

HABS No. AZ-145-G

Phoenix Indian School, Elementary School (Band-Chorus Building)  
Northeast Corner of Central Avenue and Indian School Rd.  
Phoenix  
Maricopa County  
Arizona

HABS  
ARIZ  
7-PHEN,  
17G-

**PHOTOGRAPHS**

**WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA**

**Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Western Region  
Department of the Interior  
San Francisco, California 94107**

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## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

### PHOENIX INDIAN SCHOOL, ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (Band-Chorus Building) HABS NO.: AZ-145-G

Location: Northeast Corner of Central Avenue and Indian School Road  
Phoenix  
Maricopa County  
Arizona

USGS Phoenix 1952/Sunnyslope 1965 Quadrangles  
War Memorial UTM Coordinates: 12. 400710. 3706720

Present Owner: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service,  
P.O. Box 37127, Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

Present Occupant: Unoccupied.

Present Use: None.

Statement of Significance: The Elementary School was an example of Moderne style institutional building. Its combination of stucco finish with brick trim and three-part compositions on each facade was totally characteristic of the style. It was otherwise without distinction.

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PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History.

1. Date of Erection: 1931
2. Architect/Builder: Department of the Interior, U.S. Indian Service, Construction Section, Washington, D.C., Architects; builder not known.
3. Original and Subsequent Owners: U.S. Department of the Interior.
4. Alterations and Additions: A handicapped access ramp was added against the south face; the south entrance was altered; evaporative cooling units were added on the east and west sides; 2 small storage compartments were added to the north face; the interior was altered in 1964.

B. Historical Context.

The Elementary School was built originally as an instructional building for elementary age students. It was identified first as the Grammer [sic] School; later it was called the Navajo Department; finally it became the Band - Chorus Building. The painted decorations on the north and south faces testify to the latter function. Scratched into the brickwork of the south face there are a small number of graffiti, consisting primarily of names and dates.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement.

The Elementary School is a rectangular block, 55'10" east-west x 107'4" north-south, one story high, with the long axis running north-south. Each face has a 3 part composition with the central section slightly higher than and projecting slightly forward from the sections at either side. At the north and south ends the building is entered through double doors; on the east and west sides there is a rank of large windows, grouped 5, 5 and 6, from left to right in each case, the asymmetry explained by interior dispositions (see below).

1. Architectural Character: A simple example of contemporary, or Moderne, architectural design of the time (1930). The rectangular silhouette varied only by the slight projection of the central section of each facade, the low-pitched roof concealed behind the top of the wall, the framing of openings with brick veneer, all were details common to that moment in the history of American architecture when traditional compositional modes had not been completely abandoned and European modernism had not yet won the day. In addition, the use of stucco for part of the exterior, together with brick trim, may hint at the influence of Pueblo Revival style.

2. Condition of Fabric: Good, with some interior degradation.

B. Description.

Exterior.

On the south (principal) face, the central bay is reached by a flight of concrete stairs, 4 risers to the landing, with a projection at landing height, left and right, the landing and top surface of each projection surfaced with 4" x 4" promenade tile, the remainder of the stairs with smooth cement finish; in the center, an opening for wood double doors, each leaf side hung, 8 lights above, 2 solid panels below, and above a transom with 12 lights, the whole wood framed. The opening was provided with a brick surround, with an inner row of headers, surrounded by a row of stretchers, projecting 1", with an outer row of headers on edge, projecting a further 1 1/2". The base of the central bay is of brick to a height of 55 1/2" above grade, all stretcher bond with a terminal course of headers on edge; the upper part of the bay is stucco, rough textured, painted dark cream. In the upper part of the central bay, to the left, an opening, 13" x 65" high, with a 4 light, side-hung, steel-framed casement, with a single fixed light above; to the right, a matching opening, but lacking the window. Above the doorway, 6 terra cotta pipes, 6" dia., in a triangular pattern penetrated the wall to ventilate the roof space. At the east and west ends of the wall, at the top, there is a section 3' long at 8" below the rest.

The central bay is flanked east and west by slightly narrower and lower bays of equal width, each with a brick base as the central bay, with brick coigns left and right, the rest of the bay stuccoed, with 3 tall narrow slit openings, each filled with wood louvers, at the center, a row of headers as dentils at the top. All 3 bays are topped with a cast concrete cap. The north face of the building was identical to the south.

On the west face, a central bay, with brick base, stuccoed above, top silhouette with depressed ends, all as on the south face; above the base a row of 5 rectangular windows, wood framed, double hung, 9 over 9, separated by brick piers and with a brick surround. The central bay was flanked north and south by lower but wider bays of unequal width, each with a brick base as the central bay, with brick coigns left and right, the rest of the bay stuccoed, a row of headers as dentils at the top. In the northern bay a row of 5 windows as in the central bay; in the southern bay the same, with the addition of a single sixth window to the south end. All 3 bays are topped with a cast concrete cap. The east face of the building is identical to the west, in reverse.

Interior.

The Elementary School was divided internally by a corridor running from the south to the north entrance. Inside the south entrance, to the left, the Girls' Toilet, with beyond it a row of 3 classrooms; to the right, another row of 3 classrooms, with beyond it the Boys' Toilet. The asymmetry of the internal dispositions was reflected in the asymmetry of the east and west faces. Each classroom was 30' x 22", with windows in the outer wall, blackboards on the three inner walls.

Construction.

The Elementary School has exterior walls of brick below and terra-cotta block above, the brick revealed and the terra-cotta block stuccoed externally, rising on foundations of concrete. The bricks are 8" x 2 1/4" x 3 3/4", pinkish buff in color with little or no

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variation, with mortar joints V-grooved, the mortar stained black. The floor and the roof are of timber, the original roof surface was slag at a pitch of about 5 degrees. Interior partitions were of wood studs, the walls and ceilings were of plaster, all doors wood in wood frames, all windows wood framed double hung, except for at toilets, as noted above.

Additions and Alterations.

The interior of the Elementary School was altered to provide for music instruction (Band-Chorus) in 1964 (1964 Drawings). The alterations took the form of removing some of the partition walls between classrooms and adding new partitions to provide spaces for music instruction. The south entrance doors were replaced by a new single leaf steel door, with a solid transom above, surrounded by orange porcelain enamel steel panels, 3 above, 2 each to left and right, the whole steel framed. Two small wood framed and stuccoed storage compartments were added on the north face, one to either side of the north doorway, at an unknown date. Small silhouette figures of dancing musicians, in petroglyph style (Hopi fluteplayer), were painted on the north and south faces, to either side of the entrance doors, in dark red paint, presumably in reference to the function of the building after the alterations of 1964.

Sources.

See Source List in Phoenix Indian School Report, HABS NO.: AZ-145. Drawings located: 1930 (for the Elementary School); 1964 (for the alterations).

Project Information.

This project was undertaken according to the terms of Subagreement No. 2 to Cooperative Agreement No. CA-8000-9-8005 between United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service and the Arizona Board of Regents for and on behalf of Arizona State University. This project was carried out prior to transfer of the property from Federal ownership, and the property was documented as part of the 1988 Memorandum of Agreement among the Department of the Interior, Arizona SHPO, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

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ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, Sketch Floor Plan

