

Texas Historical Commission staff (BB), 2/3/2011, rev 2/3/11, 2/7/11, 2/8/11
18" x 28" Recorded Texas Historic Landmark marker with post
Presidio County (Job #10PS01) Subject (Atlas) UTM;
Location: Marfa, 501 S. Abbot St.

BLACKWELL SCHOOL

EDUCATION FOR LOCAL CHILDREN OF MEXICAN DESCENT DATES FROM 1889, WHEN THE FORMER METHODIST CHURCH BECAME A SCHOOLHOUSE. THE SCHOOL, NAMED FOR LONGTIME PRINCIPAL JESSE BLACKWELL, SERVED HUNDREDS OF HISPANIC CHILDREN UP TO NINTH GRADE. STUDENTS WERE TOLD TO SPEAK ONLY ENGLISH ON CAMPUS; SPANISH WORDS WRITTEN ON SLIPS OF PAPER WERE BURIED ON THE GROUNDS IN A MOCK FUNERAL CEREMONY. THE SCHOOL CLOSED IN 1965 WITH INTEGRATION OF MARFA SCHOOLS. THE BUILDING SAT VACANT UNTIL PRESERVATION EFFORTS BY THE BLACKWELL SCHOOL ALLIANCE, FORMED IN 2006. THE ONE-STORY SCHOOLHOUSE HAS A MODIFIED HIP ROOF, FRONT-GABLED ENTRY, AND PLASTERED 24-INCH THICK ADOBE WALLS ON A STONE FOUNDATION.

RECORDED TEXAS HISTORIC LANDMARK – 2010
MARKER IS PROPERTY OF THE STATE OF TEXAS

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

**RECORDED TEXAS HISTORIC LANDMARK MARKERS:
2010 Official Texas Historical Marker
Sponsorship Application Form**

Valid September 1, 2009 to November 30, 2009 only

This form constitutes a public request for the Texas Historical Commission (THC) to consider approval of an Official Texas Historical Marker for the topic noted in this application. The THC will review the request and make its determination based on rules and procedures of the program. Filing of the application for sponsorship is for the purpose of providing basic information to be used in the evaluation process. The final determination of eligibility and therefore approval for a state marker will be made by the THC. This form is to be used for Recorded Texas Historic Landmark (building marker) requests only. Please see separate forms for either Historic Texas Cemeteries or subject markers.

Proposed marker topic (official title will be determined by the THC): Blackwell School

County: Presidio

Town (nearest county town on current state highway map): Marfa

Street address of marker site or directions from town noted above: 501 South Abbot St.

Marker Coordinates:

If you know the location coordinates of the proposed marker site, enter them in one of the formats below:

UTM Zone Easting Northing

Lat: 30 18'20.97"N Long: 104 1'20.72" W(deg, min, sec or decimal degrees)

Otherwise, give a precise verbal description here (e.g. northwest corner of 3rd and Elm, or FM 1411, 2.6 miles east of McWhorter Creek):

NOTE: Recorded Texas Historic Landmark markers must be placed at the structure being marked.

Recorded Texas Historic Landmark markers definition: Recorded Texas Historic Landmark (RTHL) markers are awarded to structures deemed worthy of preservation for their historical associations and architectural significance. RTHL is a legal designation and comes with a measure of protection; it is the highest honor the state can bestow on a historic structure, and the designation is required for this type of marker. The RTHL designation becomes effective upon approval by the THC. Official Texas Historical Markers signify the RTHL designation, which comes only through application to and approval by the THC and must include public display of an Official Texas Historical Marker. Owners of RTHL-designated structures must give the THC 60 days written notice before any alterations are made to the exterior of the structure. RTHL status is a permanent designation and is not to be removed from the property in the event of a transfer of ownership. Only the THC can remove the designation or recall the marker. The marker must remain with the structure and may not be removed or displayed elsewhere until or unless the THC gives express approval in writing for such action. Once designated as RTHL, properties are subject to provisions of Texas Government Code, Section 442.006(f).

Criteria:

1. **Age:** Structures eligible for the RTHL designation and marker must be at least 50 years old.
2. **Historical significance:** Architectural significance alone is not enough to qualify a structure for the RTHL designation. It must have an equally significant historical association, and that association can come from an event that occurred at the site; through individuals who owned or lived on the property; or, in the case of bridges, industrial plants, schoolhouses and other non-residential properties, through documented significance to the larger community.
3. **Architectural significance:** Structures deemed architecturally significant are outstanding examples of architectural history through design, materials, structural type or construction methods. In all cases, eligible architectural properties must display integrity; that is, the structure should be in a good state of repair, maintain its appearance from its period of significance and be considered an exemplary model of preservation. Architectural significance is often best determined by the relevance of the property to broader contexts, including geography. Any changes over the years should be compatible with original design and reflect compliance with accepted preservation practices, e.g., the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*.
4. **Good state of repair:** Structures not considered by the THC to be in a good state of repair are ineligible for RTHL designation. The THC reserves the sole right to make that determination relative to eligibility for RTHL markers.

Special National Register considerations for RTHL marker applications: If a structure has been individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) under either Criterion A or B **and** Criterion C (Architecture), the historical text compiled as part of the National Register nomination process may be submitted as part of the marker process, provided it includes the required reference notes and other documentation. Acceptance of the National Register information for the purposes of the marker process will be up to the sole determination of the THC. Listing in the NRHP does not guarantee approval for an RTHL marker. See the THC web site at <http://www.thc.state.tx.us/markerdesigns/madnrcrit.html> for National Register criteria.

Check this box if the property is individually listed in the NRHP.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Any individual, group or county historical commission (CHC) may apply to the THC to request an Official Texas Historical Marker for what it deems a worthy topic. Only complete marker applications that contain all the required elements and are submitted online as required can be accepted or processed by the THC (for RTHL markers, the required elements are: sponsorship application form; narrative history; documentation; legal description of the property; site plan; floorplan; historic photograph; and current photographs clearly showing each side of the structure—please resize photographs to 1-2 MB, or approximately 1024 x 768 pixels).

- Completed applications must be duly reviewed, verified and approved by the county historical commission (CHC) in the county in which the marker will be placed.
- The sponsorship application form, narrative history and documentation must be submitted as Microsoft Word or Word-compatible documents and sent via email attachments to the THC by no later than November 30, 2009.
- Required font style and type size are a Times variant and 12-point.
- Narrative histories must be typed in a double-spaced (or 1.5-spaced) format and include separate sections on context, overview, significance and documentation.
- The narrative history must include documentation in the form of reference notes, which can be either footnotes or endnotes. Documentation associated with applications should be broad-based and demonstrate a survey of all available resources, both primary and secondary.

- Upon notification of the successful preliminary review of required elements by the THC, a non-refundable application fee of \$100 is required. The fee shall be submitted to the THC within ten working days of application receipt notification.

APPROVAL BY COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

The duly appointed marker representative (chair or marker chair) noted below for the county historical commission will be the sole contact with the THC for this marker application. To ensure accuracy, consistency and efficiency, all information from and to the THC relative to the application—and throughout the review and production processes—will be via direct communication with the CHC representative. All other inquiries (calls, emails, letters) to the THC will be referred to the CHC representative for response. By filling out the information below and filing the application with the THC, the CHC representative is providing the THC with notice that the application and documentation have been reviewed and verified by the CHC and that the material meets all current requirements of the Official Texas Historical Marker program.

As chair or duly appointed marker chair, I certify the following:

- Representatives of the CHC have met or talked with the potential marker sponsor and discussed the marker program policies as outlined on the THC web site. CHC members have reviewed the history and documentation for accuracy and made corrections or notes as necessary. It is the determination of the CHC that the topic, history and documentation meet criteria for eligibility.

CHC comments or concerns about this application, if any:

Name of CHC contact (chair or marker chair): Lorena Kelly

Mailing address:P.O. Box 25 **City, Zip:** Marfa 79843

Daytime phone (with area code):432.729.4779 **Email address** (required):

blackwell1109bronchos@att.net

PERMISSION OF PROPERTY OWNER FOR MARKER PLACEMENT

Property owner: Marfa Independent School District

Address:P.O. Box T **City, state, zip:**Marfa TX 79843

Phone:432.729.4252 **Email address:** tjswinnea@marfaisd.com

Legal Description of the property (metes and bounds, lot and block, etc.): Block 87 Lots 1-5 City of Marfa

Upon receipt of the application, the THC will provide the owner with a letter that outlines the legal responsibility of ownership under the Recorded Texas Historic Landmark statute. The letter must be signed by the owner and returned to the THC before the evaluation can be completed.

NOTE: The property owner will not receive any additional copies of correspondence from the THC. All other correspondence—notice of receipt, request for additional information, payment notice, inscription, shipping notice, etc.—will be sent via email to the CHC representative, who is encouraged to share the information with all interested parties as necessary. Given the large volume of applications processed annually and the need for centralized communication, all

inquiries about applications in process will be referred to the CHC for response. The CHC is the sole liaison to the THC on all marker application matters.

SPONSORSHIP PAYMENT INFORMATION

Prospective sponsors please note the following:

- Payment must be received in full within 45 days of the official approval notice and must be accompanied by the THC payment form. The THC is unable to process partial payments or to delay payment due to processing procedures of the sponsor. Applications not paid in the time frame required may, at the sole discretion of the THC, be cancelled or postponed.
- Payment does not constitute ownership of a marker; Recorded Texas Historic Landmark markers and other Official Texas Historical Markers are the property of the State of Texas.
- If, at any time during the marker process, sponsorship is withdrawn, a refund can be processed, but the THC will retain the application fee of \$100.
- The Official Texas Historical Marker Program provides no means of recognizing sponsors or property owners through marker text, incising or supplemental plaques.

Marker sponsor (may be individual or organization): Blackwell School Alliance

Contact person (if applicable): Joe Cabezuela

Mailing address:P.O. Box 417 **City, zip:** Marfa 79843

Email address (required):blackwell1109bronchos@att.net **Phone:** 432.729.4752

SHIPPING INSTRUCTIONS

In order to facilitate delivery of the marker, neither post office box numbers nor rural route numbers can be accepted. To avoid additional shipping charges or delays, use a business street address (open 8 a.m.—5 p.m., Monday through Friday).

Name: Joe Cabezuela

Street address:902 W. Dallas **City, zip:** Marfa, 79843

Daytime phone (required): 432.729.4752 **Email** (required): blackwell1109bronchos@att.net

TYPE AND SIZE OF RECORDED TEXAS HISTORIC LANDMARK MARKERS

As part of its review process, the THC will determine the appropriate size marker and provide options, if any, for the approved topic based on its own review criteria, including, but not exclusive of, historical significance, replication of information in other THC markers, relevance to the Statewide Preservation Plan and the amount of available documented information provided in the application narrative. In making its determination, however, the THC will also take into account the preference of the CHC, as noted below.

The sponsor/CHC prefers the following size marker:

- 27" x 42" RTHL marker with post (\$1500)
- 27" X 42" RTHL marker without post* (\$1500)
- 18" x 28" RTHL marker with post (\$1000)

- 18" x 28" RTHL marker without post* (\$1000)
- RTHL medallion and 16" x 12" plaque with post (\$750)
- RTHL medallion and 16" x 12" plaque without post* (\$750)

*For an RTHL marker without post, indicate to what surface material it will be mounted:

- wood
- masonry
- metal
- other (specify)

SUBMITTING THE APPLICATION (via email required)

When the CHC has determined the application is complete, the history has been verified and the topic meets the requirements of the Official Texas Historical Marker Program, the materials should be forwarded to the THC via email at the following address:
markerapplication@thc.state.tx.us.

- The CHC or marker chair should send an email containing the following attachments (see attachment function under file menu or toolbox on your computer):
 - This application form
 - The narrative history (including documentation)
 - Legal description of the property
 - Detailed floor plan for each floor of the structure
 - Detailed site plan of the property
 - At least one historic photograph
 - Current photographs clearly showing each side of the structure

RECORDS RETENTION BY CHC: The CHC must retain hard copies of the application as well as an online version, at least for the duration of the marker process. The THC is not responsible for lost applications, for incomplete applications or for applications not properly filed according to the program requirements. For additional information about any aspect of the Official Texas Historical Marker Program, see the Markers page on the THC web site (<http://www.thc.state.tx.us/markerdesigs/madmark.html>)

Texas Historical Commission
History Programs Division
P.O. Box 12276, Austin, TX 78711-2276
Phone 512/463-5853
history@thc.state.tx.us



TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
real places telling real stories

The Blackwell School
Marfa, TX

I. Context

Beginning in 1890, there is historical evidence of a school in Marfa, Texas that opened to serve the community's Mexican children, as well as a few Anglo children from the surrounding area. The school moved in to a structure, whose original age is unknown that previously housed the Mexican Methodist church ¹. Records show an active congregation from 1883 to 1886, and nothing else is known about the church ². In 1890, it transitioned to being used as a weekday school with services on the weekend, and eventually functioned exclusively as a school ³. At its' inception, it was known as the Ward school. Jesse Blackwell, who served as principal beginning in 1922 ⁴, led the school through several transitions. To honor his commitment and life's work, both the school and the building were eventually named The Blackwell School. In 1933, the school was said to have had a record enrollment of over one hundred students ⁵. The Blackwell School, on the south side of the Southern Pacific tracks that bisects Marfa, was a thriving and separate campus from the north side Marfa Elementary School, and served hundreds of predominantly Latino children from kindergarten through the 8th Grade.

The 1896 United State Supreme Court case, *Plessy v. Ferguson*, sanctioned ethnic segregation. The case declared that institutions and amenities could be "equal" while keeping those of Anglo-Saxon descent and those persons of color "separate ⁶." This situation most often meant that minorities were left to cope with unacceptable circumstances. The reality of the segregation was substandard or non-existent restroom facilities, restaurants dubbed as 'Whites Only', and separate under-funded school

systems. State and municipal funding seemed to find its way to the predominantly white educational institutions, leaving the other institutions to fend for themselves. Without necessarily understanding the underlying social situation, local alumni of the school vividly remember helping their mothers and members of the Blackwell Parent Teacher Association sell tamales at fundraisers to help buy their textbooks ⁷.

In 1965, The Blackwell School shut its' doors when all of Marfa's schools were racially integrated ⁸. In a well-intentioned attempt to culturally assimilate their new students, the teachers at the Marfa Public School carried out the State's campus mandate that required the children to speak English only ⁹. Students still recall being asked to write words in Spanish on slips of paper, which were placed in a box and buried in a mock-funeral ceremony. This event is documented in teacher Evelyn Davis's declaration entitled 'The Last Rites of Spanish Speaking.' ¹⁰. Children who continued to speak in their native tongue were paddled, and alums of this experience overwhelmingly felt that the new law was an attempt to bury their language. Inez Rivera says that although she never got punished, she knew many fellow students who were "strong willed and refused, who said 'Hey, you're not burying us' ¹¹." While Principle Jesse Blackwell was well remembered for forming a very successful Spanish-speaking branch for regional academic competitions ¹², those days had been replaced with a sublimation of his students' cultural heritage. Rather than embracing both Latino and Anglo cultures, Mexican children were asked to forego their familiar customs. Because this and similar tactics were repeated in schools across the country, most notably with the discrimination of black students, recognizing sites of historical significance in this area becomes an

important facet in the understanding of U. S. history, as it relates to the treatment of Latinos and other ethnic minorities.

The building sat idle, until recently, and is now looked at as a site to be cherished, as well as a location for growing the community's strength.

II. Overview

The historic schoolhouse is a simple, story-and-a-half, gable-roofed building, complete with a steeple. It is symmetrically fenestrated and features a tall stone foundation set in lime mortar. There are several original wood-framed sash windows, wood doors, and 24'' thick adobe walls. Most of the original doors and windows have been removed. However, the wood trimming of the doors and windows, the presence of rake boards, and the wide wood soffit and overhang lend an air of 19th-century charm.

Considering the likelihood of the Blackwell School Building being the oldest building of it's kind in the Trans-Pecos region, the current condition is in good repair. The wood shingle roof has been replaced with metal. The addition of the impermeable render has caused noticeable movement and subsequent cracking. The ruptured stucco allows water infiltration and pest intrusion.

Once a bustling full block campus, all of the buildings, except for this one, have been demolished and hauled off as rubble to the landfill. Save for a flagpole and some signage, the rest of the city block is barren. When Joe Cabezuela and several of his classmates learned that the Blackwell building was slated to meet the same fate, they visited with the Marfa Independent School District and told the authorities that "enough was enough ¹³." They explained that this building belongs to the students, to the

neighborhood, and to the people of Marfa, and they offered to dedicate some of their retirement years to preserving, and reviving it.

The MISD officials agreed, and the Blackwell School Alliance was formed in August of 2006 with Cabezuella acting as their President. The Alliance paid a dollar, and signed a 99-year lease with the school district ¹⁴. The alliance members spent a weekend hauling away the trash and debris cluttering the interior. Once the place was cleaned up and aired out, archivist Richard Williams busied himself with setting up the starts of the museum that would chronicle the school's history. Inside the building at present sits an original school desk and numerous artifacts from the school's history. Dozens and dozens of young faces peer out from black-and-white photographs lovingly tacked to bulletin boards. Letterman jackets, trophies, newspaper clippings, articles of clothing, pages torn from schoolbooks and a tiny framed hand-sewn drum majorette's uniform only begin to describe the amount of objects being looked after by the Alliance. Pencil nubs sharpened all the way to their erasers; collected from underneath the floorboards, make Richard Williams smile ¹⁵. The bucking bronco logo still stirs the memories of returning students, now in their sixties and seventies, who make their way back to the old school house to reminisce and visit with one another.

The members of the Alliance envision the site as a multi-use facility, complete with a vibrant historical museum and a continuing-education learning center, focusing on computer skills and literacy. In their words, they want to see it develop as 'a green space for the entire Marfa community to share ¹⁶.' Already the Alliance has hosted several reunions, open houses, potlucks, barbecues and concerts, and is currently marching forward with future fundraising plans.

III. Significance

The preservation of this building becomes an important lesson in understanding how Marfa used to be. The ongoing transition of this abandoned site to the Blackwell School Community Center celebrates a policy of inclusiveness and diversity, and commemorates the beginning of a new and vibrant community space.

The distinctive design and craftsmanship of structure itself is a physical record of the longevity of beautiful traditional techniques. It is a testament to the days when relying upon local, readily available materials and skilled labor was a necessity. The design and workmanship represent the transition from masonry vernacular to the period when materials were made available by the railroad.

The transformation of the Blackwell School is closely associated with the broad patterns of our local, state, and national history. It is a visible reminder of the tenacity of ethnic groups to maintain their cultural identity despite efforts to conform to an Anglo political domination. The community has put forth tremendous efforts to save, preserve and transform this piece of their heritage.

IV Documentation

¹ Cecilia Thompson, *History of Marfa and Presidio County, Vol II* (Austin, Texas: Nortex Press, 1985), 466

² *Ibid.*, 259.

³ *Ibid.*, 467.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 235.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 386

⁶ Cornell University Law School, "Plessy v. Ferguson: Supreme Court Selection"; available from http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/historics/USSC_CR_0163_0537_ZO.html; Internet; accessed 3 Dec 2009.

⁷ Jean Fulton, "A Conditions Assessment in Preservation Recommendations: The Historic Blackwell School (1889-1965) Marfa, Texas." August 2008

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Rodolfo Rodriguez, "Bilingual Education: Texas State Historical Association, The Handbook of Texas Online"; available from <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/BB/khb2.html> ; Internet; accessed 5 December 2009

¹⁰ Evelyn Davis, *The Last Rites of Spanish Speaking*, Historic Document, 1954

¹¹ Karen Bernstein, "The Blackwell School: A Documentary Work in Progress," DVD, 2008

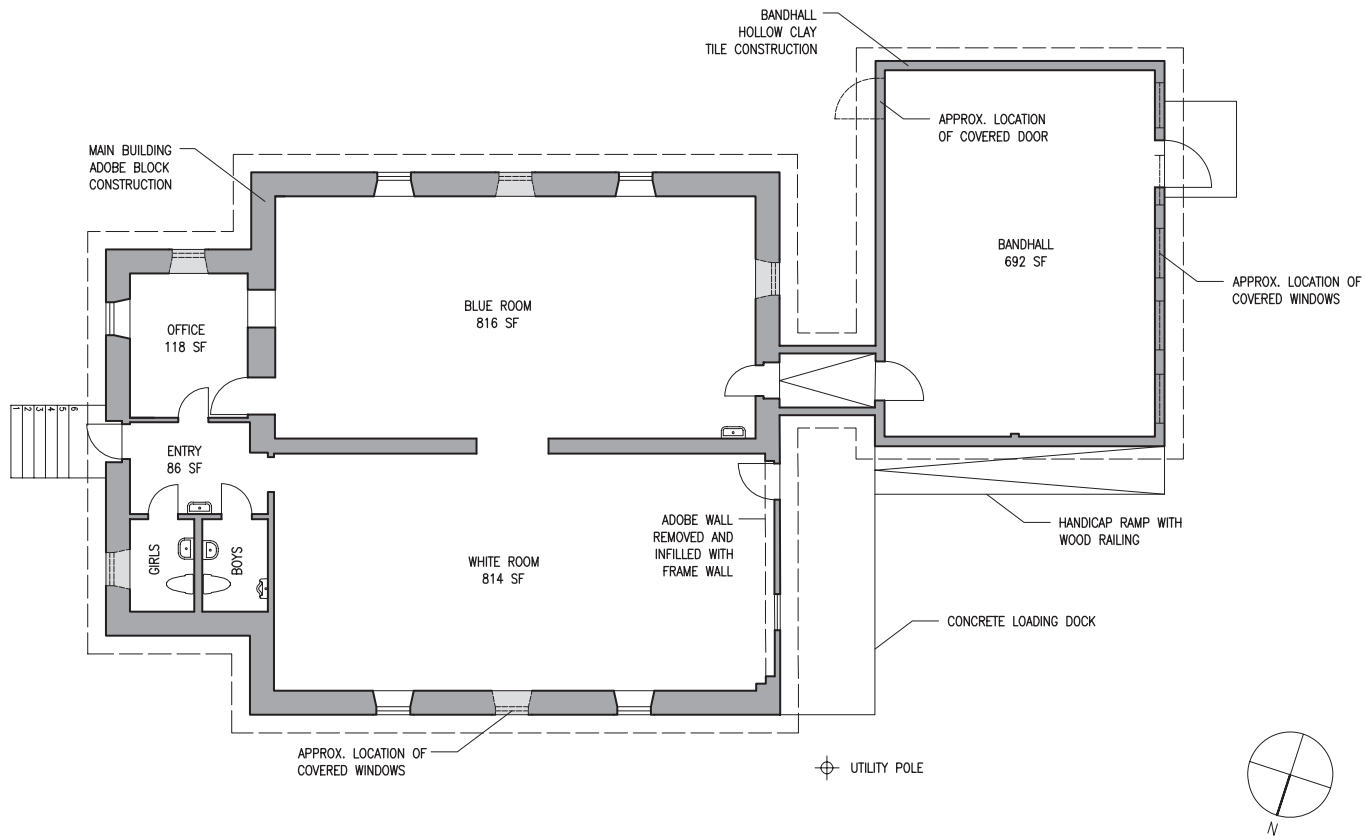
¹² Cecilia Thompson, 430.

¹³ Jean Fulton.

¹⁴ Idib.

¹⁵ Idib.

¹⁶ Idib.



REVISIONS

DATE	COMMENTS

BLACKWELL SCHOOL
 MARFA, TEXAS

BLACKWELL SCHOOL	
PROJECT #	
DRAWN BY	P. STANLEY
CHECKED BY	

FLOOR PLAN

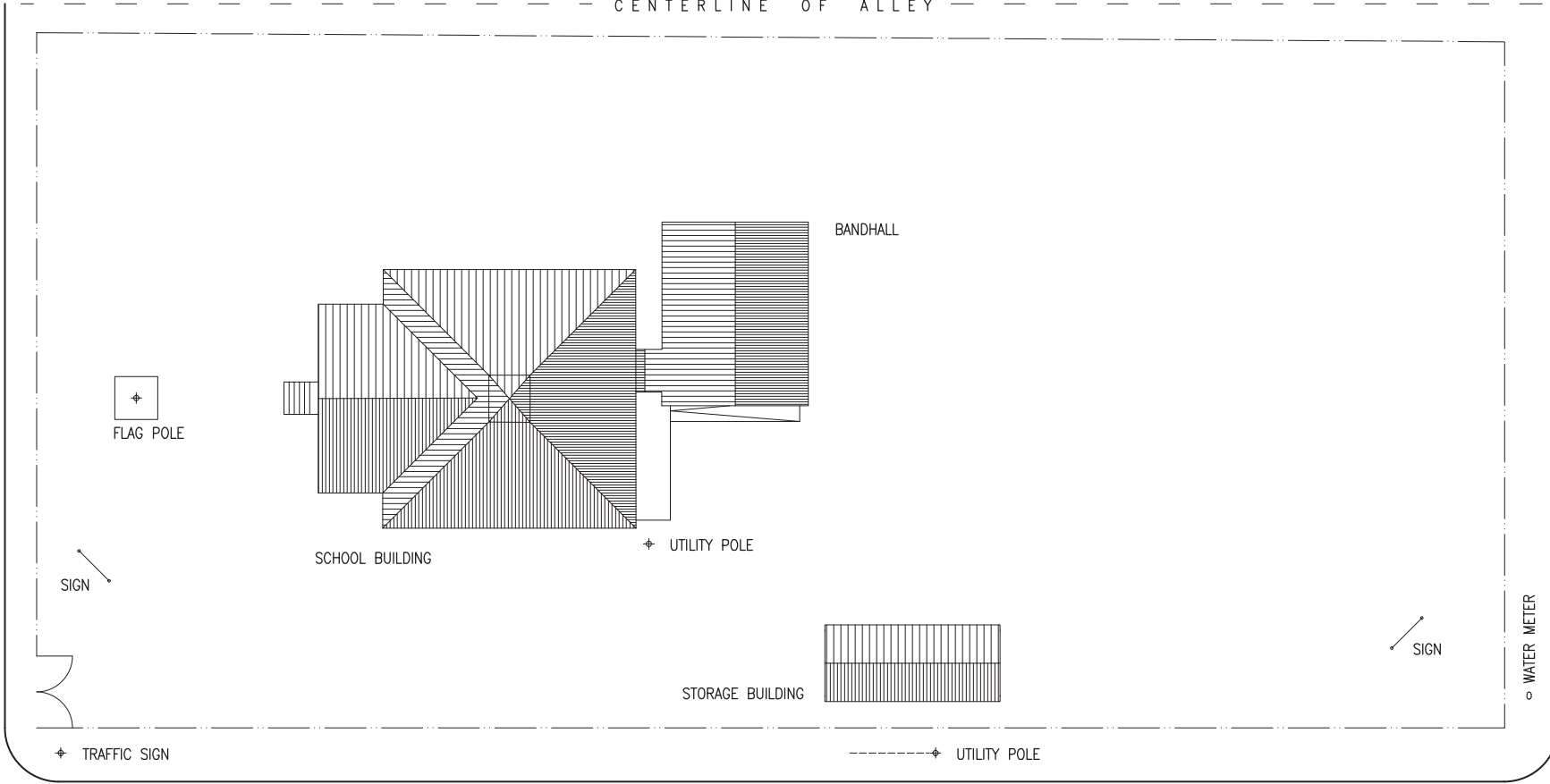
A0.2

ABBOTT STREET

CENTERLINE OF ALLEY

KELLY STREET

WACO STREET



GREENWORKS P.L.L.C.
 902 W. SAN ANTONIO ST., PO BOX 97, MARFA, TX 79843
 TEL# 432.729.3984 E-MAIL: info@greenworks-architecture.com

REVISIONS

DATE	COMMENTS

BLACKWELL SCHOOL
 MARFA, TEXAS

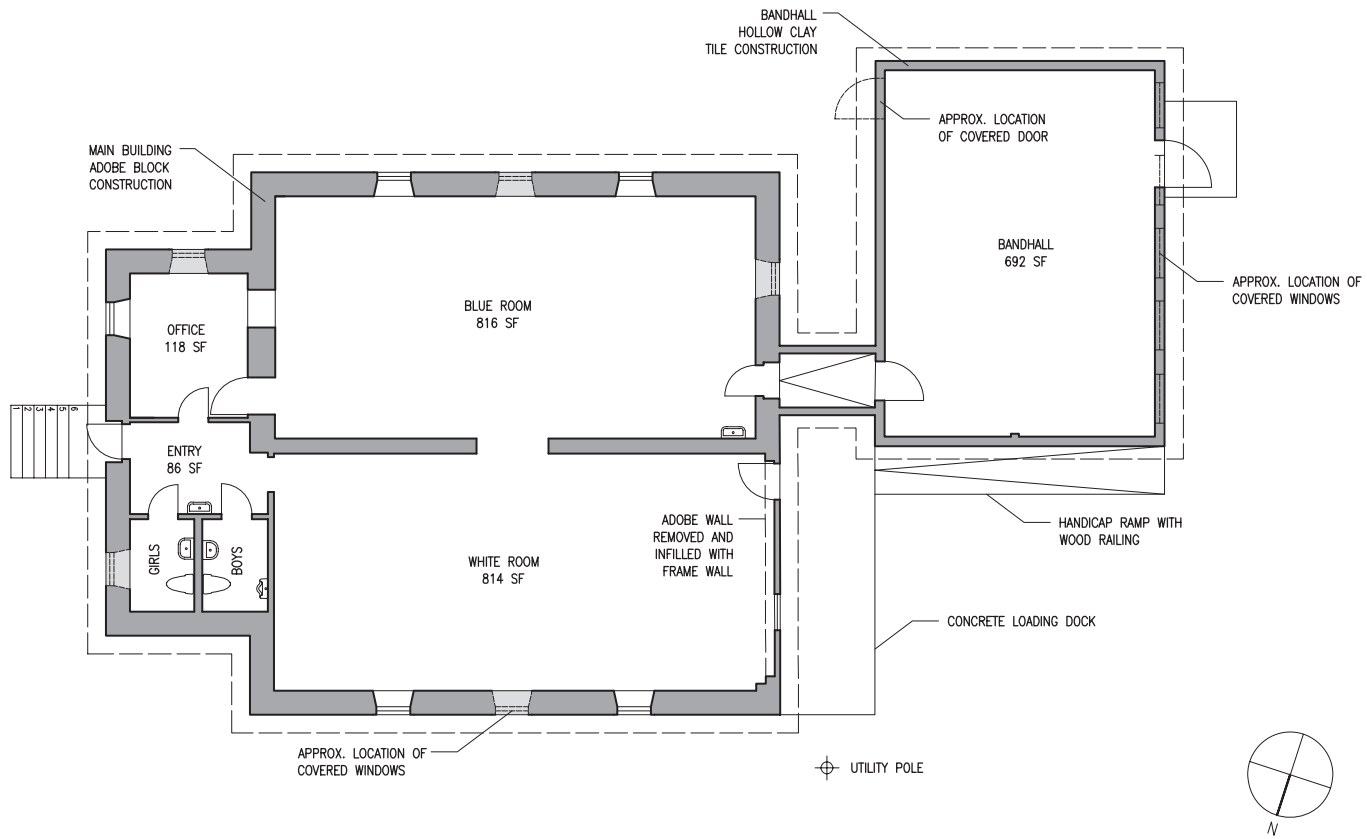
BLACKWELL SCHOOL
 PROJECT #
 DRAWN BY P. STANLEY
 CHECKED BY

SITE PLAN

A0.1

SCALE: 1/32"=1'

11.16.09



REVISIONS

DATE	COMMENTS

BLACKWELL SCHOOL
 MARFA, TEXAS

BLACKWELL SCHOOL	
PROJECT #	
DRAWN BY	P. STANLEY
CHECKED BY	

FLOOR PLAN

A0.2



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Pointer 30°18'21.87" N 104°01'21.26" W elev 4682 ft

Streaming ||||| 100%

Eye alt 7246 ft

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Authorization for Recorded Texas Historic Landmark Designation

Property considered for designation:

Name of House, Address of House, Name of County, Texas:

Blackwell School, 501 South Abbot St., Marfa, Presidio County

Legal Description (Lot and Block or Metes and Bounds):

Block 87, Lots 1-5 City of Marfa

The Recorded Texas Historic Landmark (RTHL) designation is awarded to historic structures deemed worthy of preservation for their architectural integrity and historical associations. Authorized by the Texas Legislature under Texas Government Code, Chapter 442, RTHL is the highest honor the state can bestow on historic structures in Texas. Designated properties are afforded a measure of legal protection and become part of the recorded history of the state's built environment.

Benefits of the RTHL designation:

- Recognition that a property is of local, regional or state significance.
Protection for up to 90 days from exterior alterations, including demolition or relocation.
Ad valorem tax exemptions, where granted by local taxing authorities.
Inclusion in the Texas Historic Sites Atlas.
Technical preservation assistance through the THC.

Responsibility of the property owner under the RTHL provision, as noted in Texas Government Code, Chapter 442.006 (f):

A person may not damage the historical or architectural integrity of a structure the commission has designated as a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark without notifying the commission at least 60 days before the date on which the action causing the damage is to begin. After receiving the notice, the commission may waive the waiting period or, if the commission determines that a longer period will enhance the chance for preservation, it may require an additional waiting period of not longer than 30 days. On the expiration of the time limits imposed by this section, the person may proceed, but must proceed not later than the 180th day after the date on which notice was given or the notice is considered to have expired.

Additionally:

- The designation requires the public display of the Recorded Texas Historic Landmark marker. The marker is the property of the State of Texas and may not be removed or relocated without the prior permission of the Texas Historical Commission.
RTHL status is a permanent designation which is retained with the property even upon transfer of ownership. Only the Texas Historical Commission may remove the designation.
Structures designated as RTHLs do not have to be open to the public, but the marker must be accessible to the public.
RTHL designation does not imply eligibility for federal tax incentives for rehabilitation.

I, the property owner or legal administrator of the property noted herein, signify below that I have read the information regarding Recorded Texas Historic Landmarks and that I voluntarily seek the designation for the property. I further promise to comply with the provision noted in the Texas Government Code.

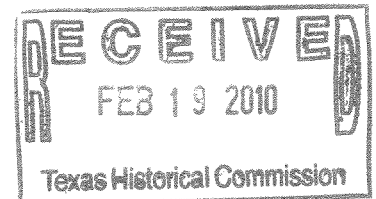
Name (print) Marfa ISD

Mailing address: P.O. Box T

City, state, zip: Marfa, TX 79843

Phone: (432) 729-4252 Email: tjswinnea@marfaisd.com

Signature: Jelo Swinnea, Superintendent



2.3.2011 notes

Call from Lorena Kelly (now former CHC chair, but will coordinate this marker application since incoming chair is not familiar with it):

1889 was actual date of school founding, not c. 1890.

Weren't all schools known as "Ward School"?

~~Primarily~~ Primarily Hispanic – students were all Hispanic.

Ninth grade until 1954, then 8 grades.

DeTeel Patterson Tiller described building as one-story (not 1 ½), with modified hipped roof.

Does have front gable entry.

THE LAST RITES OF SPANISH SPEAKING

1954

by Evelyn Davis

Teaching at Blackwell, I harbored a few pet peeves -- the greatest of all was S-p-a-n-i-s-h- s-p-e-a-k-i-n-g on the campus. Having taught in high school and college for four years in Seguin, I found it difficult to correct the heavy German accent of my students so was determined to do a better job in speech instruction at Blackwell.

Conning my seventh graders and other pupils, I convinced every one we would bury Spanish and perfect our English every hour at school. A ceremony was arranged, a grave site dug at the entrance of the campus, speeches composed, a card board coffin constructed and pall bearers designated.

It was a sunny, fall morning when the junior high students assembled with little slips of papers bearing Spanish words that they placed inside the casket. Two patriotic songs were sung, speeches were made including one from Bud Fisher, the principal.

Now it was time to close the casket and lower it into the grave. Every thing had been perfect up to this moment until two pall bearers, who had not rehearsed, were to lower the casket with dignity. They started pulling against each other in disagreement, which was followed by anger, and then a volley of Spanish cuss words # % @ * \$ * ? The solemnity turned into titters, then giggles followed by hilarious laughter as the bearers threw dirt at each other.

What a GREAT FIASCO!









MARFA
HOUSING
AUTHORITY
OFFICE
→



