



State of California - Department of Fish and Wildlife
2026 ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT FILING FEE CASH RECEIPT
DFW 753.5a (REV. 01/01/26) Previously DFG 753.5a

RECEIPT NUMBER:

E202610000120

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE NUMBER (if applicable)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON REVERSE. TYPE OR PRINT CLEARLY.

LEAD AGENCY	LEAD AGENCY EMAIL	DATE
FRESNO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT		05/04/2026
COUNTY/STATE AGENCY OF FILING		DOCUMENT NUMBER
FRESNO COUNTY		E202610000120
PROJECT TITLE		

BIRNEY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL NORTHERN CAMPUS RECONSTRUCTION

PROJECT APPLICANT NAME	PROJECT APPLICANT EMAIL	PHONE NUMBER
FRESNO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT		
PROJECT APPLICANT ADDRESS	CITY	STATE
7309 TULARE ST	FRESNO	CA
		ZIP CODE
		93721
PROJECT APPLICANT (Check appropriate box)		
☐ Local Public Agency	☒ School District	☐ Other Special District
		☐ State Agency
		☐ Private Entity

CHECK APPLICABLE FEES:

☒ Environmental Impact Report (EIR)	\$4,227.50	\$	0.00
☐ Mitigated/Negative Declaration (MND)(ND)	\$3,043.75	\$	0.00
☐ Certified Regulatory Program (CRP) document - payment due directly to CDFW	\$1,437.25	\$	0.00
☐ Exempt from fee			
☐ Notice of Exemption (attach)			
☐ CDFW No Effect Determination (attach)			
☐ Fee previously paid (attach previously issued cash receipt copy)			
☐ Water Right Application or Petition Fee (State Water Resources Control Board only)	\$850.00	\$	0.00
☒ County documentary handling fee	\$50.00	\$	50.00
☒ Other CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION		\$	0.00

PAYMENT METHOD:

☐ Cash ☒ Credit ☐ Check ☐ Other

TOTAL RECEIVED \$ 50.00

SIGNATURE

AGENCY OF FILING PRINTED NAME AND TITLE

X

Bryan Flores Deputy Clerk

County of Fresno

Clerk's Office

James A. Kus

Elections Department

(559) 600-8683

Clerk Services Department

(559) 600-2575

Finalization 2026008594

5/4/2026 04:09 PM

211 bflores

Description	Fee
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EIR Administrative Fee	
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Time Recorded:	4:09 PM
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Recording Fee:	\$50.00
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Total Amount Due	\$50.00
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Total Paid

Check Tendered	\$50.00
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#53-0639854

Amount Due	\$0.00
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E268610000120

THANK YOU

PLEASE KEEP FOR REFERENCE

Notice of Exemption

E70261000120
Appendix E

To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 113
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

County Clerk

County of: Fresno

2220 Tulare Street

Fresno, CA 93721

From: (Public Agency): Fresno Unified School District

2309 Tulare Street

Fresno, CA 93721

(Address) **FILED**

MAY 04 2026 TIME 4:19 PM

Project Title: Birney Elementary School Northern Campus Reconstruction

Project Applicant: Fresno Unified School District

FRESNO COUNTY CLERK
BY Duyang DEPUTY

Project Location - Specific:

3034 E Cornell Avenue, Fresno, CA 93703

Project Location - City: Fresno

Project Location - County: Fresno

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

The Fresno Unified School District (District) proposes to modernize the Birney Elementary School campus through selective demolition and reconstruction. The project would demolish three permanent buildings and 11 portable classrooms totaling approximately 27,320 square feet, including the multi-purpose building (6,270 sq. ft., built 1951), administration building (1,400 sq. ft., built 1951), transition kindergarten building (2,760 sq. ft., built 1987/1997), and 11 portable classrooms (16,900 sq. ft.), along with the north parking lot (33 stalls), play structures, ballfield, and associated paved and landscaped areas. Reconstruction would include five new permanent buildings totaling approximately 30,100 square feet—a 9,500-square-foot multi-purpose building, 6,700-square-foot administration/library building, and three early learning classroom buildings totaling 14,900 square feet—plus a north 75-stall parking lot and drop-off loop, a bus drop-off lane along N. Orchard Street, play structures, ballfield, and landscaped areas. All improvements would occur entirely within the existing developed campus, with no expansion of the campus footprint or student capacity and no off-site improvements proposed.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Fresno Unified School District

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Fresno Unified School District

Exempt Status: (check one):

- ☐ Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268);
- ☐ Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a));
- ☐ Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
- ☒ Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: Class 2, Sec. 15302
- ☐ Statutory Exemptions. State code number: _____

Reasons why project is exempt:

The project qualifies for a categorical exemption under CEQA Guidelines Section 15302 (Replacement or Reconstruction). It involves replacement of existing permanent and portable educational buildings with new permanent educational buildings of substantially the same purpose and use, located on the same site, and resulting in negligible expansion of capacity. The project modernizes outdated facilities to improve safety and efficiency without increasing student enrollment or expanding the campus footprint. An architectural history record review concluded that the two 1951 buildings are not historically significant or eligible for listing in the California Register or local registers. A "Letter to File" documenting these findings has been prepared for the administrative record. The project was reviewed under all exceptions in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 and none apply. The site is not located in a sensitive environmental area, is not along a state scenic highway, is not listed on a hazardous waste site list, and would not result in significant cumulative impacts, unusual circumstances, or adverse effects to historical resources.

Lead Agency

Contact Person: William Belanger

Area Code/Telephone/Extension: (559) 457-6126

If filed by applicant:

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project? ■ Yes ■ No

Signature: [Signature] Date: 4/27/26 Title: Chief Executive, Operational Services

■ Signed by Lead Agency ■ Signed by Applicant

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code.
Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.

Date Received for filing at OPR: _____

**CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA)
NOTICE OF EXEMPTION MEMORANDUM**

To: Project File, William Belanger
From: Michael Gennaro, Environmental Specialist,
Date: 02/19/2025
Subject: Notice of Exemption – Birney Elementary School Northern Campus Reconstruction
Project Location: 3034 E Cornell Avenue, Fresno, CA 93703
Lead Agency: Fresno Unified School District
Contact: William Belanger, Chief Executive, Operational Services
William.Belanger@fresnounified.org
(559) 457-3074

Project Description

The Fresno Unified School District (District) proposes to modernize facilities at the existing Birney Elementary School campus through selective demolition and reconstruction. The project would demolish three permanent buildings and 11 portable classroom buildings, totaling approximately 27,320 square feet, and reconstruct five permanent buildings totaling approximately 30,100 square feet. The existing north parking lot would also be demolished and reconstructed, including a new drop-off loop, and athletic and play structures would be relocated and reconstructed.

Specifically, demolition would include:

- The multi-purpose building (6,270 sq. ft., constructed in 1951),
- The administration building (1,400 sq. ft., constructed in 1951),
- One transition kindergarten building (2,760 sq. ft., constructed in 1987 and expanded in 1997),
- Eleven portable classroom buildings (16,900 sq. ft.),
- The north parking lot (33 stalls), play structures, ballfield, and various paved and landscaped areas.

Reconstruction would include:

- A new 9,500-square-foot multi-purpose building,
- A 6,700-square-foot administration/library building,
- Three early learning classroom buildings totaling 14,900 square feet,
- A new 75-stall parking lot and drop-off loop,
- Two play structures, a ballfield, and landscaped areas.
- A new bus drop-off lane along N. Orchard Street.

All improvements would occur entirely within the boundaries of the existing developed school campus. The project would not expand the campus footprint or increase student enrollment capacity, and no off-site improvements are proposed.

CEQA Determination

Exempt Status: Categorical Exemption – Class 2: Replacement or Reconstruction (Section 15302)

Basis for Exemption

The project qualifies for a Class 2 categorical exemption under CEQA Guidelines Section 15302, which applies to the replacement or reconstruction of existing structures and facilities where the new structures are located on the same site and serve substantially the same purpose and capacity as those replaced.

The proposed reconstruction would replace outdated permanent and portable classroom buildings with modern, energy-efficient permanent facilities serving the same educational use and similar capacity. The project would modernize facilities to meet current building and accessibility codes and improve the safety and functionality of the campus without altering its existing educational purpose.

Because two of the buildings proposed for demolition were constructed in 1951, a historic resource evaluation was conducted by qualified architectural historian Karana Hattersley-Drayton, M.S. The evaluation determined that the buildings do not meet the criteria for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources or any local register. A Letter to File documenting this finding has been prepared and included in the administrative record.

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2, the District evaluated potential exceptions to the use of a categorical exemption and determined that none apply:

- The project is not located in a sensitive environmental area.
- The cumulative impact of similar projects would not be significant.
- The project would not result in significant effects due to unusual circumstances.
- The site is not along a designated State Scenic Highway.
- The site is not listed on any hazardous materials or waste sites compiled under Government Code Section 65962.5.
- The project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.

Conclusion

Based on the above, the Fresno Unified School District has determined that the Birney Elementary School Northern Campus Reconstruction Project is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15302 (Replacement or Reconstruction). No exceptions to the exemption apply. A Notice of Exemption will be filed with the Fresno County Clerk in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15062.

Prepared by:

Michael Gennaro
Environmental Specialist
Blair, Church & Flynn Consulting Engineers, Inc.
mgennaro@bcf-engr.com
(559) 326-1400

Reviewed and Approved by:

William Belanger
Fresno Unified School District
Chief Executive, Operational Services
William.Belanger@fresnounified.org
(559) 457-3074

E202610000120



Signature



Date



February 16th, 2026

To: Michael Gennaro, Environmental Specialist
Blair, Church and Flynn

From: Karana Hattersley-Drayton, M.A.
Architecture Historian
(Johnston and Associates)
4110 N. Maroa Avenue
Fresno, CA 93704

Re: Letter to File, Historic Review for Proposed Birney Elementary School Northern Campus Reconstruction and CEQA Findings

The Fresno Unified School District proposes to modernize facilities at the existing Birney Elementary School campus located at 3034 E. Cornell Avenue Fresno 93703 (APN: 455-133-01T (7.650 acres). The project will include the demolition of three permanent buildings and 11 portable classroom buildings, totaling approximately 27,320 square feet and reconstruct five permanent buildings totaling approximately 30,100 square feet.

On October 8th 2025, Johnston and Associates was hired to provide the architectural review of four District elementary schools proposed for reconstruction and renovation, including Birney Elementary. Due to the fact that the impact of this project is to two historic-era buildings only, it was agreed that a Letter to File with CEQA Findings, rather than a full Historic Architectural Survey Report, would be prepared for this school.

On January 15, 2026, Karana Hattersley-Drayton, M.A. visited the school to record and photograph the Multi-Purpose and Administration buildings (1951). She also photographed the third building slated for removal, a 1987 Kindergarten room. However, this building is less than 50 years of age and was not ultimately recorded. Ms. Drayton was accompanied by Sarah Johnston (Principle, Johnston and Associates), Michael Gennaro of Blair, Church and Flynn and Luz Gonzalez of Kitchell. Following the site visit Ms. Drayton conducted research on the history of the site, including review of the original architectural drawings by Franklin and Simpson which were made available by FUSD staff. Librarian Melissa Scroggins in the Heritage Room at the Fresno County Library forwarded articles on Birney School from the *Fresno Bee* which were located in a file dedicated to Fresno area schools.

The Alice Birney Elementary School was initially constructed to serve the residential neighborhood at Shields and First which had developed following WW II. The school is named for Alice Birney who in 1897 co-founded the national PTA with Phoebe Apperson Hearst (www.fresnounified.org). Six wood frame buildings were located on the campus when Franklin and Simpson submitted their drawings for an expanded campus, to include two kindergartens, 6 classrooms, a multi-purpose room and office (Franklin and Simpson 1951). An undated *Fresno Bee* article noted that the expansion allowed for the school to sponsor Brownie and Cub Scout troops as well as an adult square dancing class (*Fresno Bee*). Additional classrooms were approved by 1954 with designs by Alastair Simpson.

Charles Franklin in particular was a significant figure in Fresno County architecture. In 1912 he moved to Fresno to work for the R.F. Felchlin Company, a design-build firm responsible for the Classic Revival office buildings along Fresno's Fulton Street. In 1933 he designed the Art Deco Gateway to Kearney Boulevard and in 1937 he became partners with Ernest Kump Jr. a passionate modernist who had first worked in his office as a draftsman. Together they designed several notable buildings including the Fresno City Hall (1941). Following World War II Franklin became partners with Alastair Simpson, a graduate of the Architecture Program at U.C. Berkeley (1934). Franklin was forced into an early retirement in 1953 from Lou Gehrig's disease (Powell 1996). The two men designed several school buildings including the stunning Multi-Purpose room at Calwa Elementary School and the "Finger Plan" school at Del Mar, which is now mostly changed. The Office and Multi-Purpose Room at Birney are fine but typical buildings of this era and Mid-Century Modern design but do not represent the best work of either Franklin or Simpson.

Findings: The eligibility criteria for the California Register of Historical Resources are the definitive criteria for assessing the significance of historical resources for the purposes of CEQA (Office of Historic Preservation n.d.). Potential resources must generally be 50 years of age and have integrity to their period of significance to be considered. Additionally, the resource must have historic significance under one or more criterion:

- (1) Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California's history and cultural heritage.*
- (2) Is associated with the lives of persons important in our past.*
- (3) Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of an important creative individual, or possesses high artistic values.*

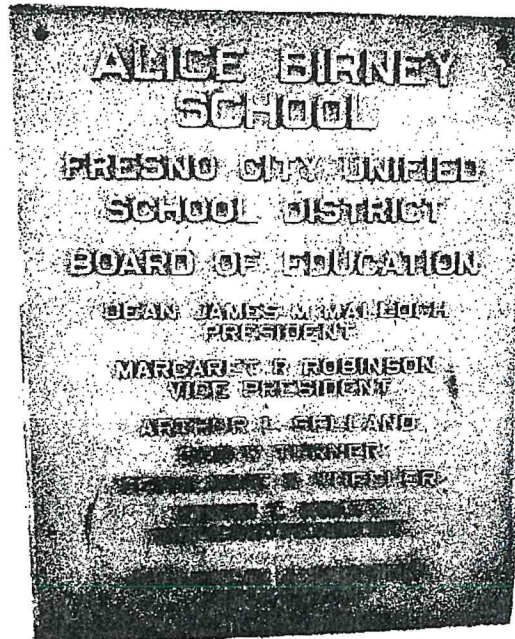
(4) Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history. [PRC 5024.1(c)].

The two historic-era buildings at Birney School, the Multi-Purpose and Administrative Office are both 75 years of age thus well over 50 years as an initial guideline. They appear to have high integrity to their Period of Significance of 1951. They were designed by a leading architectural firm for the era, Franklin and Simpson, but do not represent their best work (see for example their stunning Multi-Purpose room at Calwa Elementary School) and are in fact quite typical for the era. Thus they do not appear to be eligible for the California Register of Historical Resources nor are they historical resources for the purpose of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Karana Hattersley-Drayton has a B.A. and M.A. from UC Berkeley where she also completed three years of coursework towards the Ph. D. in Architectural History. Ms. Drayton moved to Fresno in 1999 to work for Caltrans and in 2002 was hired by the City of Fresno as the Historic Preservation Project Manager, a position from which she retired in 2017. She currently teaches Architecture History and Historic Preservation in the College of Engineering, California State University, Fresno.

Attached: DPR forms and Site Plan, Alice Birney Elementary School, Fresno

DEDICATION PLAQUE. n.d.
noting Franklin and Simpson
Architects



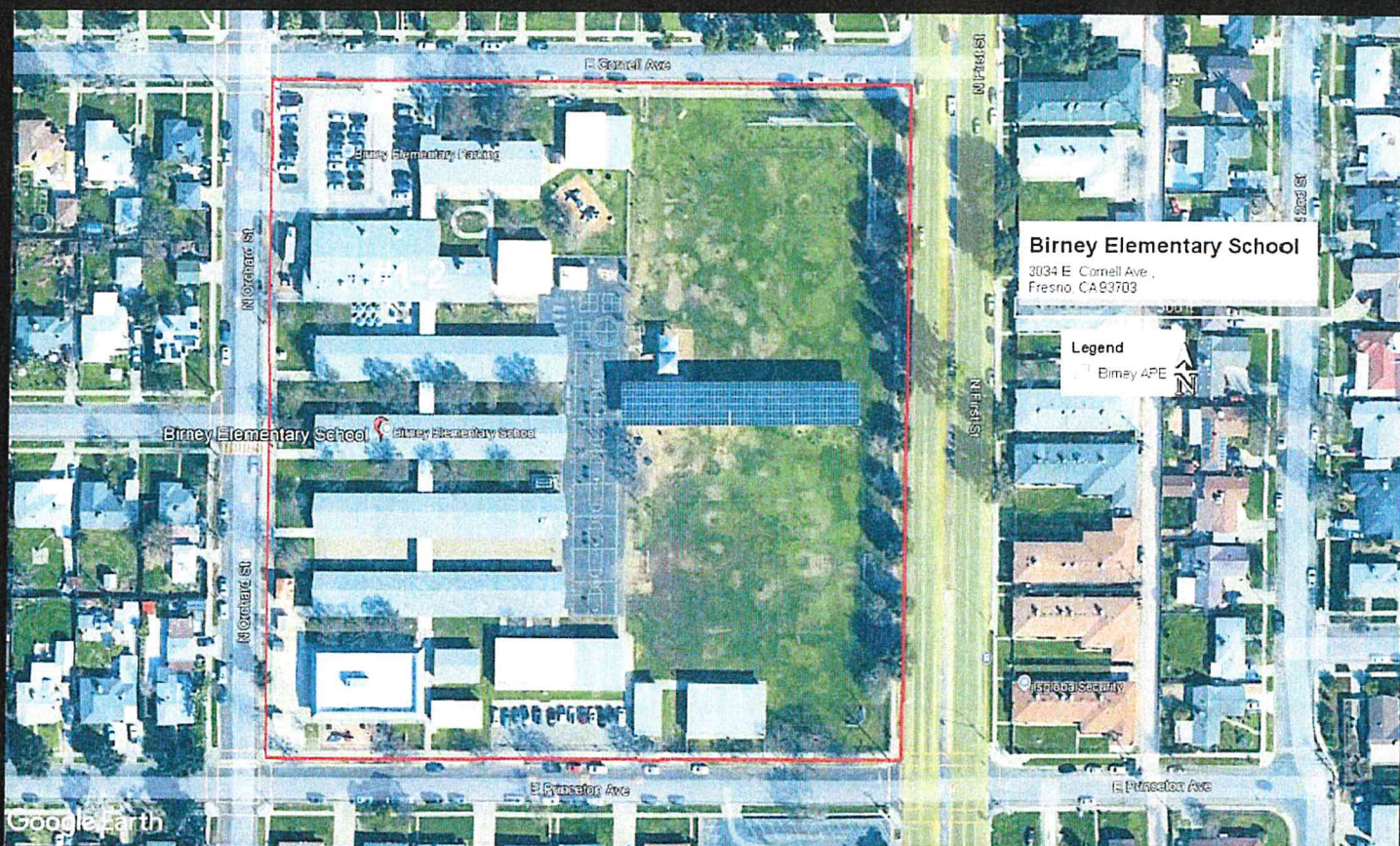


Figure 1: APE Map for Birney Elementary School Northern Campus Reconstruction Project

State of California — The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

PRIMARY RECORD

Primary # _____

HRI # _____

Trinomial _____

NRHP Status Code _____

Other Listings _____

Review Code _____

Reviewer _____

Date _____

Map Ref. #1, #2

P1. Resource Name: Multi-Purpose Room (Building L) and Office (B)

***P2. Location:** *a. County: Fresno

*b. USGS 7.5' Quad: Fresno North, n/east ¼ of section 27 T13S, R20E

c. Address: 3034 E. Cornell Avenue, Fresno 93703

d. Assessor's Parcel Number: 455-133-01T (7.650 acres)

***P3a. Description:** The school's **Multi-Purpose Room** faces east and has a large rectangular footprint. It is connected to the administration/office building through the low pitched end gable roof which provides an overhang and covered corridor. The eaves project and the cornice is boxed with a simple fascia trim painted brick red. A planter box of Roman style bricks also connects the two buildings. Two sets of double doors are on the east/principle elevation of the Multi-Purpose building. Two sets of double doors are also located on the north elevation which features 14 vertical rows of three windows in each panel. A full stage is located inside at the west end of the auditorium with kitchen and bathroom facilities on the south side. The main door to the **Office** is on the west. The Office also has a rectangular plan with 10 sets of vertical panels of three windows each on the north. As with the Multi-Purpose building the roof of the office is end gabled with a wide overhang on the east end with a boxed cornice and fascia trim painted brick red as with the larger building. Both the Office and Multi-Purpose room are clad in stucco and currently painted a cream color.

***P3b. Resource Attributes:** HP15 (Educational Building)

***P4. Resources Present:** •Building



P5b Photo date: 15 January 2026

***P6. Date Constructed/Age and Sources:** 1951, FUSD and Architectural Plans, Franklin and Simpson

***P7. Owner and Address:**
Fresno Unified School District
2309 Tulare
Fresno CA 93721-2287

***P8. Recorded by:**
Karana Hattersley-Drayton, M.A.
(for Johnston and Associates)
4110 N. Maroa Avenue
Fresno 93704

***P9. Date Recorded:** 15 January 2026

***P10. Survey Type:** Intensive

***P11. Report Citation:** "Letter to File, Historic Review for Proposed Birney Elementary School Northern Campus Reconstruction and CEQA Findings"

***Attachments:** • Building, Structure and Object Report; • Continuation Sheet

DPR 523A (1/95)

***Required information**

State of California — The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
CONTINUATION SHEET

Primary # _____
HRI# _____
Trinomial _____

Page 2 of 3

Resource: Map Reference #1 and 2, Birney Elementary School, Fresno

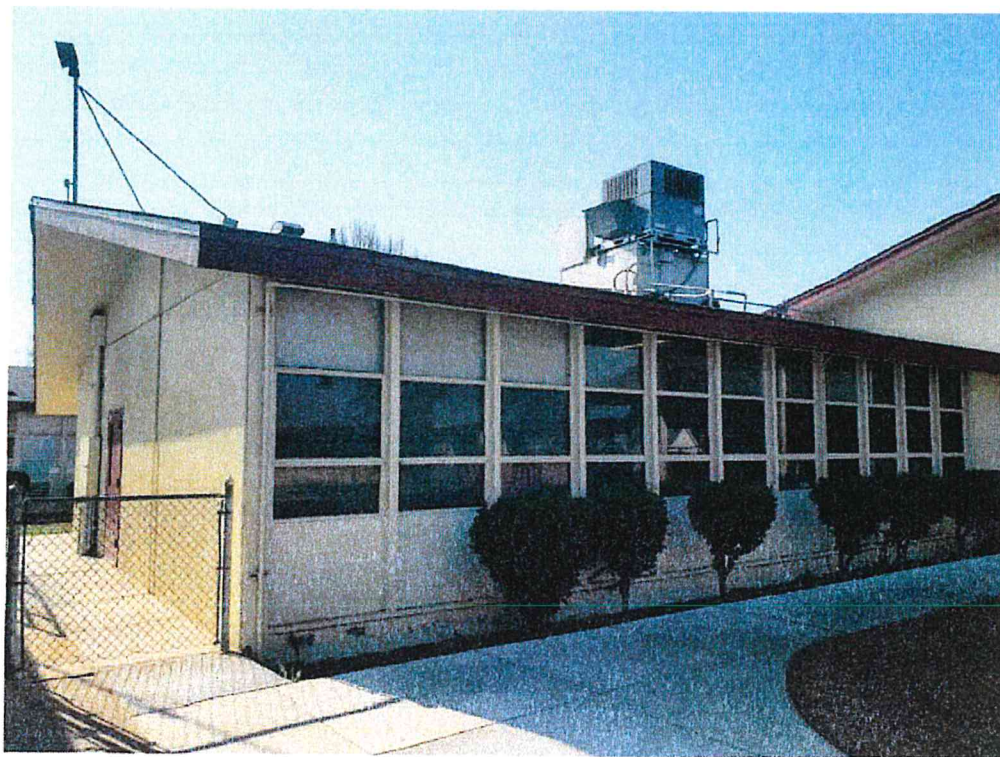
*Recorded by: Karana Hattersley-Drayton M.A.

*Date: 15 January 2026

■ Continuation



North elevation of MP Building and stage; North elevation of School's Office Building



E202610000120

State of California — The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

Primary # _____

HRI# _____

BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD

*NRHP Status Code: 6Z

*Resource Name: Multi-Purpose and Office Buildings, Birney Elementary School

B3. Original Use: Elementary School

B4. Present Use: Elementary School

*B5. Architectural Style: Mid-Century Modern

*B6. Construction History: The Alice Birney Elementary School was initially constructed prior to 1951. Nine additional units were added in 1951 including the Multi-Purpose Room and Administration Building,

*B7. Moved? ☐ No

*B8. Related Features: The school is located in a residential neighborhood which was developed shortly after WWII.

B9a. Architect: Franklin and Simpson Architects

B9b. Builder: Unknown

*B10. Significance: Theme: Education

Area: Fresno, California

Period of Significance: 1951

Property Type: Elementary School

Applicable Criteria: N/A

The Alice Birney Elementary School was initially constructed to serve the residential neighborhood at Shields and First that had developed following WW II. The school is named for Alice Birney who in 1897 co-founded the PTA with Phoebe Apperson Hearst (www.fresnounified.org). Six wood frame buildings were located on the campus when Franklin and Simpson submitted their drawings in 1951 for an expanded campus, to include two kindergartens, 6 classrooms, a multi-purpose room and office (Franklin and Simpson 1951). An undated *Fresno Bee* article noted that the expansion allowed for the school to sponsor Brownie and Cub Scout troops as well as an adult square dancing class (*Fresno Bee*). Additional classrooms were approved by 1954 with designs by Alastair Simpson. Charles Franklin in particular was a significant figure in Fresno County architecture. In 1912 he moved to Fresno to work for the R.F. Felchlin Company, a design-build firm responsible for the Classic Revival office buildings along Fresno's Fulton Street. In 1933 he designed the Art Deco Gateway to Kearney Boulevard and in 1937 he became partners with Ernest Kump Jr. a passionate modernist who had first worked in his office as a draftsman. Together they designed several notable buildings including the Fresno City Hall (1941). Following World War II Franklin became partners with Alastair Simpson, a graduate of the Architecture Program at U.C. Berkeley (1934). The two men designed several school buildings including the stunning Multi-Purpose room at Calwa Elementary School. Franklin was forced into an early retirement in 1953 from Lou Gehrig's disease (Powell 1996). The Office and Multi-Purpose Room at Birney are fine but typical buildings of this era and do not represent the best work of either Franklin or Simpson.



▲ North

*B12. References: Fresno County Library; "Fresno County Schools Research Files"; Powell, John Edward. "Charles H. Franklin (1891-1956)," in "A Guide to Historic Architecture in Fresno, California," 1996; *Fresno Bee* (no dates); "Alice Birney School" www.fresnounified.org; Franklin and Simpson drawings for Birney Elementary School, 7 March 1951.

*B14. Evaluator: Karana Hattersley-Drayton, M.A.

*Date of Evaluation: 15 February 2026

(This space reserved for official comments.)