

FORM APPROVED COUNTY COUNSEL  
 BY: *G.P.P.*  
 GREGORY P. PRAMOS  
 DATE: 5/11/16

Departmental Concurrence

**SUBMITTAL TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
 COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE, STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

121



**SUBMITTAL DATE:**  
 May 11, 2016

**FROM:** Parks Department

**SUBJECT:** County Historic Landmark Designation: 1909 Indio Public School House; District 4; [\$0]

**RECOMMENDED MOTION:** That the Board of Supervisors:  
 Approve and authorize the designation of 1909 Indio Public School House as a Riverside County Historic Landmark.

**BACKGROUND:**  
Summary

The 1909 Indio Public Schoolhouse is located at 82-616 Miles Avenue in Indio, California. The building is owned by the City of Indio and managed by the Coachella Valley History Museum.

The Schoolhouse is the only existing original, one-room schoolhouse in the greater desert community and the oldest public building in the city of Indio. It was used continuously as a school from 1909-1960. It was also a social center for the community, often hosting social activities, meetings, and even serving as a hospital during the Spanish influenza epidemic of 1918-1919 following World War I.  
 (summary continued on Page 2)

2016-007S

*[Signature]*  
 Scott Bangle  
 Parks Director

FINANCIAL DATA	Current Fiscal Year:	Next Fiscal Year:	Total Cost:	Ongoing Cost:	POLICY/CONSENT (per Exec. Office)
COST	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	Consent <input type="checkbox"/> Policy <input type="checkbox"/>
NET COUNTY COST	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	

**SOURCE OF FUNDS:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Budget Adjustment:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**For Fiscal Year:** \_\_\_\_\_

**C.E.O. RECOMMENDATION:** APPROVE  
 BY: *[Signature]*  
 Steven C. Horn  
 County Executive Office Signature

**MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

On motion of Supervisor Benoit, seconded by Supervisor Washington and duly carried, IT WAS ORDERED that the above matter is approved as recommended.

Ayes: Jeffries, Washington, Benoit and Ashley  
 Nays: None  
 Absent: Tavaglione  
 Date: July 12, 2016  
 xc: Parks

Kecia Harper-Ihem  
 Clerk of the Board  
 By: *[Signature]*  
 COUNTY Deputy

- Positions Added
- Change Order
- A-30
- 4/5 Vote

Prev. Agn. Ref.: \_\_\_\_\_ District: 4 Agenda Number: \_\_\_\_\_

13-2

**SUBMITTAL TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE, STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

**FORM 11: County Historic Landmark Designation: 1909 Indio Public School House; District 4; [\$0]**

**DATE: May 11, 2016**

**PAGE: 2 of 2**

**BACKGROUND:**

**Summary (continued)**

The building is an outstanding early example of "desert craftsman" architecture. It is a single story structure and exhibits desert adaptations within the craftsman style. The eaves are especially broad and well vented. There are eight doors and large string windows to allow extra ventilation. It is truly a handsome building and a great example of the style.

The Schoolhouse was moved to its current location in 1999. The little altered building was restored over the next several years and dedicated in 2005. It is now considered a cornerstone of historic Old Town Indio.

The Riverside County Historic Commission reviewed the Historic Landmark Nomination Form submitted by the Coachella Valley History Museum on February 18, 2016, and unanimously recommended approval by your honorable Board. The nomination form and supporting documents are attached as Exhibit A.

**Impact on Citizens and Businesses**

None

**Attachments**

Historic Landmark Nomination Form



# RIVERSIDE COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION FORM

For Historical Commission Use Only		
Date Reviewed: _____		
Commission Recommendation:		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recommend Approval	<input type="checkbox"/> Eligible but Not Listed	<input type="checkbox"/> Disapproved

This form must be used to nominate any pre-historic or historic site in Riverside County for designation as a County Historic Landmark. Information provided will serve as the basis for Historical Commission evaluation and recommendation to the Board of Supervisors. All nominations for this designation must be approved by the Board.

Please fill out and send to:

Riverside County Historical Commission  
c/o County Historic Preservation Officer  
Riverside County Parks District  
4600 Crestmore Road, Riverside, CA 92509-6858.

Please type your answers. An e-mail version of this form is available upon request.  
(951) 955-4310.

1. SITE NAME:

Historic  \_\_\_\_\_  
Common \_\_\_\_\_

2. LOCATION:

(a) Address \_\_\_\_\_ City Indio Town \_\_\_\_\_ 82-106 Miles Ave, 92201  
(b) Vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_

3. LEGAL OWNER:

(a) Name City of Indio  
(b) Address \_\_\_\_\_ City Indio Town \_\_\_\_\_ Zip 92201-100 Civic Center Mall  
(c) Contact Number(s) if known: 760 391-4015  
(d) Letter of Consent Enclosed:  Yes  No

4. PRESENT USE: historic property / museum

5. ORIGINAL USE: schoolhouse, social building

6. OTHER PAST USES: infirmary, maintenance workshop

7. YEAR OF CONSTRUCTION: 1909

(a) Builder: unknown

(b) Architect: unknown

8. CLASSIFICATION (Check appropriate spaces):

- Category:  Site (Historic)  Site (Archaeological)  Building(s)  
 Structure(s)  Object(s)
- Ownership:  Public  Private  Both
- Status:  Occupied  Unoccupied
- Accessibility:  Yes: Restricted  Yes: Unrestricted  No
- Condition:  Good  Fair  Deteriorated  Unexposed  
 Demolished (just for site applications)

9. ARCHITECTURAL STYLE (for buildings & structures) craftsman/rail depot

10. IF ALTERED, PLEASE DESCRIBE: \_\_\_\_\_

11. LEGAL PROPERTY DESCRIPTION: see enclosed blueprint

Include approximate property size in feet:

(a) Frontage \_\_\_\_\_ (b) Depth \_\_\_\_\_ or Approximate Acreage \_\_\_\_\_

12. PHYSICAL APPEARANCE OF SITE/STRUCTURE:

- Excellent  Good  Fair  Deteriorated

13. PRIMARY STRUCTURAL MATERIALS:

- Stone  Adobe  Wood  Stucco  Brick  Other:

14. RELATED FEATURES OR OUTBUILDINGS (list here, describe in No. 15):

15. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (please attach a 1-2 page statement):

Click [here](#) for assistance on "**How to Write a Statement of Significance**"

\_\_\_\_\_ see attached

16. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION (for buildings and structures):

Please attach your description on a separate page.

17. REFERENCES/BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Please attach separate page.

18. THREATS TO THE SITE (if any; use separate page if needed): None

19. PHOTOGRAGHS ENCLOSED:  Yes  NO

20. FORM PREPARED BY:

Name Maureen BOREN

Address            City            Zip            82-616 Miles Ave  
Indio, Ca 92201

Telephone(s) 760 221-0239  
H 760 346-1701

21. Organization: Coachella Valley History Museum

Signature of Authorizing Official (s):

Karen Hawksworth, President of the Board

Maureen Boren, Secretary of the Board

## Statement of Significance

The 1909 Indio Public Schoolhouse is the only existing original one-room schoolhouse in the greater desert community and the oldest public building in the city of Indio. Its history parallels the agricultural and railroad development of the eastern Coachella Valley. It was used continuously as a schoolhouse from 1909- 1960 and more recently as a maintenance building for the Desert Sands Unified School District. During its early tenure as the area's school, it was used variously on the weekends as a community gathering place for social activities and meetings, and, during the Spanish Influenza epidemic of 1918-1919, as a hospital. At that time Indio was a growing community with the largest train depot of the Southern Pacific Railroad in the Valley. The school's architecture is considered desert craftsman and resembles most of the rail depots and structures throughout the Coachella Valley. With the influx of rail workers and their families, a proper schoolhouse was strongly supported by the Southern Pacific Railroad. The 1909 Schoolhouse would have been one of the more prominent buildings to serve the community during the early days of growth.

The entire project of the restoration of the Schoolhouse is significant as it involved a successful partnership of the City of Indio and the Coachella Valley Historical Society. Members of the Historical Society generated interest in saving and moving the structure over a five year campaign, 1994-1999. Many private donors stepped up with significant contributions and a local high school student, Jean-Guy Dube' completed an extensive historical and architectural study of the soon- to- be demolished building. It was this study that demonstrated a compelling argument for saving the Schoolhouse. It was moved from its' position behind Roosevelt School on Hwy 111 in Indio in 1999 and placed on the site of the Coachella Valley History Museum and Cultural Center at 82-616 Miles Ave. The restoration was completed in 2003 with a formal dedication in 2005. The 1909 Schoolhouse is considered a cornerstone of historic Old Town Indio.

The Schoolhouse is a valuable addition to the entire campus of the Coachella Valley History Museum. One of the goals of the Museum is to interpret early life in the desert. Across the campus sits the Riverside County Landmark, the Smiley House, a 1927 family home and office of Dr. Smiley and later Dr. Tyler. Also on the campus are a turn- of- the- century blacksmith shop, a desert submarine, displays of agricultural equipment, and the original Indio Library which now houses a Date Museum. These facilities provide visitors with multiple fine examples of the early history of the Coachella Valley.

Presently the Schoolhouse provides free tours for third grade students from all three local school districts. When visiting the Schoolhouse, students participate in lessons and

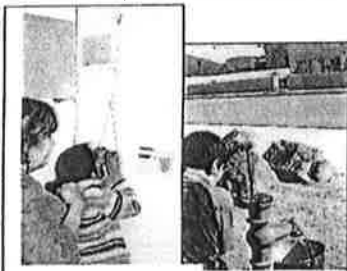


Figure 5: Student practicing

activities similar to children of 1909. The water is pumped outside, the school bell is rung, and children use slates to practice cursive writing exercises. Approximately 2,000 students and youth of various ages use the grounds and Schoolhouse yearly. The meeting room side of the Schoolhouse is used for community meetings, museum social functions, and as a rental venue. A photo exhibit in the Schoolroom showcases early schoolhouses in the greater Coachella Valley, detailing their chronology. Information about the development of the three local school districts has been archived as well as memorabilia of past teachers and students. Exhibits within the Schoolhouse display photos of early classes, classroom materials, and vintage toys.

### **Awards and Recognitions**

2004 Joint Indio Chamber of Commerce/City of Indio Image Award

2005 Annual Governor's Historic Preservation Award

2006 Riverside County Historical Commission for "Organizational Achievement Award for Outstanding Contribution to Local History.

### **Bibliography**

Dube', Jean-Guy. (1994, February 16). Indio's Two Room Schoolhouse and Rail Related Building. Santa Barbara, California. Available in the 1909 Schoolhouse Archives, Coachella Valley History Museum.

Lafin, Patricia. (2003). *The Periscope: Early Schools*. A Publication of the Coachella Valley Historical Society.

Pena, Xochitl. (2004, November 11). "Valley's Museum, Cultural Center Poised for Growth." *The Desert Sun*. Available in the 1909 Schoolhouse Archives, Coachella Valley History Museum.

## Architectural Description of the 1909 Indio Public Schoolhouse



Figure 1: 1909 Schoolhouse located on the campus of the Coachella Valley History Museum.

The 1909 Schoolhouse is a single story, gray wood frame structure with many unique architectural attributes. The Schoolhouse is an early example of Craftsman style architecture in the Coachella Valley; its adaptive design for a desert climate was inspired by Southern Pacific depots and structures built in the area from the late 1870s to the early 1900s. Located nearby, the Indio Depot showed the same Craftsman style until it burned in January 1966.



The plan of the building is rectangular with a protruding front “cloak room” and small uncovered front porch. The foundation is cement with interior lathe and plaster walls and a wainscoting trim. Roofing materials are shingle with a wooden belfry on top enclosing a bell from a Southern Pacific steam engine.

Banks of 8 x 10 wooden- framed

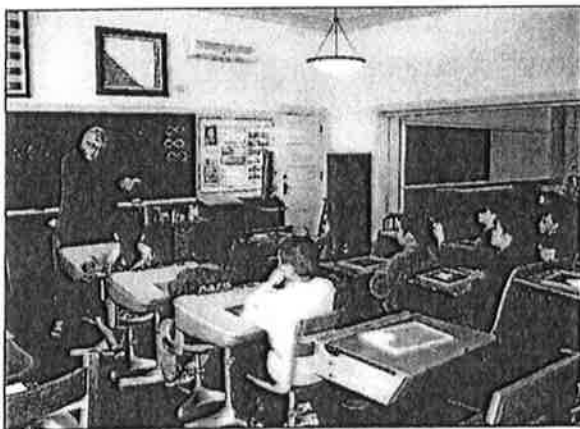
window panes in multiples of two cover the east,

Figure 2: North-facing side of the Schoolhouse with the protruding cloakroom entry and small front porch



north and west side of the building. Since there was no electricity in 1909, the windows were an excellent source of light. Eight solid wooden doors surround the building on all four sides, including two sets of double doors at the front entrance to the cloak room.

To adapt to the heat of Southern California's desert, several adaptations were developed within the Craftsman style of architecture. The roof overhang is extensive on all sides with lattice work under the eaves to allow hot air to vent out of the building. On the inside, a central vent with a decorative opening is positioned above each electric (installed in the 1930's) fan. The eight doors and the numerous windows could all be opened for additional ventilation. Heating in the winter was provided by two wood burning stoves positioned on each side of the building.



*Figure 3: South-facing wall of the Schoolhouse. The blackboard is retracted on the dividing wall.*

Unique to the schoolroom is a wooden wall with a blackboard on each side that divides the structure in half. The wall can be positioned up and down by means of cement pulleys that are on either side. Thus, the one-room Schoolhouse can become a two-room Schoolhouse. Three additional blackboards are mounted on the south and west walls of the building. Identical wooden storage cabinets are on each side of the south-facing room. One shelving area with glass doors is located on the dividing wall between the two parts of the room.

Alterations to the original structure are few with a closet area on the west side to house tables and chairs and the addition of air conditioning and heating units. The windows are no longer opened with rope pulleys but are permanently secured, and the original stove pipe openings have been removed. While hanging lights were eventually added to the schoolroom, they have been replaced with lights of a vintage design. A tin pressed ceiling, pine wood floors, doors, cabinetry, and 50% of the original glass are all original.

The Schoolhouse sits at the west side of the Coachella Valley History Museum campus. It is faced on the north by a working date garden and is surrounded by native trees and plants (see diagram). A wooden outhouse has been placed to one side as part of the interpretive story of "life in the early desert". The original building had no landscaping or trees around it. For a 106 year old building that has been moved three times it is in excellent condition. The only refurbishment needed in the near future would be an exterior repainting. It is used weekly during the Museum's season for school tours and meetings.



December 16, 2015

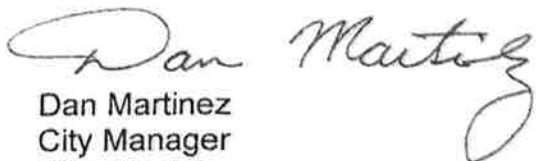
Riverside County Historical Commission  
Park Headquarters  
4600 Crestmore Road  
Jurupa Valley, CA 92509

RE: Historic Landmark Nomination/1909 Indio Public Schoolhouse

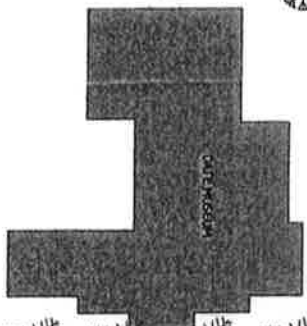
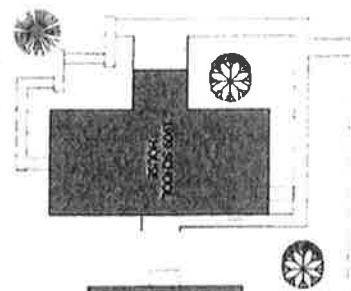
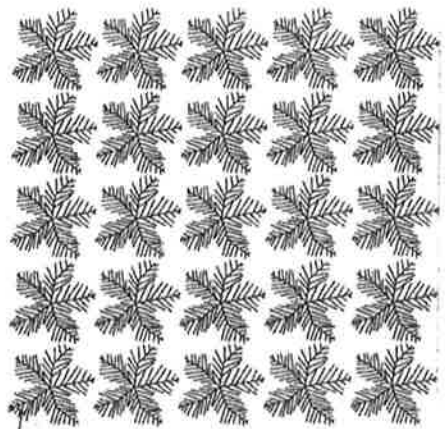
This is to confirm that the property housing the Coachella Valley History Museum at 82-616 Miles Avenue in Indio is owned by the City of Indio. The property includes the 1927 Smiley-Tyler adobe, the Blacksmith Shop, 1909 Indio Public Schoolhouse, Date Museum, Archive building and Art Studio.

Should you need any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me at 760 391-4015, or [danmartinez@indio.org](mailto:danmartinez@indio.org).

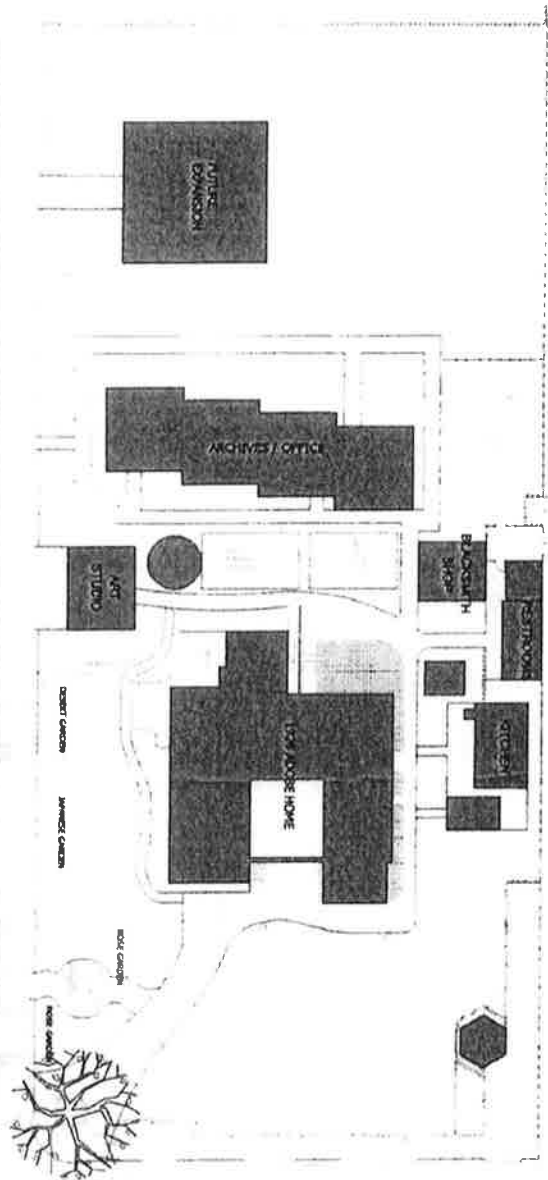
Sincerely,



Dan Martinez  
City Manager  
City of Indio

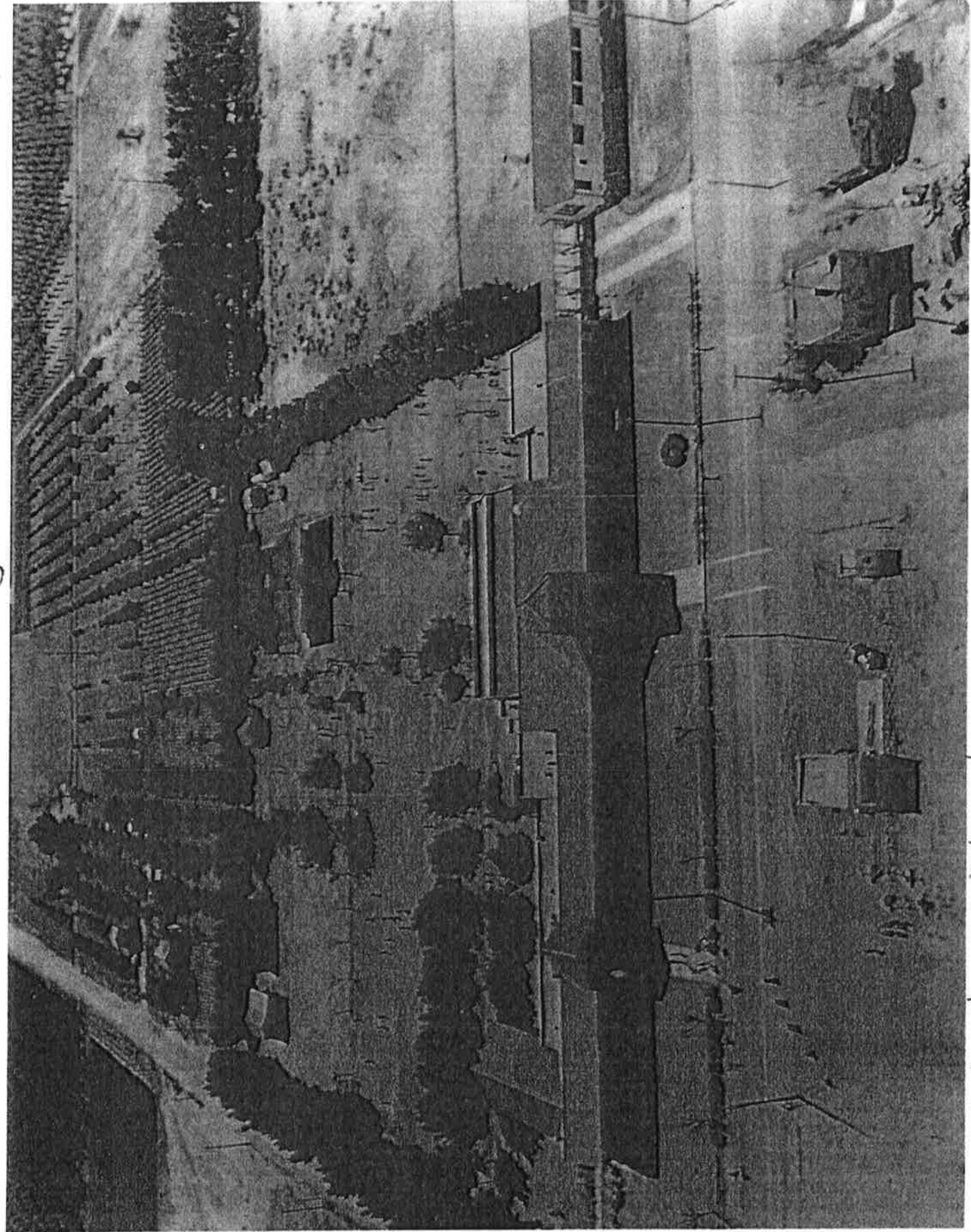


PROWLADE



MILES AVENUE

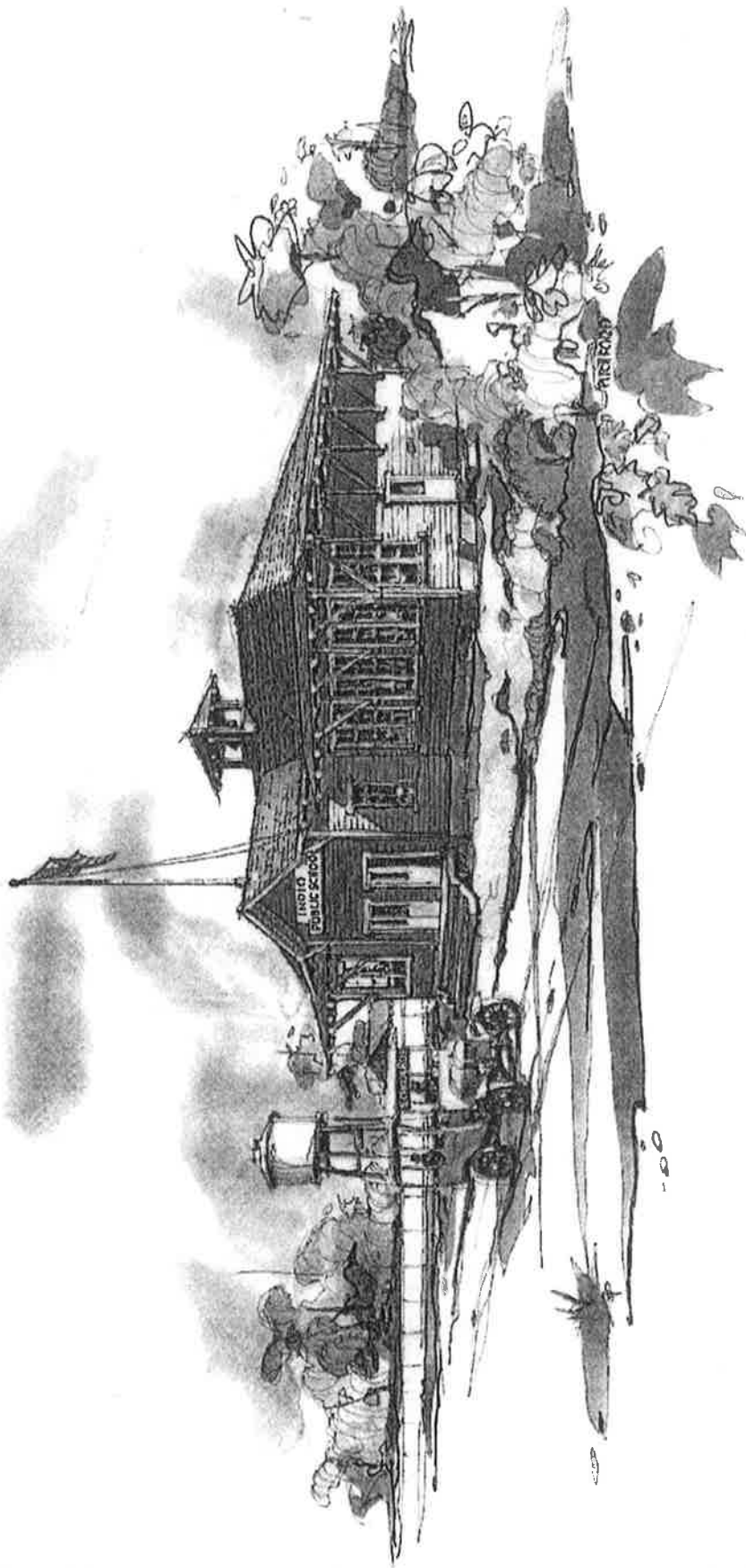
DEGLETT NOOR STREET



1909 Schoolhouse Placed  
south of Rosevelt Elem. Indio N

circa 1938

2



This one room schoolhouse, built in 1909, was once known as Indio Public School. It served the community as a K-8 classroom for nearly three decades before becoming part of the greater Indio School District. It was moved from its first location near Oasis and Bliss Streets to a site on the grounds of the original Roosevelt School campus. For many more years it was used in a variety of ways before being donated to the Coachella Valley Historical Society, Museum and Cultural Center. In 1999 it was relocated to its present placement on the grounds of the museum. It has been beautifully restored and presently stands as a reminder to all generations, present and future, of the vital role education played in the formation of communities in the Coachella Valley. (Architectural drawing provided by Carl Cox)