

**Dallas Landmark Commission
Landmark Nomination Form**

1. Name

historic: Phyllis Wheatley Elementary School
and/or common: _____

date: 4/26/93

2. Location

address: 2908 Metropolitan Ave. Dallas, TX 75215

location/neighborhood: Wheatley Place/South Dallas

block: 1965 lot: 6 land survey: _____ tract size: 5.5 Acres

3. Current Zoning

R-5 (A)

4. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	___ museum
___ district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	___ agricultural	___ park
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	___ private	___ unoccupied	___ commercial	___ residence
___ structure	___ both	___ work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational	___ religious
___ site	Public	Accessibility	___ entertainment	___ scientific
___ object	Acquisition	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes:restricted	___ government	___ transportation
	___ in progress	___ yes:unrestricted	___ industrial	___ other, specify
	___ being considered	___ no	___ military	

5. Ownership

Current Owner: Dallas Independent School District

Contact: Dr. Marvin Edwards

Phone: 824-1620

Address: 3700 Ross

City: Dallas

State: TX

Zip: 75204

6. Form Preparation

Date: January 1993

Name & Title: Frances James, Historic Researcher

Organization: Neighborhood Designation Task Force

Contact: Jim Anderson, Planning Department

Phone: 670-4132

7. Representation on Existing Surveys

Alexander Survey (citywide) ___ local ___ state ___ national National Register
H.P.L. Survey (CBD) ___ A ___ B ___ C ___ D ___ Recorded TX Historic Ldmk
Oak Cliff ___ ___ TX Archaeological Ldmk
Victorian Survey ___
Dallas Historic Resources Survey, Phase 4 high ___ medium ___ low

For Office Use Only

Date Rec'd: _____ Survey Verified: Y N by: _____ Field Check by: _____ Petitions Needed: Y N

Nomination: Archaeological Site Structure(s) Structure & Site District

8. Historic Ownership

original owner: Dallas Board of Education

significant later owner(s): Dallas Independent School District

9. Construction Dates

original: 1929

alterations/additions:

10. Architect

original construction: Flint and Broad - Architects \ L.M. Burford - General Contractor

alterations/additions:

11. Site Features

natural:

urban design:

12. Physical Description

Condition, check one:

excellent

good

fair

deteriorated

ruins

unexposed

unaltered

altered

Check one:

original site

moved(date _____)

Describe present and original (if known) physical appearance. Include style(s) of architecture, current condition and relationship to surrounding fabric (structures, objects, etc). elaborate on pertinent materials used and style(s) of architectural detailing, embellishments and site details.

Phyllis Wheatley Elementary School is a two story building which sits at the northern edge of the city block bounded by Metropolitan Avenue, Havana Street, Meyers Street and McDermott Street. The building faces north to Metropolitan Street. Constructed of a light yellow brick in a regular bond pattern with stone coping and horizontal trim, this building reflects both Spanish Colonial and Spanish Revival ornamentation on a modernistic building. The building form is very simple and modern, with its large window openings, simple floor plan, simple horizontal stone banding at the roof line, and blank expanses of brick at the front protruding facades.

The ornamentation on the building facade is restrained and in keeping with the simplicity of the building. At the front facade of the building, the center protrudes slightly from the adjacent areas of the facade; this center portion has textural low relief stonework above the second story windows and to the parapet; this is in a checkered pattern. At the building entry, the double doors are recessed slightly into a low relief stone surround; this surround extends to the triple windows at the second story and the parapet above. Centered over each of these three second story window is a decorative geometric panel of cast stone.

At the main building entry, a small porch floor extends along the width of the center portion of the building. This is flanked by brick partial walls, with stone coping.

The side facades of this building are similar to the front, with less ornamentation. These also have large groupings of windows with the stone window head continuing from the front facade. The side doors also have a low relief stone surround.

Wheatley Elementary has seen several modifications to the school. The first was the addition of an auditorium at the rear of the building. A gym was later added behind the school and to the side of the auditorium. This gym is not attached to the school building. Both of these additions are of

yellow brick to match the original structure, are of an appropriate scale and massing, and have complimentary windows and detailing. Both are truly compatible with the original structure.

Further to the rear of the site, several portable classrooms have been placed. These are connected to the structure with a covered walkway; this provides protection against the elements for the students.

This school is located in Wheatley Place, an early twentieth century subdivision that was platted specifically for African Americans. The residential area was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1991. This elementary school continues to serve this and other surrounding neighborhoods.

The adjacent streets are single family homes, mostly one story bungalows. The south end of this block is a public park. This park contains a tennis court, children's play area and swimming pool.

13. Historical Significance

Statement of historical and cultural significance. Include: cultural influences, special events and important personages, influences on neighborhood, on the city, etc.

The Phyllis Wheatley School was completed in 1929 on what is now known as Metropolitan (Nellie) between Havana and Meyers. The land had previously been occupied by a small one room red frame building. It was razed to ¹ allow for the construction of the new Phyllis Wheatley School. This area was annexed to the City of Dallas in 1913.²

In a questionnaire filled out by Principal William Jackson, as of May 1, 1929, he noted that there were 565 children enrolled in the school. The fifteen teachers occupied sixteen classrooms. In answer to the question concerning what new features would you have added to a new school building, he replied that an auditorium, restrooms for the girls and women with inside toilets, and a clinic room. (this is what the old building lacked). Mr. Jackson finalized his report by adding that a new building is being erected on our school grounds.³

The Phyllis Wheatley addition to the city of Dallas was developed by Alex Camp in 1916.⁴ This area of land was a portion of the 4444 acre Lagow League. A portion had been owned by Mr. J.F. and Bettie Warren since they came to Dallas in 1874. Mr. Warren engaged in farming and raised fruit. He had bought and sold other property, but kept his original 33 acres intact. The first Mrs. Warren died in 1882.⁵

In 1889 Warren married Mrs. M.A. Camp, the widow of Aaron C. Camp who had died in 1881. Aaron C. Camp was a partner with W.H. Gaston in establishing Dallas' first bank. The Camps had four children, Alex, Thomas L., Aaron, and daughter Mattie. For many years after James F. Warren died, Mrs. Warren (Camp) held the land and it was not developed.⁶

Eventually, two of the Camp brothers, T.L. and Alex, were able to develop the Wheatley Place Addition to the City of Dallas in 1916. The plat submitted by Alex Camp included the site for a school and park. The records at Dallas Independent School District archives show the park was originally named the Booker T. Washington Park.⁷

One of the first families to move into the addition was that of Joe and Sereptha Smith. Joe was a porter at the Dallas Times Herald. They could look from the corner where they lived to Oakland Cemetery because there were no other houses to block their view.⁸

The cemetery had been established in 1911 by George W. Loudermilk, an early day Dallas undertaker. Mr. Loudermilk was involved in many businesses in Dallas and is credited with helping Hilton when he built his first high rise hotel in Dallas (now called the Aristocrat) on Harwood Street. Loudermilk owned the land and signed a 100 year lease with the Hilton Investment company in 1924. He and his wife lived in the hotel until he died in 1953.⁹

This cemetery was the final resting place for many of Dallas' leading citizens. Among these are Edgar L. Flippen and John S. Armstrong, the developers of Highland Park, and General R.M. Gano, renowned medical doctor, minister, business man and grandfather of millionaire Howard Hughes. At the far side (from Oakland) space was reserved for the black families from the community.¹⁰

Phyllis Wheatley School was named for a Negro poet of the eighteenth century. At age seven Phillis (born 1754) was kidnapped and brought to America from Senegal, in Africa. She was sold

as a slave to a tailor, John Wheatley and his wife in Boston. She was educated by the Wheatleys and in less than two years she had mastered English and later also learned Greek and Latin. Her first book of poetry was published in 1773 in London, England. It was the second book of poetry ever published by a woman from America. Phillis Wheatley died in 1784.¹¹

This school and park have been the centerpoint of the community for many years. In an interview with Otis White, who attended school in the little, red building, he described the surroundings at the school and park. He is still very involved in the community now that he is retired. He can recall the names of some of the teachers, and the principal, Mr. William Jackson, who was described by Mr. White as being immaculate and a "sharp dresser."¹²

In the 1940 edition of the Texas Writers Project, the Phyllis Wheatley neighborhood is described as among the better Negro residential areas of Dallas.¹³ This development has experienced very little change since the housing was completed. In the Dallas Dispatch in 1918, Wheatley Place was promoted by Wash Russell, a black resident of the addition for colored people. This 1918 advertisement states that 33 homes have been completed and 100 lots have been sold.¹⁴

The Phyllis Wheatley School was one of the K-3 schools in Dallas that received the Excellence in Education Award from the Dallas Foundation and the Dallas Morning News in 1992¹⁵. The current principal is Ms. Dolores Seemster.

The building has had several sensitive additions to meet the needs of the community. Documents in DISD archives show that the original building was designed by the architectural firm of Flint and Broad. The general contractor was L.M. Burford. Dallas Plumbing Company was responsible for the plumbing and the heating. Electrical work was performed by Ro-Nile Electric company. Temperature Control was Johnson Service company. The final payments were made for \$105,702.03.¹⁶

The current staff are devoted to the children and the maintenance of the structure and grounds seems to be adequate.

The contingency of the grounds for the school and the park, which contains a beautiful grove of trees, adds to the spaciousness of the landscaping.

Continuation Sheet

Item # _____

(Page _____ of _____)

Endnotes Phyllis Wheatley

1. Documentation in the archives files of Dallas Independent School District.
2. There were many parcels of this area annexed to the city of Dallas from 1903-1919. Ordinance No. 440 was passed by City on February 26, 1919 to allow for a special election to adopt an amendment establishing the boundaries of the city of Dallas.
3. Report dated May 1, 1929, in DISD files. Interview with Otis White who had been a student in the original building.
4. Copy of plat in Bracey's Plat Book dated 1949, map 105 and 112.
5. Memorial and Biographical History of Dallas county, pages 703-704.
6. Ibid.
7. DISD Archives and Bracey's Plat Map 105 and 112.
8. African American Families and Settlements of Dallas: On the Inside Looking Out. page 44. Also Dallas City Directory for 1924.
9. Dallas County Deed records Volume 1239 page 53, July 4, 1925. Also see research done in connection with Texas Historical Marker for Aristocrat (Dallas Plaza Hotel) dedicated March 16, 1990.
10. Bracey's Plat Map 105 and 112. Information from the headstones at the cemetery.
11. Phyllis Wheatley, by Merle Richmond, published by Chelsea House Publishers, New York, New York, 1988, page 21-22.
12. Interview with Otis White, resident of Whetle Place.
13. The WPA Dallas Guide and History page 293.
14. Advertisement in the Dallas Dispatch, July 19, 1918.
15. Dallas Morning News, Monday, October 12, 1992 page 15A.
16. Records of DISD.

14. Bibliography

PUBLISHED SOURCES

Acheson, Sam, Dallas Yesterday, published by SMU Press, 1977.

African American Families and Settlements of Dallas: On the Inside Looking OUT, published in 1990.

City Directories for Dallas, 1900, 1915, 1918, 1924.

Dealey, Ted, Diaper Days of Dallas published by SMU Press, 1966.

Memorial and Biographical History of Dallas County, published by Lewis Publishing company of Chicago, 1892.

Richmond, Merle, Phyllis Wheatley, published by Chelsea House Publishers, New York, New York, 1988.

The WPA Dallas Guide and History, published 1992.

MAPS

Bracey's Block Maps of City of Dallas, 1949.

Dallas County Plat Records Wheatley Place Addition filed Volume 2, page 28 May 31, 1916.

MISCELLANEOUS

Archives of Dallas Independent School District, file on Phyllis Wheatley Elementary School.

Interview with Mr. Otis White resident of Wheatley Place.

Information covering Dallas - City and County, and individuals personal files Frances James, 4322 St. Francis,

Designation Merit

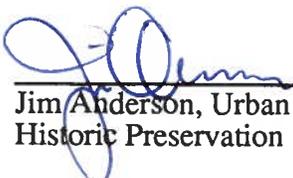
- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>A. Character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City of Dallas, State of Texas or the United States. <u> X </u></p> | <p>H. Embodiment of elements of architectural design, detail, material or craftsmanship which represent a significant architectural innovation. <u> </u></p> |
| <p>B. Location as the site of a significant historical event. <u> </u></p> | <p>I. Relationship to other distinctive buildings, sites or areas which are eligible for preservation according to a plan based on historic, cultural or architectural motif. <u> X </u></p> |
| <p>C. Identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the culture and development of the city. <u> </u></p> | <p>J. Unique location of singular physical characteristics representing an established and familiar feature of a neighborhood, community or the city. <u> </u></p> |
| <p>D. Exemplification of the cultural, economic, social or historical heritage of the city. <u> X </u></p> | <p>K. Archaeological value in that it has produced or can be expected to produce data affecting theories or historic or prehistoric value. <u> </u></p> |
| <p>E. Portrayal of the environment of a group of people in an era of history characterized by a distinctive architectural style. <u> X </u></p> | <p>L. Value as an aspect of community sentiment of public pride. <u> </u></p> |
| <p>F. Embodiment of distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or specimen. <u> </u></p> | |
| <p>G. Identification as the work of an architect or master builder whose individual work has influenced the development of the city. <u> </u></p> | |

Recommendation

The Designation Task Force requests the Landmark Commission to deem this nominated landmark meritorious of designation as outlined in Chapter 51 and Chapter 51A, Dallas Development Code.

Further, the Designation Task Force endorses the Preservation Criteria, policy recommendations and landmark boundary as presented by the Department of Planning and Development.


 Kathleen Cothrum Chair
 Neighborhood Designation Task Force


 Jim Anderson, Urban Planner
 Historic Preservation

Date: April 26, 1993

Exhibit A

PRESERVATION CRITERIA Phyllis Wheatley Elementary School Historic District

Except as otherwise provided in these Preservation Criteria, all public and private right-of-way improvements, renovation, repairs, demolition, maintenance, site work and new construction in this district shall conform to the following guidelines and a certificate of appropriateness must be obtained for such work prior to its commencement.

Except as otherwise provided in these Preservation Criteria, any such alterations to the property must conform to the regulations contained in CHAPTER 51A, "PART II OF THE DALLAS DEVELOPMENT CODE" of the Dallas City Code, as amended. In the event of a conflict, these Preservation Criteria control.

Unless otherwise specified, preservation and restoration materials and methods used shall conform to those defined in the Preservation Briefs published by the United States Department of the Interior, copies of which are available at the Dallas Public Library.

1. DEFINITIONS

Unless provided below or the context clearly indicates otherwise, the definitions contained in Sections 51A-2.102 and 51A-7.102 of the Dallas City Code, as amended, apply.

- 1.1 APPLICANT means an owner of property within this district, or an owner's duly authorized agent.
- 1.2 CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS means a certificate issued by the city in accordance with Section 51A-4.501 of the Dallas City Code, as amended, to authorize the alteration of the physical character of real property in the district or any portion of the exterior of a structure in the district, or the placement, construction, maintenance, expansion, or removal of any structure in or from the district.
- 1.3 COMMISSION means the Landmark Commission.
- 1.4 DIRECTOR means the director of the Department of Planning and Development or that person's representative.
- 1.5 DISTRICT means the Phyllis Wheatley Elementary School Historic Overlay District. This district contains the property described in Section 1 of this ordinance.
- 1.6 ERECT means to build, attach, hang, place, suspend, fasten, fix, maintain, paint, draw or otherwise construct.

- 1.7 **FENCE** means a structure or hedgerow that provides a physical barrier, including a fence gate.
- 1.8 **MAIN BUILDING** means a building on a lot intended for occupancy by the main use.
- 1.9 **NO BUILD ZONE** means that part of a lot in which no new construction may take place.
- 1.10 **PRESERVATION CRITERIA** means the standards considered by the director and commission in determining whether a certificate of appropriateness should be granted or denied.
- 1.11 **PROTECTED FACADE** means a facade that must maintain its original appearance, as near as practical, in all aspects.
- 1.12 **REAL ESTATE SIGN** means a sign that advertises the sale or lease of an interest in real property.
- 1.13 **ROUTINE WORK** includes both minor exterior alterations and routine maintenance and replacement work, and falls into the following categories:
 - (A) **MINOR EXTERIOR ALTERATIONS** means minor alterations to the exterior of any structures within this district in accordance with the Dallas City Code.
 - (B) **ROUTINE MAINTENANCE AND REPLACEMENT** means work necessary to maintain the landmark and to slow deterioration in accordance with the Dallas City Code.

2. SITE AND SITE ELEMENTS

- 2.1 New construction is prohibited in an area designated as a "No Build Zone" on Exhibit B.
- 2.2 The existing original and historic structure must be retained and protected.
- 2.3 New sidewalks, walkways, steps, and driveways must be of brush finish concrete or other material if deemed appropriate. No exposed aggregate, artificial grass, carpet, asphalt or artificially-colored monolithic concrete paving is permitted.
- 2.4 Exterior lighting must be appropriate to and enhance the structure.
- 2.5 Landscape must be appropriate and compatible, must enhance the structure and surroundings, and must not obscure significant views of the main building or from the main building. It is recommended that landscaping modifications reflect the original historic landscaping design when appropriate.

- 2.6 Existing mature trees will be protected. Unhealthy or damaged trees may be removed if deemed appropriate.
- 2.7 No fences are permitted in the no-build zone, except as required for school security.

3. STRUCTURE

Facades

- 3.1 The front facade and side facades of the main structure are protected facades.
- 3.2 Reconstruction, renovation or repair of the opaque elements of the protected facades must employ materials similar to the original materials in texture, color, pattern, grain and module size as much as practical.
- 3.3 The existing solid-to-void ratios of non-protected facades must be maintained as much as practical. All additions and alterations must be architecturally sensitive and appropriate to the overall design of the existing structure.
- 3.4 Brick must match in color, texture, module size, bond pattern and mortar color. Original brick on a facade may not be painted, with the exception that portions of the original structures that had previously been painted may remain painted.
- 3.5 Stone, cast stone, and concrete elements must be renovated or repaired only with materials similar in size, grain, texture, and color to the original materials.
- 3.6 Wood trim and detailing shall be carefully restored wherever practical. Historic materials should be repaired; they should be replaced only when necessary. Badly deteriorated paint should be removed in accordance with the Department of Interior standards prior to refinishing. All exposed wood must be painted, stained, or otherwise protected. Resurfacing with vinyl or aluminum siding or stucco is not permitted.
- 3.7 Original color and original materials must be preserved and maintained wherever practical. Paint and other color schemes for non-masonry elements should be based upon any available documentation as to original conditions.
- 3.8 Exposing and restoring original historic finish materials is encouraged.
- 3.9 Exterior cleaning must be accomplished in accordance with Department of Interior standards. No sandblasting or other mechanical abrasive cleaning processes are permitted.
- 3.10 After the effective date of this ordinance, any new mechanical equipment must be erected in side or rear yards and must be screened.

Embellishments and Detailing

- 3.11 The following architectural elements are considered special features and will be protected and preserved unless otherwise determined by the Commission: exterior decorative main entry at Metropolitan Avenue, front steps and balustrade adjacent to this front entry, decorative brick and stone work at the parapet on the front facade and decorative minor entries at the side streets.

Fenestrations and Openings

- 3.12 Original doors and windows and their openings should remain intact and be preserved. Where replacement of an existing door or window is necessary due to damage or structural deterioration, replacement doors and windows must express mullion size, light configuration, and material to match the original or existing doors and windows.

Total replacement of windows and doors which have been altered and no longer match the historic appearance is strongly recommended.

Exterior storm windows, storm doors and window screens may be permitted if they are sensitive additions and match the existing windows and doors in frame width and proportion, glazing material, and color.

- 3.13 Burglar bars are permitted over existing doors and windows of protected facades if required for security reasons. These should not be of a highly decorative or ornamental design, and should align with or complement the window or door muntin pattern.
- 3.14 Glass and glazing shall match original materials as much as practical. No tinted or reflective glazing or films is permitted.
- 3.15 New door and window openings in protected facades are permitted only where there is evidence that original openings have been infilled with other materials or the safety of life is threatened.
- 3.16 The Department of the Interior standards should be referred to for acceptable techniques to improve the energy efficiency of historic fenestrations.

Roofs

- 3.17 The slope, massing, and configuration of the roof must be preserved and maintained.

Existing parapets, cornices and coping, and roof trim must be retained and when repaired, should be done so with material matching in size, finish, module and color.

- 3.18 Solar panels, skylights, and mechanical equipment must be set back or screened so that it is not visible to a person standing at ground level on the opposite side of Havana Street, Metropolitan Avenue, and Meyers Street where adjacent to the "no build zone" of the site.

4. NEW CONSTRUCTION AND ADDITIONS

- 4.1 The form, materials, general exterior appearance, color and details of any new construction of accessory buildings or must be compatible with the existing historic structure.
- 4.2 New construction, additions to historic structures, accessory buildings, porches, and balconies must be of appropriate massing, roof form, shape, materials, detailing and color and have fenestration patterns and solids-to-voids ratios that are typical of the historic structure.
- 4.3 The height of new construction, accessory buildings, or vertical or horizontal additions to existing non-protected structures or facades must not exceed the height of the historic structure.
- 4.4 Vinyl, aluminum, and stucco are not acceptable cladding materials for the construction of a new accessory structure in this district.
- 4.5 New construction and connections between new and existing construction must be designed so that they are clearly discernible from the existing historic structures as suggested by the Secretary of the Interior in Preservation Brief No. 14. A clear definition of the transition between new and existing construction shall be established and maintained.

Historic details at parapets and coping must be preserved and maintained where abutting new construction.

5. SIGNS

- 5.1 Temporary and permanent school information signs and temporary political signs (as defined in Chapter A of the Dallas City Code, as amended) may be erected.

No certificate of Appropriateness shall be required for free-standing school identification and information signs.

- 5.2 Street signs, protective signs, movement control signs, and historical markers may be erected.

5.3 All signs must conform with all applicable provisions of the Dallas City Code, as amended and be compatible with the architectural qualities of the historic structure.

6. REVIEW PROCEDURES FOR CERTIFICATES OF APPROPRIATENESS

6.1 The review procedure outlined in Section 51A-4.501 of the Dallas City Code, as amended, applies to this district unless otherwise noted in this section.

6.2 Upon receipt of an application for a certificate of appropriateness, the director shall categorize the application as one of the following:

(A): Routine Work, and

(B): Work requiring review by the commission.

A certificate of appropriateness shall not be required for the following items: the installation of a chimney located on an accessory building; replacement or repair of a roof of the same or an original material that does not include a change in color; a chain link fence that is not painted; new or replacement gutters and downspouts of a color that match or complement the dominant, trim, or roof color; the application of paint that matches the dominant, trim, or accent color; the restoration of original architectural elements; addition of window and door screens that complement the existing doors or windows; graffiti removal; maintenance and replacement by cleaning (including but not limited to water blasting and stripping), painting, replacing, duplicating, or stabilizing deteriorated or damaged architectural features (including but not limited to roofing, windows, columns, and siding) in order to maintain the landmark and to slow deterioration.

6.3 A certificate of appropriateness is not required to erect temporary political campaign signs (as defined in Chapter 15A of the Dallas City Code, as amended) or real estate signs.

6.4 The director shall review and grant or deny certificates for applications categorized as routine work within ten (10) days of receipt of a completed application. To be considered complete, an application shall include any exhibits or attachments deemed necessary by the director.

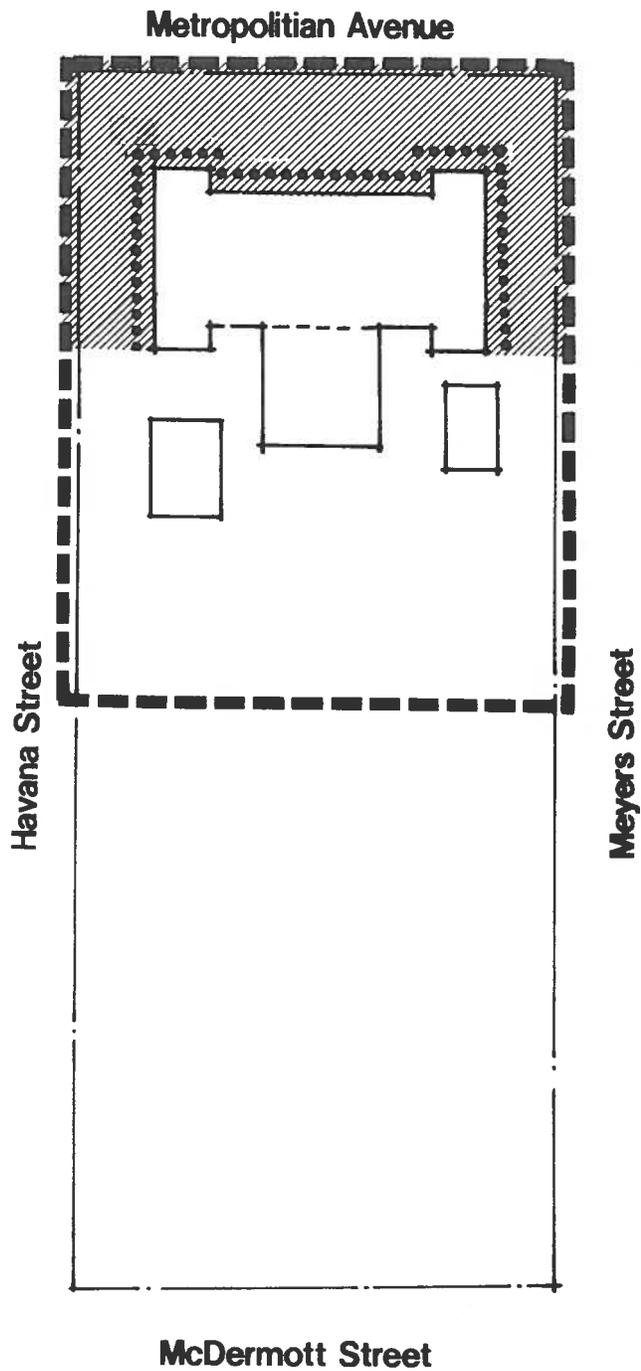
6.5 No decision by the director to approve a certificate of appropriateness for proposed routine work may be appealed. A decision to deny a certificate of appropriateness in such instances may be appealed by the applicant or property owner. Appeal is made to the Landmark Commission by submitting a written request for appeal to the director within ten days after the decision to deny.

6.6 Proposed work requiring review by the commission shall be reviewed by the commission within 45 days following the standard review procedure as outlined in Section 51A-4.501 of the Dallas Development Code, as amended.

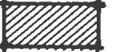
- 6.7 Certificates of appropriateness denied by the Landmark Commission may be appealed to the city plan commission in accordance with Section 51A-4.501 of the Dallas Development Code, as amended.

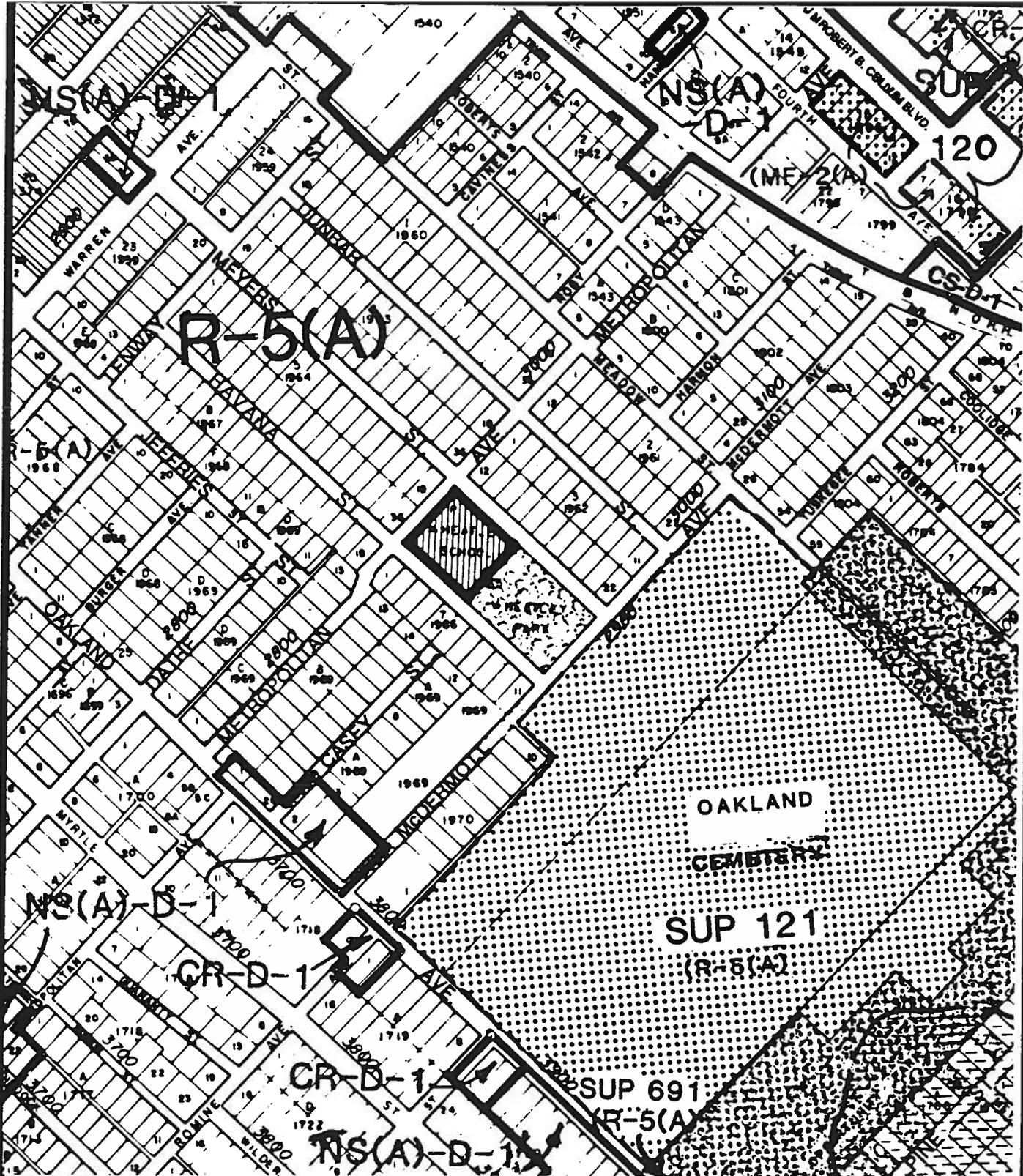
January 31, 1993

Revised: April 26, 1993



**Phyllis Wheatley Elementary School
Exhibit B**

-  Area of Designation
-  No Build Zone
-  Protected Facades



ZONING AND LAND USE

Map No. K-8

Case No. Z923-292/9504-S