation. This property was considered for its potential to contribute to a historic district, but no potential district was identified.

Integrity

Under the requirements of the Federal Relief MPDF, “a building should possess integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, and association, and should be without substantial alterations.”⁷⁴ The North Heights School remains in its original location and at the site of an earlier 1880s District 31 schoolhouse. Although the original rural setting at the time of construction has changed, suburban development of the surrounding area began by the late 1940s and continued well into the twentieth century. The school’s period of significance in the areas of Education and Community Planning and Development extends to 1981 and includes this period of suburban development and change as the school expanded in response to area growth. Therefore, the building retains integrity of location and setting. The feeling and association of the building, initially as a 1935 WPA-constructed school, and later through multiple additions as a large, suburban educational facility, has not changed, and the building remains in educational use as a private Christian school.

⁷⁴ National Register of Historic Places, Multiple Property Documentation Form, “Federal Relief Construction in Minnesota, 1933-1941,” F15.

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For the original 1935 WPA-constructed school building, as a property possessing significance under *Criterion C*, the design, materials, and workmanship are the most important aspects of integrity to convey its historic significance. Although the building no longer retains its original windows or doors, the integrity of the overall design and workmanship of the WPA-era, Art Deco-influenced school building has not been significantly affected. The window and door openings have not been altered in size or shape, and the building retains its austere, symmetrical facade and original Art Deco-influenced design elements, including the brick pilasters across the facade, the stepped parapet at the entrance bay, and the stepped patterned brickwork over the secondary entrance. The series of large, linear, postwar additions extend from the side (north) elevation of the original building and are distinctly separate both in materials and massing from the 1935 school building and from one another. Despite the size of the additions, they do not obscure the 1935 school building's historic facade or side (south) and rear (west) elevations. Although the North Heights School has been altered, it remains the better of only two identified remaining WPA-constructed school buildings in Roseville. Additionally, the additions generally retain integrity of original design, materials, and workmanship, despite primarily replacement windows, and they continue to convey their distinct periods of significance from the mid-to-late twentieth century.

Recommendation

The North Heights School is recommended eligible for the National Register under *Criterion A* in the areas of Education, Community Planning and Development, and Politics/Government for its association with federal work-relief programs of the Great Depression. Under *Criterion A*, the period of significance begins in 1935, the year of WPA construction, and extends to 1981 with the final closure of the public school. The property is also recommended eligible for the National Register under *Criterion C* in the area of Architecture as the most intact remaining example of a WPA-constructed school building in Roseville and as a cohesive complex reflecting the changing trends in educational design over the course of the twentieth century. Under *Criterion C*, the period of significance extends from 1935 to 1975, from initial WPA construction through completion of the series of mid- to late-twentieth-century additions.

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Photographs, Figures, and Maps

Photographs, figures, and maps are provided throughout this attachment sheet.

Inventory Number: RA-SPC-01948

Historic Name: The Isabel

Address: 109-119 Isabel Street East

Narrative Description

Built in 1904, the Isabel, also known as the Isabel Rowhouse or Isabel Flats, is a multi-family rowhouse located at 109-119 Isabel Street East in the West Side neighborhood of Saint Paul, Ramsey County.¹ It is a modest interpretation of the Neoclassical style with features including porch columns, quoins, and a decorative cornice. The Isabel is situated approximately one mile southeast of the Mississippi River, which divides the West Side from Downtown Saint Paul. It is one block north of the intersection of Cesar Chavez Street (previously Concord Street) and Robert Street South. It occupies the central portion of the block between Robert Street South and Clinton Avenue South. It is flanked to the west by an asphalt parking lot belonging to the commercial property at 420 Robert Street South and to the east by a residential property (see Figure 1). An asphalt driveway on each side of the building leads to a paved parking area at the rear. A grassy terrace with mature trees is situated behind the Isabel Street curb. Hedges are located along the back of the sidewalk with small, shallow lawns behind the hedges. Concrete walkways lead from the sidewalk to each porch.

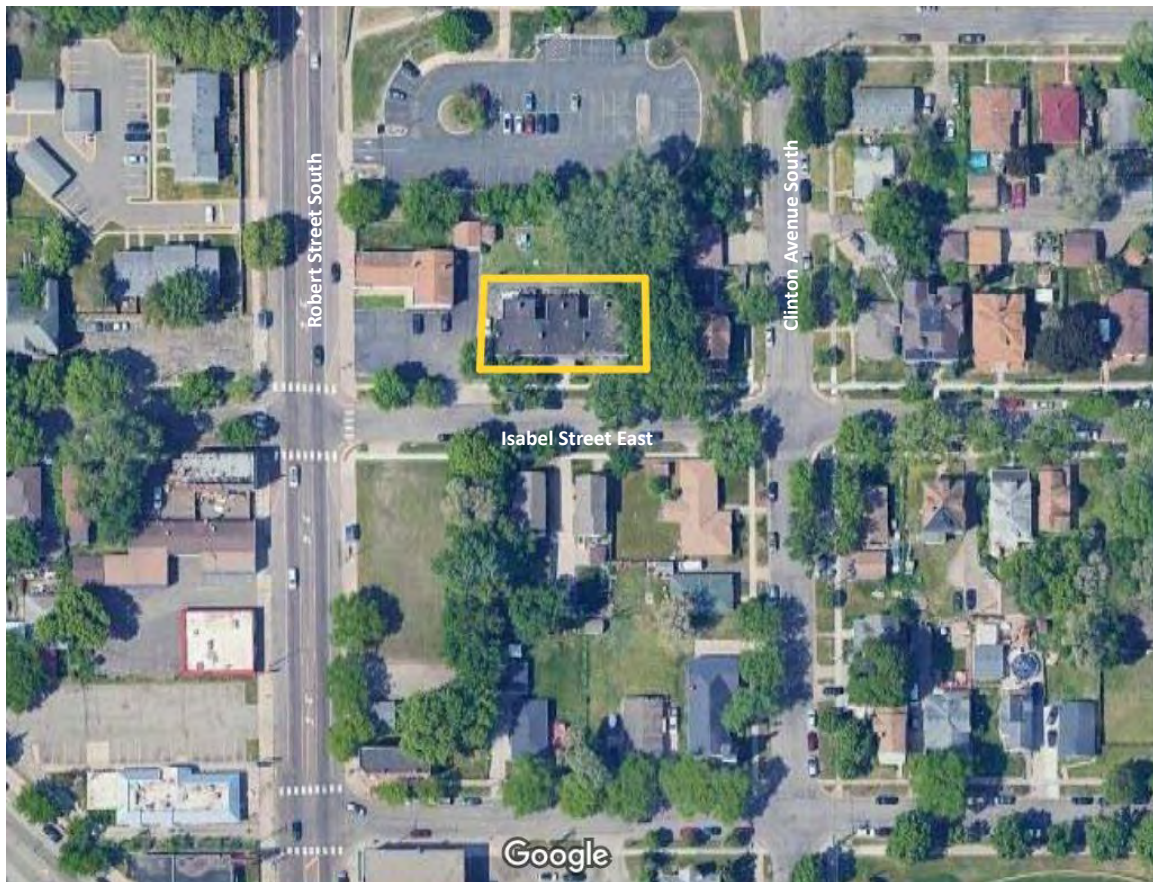


Figure 1. Google aerial image with the Isabel indicated in yellow, 2023.

The Isabel has a rectangular plan, stone foundation, brick cladding with red brick featured on the front (south) facade, and flat roof with parapet. The building has a symmetrical facade and is organized into three bays with two residential units contained in each. The central bay slightly projects and has a stone

¹ S. Granger, "Minnesota Individual Property Inventory Form, RA-SPC-01948," June 30, 1981, 01948, Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office.

Inventory Number: RA-SPC-01948

Historic Name: The Isabel

Address: 109-119 Isabel Street East

nameplate inscribed “The Isabel” (see Figures 2-4). Quoins with stone capitals are located at the corners of each bay. Three hip-roof porches with wood columns on brick bases and simple wood railings on either side are evenly spaced across the facade. Each porch includes two primary entrances; some doors are original and some are replaced. Each has a transom. Each unit has a large, fixed sash window with a transom on the first story. Some of the window transoms retain original leaded glass (see Figure 5). The cornice features brickwork and a terra cotta stringcourse with a decorative motif (see Figure 6). Second-story windows on the front (south) facade are one-over-one replacement units and feature stone sills. The windows in the central bay feature rounded arches, while those in the flanking bays have segmental arches.

The side (east and west) elevations feature one-over-one sash replacement windows with segmental arches and brick sills as well as basement windows with segmental arches (see Figure 7). Three projecting wings are located on the rear (north) elevation (see Figures 8-9).² Each wing has one-over-one sash replacement windows with segmental arches and additional entrance doors with transoms. Interior brick chimneys are also visible from the rear. Modern wood decks have been added to the rear elevation of each wing.

Based on available real estate listings, each unit likely has three second-story bedrooms and kitchens placed at the rear of the first story. They originally had hardwood floors and simple door and window surrounds. Some of the units retain the original wood floor and finishes, including the door and window surrounds (see Figure 9). Each unit is individually owned and has experienced different alterations over the years.



Figure 2. Front (south) facade and side (east) elevation, view toward northwest.

² Granger, “Minnesota Individual Property Inventory Form, RA-SPC-01948,” 01948.

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Figure 3. Front (south) facade and side (west) elevation, view toward northeast.



Figure 4. Front (south) facade, view toward north.

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Figure 5. Detail view of stained-glass transom above an entrance door, view toward north.



Figure 6. Detail view of molded band motif, stone capital, and brick work, view toward northwest.

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Figure 7. Side (west) elevation, view toward east.



Figure 8. Rear (north) elevation and side (east) elevation, view toward southwest.

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Figure 9. Interior of 115 Isabel Street East, note the wood floors, leaded glass windows, and interior finishes.³

Property History

A detailed historic context is presented in *Phase I Survey/Phase II Evaluation of the METRO G Line Bus Rapid Transit Corridor, Ramsey and Dakota Counties, Minnesota*.

Building permits indicate the Isabel was constructed in 1904 and originally owned by Dwight H. Watson, who worked at the Noyes Brothers and Cutler Wholesale Drug Company in various capacities from the late 1870s to 1920.⁴ The contractor for the building was N.P. Fransen & Company, which was named after owner Nels Peter Fransen. He was born in Denmark in 1858 and lived and worked in Saint Paul as a contractor and carpenter until at least 1930.⁵ Architect Louis F. Lockwood designed the Isabel and worked in Saint Paul from 1892 until his death in 1908.⁶

³ "115 Isabel St E," *Zillow*, n.d., https://www.zillow.com/homedetails/115-Isabel-St-E-Saint-Paul-MN-55107/2057131_zpid/

⁴ St. Paul Pioneer Press Co., "U.S., City Directories, 1822-1995" (W.M. Campbell, 1878), https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/881555393:2469?tid=&pid=&queryId=9c266f4d-1509-44fe-8dfd-7f75a42dc8f2&_phsrc=old1043&_phstart=successSource. "U.S., City Directories, 1822-1995" (R.L. Polk & Co., 1920), https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/784897715:2469?tid=&pid=&queryId=ecaa668b-9cda-4e03-87dc-c83eacf5e3c6&_phsrc=old1045&_phstart=successSource.

⁵ Department of Commerce - Bureau of the Census, "1930 United States Federal Census," *Ancestry*, 1930, 1930 United States Federal Census - Ancestry.com.

⁶ Louis C. Sudheimer, "Vienna and Earl Apartment Buildings" (United States Department of the Interior National Park Service, February 28, 1984), <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/93202734>.

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Origins of the West Side and Early Transportation and Development

French-Canadians first settled in the area known as the West Side along the Mississippi River in the 1850s following an 1851 treaty with the Dakota people, who originally inhabited the land. German, Irish, and Eastern-European Jewish immigrants then settled in the area by the 1880s.⁷ Transportation between downtown Saint Paul and the West Side increased in the late nineteenth century. In 1872, Saint Paul began running horse-drawn streetcars throughout the city, which included lines across the river.⁸ Saint Paul officially annexed the West Side in 1874.⁹ The Robert Street Bridge, constructed in 1885 (nonextant), became a major crossing between downtown and the West Side. In 1891, the Twin Cities Rapid Transit Company electrified the streetcar lines, further contributing to streetcar use.¹⁰ By 1920, the Robert Street Bridge carried 2,730 vehicles and 400 streetcars every 12 hours.¹¹ Increasing vehicular traffic between downtown and the West Side prompted the City of Saint Paul and Ramsey County to demolish the original Robert Street Bridge and construct a new structure in 1924 (RA-SPC-03177).¹²

Streetcar lines influenced commercial and residential development in the West Side and allowed residents to easily connect to commercial nodes. The main lines through the West Side started at the Robert Street and Wabasha Street Bridges and extended through the area immediately south of the river known as the West Side Flats. The Wabasha Street line then turned west into the West Side Heights residential area, while the Robert Street line turned onto Concord Street (now Cesar Chavez Street). A smaller spur on State Street intersected with Concord Street, where a commercial node emerged approximately one-quarter mile south of the Isabel (see Figure 11). Commercial development along rail lines was common during the streetcar era (roughly 1890 to the 1920s), signifying interactions between commuters and the communities through which the streetcar travelled.¹³ Smaller streetcar spurs, such as State Street, allowed easier access from the residential areas on either side of Concord Street to commercial nodes along the corridor. Rowhouses, such as the Isabel, were common in residential areas near the streetcar lines. In addition to the Isabel, other rowhouses in the West Side included the buildings at 77-83 Isabel Street East (1887, RA-SPC-01946), 559-567 State Street South (1890, RA-SPC-03525), and the Grady Flats at 46-52 Delos Street West (1891, RA-SPC-01044).¹⁴ These buildings are located within a five-block radius of each other and are situated within two blocks to the north and

⁷ Paul Nelson and Lisa Lyons, "Tour St. Paul: West Side" (Historic Saint Paul, n.d.).

⁸ Kathleen Huynh, "Twin Cities Streetcars - The Rise and Fall," *Minnesota Digital Library*, 2020, <https://mndigital.org/projects/primary-source-sets/twin-cities-streetcars-rise-and-fall>.

⁹ Paul Nelson, "West Side Flats, St. Paul," *MNOPEDIA*, March 30, 2015, <https://www.mnopedia.org/place/west-side-flats-st-paul>.

¹⁰ Huynh, "Twin Cities Streetcars - The Rise and Fall." Mead & Hunt, Inc., *Phase I Architecture/History Survey for the Trunk Highway 5 / 7th Street West Improvements Project, Saint Paul, Ramsey County, Minnesota* (prepared for the Minnesota Department of Transportation, Cultural Resources Unit, May 2024).

¹¹ Minnesota Historical Society, "Robert Street Bridge," *Internet Archive*, January 5, 2006, <https://web.archive.org/web/20060105160317/http://www.mnhs.org/places/nationalregister/bridges/nrrarsb/nrrarobe.html>.

¹² Minnesota Historical Society, "Robert Street Bridge."

¹³ Mead & Hunt, Inc., *Phase I Architecture/History Survey for the Trunk Highway 5 / 7th Street West Improvements Project, Saint Paul, Ramsey County, Minnesota*.

¹⁴ A. Katata, "46-52 W. Delos Street" (Ramsey County Historical Society, Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Commission, July 9, 1981). M. McGrath, "77-83 E. Isabel Street" (Ramsey County Historical Society, Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Commission, July 13, 1981). G. Whitney, "559-567 S. State Street" (Ramsey County Historical Society, Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Commission, July 1, 1981).

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south of Cesar Chavez Street (Concord Street), confirming a broader relationship between multi-family residences and streetcar lines in the West Side.

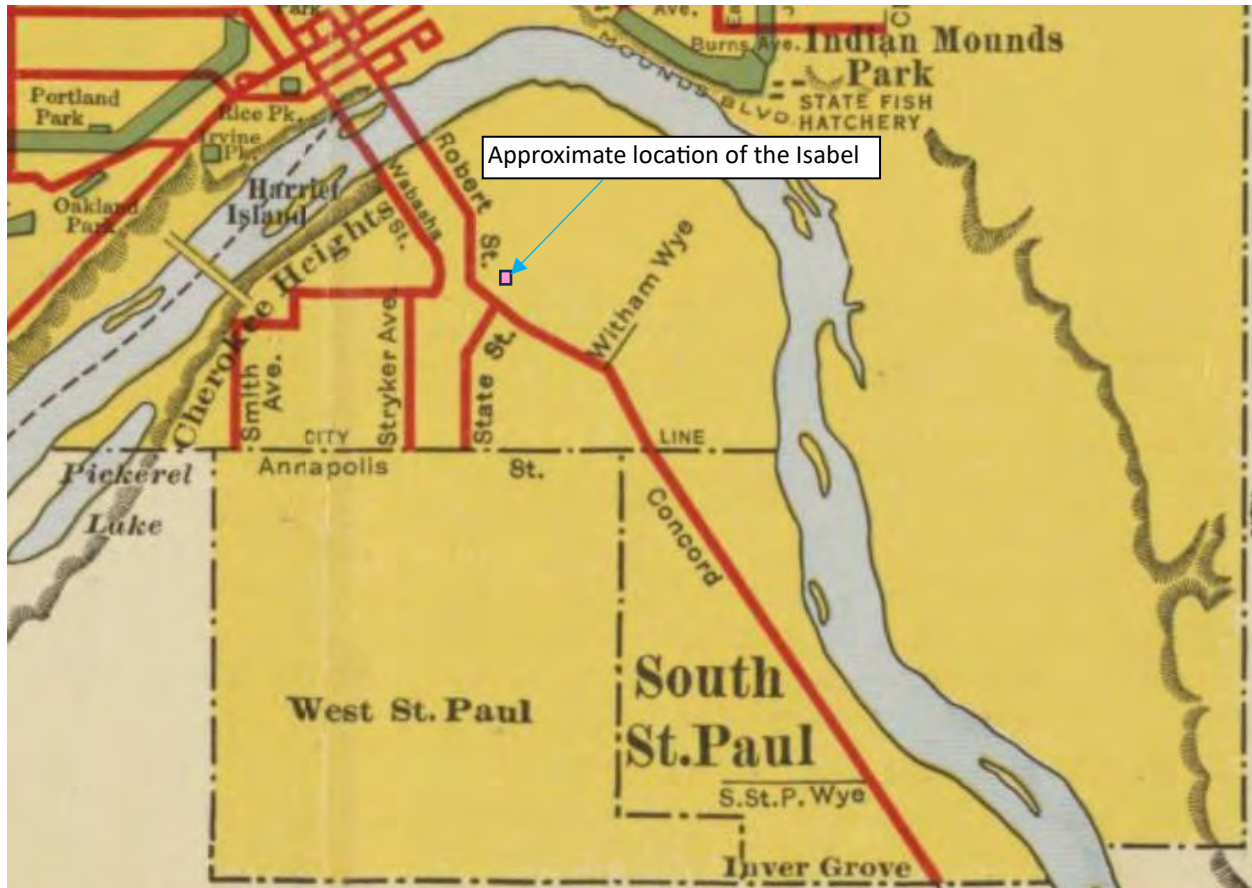


Figure 10. Map of the Twin Cities Rapid Transit Company streetcar lines, 1915.¹⁵ Note the Isabel indicated in pink, and the intersection of Robert St./Concord line and State St. spur indicated in red.

Residents of the Isabel and West Side Neighborhood

The Isabel has maintained its original use as an early-twentieth-century, multi-family rowhouse to the present day. Sanborn maps of the Isabel confirm other multi-family and single-family residences in the immediate vicinity. Small businesses and public service buildings, such as a filling station, auto repair shop, undertaker, lumber company, sausage and fish companies, a school, synagogue, and fire station are also visible on Sanborn maps and reflect a working-class environment of the neighborhood in the early to mid-twentieth century (see Figure 12).

¹⁵ A.W. Warnock, "The Twin Cities and Surroundings, Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota," *Minnesota Digital Library*, 1915, <https://collection.mndigital.org/catalog/mps:317#c=&m=&s=&cv=&xywh=2801%2C1059%2C4237%2C2641>.

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Figure 11. Sanborn Map from Saint Paul, Ramsey County, Minnesota, revised 1939. The Isabel is indicated in blue.¹⁶

City directories from the first half of the twentieth century reveal working-class individuals and families housed at the Isabel. The first occupants are indicated in the 1905 and 1906 Saint Paul city directories. Many of the residents from the early twentieth century had American-born parents, apart from a few Irish, English, and Canadian descendants. Residents from the Isabel's construction to the early 1930s worked in various local roles, such as firefighter, barber, grocer, clerk, bookkeeper, and driver; while others worked for larger companies including Swift & Company, Armour & Company, and the Chicago Great Western Railroad.¹⁷ City directories did not reveal many residents of the Isabel beyond the early 1930s, besides a couple of families who lived at 113 Isabel Street East. Members of these families also

¹⁶ "Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Saint Paul, Ramsey County, Minnesota. Vol. 5" (Sanborn Map Company, 1904), 5, Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division, Image 20 of Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Saint Paul, Ramsey County, Minnesota. | Library of Congress (loc.gov).

¹⁷ "U.S., City Directories, 1822-1995" (R.L. Polk & Co., 1905), https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/997677450:2469?tid=&pid=&queryId=b245bbf4-9fd4-466b-b567-6f1c6131724f&_phsrc=old1076&_phstart=successSource. "U.S., City Directories, 1822-1995" (R.L. Polk & Co., 1906), https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/791387776:2469?tid=&pid=&queryId=71519f35-4b96-4394-a921-8d976815a4b9&_phsrc=old1079&_phstart=successSource. "U.S., City Directories, 1822-1995" (R.L. Polk & Co., 1915), <https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/2469/images/12859251?ssrc=&backlabel=Return>. "U.S., City Directories, 1822-1995" (R.L. Polk & Co., 1927), <https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/2469/images/14914015?ssrc=&backlabel=Return>. "U.S., City Directories, 1822-1995" (R.L. Polk & Co., 1932), https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/922258872:2469?tid=&pid=&queryId=14ec1256-4438-4685-9f4b-c04cb117b952&_phsrc=old1465&_phstart=successSource.

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worked for Swift & Company in various capacities in the late 1930s to mid-1940s.¹⁸ Swift & Co. and Armour & Co. were part of the Saint Paul Union Stockyards complex in South Saint Paul, located approximately 4 miles south of the Isabel along the Concord Street streetcar line. The complex employed over 6,000 employees at its peak between the 1930s and 1960s.¹⁹ The Chicago Great Western Railroad owned a collection of repair shops along Concord Street.²⁰ The proximity of the Isabel and the stockyard and railroad facilities to the Concord streetcar line suggests that residents of the Isabel may have utilized the streetcar for travel to and from their places of employment in addition to reaching nearby commercial nodes.

Concord Street continued to operate as a commercial corridor into the second half of the twentieth century despite the removal of the streetcar lines in 1954.²¹ In 1952, a flood devastated the nearby West Side Flats, which prompted the city to relocate residents further south along Concord Street in closer proximity to the Isabel (see Figure 13).²² The Flats represented a diverse ethnic enclave originally made up of French Canadians, Germans, Irish, and Russian and Eastern European Jewish immigrants, and later Mexican immigrants, who arrived there as early as World War I in search of migrant work.²³ The influx of new residents sustained commercial activity along Concord Street near the Isabel, especially during the 1960s and 1970s when the West Side emerged as an active area for the Chicano movement.²⁴

Known today as “District del Sol,” the neighborhood has newer businesses such as Boca Chica Restaurante (11 Cesar Chavez Street, 1964, not previously surveyed) and El Burrito Mercado (175 Cesar Chavez Street, 1979, not previously surveyed) that continue to drive commercial activity near the main intersections along Cesar Chavez Street.²⁵ Despite the emergence of Chicano culture in the West Side, city directories and other sources ultimately did not indicate any direct ethnic association with the Isabel.

¹⁸ “U.S., City Directories, 1822-1995” (R.L. Polk & Co., 1937), https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/1178776704:2469?tid=&pid=&queryId=bc1b087d-a231-4fc4-8128-244f13c082e0&_phsrc=old1469&_phstart=successSource. “U.S., City Directories, 1822-1995” (R.L. Polk & Co., 1944), https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/803807252:2469?tid=&pid=&queryId=bc1b087d-a231-4fc4-8128-244f13c082e0&_phsrc=old1469&_phstart=successSource.

¹⁹ Historic Twin Cities, “Armour Gates,” *Historic Twin Cities*, December 12, 2019, <http://www.historictwincities.com/2019/12/12/armour-gates/#PhotoGallery>.

²⁰ “Streetcar on Concord Street, South St. Paul, Minnesota,” *Minnesota Digital Library*, 1910 1905, <https://collection.mndigital.org/catalog/msn:2607?c=&m=&s=&cv=&xywh=-975%2C-321%2C5909%2C3684>.

²¹ Huynh, “Twin Cities Streetcars - The Rise and Fall.”

²² Vicki Adame, “Former West Side Flats Residents Have Mixed Memories about Their Old Neighborhood,” *North Star Journey*, March 30, 2022, <https://www.mprnews.org/story/2022/03/30/former-west-side-flats-residents-have-mixed-memories-about-their-old-neighborhood>.

²³ Nelson, “West Side Flats, St. Paul.”

²⁴ St. Paul Planning Commission, “The District Del Sol Plan: An Addendum to the St. Paul Comprehensive Plan,” August 2012.

²⁵ Nelson and Lyons, “Tour St. Paul: West Side.”

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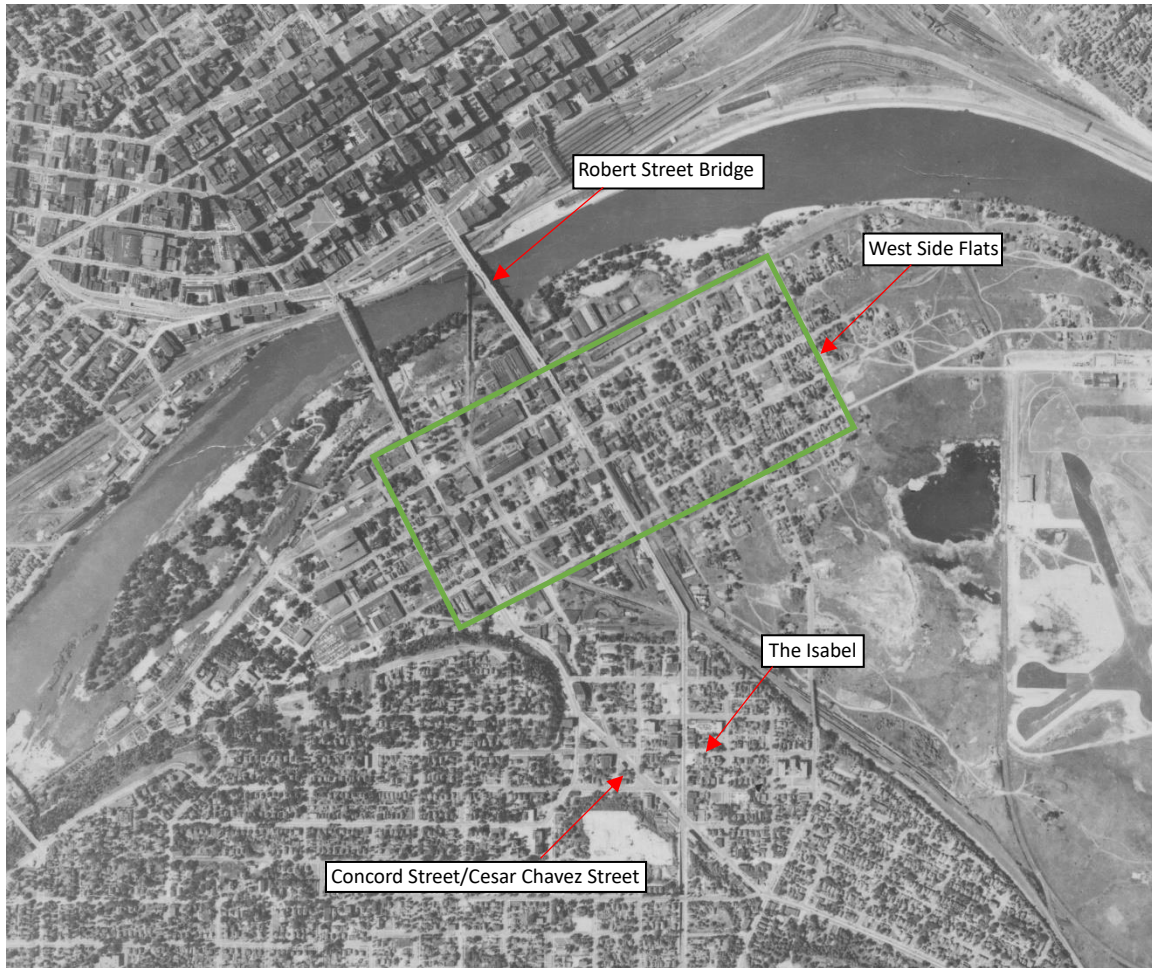


Figure 12. Historic Aerial of West Side, Saint Paul, 1940, prior to construction of the Riverview Industrial Park.²⁶

Louis F. Lockwood and Architecture of the Isabel

The Isabel architect, Louis F. Lockwood, was born in London, England in 1854 and graduated from King's College in Cambridge in 1884. He started his career in London before moving to the west coast of the United States, where he worked in Portland, Seattle, and San Francisco between 1889 and 1892. Lockwood moved to Saint Paul in 1892 and worked in the city for the next 15 years. Lockwood designed several residential properties in Saint Paul including the Vienna and Earl Apartment Buildings (RA-SPC-01822), Saint Anthony Flats (RA-SPC-07138), at least seven contributing single-family houses within the West Summit Avenue Historic District (RA-SPC-04583), and at least five contributing single-family houses within the Historic Hill District (RA-SPC-04581). The Vienna and Earl Apartments and Saint Anthony Flats

²⁶ John R. Borchert, "St. Paul Aerial" (University of Minnesota Libraries, June 11, 1940), <https://apps.lib.umn.edu/mhapo/>.

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represent Renaissance Revival-style residential apartment buildings in Saint Paul at the turn-of-the-century.²⁷

Rowhouses, such as the Isabel, represent the earliest type of extant multi-family housing found in Saint Paul. Rowhouses are one- to three-story dwellings of simple rectangular massing where each living unit is joined to another by a party wall and does not have another dwelling above and below.²⁸ Rowhouses first appeared in both Minneapolis and Saint Paul in the 1880s but gradually declined as other types of multi-family, attached buildings were constructed.²⁹ The other extant late-nineteenth-century examples of rowhouses in the West Side have been highly altered. These alterations include replacement front porches and garages at Grady Flats (RA-SPC-01044); replacement front porches and stucco cladding at 77-83 Isabel Street East (RA-SPC-01946); and a removed cornice, infilled transoms, and altered porch at 559-567 State Street South (RA-SPC-03525).³⁰ Although the Isabel does not display a fully formed architectural style, it represents a highly intact example of a multi-family rowhouse in the West Side with Neoclassical influences.

Evaluation

The Isabel building was evaluated for the National Register under *Criteria A, B, and C*.

Criterion A

To be eligible under *Criterion A: History*, a property must be associated with a significant event or broad pattern(s) of history. It must also demonstrate that the event or pattern of history was important at the local, state, or national level, specifically, in the case of this property, to the history or development of Saint Paul, Ramsey County, or Minnesota. The Isabel is located near former streetcar lines in the West Side that connected to downtown Saint Paul. Residents of the Isabel likely utilized the streetcar lines for transportation purposes. Its early twentieth century construction date of 1904 also aligns with many commercial buildings in the area, which suggests that its construction was partly influenced by the development and electrification of streetcar lines. However, these patterns are seen citywide and are not unique to the West Side area or the Isabel.³¹ Although the West Side as a whole experienced an influx of

²⁷ Sudheimer, "Vienna and Earl Apartment Buildings." Roberts Dr. Norene A., "West Summit Avenue Historic District" (United States Department of the Interior National Park Service, March 1992), <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/93202738>. Charles W. Nelson and Susan Zeik, "Historic Hill District" (United States Department of the Interior National Park Service, June 7, 1976), <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/93202626>.

²⁸ Mead & Hunt, Inc., *Phase I Architecture/History Survey for the Trunk Highway 5 / 7th Street West Improvements Project, Saint Paul, Ramsey County, Minnesota*.

²⁹ Garneth O. Peterson, *Historic Context of the Riverview Modern Streetcar Corridor in Saint Paul, 1850-1980* (prepared by the Minnesota Department of Transportation Cultural Resources Unit for the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority, May 2020).

³⁰ A. Kataba, "Grady Flats" (Ramsey County Historical Society, Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Commission, July 9, 1981). McGrath, "77-83 E. Isabel Street." Whitney, "559-567 S. State Street."

³¹ Mead & Hunt, Inc., *Phase I Architecture/History Survey for the Trunk Highway 5 / 7th Street West Improvements Project, Saint Paul, Ramsey County, Minnesota*.

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different ethnic groups, there is no indication of any ethnic association with residents of the Isabel throughout the twentieth century. As such, the Isabel does not possess significance under *Criterion A*.

Criterion B

To be eligible under *Criterion B: Significant Person*, the property must be associated with a person who individually made an important contribution within the subject property's associated historic context of history or education. Dwight H. Watson, the original owner of the building, does not appear to have played a significant role in the history of the West Side neighborhood or Saint Paul. As such, the Isabel does not possess significance under *Criterion B*.

Criterion C

To be eligible under *Criterion C: Architecture*, the property must represent the work of a master, possess high artistic value, or embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction. Louis Lockwood was a prolific area architect, but he is not considered a master. Although the Isabel retains its porch columns, quoins, and a decorative cornice, it is a modest interpretation of the Neoclassical style and is not significant for high artistic value.

However, the Isabel is a good representative example of a turn of the century multi-family rowhouse in Saint Paul's West Side. It retains its modest Neoclassical ornamentation along with the character-defining features of a rowhouse including individual living units with porches, and shared party walls. Other West Side rowhouses from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries have been highly altered and no longer represent the period in which they were constructed. Therefore, as an intact remaining rowhouse, the Isabel possesses significance under *Criterion C: Architecture*.

Integrity

The Isabel remains in its original location at 109-119 Isabel Street East. The streetcar system in the West Side has been removed since the building's original period of construction; however, Robert Street South and Cesar Chavez Street (Concord Street) remain as the main transportation corridors through the West Side neighborhood. The Isabel is still easily accessible to the commercial node at the nearby intersection with State Street. Therefore, the Isabel retains integrity of location and setting.

The Isabel has undergone minimal exterior alterations. Changes are limited to replacement of most windows, although some original leaded glass transoms are intact. Wood decks have been added at the rear of each unit but are not visible from the right of way. The building retains its overall massing, form, and cladding, as well as architectural details such as the porch columns, quoins, decorative cornice, and window arches. Therefore, the Isabel retains integrity of design, materials, and workmanship.

The Isabel retains its original form and architectural features. The exterior maintains the attributes that reflect its historical association with a multi-family rowhouse. The area retains a collection of late nineteenth and early twentieth century properties amidst modern infill. As such, the Isabel expresses the historical sense of the West Side and links the building to distinctive trends in the construction of rowhouses at the turn-of-the-century. Therefore, it retains integrity of feeling and association.

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Recommendation

The Isabel is recommended eligible for the National Register under *Criterion C: Architecture* as an intact example of an early-twentieth-century, multi-family rowhouse in the West Side of Saint Paul. The period of significance coincides with its date of construction – 1904. The Isabel’s character-defining features include porches with individual entrances, living units joined by a party wall, quoins, a decorative cornice, and its two-story rectangular massing. The historic boundary is the legal parcel.

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"U.S., City Directories, 1822-1995." R.L. Polk & Co., 1937. https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/1178776704:2469?tid=&pid=&queryId=bc1b087d-a231-4fc4-8128-244f13c082e0&_phsrc=old1469&_phstart=successSource.

"U.S., City Directories, 1822-1995." R.L. Polk & Co., 1944. https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/803807252:2469?tid=&pid=&queryId=bc1b087d-a231-4fc4-8128-244f13c082e0&_phsrc=old1469&_phstart=successSource.

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Description Narrative

People's Park, currently known as Parque Castillo, is an approximately one-acre public park at 149 Cesar Chavez Street, owned and maintained by the City of Saint Paul (see Figure 1).¹ The park is nestled within the District del Sol, previously known as Concord Terrace, in Saint Paul's West Side, between Cesar Chavez Street and Clinton Avenue South. The square-shaped property has a paved sidewalk to the southwest along Cesar Chavez Street and a paved sidewalk to the northeast along Clinton Avenue South. A parking lot for an adjacent health center delineates the park's southeastern border, and a metal chain-link fence delineates the northwestern border. Parque Castillo is surrounded by a community health center to its southeast, a recreation and community organization and ball field to the northeast, and commercial buildings and two-story townhomes to the northwest.



Figure 1. Google aerial image with Parque Castillo indicated in red, 2023.

Mature deciduous trees occupy the western section of the property. Two curvilinear paved paths lined with mature trees and two park benches lead from Cesar Chavez Street to the modern play area and splashpad located at the north side of the property. Two additional curvilinear paved paths lead from Clinton Avenue South to the play area and splashpad, which feature picnic tables, benches, outdoor grills, and a flagpole. Near the center of the property is a raised, circular, concrete platform used for cultural celebrations and dances. It is surrounded by green space used for community gatherings and events. In the southeastern corner is a concrete and stone public art piece erected in 2018 in memory of Nicolas Castillo, a community activist for whom the park was renamed in 1988.² Two free-standing metal

¹ People's Park will be referred to by its current name, Parque Castillo, throughout this evaluation.

² Frederick Melo, "99-Year-Old Widow Cuts Ribbon, Reopens Park Named for St. Paul Musician, Activist," *Pioneer Press*, October 26, 2018, <https://www.twincities.com/2018/10/26/99-year-old-widow-cuts-ribbon-reopens-park-named-for-st-paul-musician-activist/>.

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signs that read “Parque Castillo: Dedicated in Honor of Nicolas Castillo, Sr. May 7, 1988” (Figure 6) are located behind the sidewalk near the walkways.

The neighborhood has been occupied by predominantly Mexican American families since the mid-twentieth century. The community began using the park area ca. 1970; however, the City of Saint Paul officially established it as People's Park ca. 1980 and renamed it Parque Castillo in 1988.³ Between 2004 and 2008, the park's southeastern border changed, which expanded its parcel boundary giving the park its square shape.⁴ Parque Castillo was redesigned in 2018 to include the play area, splashpad, art piece, and landscaping and walkway improvements (see Figures 2-5).⁵



Figure 2. Overview of Parque Castillo, view facing northeast. Note the walkway, sign, and play area.

³ “Parque De Castillo,” *Saint Paul Minnesota*, accessed March 12, 2024, <https://www.stpaul.gov/facilities/parque-de-castillo>; “Aerial Image, Ramsey County, Minnesota,” *Historic Aerials by NETROnline*, 1975, <https://www.historicaerials.com/viewer>; David Knutson, “St. Paul’s West Side Paque Castillo to Undergo Renovations,” *Pioneer Press*, May 18, 2018, <https://www.twincities.com/2018/05/18/st-pauls-west-side-parque-castillo-to-undergo-renovations/>. Although the Saint Paul city website names the park as Parque De Castillo, its correct name is Parque Castillo.

⁴ “Aerial Image, Ramsey County, Minnesota,” *Historic Aerials by NETROnline*, 2004, <https://www.historicaerials.com/viewer>; “Aerial Image, Ramsey County, Minnesota,” *Historic Aerials by NETROnline*, 2008, <https://www.historicaerials.com/viewer>.

⁵ “Parque De Castillo.”

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Figure 3. Overview of Parque Castillo, view facing east. Note the public art behind the bench.



Figure 4. Parque Castillo with the public art piece on the left and play area at the center, view facing north.

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Figure 5. Parque Castillo play area and center stage at the far right, view facing north.



Figure 6. Parque Castillo sign located behind the Cesar Chavez Street sidewalk, view facing northeast.

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Significance Narrative

A detailed historic context is presented in *Phase I Architecture/History Survey and Phase II Evaluation for the G Line Bus Rapid Transit Project*.

Property History

Parque Castillo is located in the District del Sol neighborhood (previously known as Concord Terrace) between Cesar Chavez Street and Clinton Avenue South. It was established as People's Park in response to the City of Saint Paul's displacement of West Side Flats residents in the early 1960s. The West Side Flats (Flats) neighborhood once occupied the lowlands just south of and across the Mississippi River from downtown Saint Paul, and less than one mile north of present-day Parque Castillo (see Figure 7). Due to their displacement, Flats residents, who by 1960 were comprised primarily of Mexicans and Mexican Americans, moved to the Concord Terrace area located less than one mile to the south.

The influx of residents into Concord Terrace created new housing demands. As a result, Mexicans and Mexican Americans advocated for the Concord Terrace Renewal Project (CTRP) in the mid-1960s. This project called for beautification of their new neighborhood along with the rehabilitation of existing housing. As part of the CTRP project, buildings that once stood at the present-day site of Parque Castillo were demolished, and the property became an open green area. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Nicolas Castillo and other community members began using this green area as a recreational space.

Nicolas Castillo and his family were displaced Flats residents. Castillo and his wife, Tomasa Castillo, were well-known leaders in the Flats neighborhood. Castillo led the fight to formally establish People's Park in the 1970s when the City of Saint Paul attempted to sell the community's green space to developers. Castillo's activism and dedication to his community helped make People's Park a center for community engagement and kinship before its official ca. 1980 establishment. The park was renamed Parque Castillo in 1988 in memory and honor of Castillo.⁶

⁶ "Aerial Image, Ramsey County, Minnesota," *Historic Aerials by NETROnline*, 1972, <https://www.historicaerials.com/viewer>; "Aerial Image, Ramsey County, Minnesota," *Historic Aerials by NETROnline*, 1966, <https://www.historicaerials.com/viewer>. Kate Parry, "Chicano Activist Chronicled St. Paul's West Side in Song," *Star Tribune*, May 1, 1988, [Newspapers.com](https://www.newspapers.com), <https://www.newspapers.com/image/195178722/?terms=nicolas%20castillo>.

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Figure 7. 1940 aerial view of Saint Paul's West Side, showing the location of the Flats and its proximity to today's Parque Castillo.

The West Side Flats, Mexicans, and Mexican Americans

The Flats neighborhood was once located less than one mile north of present-day Parque Castillo.⁷ From the mid-nineteenth to early-twentieth century Eastern European Jews, German, Irish, Polish, Lebanese, Syrians, Greeks, Italians, African Americans, and Scandinavians made the Flats their home.⁸ The neighborhood was a place where new immigrants and low-income families could make their temporary home until they had the opportunity to better their situation. As these early immigrants left the Flats in the 1920s and 1930s, they were replaced by Mexicans and Mexican Americans.⁹ By 1920, about 240

⁷ Paul Nelson, "West Side Flats, St. Paul," *MNOPEDIA*, March 30, 2015, <https://www.mnopedia.org/place/west-side-flats-st-paul>.

⁸ Jane McClure, "A Story of Change, Pride, and Perseverance: The Mexican-Americans and Their Roots in St. Paul's Past," *Ramsey County History* 27, no. 3 (Fall 1992): 4–12.

⁹ McClure, "A Story of Change, Pride, and Perseverance: The Mexican-Americans and Their Roots in St. Paul's Past."

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Mexicans lived in Minnesota with about 70 in Saint Paul.¹⁰ By 1930, about 860 people of Mexican heritage lived in the Flats.¹¹

The 1930s proved to be a difficult time for Mexicans and Mexican Americans in Saint Paul. Job scarcity, prejudice, and racism led to some employers discriminating against them. In 1934, the city of Saint Paul became one of the first major cities in the United States to deport Mexicans and Mexican Americans in an effort to remove people who were not naturalized citizens; however, of the 328 children and adults deported to Mexico, most were, in fact, United States citizens.¹² The City of Saint Paul's attempt to eliminate Mexicans and Mexican Americans from Saint Paul failed as many continued to migrate to Minnesota and establish roots in Saint Paul, especially in the Flats.¹³ The Flats were a place where, according to a former West Side Flats resident, "Everyone knew each other, you took care of each other. Jewish kids played with Mexican kids, Italian kids, Black kids, all kinds of nationalities, all kinds of people."¹⁴ Residents of the Flats were bound by their common socio-economic status, unique cultures, and sense of pride in their own roots. Although still diverse, the Flats had become a predominantly Mexican, Mexican American, and Jewish neighborhood by the 1950s.¹⁵

Flooding of the West Side Flats and Displacement

Since its establishment, the Flats residents were no strangers to the fierce and mighty waters of the nearby Mississippi River during the spring flood season. The flood of 1952 damaged hundreds of homes, including many in the Flats, causing 2,641 residents to evacuate.¹⁶ Repeated flooding made houses in the Flats uninhabitable and despite this, the city never constructed a levee to protect residents.¹⁷ However, community members rebuilt their houses and occupied them after each flood.

In 1956, the Flats became a target for urban renewal when the Saint Paul Port Authority announced the Riverview Industrial District Project. Subsequently, the flood of 1957 provided city officials with an excuse to force people out of the Flats with the promise of compensation for their lost homes and the

¹⁰ McClure, "A Story of Change, Pride, and Perseverance: The Mexican-Americans and Their Roots in St. Paul's Past."

¹¹ McClure, "A Story of Change, Pride, and Perseverance: The Mexican-Americans and Their Roots in St. Paul's Past."

¹² McClure, "A Story of Change, Pride, and Perseverance: The Mexican-Americans and Their Roots in St. Paul's Past."

¹³ Jeff Kolnick, "Minnesotanos: Latino Journeys in Minnesota," *MNOPEDIA*, March 7, 2016, <https://www.mnopedia.org/minnesotanos-latino-journeys-minnesota>.

¹⁴ "Gallery: Stories from the Flats," *West Side Community Organization*, accessed April 30, 2024, <https://www.wsko.org/wsflatsgallery>.

¹⁵ Kolnick, "Minnesotanos: Latino Journeys in Minnesota"; Nelson, "West Side Flats, St. Paul"; McClure, "A Story of Change, Pride, and Perseverance: The Mexican-Americans and Their Roots in St. Paul's Past."

¹⁶ Shirley Saldivar, "Chicano Movement in Westside St. Paul," *MNOPEDIA*, May 15, 2019, <https://www.mnopedia.org/thing/chicano-movement-westside-st-paul#:~:text=When%20migrant%20workers%20from%20Mexico%20began%20to%20look,and%201970s%20as%20a%20means%20to%20that%20end>.

¹⁷ "West Siders Call for Acknowledgement of Historic Displacement," *West Side Community Organization*, November 4, 2022, <https://www.wsko.org/westsidedisplacement>.

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assurance of a job at the industrial plant. However, many were not compensated or given fair compensation for their homes.¹⁸

The city destroyed around 480 buildings and homes and displaced 2,147 people.¹⁹ By the end of 1963, no residents remained in the Flats. By 1964, the construction of the \$9 million industrial district was complete with \$4 million spent on forced-relocation costs.²⁰ Although the city had guaranteed some Flats residents jobs at the industrial district upon its completion, “the jobs didn’t come in the quantity promised.”²¹ Additionally, the city built a flood wall only after the residents had left the Flats to “protect their investments,” which many former Flats residents felt emphasized the injustice committed against a low-income and ethnically diverse community.²² Additionally, in 1965 U.S. Highway 52 was routed through the former Flats.²³ The City of Saint Paul and the Saint Paul Port Authority had demolished and destroyed the West Side Flats neighborhood while forcibly displacing its residents.²⁴

Concord Terrace and the Concord Terrace Renewal Project (CTRP)

Due to their forced displacement, some families moved far away, others relocated to the East Side of Saint Paul; however, the majority resettled in Concord Terrace, an area less than one mile south of the Flats neighborhood in the West Side of Saint Paul.²⁵ Despite deep opposition and racist sentiments from Concord Terrace’s white residents towards former Flats residents, 1,074 people found housing in Concord Terrace by early 1963, with that number increasing by the end of the year.²⁶ Concord Terrace became a predominantly Mexican and Mexican American neighborhood.

With the influx of people to Concord Terrace, housing demands increased, which paved the way for the CTRP. The CTRP used federal funds to “rehabilitate existing housing” and “engage in neighborhood beautification” by eliminating older buildings and reducing “commercial and industrial zoning to provide more space for new single and multifamily dwellings.”²⁷ In addition to housing needs, the project also attempted to address the social needs of the West Side community. Around 1966, Mexicans and Mexican Americans successfully encouraged the Saint Paul city council to approve the CTRP in an effort to provide more affordable housing for many in the area. Additionally, in the late 1960s, the ball field

¹⁸ Vicki Adame, “Former West Side Flats Residents Have Mixed Memories About Their Old Neighborhood,” *MPR News*, March 30, 2022, <https://www.mprnews.org/story/2022/03/30/former-west-side-flats-residents-have-mixed-memories-about-their-old-neighborhood>.

¹⁹ “The West Side Flats,” *West Side Community Organization*, https://www.wsco.org/west_side_flats; Saldivar, “Chicano Movement in Westside St. Paul.”

²⁰ Saldivar, “Chicano Movement in Westside St. Paul”; “The West Side Flats.”

²¹ Saldivar, “Chicano Movement in Westside St. Paul”; “The West Side Flats.”

²² Cathy Wurzer and Matthew Alvarez, “The ‘Ellis Island’ of St. Paul Was Razed in the 1960s, but West Side Residents Haven’t Forgotten,” *MPR News*, February 9, 2024, <https://www.mprnews.org/story/2024/02/09/the-ellis-island-of-st-paul-was-razed-in-the-1960s-but-west-side-residents-havent-forgotten>.

²³ “West Siders Call for Acknowledgement of Historic Displacement”; Ania Salcedo, “Interview: Linda Castillo,” *West Side Community Organization*, 2021, <https://www.wsco.org/lindacastillointerview>.

²⁴ “The West Side Flats.”

²⁵ Dionicio Nodín Valdés, *Barrios Norteños: St. Paul and Midwestern Mexican Communities in the Twentieth Century* (University of Texas Press Austin, 2000); Salcedo, “Interview: Linda Castillo.”

²⁶ Valdés, *Barrios Norteños: St. Paul and Midwestern Mexican Communities in the Twentieth Century*.

²⁷ Valdés, *Barrios Norteños: St. Paul and Midwestern Mexican Communities in the Twentieth Century*.

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(still extant) on the north side of South Clinton Avenue South was established in conjunction with a new community service building that was proposed by the Neighborhood House—a social services organization created to serve immigrant communities in the Flats.²⁸ The building, located at 179 Robie Street East, became the Neighborhood House headquarters and operated jointly with the Saint Paul Department of Public Parks, Recreation and Public Buildings.²⁹

Directly south of the Neighborhood House and ball field, across South Clinton and Robie Streets, was a small, grassy area lined with trees that would eventually become People's Park (later renamed Parque Castillo). In the mid-twentieth century, the grassy area was comprised of three separate blocks with mostly frame and brick buildings, some of which were dwellings, and others were apartments, flats, automobile garages, and stores (see Figures 8 and 9). Between 1970 and 1972, most of the buildings on the blocks had been demolished as part of the CTRP.³⁰ During this time, the Concord Terrace area was a predominantly Mexican and Mexican American neighborhood, with the majority concentrated between the nearby Our Lady of Guadalupe Church and this small, grassy area.³¹ Thanks to Nicolas Castillo's efforts, this grassy area would become an official city park intended to fulfill the needs of the Mexican and Mexican American residents in the Concord Terrace area.

²⁸ "St. Paul Park Backers Win Twice, Lose Once," *The Minneapolis Star*, January 28, 1967, Newspapers.com, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/188225407/?match=1&terms=%22Concord%20Terrace%20Renewal%20Project%22>; "Playground Plan Studied in St. Paul," *Star Tribune*, July 19, 1966, Newspapers.com, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/187971870/?match=1&terms=%22Concord%20Terrace%22%20%22West%20Side%22>.

²⁹ "St. Paul Park Backers Win Twice, Lose Once"; "Playground Plan Studied in St. Paul."

³⁰ Salcedo, "Interview: Linda Castillo"; "Aerial Image, Ramsey County, Minnesota," 1972; "Aerial Image, Ramsey County, Minnesota," 1966; "Aerial Image, Ramsey County, Minnesota," *Historic Aerials by NETROnline*, 1979, <https://www.historicaerials.com/viewer>; "Aerial Image, Ramsey County, Minnesota," *Historic Aerials by NETROnline*, 1980, <https://www.historicaerials.com/viewer>. Peter Vaughan, "Robie St. Trees To Go Down Drain," *Star Tribune*, September 11, 1970, Newspapers.com, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/189770280/?match=1&terms=%22Concord%20Terrace%22%20%22West%20Side%22>.

³¹ Valdés, *Barrios Norteños: St. Paul and Midwestern Mexican Communities in the Twentieth Century*.

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Figure 8. 1950 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. Blocks 71, 70, and 90 were combined and portions of Robie Street East and Clinton Avenue South closed between the blocks. Parque Castillo is located mostly on block 70.³²

³² "Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Saint Paul" (Saint Paul, Minnesota: Sanborn Map & Publishing Company, 1950), Library of Congress Geography and Map Division Washington, D.C. 20540-4650 USA, https://www.loc.gov/item/sanborn04379_023/.

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Figure 9. 1962 aerial image of the blocks where Parque Castillo is now situated.³³

Nicolas Castillo and the Establishment of People's Park

Nicolas Castillo was born in Dolores, Texas, in 1912, into a Mexican American family that migrated to the Midwest to work in the sugar beet fields during the summer months, eventually settling down in Minnesota.³⁴ Castillo moved to the West Side of Saint Paul in his early twenties and worked in construction and the railroad yards. In his late twenties, he met Tomasa Isadora Perez, a Mexican American from Hampton, Iowa, before being drafted during World War II. He served in the U.S. Army during the war and was awarded the Purple Heart.³⁵ Upon his return to Minnesota, he married Perez and together they went on to settle in the Flats neighborhood in the early 1940s and have six children (see Figure 10).³⁶ The Castillos quickly became a staple of the community and were known for feeding

³³ "Aerial Image, West St. Paul, Ramsey County, Minnesota" (Minnesota Historical Aerial Photographs Online, 1962), John R. Borchert Map Library, University of Minnesota, https://geo.lib.umn.edu/Hennepin_County/y1962/AA-15-153.jpg.

³⁴ U.S. Census Office, *Seventeenth Census of the United States, 1950, St. Paul, Ramsey, Minnesota* (Washington, D.C: National Archives and Records Administration, 1950), https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/92239505:62308?queryId=8347ceda660b494e8cf131a03ce9f1e1&_phsrc=AuE486&_phstart=succesSource; "Nicolas C. Castillo, 76, Dies; Wrote Chicano St. Paul Songs," *Star Tribune*, October 29, 1987, Newspapers.com, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/191136428/?terms=nicolas%20castillo&match=1>.

³⁵ "Nicolas C. Castillo, 76, Dies; Wrote Chicano St. Paul Songs."

³⁶ Parry, "Chicano Activist Chronicled St. Paul's West Side in Song." Salcedo, "Interview: Linda Castillo"; McClure, "A Story of Change, Pride, and Perseverance: The Mexican-Americans and Their Roots in St. Paul's Past."

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children in the neighborhood. According to their daughter, Linda Castillo, her parents “never chased any kids away.”³⁷ The Castillo family was one of the families forcibly displaced in the early 1960s.



*Figure 10. Nicolas Castillo with his children after a flood in 1951, April 22, 1951, Star Tribune.*³⁸

Linda remembers her family's displacement, “Port Authorities came in 1959 and they told us they were going to buy up the land because the land was no good, and they were going to move us up the hill, and they were going to pay us for the houses, which they didn't. My mom and dad went back to our house and they already had the bulldozer in the middle of the house.”³⁹ The Castillo family moved to Concord Terrace, and by the late 1960s, Castillo purchased a house on Oakdale Avenue.⁴⁰ Despite the hardships Castillo and his family faced before and after the displacement, they became pillars of the new Mexican and Mexican American community that formed in Saint Paul's West Side.

From the late 1960s into the early 1970s, Castillo began frequenting the grassy area that would become People's Park. It was a “grove of trees across from the neighborhood baseball diamond” where Castillo would take his children to play because there were no other parks around (see Figure 11).⁴¹ Knowing that the area had once accommodated houses, Castillo kept the area clean, played music with other

³⁷ Salcedo, “Interview: Linda Castillo.”

³⁸ “The Flood Means Trouble, No Matter How You Say It,” *Star Tribune*, April 22, 1951, Newspapers.com, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/183470173/?match=1>. The names in the article are incorrect, however, based on genealogy records, the address given in the newspaper, and the picture, the article reports on the Nicolas and his family.

³⁹ Salcedo, “Interview: Linda Castillo.”

⁴⁰ Salcedo, “Interview: Linda Castillo.”

⁴¹ Parry, “Chicano Activist Chronicled St. Paul's West Side in Song.”

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Mexican men and elders, and continued to feed community members.⁴² Castillo built community at this grassy area through cultural music and food, and Mexicans and Mexican Americans in the area had a new place to call home.



Figure 11. 1972 Aerial image of Parque Castillo and the ball field across the street.⁴³

In 1972, as part of the CTRP, the City of Saint Paul attempted to sell the land that served as a prominent gathering area for the community. An advertisement printed in the *Star Tribune* in February of 1972 informed developers the area was up for sale and ripe for commercial and residential development.⁴⁴ If the sale went through, the community-established park would cease to exist. Heavily influenced and inspired by the 1960s and 1970s national and local Chicano Movement, Castillo lobbied and advocated for the community gathering area at city council meetings.⁴⁵ This effort proved to be fruitful, and the space was not sold to developers, halting the city's redevelopment plans. Shortly after, it became an official park known as People's Park.⁴⁶

According to Tomasa, People's Park "was a place where migrant workers coming for a weekend in the city could take a picnic lunch and sit under the trees. It was a place where the kids could play without cars screeching by. [Castillo] lobbied for and got water, toilets, a platform for musicians, and picnic tables."⁴⁷ Castillo spent hours at the park engaging with friends, building community pride, and

⁴² Salcedo, "Interview: Linda Castillo."

⁴³ "Aerial Image, West St. Paul, Ramsey County, Minnesota" (Minnesota Historical Aerial Photographs Online, 1970), John R. Borchert Map Library, University of Minnesota, https://geo.lib.umn.edu/Dakota_County/y1970/WK-1LL-228.jpg.

⁴⁴ "Opportunity for Commercial Development," *Star Tribune*, February 6, 1972, Newspapers.com, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/185143684/?match=1&terms=%22Concord%20Terrace%20Renewal%22%20%22trees%22>.

⁴⁵ Joe Kimball, "Around St. Paul," *Star Tribune*, March 10, 1988, Newspapers.com, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/191292397/?terms=parque%20castillo&match=1>. Parry, "Chicano Activist Chronicled St. Paul's West Side in Song."

⁴⁶ Kimball, "Around St. Paul."

⁴⁷ Parry, "Chicano Activist Chronicled St. Paul's West Side in Song."

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encouraging involvement.⁴⁸ Aerial imagery shows that in 1980 and 1991, the park continued to have trees and grassy areas, and three paths were paved and led to a central playground (see Figure 12).⁴⁹



Figure 12. 1991 aerial image of Parque Castillo with paved paths and a playground.⁵⁰

Castillo's advocacy for his community did not end with the establishment of People's Park. As a devotee and supporter of the Chicano Movement, Castillo was committed to documenting the community's struggles in addition to advocating for Chicano rights.⁵¹ Castillo wrote hundreds of "corridos" or Mexican ballads that recount the ongoings of a specific geographic area.⁵² In the corridos, Castillo depicted "the life style, culture, sufferings, and political fights of the Chicanos in St. Paul."⁵³ Castillo also wrote songs about the Fourth of July celebrations on Harriet Island, local Chicanos fighting in Vietnam, West Side bars and women, and community issues with the police.⁵⁴ Some of his songs paid homage to the old Flats neighborhood and community. Additionally, in the 1970s, he fought alongside fellow Chicano activists for the creation of the Chicano Studies Department at the University of Minnesota. Along with his wife, Tomasa, Castillo paved the way for the eventual establishment of Spanish immersion schools in the West Side.⁵⁵ Access to healthcare was also an important subject to the Castillo family. In 1971, he and Tomasa helped establish the community health clinic, La Clinica (The Clinic), to provide low-cost

⁴⁸ Parry, "Chicano Activist Chronicled St. Paul's West Side in Song."

⁴⁹ "Aerial Image, Ramsey County, Minnesota," 1980.

⁵⁰ "Aerial Image: Parque Castillo, West Saint Paul, MN" (Google Earth, April 1991).

⁵¹ Parry, "Chicano Activist Chronicled St. Paul's West Side in Song"; Saldivar, "Chicano Movement in Westside St. Paul"; McClure, "A Story of Change, Pride, and Perseverance: The Mexican-Americans and Their Roots in St. Paul's Past."

⁵² Parry, "Chicano Activist Chronicled St. Paul's West Side in Song"; "Nicolas C. Castillo, 76, Dies; Wrote Chicano St. Paul Songs."

⁵³ "Nicolas C. Castillo, 76, Dies; Wrote Chicano St. Paul Songs." Parry, "Chicano Activist Chronicled St. Paul's West Side in Song."

⁵⁴ Parry, "Chicano Activist Chronicled St. Paul's West Side in Song."

⁵⁵ Parry, "Chicano Activist Chronicled St. Paul's West Side in Song"; Saldivar, "Chicano Movement in Westside St. Paul"; McClure, "A Story of Change, Pride, and Perseverance: The Mexican-Americans and Their Roots in St. Paul's Past"; Salcedo, "Interview: Linda Castillo."

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healthcare to uninsured, non-English speakers.⁵⁶ This clinic continues to serve the community and is now located at 153 Cesar Chavez Street, directly southeast of present-day Parque Castillo.

Parque Castillo and Continued Use

Castillo continued to advocate for Mexican American/Chicano rights and wellbeing until his death, which prompted the renaming of People's Park. In October 1987, Castillo passed away from a heart attack at the age of 76 leaving a deep mark within the community. Sometime in 1988, the City of Saint Paul, West Side Community Organization, and the governor Minnesota honored the Castillo family and renamed the park Parque Castillo.⁵⁷

Parque Castillo has continued to function not only as a recreational space, but as a gathering space for cultural celebrations and as a space to address community concerns. Starting at least in 1985, annual Cinco de Mayo celebrations, which commemorate Mexico's defeat of the French in the 1862 Battle of Puebla, have occurred in District del Sol (formerly Concord Terrace) with performances and various activities happening at Parque Castillo.⁵⁸ Aerial imagery shows that by 1991, the raised, circular concrete platform was present at the park, presumably for performance purposes.⁵⁹ Also in the 1990s, Parque Castillo was used as a venue to address community concerns over violence in the neighborhood, particularly gang violence. In May 1993, West Side community leaders and residents met with the Saint Paul Police at Parque Castillo to address gang shootings that had been increasingly occurring in the area and at the park.⁶⁰ The park has also been used for concerts, special events, movie nights, art festivals, as a distributing place for free produce from neighborhood gardens, and much more.⁶¹

In 2018, Parque Castillo underwent a five-month renovation to ensure that it continued to serve as a "community landmark and gathering space," according to former Saint Paul Parks and Recreation

⁵⁶ Salcedo, "Interview: Linda Castillo."

⁵⁷ Salcedo, "Interview: Linda Castillo"; Parry, "Chicano Activist Chronicled St. Paul's West Side in Song."

⁵⁸ Parry, "Chicano Activist Chronicled St. Paul's West Side in Song"; Ginger Pinson, "Cinco de Mayo Celebrates 33rd Year On St. Paul's West Side," *Pioneer Press*, May 6, 2018, <https://www.twincities.com/2018/05/05/cinco-de-mayo-celebrates-33rd-year-on-st-pauls-west-side/>; Paul Nelson, "District Del Sol," *Saint Paul Historical*, accessed March 20, 2024, <https://saintpaulhistorical.com/items/show/129>. Nelson, "West Side Flats, St. Paul." Cinco de Mayo celebrations have occurred in the West Side of Saint Paul since the late 1930s.

⁵⁹ "Aerial Image, Ramsey County, Minnesota," *Historic Aerials by NETROnline*, 1991, <https://www.historicaerials.com/viewer>.

⁶⁰ Tim Steller, "Angry West Side Residents Unite To Fight Neighborhood Violence," *Star Tribune*, May 28, 1993, Newspapers.com, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/193250982/?terms=parque%20castillo&match=1>; Chris Graves, "West Side Bands Together Against Crime," *Star Tribune*, April 17, 1994, Newspapers.com, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/192854393/?terms=parque%20castillo&match=1>.

⁶¹ "Grows," *West Side Community Organization*, accessed March 20, 2024, <https://www.wsko.org/grows>; Horgen Tom, "Music & Movies in District Del Sol," *Star Tribune*, June 30, 2006, Newspapers.com, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/250364366/?terms=%22parque%20castillo%20%22&match=1>; "River Rats," *Star Tribune*, July 26, 1997, Newspapers.com, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/195316429/?terms=parque%20castillo&match=1>. "West Side Best Side! Neighborhood Art Fair & Cultural Market," *West Side Community Organization*, accessed May 28, 2024, <https://www.wsko.org/artfair>. "West Side Juneteenth," *West Side Community Organization*, accessed May 28, 2024, <https://www.wsko.org/wsjuneteenth>.

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director Mike Hahm.⁶² After completion, the park featured play areas, a splashpad, improved landscaping and walkways, and a public art piece honoring Nicolas Castillo. The raised, circular concrete platform remained in place for annual Cinco de Mayo performances.⁶³ Tomasa cut the ribbon at the ceremonial re-opening of the park in October 2018, on the 31st anniversary of Castillo's death (Figure 13). One of Castillo's daughters expressed how meaningful the park was to her family, "My dad is smiling with joy over this park, and I know that he would love the fact that it is packed with little kids and families from the West Side...October 26 is the anniversary of my father's death, so it is a perfect time of year to celebrate the renovation of the park that means so much to our family."⁶⁴ Today, the public park continues to serve the community as a neighborhood recreational space that hosts a variety of Cinco de Mayo festivities, celebrations, markets, free farm stands, and events—all which are integral to the vibrant West Side community.



Figure 13. 99-year-old Tomasa Castillo cutting the ribbon at the newly renovated Parque Castillo, surrounded by family, community, and local officials. October 25, 2018.⁶⁵

Evaluation

Parque Castillo was evaluated for the National Register under *Criteria A, B, and C*.

Criterion A

To be eligible under *Criterion A: History*, a property must be associated with a significant event or broad pattern(s) of history. It must also demonstrate that the event or pattern of history was important to the history or development of Saint Paul, Ramsey County, or Minnesota.

Parque Castillo was a community park established contingent upon and in response to the 1960s forced displacement of the majority of Mexican and Mexican American residents of the West Side Flats. By ca. 1970, this area functioned as an informal gathering place for the Mexican and Mexican American community. The City of Saint Paul officially established it as People's Park ca. 1980 thanks to efforts of

⁶² Knutson, "St. Paul's West Side Paque Castillo to Undergo Renovations."

⁶³ Melo, "99-Year-Old Widow Cuts Ribbon, Reopens Park Named for St. Paul Musician, Activist."

⁶⁴ Melo, "99-Year-Old Widow Cuts Ribbon, Reopens Park Named for St. Paul Musician, Activist."

⁶⁵ Melo, "99-Year-Old Widow Cuts Ribbon, Reopens Park Named for St. Paul Musician, Activist."

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Mexican and Mexican American community members, including community activist Nicolas Castillo. Since then, the park has served as an epicenter of recreation, cultural celebration, and community building. It serves as a physical reminder of Mexican and Mexican American resilience, activism, and political organization in the face of systemic oppression. It is the only park known to have been established by Mexicans and Mexican Americans in Saint Paul's West Side and the only known park with direct ties to the 1960s displacement of the West Side Flats. This park ensured Mexicans and Mexican Americans in Saint Paul had a place to celebrate their heritage and preserve their cultural identity. Parque Castillo is recommended eligible under *Criterion A* in the area of Ethnic Heritage: Hispanic.

Criterion B

To be eligible under *Criterion B: Significant Person*, a property must be associated with a person who made an important contribution in history. Nicolas Castillo was an important figure within the West Side Mexican American community for the establishment of Parque Castillo, and for his contribution to founding of Spanish immersion schools and the community health clinic. Heavily inspired by the Chicano movement of the 1960s and 1970s, Nicolas Castillo led the fight to officially establish Parque Castillo and continued to promote the park's use and improvement until his death, with the park closely and directly representing Castillo's significance. Although La Clinica is an extant resource that was established during Castillo's productive years in the West Side, La Clinica has evolved and changed over time. Therefore, Parque Castillo is the best extant resource that illustrates Castillo's important achievements from the late 1960s to the late 1980s, which contributed to the development of West Side Saint Paul as a prominent Mexican American area. Therefore, Parque Castillo is recommended eligible under Criterion B: Significant Person for its association with Nicolas Castillo.

Criterion C

To be eligible under *Criterion C: Landscape Architecture*, the property must represent the work of a master, possess high artistic value, or embody the distinctive characteristics of a designed park or garden associated with a particular landscape design philosophy, type, period, or method of construction. The park is a small area with modern play areas, walkways, and public art. It is not noted as an early example of its type or for innovative design, construction, or use. It follows a typical design intent for a small community park and does not possess significance under *Criterion C: Landscape Architecture*.

Integrity

Parque Castillo remains in the original location where it became an informal gathering space for the Mexican and Mexican American community ca. 1970. Its location conveys the transplanting of community that took place in response to the West Side Flats displacement. The park's relationship to the ball field created as part of the CTRP, the Neighborhood House, and La Clinica reflects the community's intention to use this space for kinship. Although the park expanded between 2004 and 2008, it is still recognizable as Parque Castillo. Therefore, Parque Castillo retains integrity of location and setting. The park continues to express the historic sense of a ca. 1970 gathering area as a central open

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green space with mature trees and pedestrian paths. The park remains sufficiently intact to read as a recreational and gathering space; therefore, Parque Castillo retains integrity of feeling and association.

This park was redesigned in 2018 with play areas, a splashpad, art piece, and landscaping and walkway improvements. However, the park's spatial organization, with prominent open green space occupying most of the parcel, is similar to its original spatial design as community gathering space rather than a formally established park with a formal conceptual design and infrastructure. The park's curvilinear pedestrian paths, open green space, trees, and its concrete circular platform remain intact to convey the merger of nature and culture. Recent park renovations did not change the informal nature of the park, nor did they obscure any open green space or add any considerable infrastructure to park grounds. The renovations do not detract from the park's original intent as a gathering space; rather, they enhance the park and convey the importance of the space to the community. Therefore, the Parque Castillo retains integrity of design, materials, and workmanship.

Recommendation

The People's Park (Parque Castillo) is recommended eligible for the National Register under *Criterion A* in the area of Ethnic Heritage: Hispanic and *Criterion B: Significant Person*. The character-defining features of the park include its open green space, trees, curvilinear paths, and circular raised performance platform. The period of significance extends from ca. 1970, when Nicolas Castillo and community members began using this area in response to their displacement, to Castillo's death in 1987. The park's historic boundary corresponds to the current park boundaries.

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Photographs, Figures, and Maps

Photographs, figures, and maps are provided throughout this attachment sheet.