

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. Name of Property

Historic Name: Farrington Field and Public Schools Gymnasium
Other name/site number: Farrington Field and Jack A. Billingsley Field House
Name of related multiple property listing: NA

2. Location

Street & number: 1501 University Drive and 1400 Foch Street
City or town: Fort Worth State: Texas County: Tarrant
Not for publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this
☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria.

I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following levels of significance:
☐ national ☐ statewide ☒ local

Applicable National Register Criteria: ☒ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D

Mark Wolfe State Historic Preservation Officer 12-21-2021
Signature of certifying official / title Date
Texas Historical Commission
State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- ____ entered in the National Register
____ determined eligible for the National Register
____ determined not eligible for the National Register
____ removed from the National Register
____ other, explain: _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

United States Department of the Interior

National Park Service

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Signature of the Keeper_____
Date of Action

Farrington Field and Public Schools Gymnasium, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

	Private
x	Public - Local
	Public - State
	Public - Federal

Category of Property

	building(s)
x	district
	site
	structure
	object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
5	0	buildings
1	0	sites
1	1	structures
0	0	objects
7	1	total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions: Recreation and culture/sports facility=stadium and gymnasium

Current Functions: Recreation and culture/sports facility=stadium and gymnasium

7. Description

Architectural Classification: MODERN MOVEMENT: Moderne/Classical Moderne

Principal Exterior Materials: Concrete, Brick

Narrative Description (see continuation sheets 7 through 13)

Farrington Field and Public Schools Gymnasium, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria: A, C

Criteria Considerations: NA

Areas of Significance: Entertainment/Recreation; Social History; Architecture

Period of Significance: 1938-1972

Significant Dates: 1939, 1953

Significant Person (only if criterion b is marked): NA

Cultural Affiliation (only if criterion d is marked): NA

Architect/Builder: Preston M. Geren (A. [Arthur] George King, Everett L. Frazier, Sr.), architects (stadium); WPA, builder (stadium); Evaline Sellors, sculptor (stadium); Preston M. Geren, architect (gym); Rambo Construction, builder (gym)

Narrative Statement of Significance (see continuation sheets 14 through 34)

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography (see continuation sheets 35 through 38)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State historic preservation office (*Texas Historical Commission*, Austin)
- ☐ Other state agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☒ Other -- Specify Repository: Evan S. Farrington, Austin, TX; Historic Fort Worth, Inc., Fort Worth, TX

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): NA

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: approximately 36 acres

Coordinates (See page 39)

Verbal Boundary Description: (See page 39)

Boundary Justification: (see page 39)

11. Form Prepared By

Name/title: Susan Allen Kline, Consultant

Organization: Historic Fort Worth, Inc.

Street & number: 1110 Penn Street

City or Town: Fort Worth State: Texas Zip Code: 76102

Email: sskline@sbcglobal.net (consultant) jerre_tracy@historicfortworth.org (Historic Fort Worth)

Telephone: 817-921-0127 (consultant); 817-336-2344 (Historic Fort Worth)

Date: February 5, 2021

Additional Documentation

Maps (see continuation sheets 40-45)

Additional items (see continuation sheets 46-81)

Photographs (see continuation sheets 82-97)

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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Photographs

Farrington Field and Public Schools Gymnasium
Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas
Photographed by Susan Allen Kline, January 31, 2021 (except as noted)

Photo 1: Farrington Field, West elevation of west stand, looking SE

Photo 2: Farrington Field, West elevation of west stand, looking N/NE

Photo 3: Farrington Field, Under upper tier of west stand; Photographer: John Roberts, February 15, 2020, looking S

Photo 4: Farrington Field, Entrance of west elevation of west stand and west ticket booth, looking E

Photo 5: Farrington Field, Evaline Sellors' sculpture of football player, entrance to west stand, looking E

Photo 6: Farrington Field, Evaline Sellors' sculpture of female sprinter, entrance to west stand, looking E

Photo 7: Farrington Field, Entrance to tunnel, Section D, west stand, looking E

Photo 8: Farrington Field, South elevations of (left to right) west stand and east stand, looking E

Photo 9: Farrington Field, East and north elevations of west stand, looking SW

Photo 10: Farrington Field, Looking across field to east elevation of west stand; Photographer: John Roberts, February 15, 2020, looking NW

Photo 11: Farrington Field, East elevation of east stand, looking W

Photo 12: Farrington Field, South half of east elevation of east stand, looking NW

Photo 13: Farrington Field, Under upper tier of east stand; Photographer: John Roberts, February 15, 2020, looking S

Photo 14: Farrington Field, East elevation of east stand and east ticket both, looking W

Photo 15: Farrington Field, South end of south and east elevations, showing enclosure of bays, looking NE

Photo 16: Farrington Field, Looking across field to west elevation of east stand; Photographer: John Roberts, February 15, 2020, looking NE

Photo 17: Farrington Field, Ramp to exit from north (home) locker room, east stand; Photographer: John Roberts, February 15, 2020, looking W

Photo 18: Farrington Field, View from south end zone to north end of field; Photographer: John Roberts, February 15, 2020, looking N

Photo 19: Farrington Field, View from north end zone to south end of field; Photographer: John Roberts, February 15, 2020, looking S

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Photo 20: Farrington Field, Fence, wall, and mature trees at northeast corner of stadium, looking NW

Photo 21: Farrington Field, South parking lot and wall with west stand (left) and east stand (right), looking NE

Photo 22: Farrington Field, North entrance with piers and fence, looking SW

Photo 23: Public Schools Gymnasium, East and north elevations, looking SW

Photo 24: Public Schools Gymnasium, north elevation, looking SW

Photo 25: Public Schools Gymnasium, entrance and ticket booth, north elevation, looking E/SE

Photo 26: Public Schools Gymnasium, West elevation entrance, looking E

Photo 27: Public Schools Gymnasium, West elevation entrance to one story wing, looking SE

Photo 28: Public Schools Gymnasium, West elevation with barrel roof, looking E/NE

Photo 29: Public Schools Gymnasium, West and south elevations, looking NE

Photo 30: Public Schools Gymnasium, South and east elevations, looking NW

Photo 31: Public Schools Gymnasium (left) and Farrington Field (right) from Foch Street, looking SW

Photo 32: Trail Drive, Noncontributing structure, looking N

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Narrative Description

Farrington Field (1938-39) and the Public Schools Gymnasium (1953) are located approximately 1.5 miles west of downtown Fort Worth on a flat parcel containing approximately thirty-six acres. Due to the property's complexity, it is nominated as district. The parcel is bordered by West Lancaster Avenue on the north, University Drive on the west, Foch Street on the east, and Farm House Way and Trail Drive on the south. Farrington Field, a beloved community landmark, is a massive reinforced concrete stadium that sits near the northwest corner of the parcel. It consists of two stands of bleachers designed in the Classical Moderne style and constructed by the Works Progress Administration. The brick-faced Public Schools Gymnasium, now called Jack A. Billingsley Field House, is located in the southeast corner of the parcel and faces northwest toward West Lancaster Avenue. Its design features characteristics of the Modern Movement. Nominated with these two resources are two contributing ticket booths on the west and east sides of the stadium and a contributing concrete perimeter wall around the stadium. All of the contributing resources retain a high degree of integrity. Trail Drive, constructed through the parking lot separating the stadium and the gymnasium in c. 2017-19, is counted as a noncontributing structure.

Farrington Field and the Public Schools Gymnasium (now called the Jack A. Billingsley Field House) located west of downtown Fort Worth along two major thoroughfares—the east/west West Lancaster Avenue and north/south University Drive in the city's Cultural District. Within the district are six museums, livestock and equestrian show facilities, a large park, an arena, a horticultural research institute, and a botanic garden. Three of the museums have world-class collections and facilities: the Kimbell Art Museum, composed of the original Louis Kahn-designed building (1969-1972) and a second building designed by Renzo Piano Building Workshop (2013); Fort Worth Modern Art Museum (Tado Ando, 2002); and the Amon Carter Museum (Philip Johnson, 1961, 1964, 1977, 2001). Also nearby are the Will Rogers Memorial Auditorium, Coliseum, and Memorial Pioneer Tower (Wyatt C. Hedrick and Elmer G. Withers Architectural Group, 1936-37 with later additions; NRHP 2016 as Will Rogers Memorial Center); the geodesic-domed Casa Mañana Theater (A. George King & Associates, 1958 and Gideon Toal, 2003); Fort Worth Art Center (Herbert Bayer and A. George King & Associates, 1954 with an addition by O'Neil Ford—Chris Carson, PIC, 1974) and the Scott Theater, 1966; Fort Worth Museum of Science and History (Legoretta+Legoretta, 2009); the National Cowgirl Hall of Fame (David M. Schwarz, 2002). South of the Will Rogers Center is the Botanical Research Institute of Texas (H3 Hardy Collaboration Architecture, 2011), the Fort Worth Botanic Garden, and Dickies Arena (David M. Schwarz, 2019). A portion of the botanic garden, designed by Hare & Hare, was listed in the National Register in 2009 for its significance as a designed landscape. East and south of Farrington Field and the Public Schools Gymnasium is Trinity Park, the city's second oldest park. It contains approximately 252 acres and is known for its stands of native trees, duck pond, its stone shelter house constructed by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) c. 1937, miniature railroad, and winding drives along the Clear Fork of the Trinity River and through the park. Within the park and immediately south of the nominated resources is the Van Zandt Cottage (NR 2012), a mid-nineteenth century pioneer residence that was restored in 1936 as part of the city's celebration of the Texas Centennial. The area north of West Lancaster Avenue and east of University Drive is a high-density multi-family, hotel, retail, and entertainment district known as South of Seventh that has been developed over the last two decades.

Farrington Field and Public Schools Gymnasium are on an approximately 36-acre parcel of flat land at the southeast intersection of University Drive and West Lancaster Avenue. The parcel is situated in portions of the John P. Montgomery and Josiah M. C. Lynch Surveys and along a small stretch of vacated railroad right-of-way at the southwest corner. Farrington Field, a massive reinforced concrete stadium, sits towards the parcel's northwest corner with its primary elevation facing west toward University Drive. The stadium was constructed in 1938-39 in the Classical Moderne style by laborers employed by the Works Progress Administration. It was built to accommodate seating for 20,000 in two banks of bleachers; one on the west side of the field and one on the east side. The Fort Worth Public Schools Gymnasium was constructed in 1953 and is situated at an angle at the southeast corner of the parcel. The one-story building is constructed of concrete block faced with a yellow brick and contrasting red brick on portions of the facade. It has a barrel roof

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supported by steel trusses and a symmetrical but stepped massing with the gym, the tallest and largest section, located at the rear. Inside, the gym floor is surrounded by concrete bleachers with wood seating located on the west (southwest), north (northwest) and east (northeast sides). The parcel on which the two buildings stand is bisected by Trail Drive, a parkway constructed in c. 2017-19. Each resource and contributing and noncontributing features are discussed in greater detail below.

Farrington Field (contributing building)

Farrington Field is a mammoth reinforced concrete stadium constructed for the city's public schools in the Classical Moderne style in 1938-39. It is the fifth largest high school stadium in the state and the third largest of those at least fifty years old.¹ The stadium is composed of two banks or stands bleachers, each initially constructed with a seating capacity of 10,000 (current total capacity for the stadium is 18,500). These banks flank a football field and surrounding oval track. The field has a north-south orientation with the stands on its east and west sides. Associated with the stands are two small reinforced concrete ticket booths; one for each side of the stadium. A reinforced concrete wall encloses the north and south ends of the stadium. The concrete walls of these features are imprinted with the horizontal lines and textures of the wood forms used to build them.

West Stand (contributing building)

The west stand is considered the "home" stand and as such, contains the stadium's main entrance which is located at the center of the west elevation facing University Drive. The stand is constructed of reinforced concrete and has a slight curve that makes it difficult to see from the southwest corner to the northwest corner (Photos 2 and 3). The west elevation is characterized by its two rows of square columns that support the upper tier of bleachers (Photos 2 and 3). The outer row of columns reinforces the stadium's monumentality and its Classical Moderne style. The entrance is defined by a center bay that projects slightly forward (Photo 4). At its center are four square fluted columns with a five-pointed "Lone Star" in each capital. A frieze above the columns is incised with the words "Farrington Field" and the words "Fort Worth Public School Stadium" below. Flanking the frieze and slightly set back from it are two stylized cast concrete *bas-relief* sculptures created by Fort Worth artist Evaline Sellors. The left sculpture is of a male football player holding a football in his right hand as if to throw a forward pass (Photo 5). The right figure is of a female sprinter holding a relay baton in her left hand (Photo 6). The lettering and sculptures were executed in a style indicative of Classical Moderne design. Above the frieze and sculptures are fixed windows in groups of three. These illuminate the press box at the very top of the stand. On either side of the entrance bay are five nearly full-height square columns. The frieze above them is decorated with cast stone Lone Stars. The underneath side of the concrete seating is exposed, with the risers and treads creating an accordion pattern of light and shadows (Photos 3 and 4). Beneath the seating are administrative offices, concession stand, and six ramped concrete tunnels that provide access to the seats on the east side of the west stand (Photo 7). The north and south elevations were constructed with two open bays under the upper tier of the stadium, with a concrete wall filling in the space under the lower tier. These walls had three small windows; the windows on the south elevation remain (Photo 8).

The east elevation of the west stand faces the playing field and track. The six concrete tunnels terminate approximately in the middle of the stand. In front of their openings is a horizontal aisle that runs nearly the full width of the stadium. A protective metal railing runs along the east side of the aisle, dividing the upper tiers from the lower tiers. There are eight vertical aisles that access the lower and upper tiers. The seats are aluminum. There are boxed seats along the first two rows. These seats have seat backs. Seat backs are also found in the center five sections immediately below and above the center aisle; they are used in the first row below the aisle and the five rows above the aisle. Behind the center section of

¹ "Texas High School Stadiums with a Seating Capacity Greater Than 16,500," *TexasBob.com*, accessed February 2, 2021 (https://texasbob.com/stadium/cap_index.php).

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seats is a press and coaches' box at the top of the stadium. It has a flat roof and tinted windows. Above the stadium's back wall are four evenly spaced light standards that illuminate the playing field (Photos 9 and 10).

Alterations to the west stand

Historically, there were three window openings on the north elevation under the lower tier of seats. There are currently two windows and a pedestrian entrance has been added east of the windows (Photo 9). The two open bays on the west end of this elevation have been partially infilled with concrete block, creating a one-story space under the bleachers. The east bay has a metal pedestrian door with a small awning above it. The west bay has no openings. The addition partially infills the two northernmost bays of the west elevation. This addition does not change the west bank's footprint. The stadium's seats were initially of redwood strips but have been replaced by aluminum seats. The press box's windows have been replaced with fixed tinted units. The configuration of the press box's east elevation's (field side) windows was completely changed and the openings infilled with windows. The two entrances to the box were raised and stairs were added in front of them (Photo 10). These alterations may have occurred c. 2010 when other modifications were made to the field. Although the press box has been altered, it retains its original footprint. The space below the lower tier no longer contains the home team's locker room and is used for administrative offices.

East Stand (contributing building)

The east stand shares numerous similarities with the west stand including its curved shape and two rows of square columns underneath the upper tier of bleachers, again, reinforcing the stadium's monumental presence (Photos 11-13). The outer (east) elevation lacks the embellished entrance found on the west stand as the east stand was typically the "visitors" side. However, the name "Farrington Field" is on the back of the coaches box above the top of the stadium. This elevation also has cast stars near the top of the stadium (Photo 14). The north and south elevations also had two open bays under the upper tier of seats and a concrete wall under the lower tier of seats. The west elevation faces the field and is very similar to the field side of the west stand although it has fewer seats with backs (Photo 16).

Alterations to the east stand

Historically, there were two open bays on the east end of the south elevation. The left bay has been infilled with concrete block and a metal overhead garage door. The right bay and the two southernmost bays of the east elevation have been partially enclosed with a one-story, flat-roofed addition of concrete block. The southernmost bay of the addition's east elevation has a narrow overhead door (Photo 15). The west open bay of the north elevation has been partially infilled with a one-story concrete block addition that has a pedestrian door. These additions do not change the overall footprint of the east bank. A press or coaches' box was added to the center of the top rows of seats between 1963 and 1968 according to aerial photographs, making this a historic alteration (Photos 14 and 16). The original redwood seats have been replaced with aluminum seats. Beneath the stand are the locker rooms; the home team's locker room is located at the north end and the visiting team's locker room is at the south room. The locker rooms have been modified over the years. A historic feature that remains are the ramps along the north and south walls from which the teams exit the locker room to enter the field (Photo 17).

Field (contributing site)

Between the two banks of bleachers is the football field which has a north/south orientation (Photos 10, 16, and 18-19). The field was changed from a natural turf to a synthetic turf c. 2010-11. Circling the field is a seven-lane oval track with a 220-yard straightaway in front of the west bleachers. The track is covered with an all-weather surface which was also installed around 2010-11. South and southeast of the track are a video scoreboard (2010-11) and a shot-put circle. Historic photographs reveal there was a circle in this general area.

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The field and track were constructed below grade, creating sloped banks from the track to the original grade level and give the stadium an oval or “bowl” shape. The slopes are planted with grass. At the top of the bank north of the track is a curving asphalt road that loops from the west stand to the east stand. A chain link fence edges the inner curve of the road (Photo 9).

West (Home) Ticket Booth contributing building)

There is a small one-story, flat-roofed ticket booth west of the main entrance. It is constructed of reinforced concrete impressed with horizontal lines created by the wood forms used to build them. A ribbed parapet adorns the front (west) elevation. The booth’s concrete walls and ribbed parapet tie it to the design of the stadium. A shallow flat awning shelters three ticket windows on the west elevation. Metal stanchions are aligned with each window (Photo 4).

East (Visitor) Ticket Booth (contributing building)

A small one-story, flat-roofed ticket booth is located east of the center of the east stand. It is constructed of reinforced concrete imprinted with horizontal lines and texture created by the wood forms used for pouring the concrete. A ribbed parapet adorns the front (east) elevation. Abutting the north elevation is a small addition, possibly constructed of concrete block or clay tile and covered with a cementitious stucco. It does not have the ribbed parapet. The construction date of the addition has not been determined but it is harmonious with but differentiated from the original building. A shallow flat canopy runs across the east elevation above the three ticket windows of the original portion and the two ticket windows of the addition. Metal stanchions are aligned with each window (Photo 14).

Concrete Wall and Fence Piers (contributing structure)

Surrounding the stadium on its north and south ends are twelve-foot-high concrete walls with decorative piers. Linking these two sections are black metal fences and gates set between high concrete piers. Many of the piers are fluted, tying them to the Classical Moderne style of the stadium. The metal fence and gates are not historic. The walls and piers were constructed 1938-39 and are counted as a single structure as they are functionally related (Photos 1, 4, 8, 12, 19-22).

Grounds Around Farrington Field (not counted on inventory)

Mature live oak trees and grassy borders are located within the perimeters of stadium’s wall. The trees follow the curve of the wall, particularly on the north end (Photos 18-19). Other live oaks are located outside of the walls. Deciduous trees are also located elsewhere on the grounds, particularly on the west side of the stadium. They partially obscure views of the stadium from University Drive when the trees are leafed out (Photo 1, 12, and 20). The trees are likely the remnants of the 1,600 trees and plants planted around the stadium in 1938. A concrete sidewalk follows the oval outside the perimeter wall north of the stadium. Other sidewalks are located next to West Lancaster Avenue and University Drive. Small asphalt parking lots are located northwest, northeast, and south of the stadium (Photo 21). The latter two parking lots were constructed/reconfigured following the construction of Trail Drive south and east of the stadium. There is an electronic event sign near the intersection of University Drive and West Lancaster Avenue.

Alterations to the Grounds Around Farrington Field

When Farrington Field was initially constructed, there was a third reinforced concrete ticket booth at the north end of the stadium. It was set within a plaza that included a concrete terrace and stairs flanked by ornamental light standards facing West Lancaster Avenue (Figures 12 and 14). According to aerial images, these features were removed between 1979 and 1981. There is now a plaza of brick pavers at this location. The north entrance to the stadium has been closed off by a

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black metal fence between the perimeter walls and tall concrete piers (Photo 22). As mentioned, the construction of Trail Drive south and east of Farrington Field resulted in the reconfiguration of parking lots.

Integrity of Farrington Field

Farrington Field retains a high degree of integrity. Its design has remained intact through the retention of such character-defining features as its massive size and the two stands of seats—each with two rows of square columns supporting the upper tier of seating, and the Classical Moderne entrance with *bas relief* sculptures. The additions underneath the stands do not change the stadium's footprints. Alterations to locker rooms and office spaces were done to accommodate the school district's and players' evolving needs. There has been little substitution of materials. The most obvious changes include the replacement of the wood seats with aluminum and the field and track's natural materials with synthetic materials. Workmanship is still widely evident by the imprint of the wood forms that were used when the concrete was poured and by the *bas relief* sculptures created by artist Evaline Sellors. The stadium's setting has changed along with the development of the adjacent Cultural District although the stadium itself is surrounded by mature trees that were likely planted around the time it was constructed. Its location has not changed. Because of the retention of these characteristics, it has the feeling of a stadium built before World War II. It retains integrity of association as it is still used as an athletic and event venue for the Fort Worth Independent School District.

Public Schools Gymnasium (Jack A. Billingsley Field House) (contributing building)²

The Public Schools Gymnasium (now known as Jack A. Billingsley Field House) is located southeast of Farrington Field and is separated from it by a large asphalt parking lot and the recently constructed Trail Drive. The field house is located in the southeast corner of the parking lot and is placed at an angle so that its front elevation faces northwest towards West Lancaster Avenue, which borders the north side of the parcel (Photo 31). Bordering the east side of the parcel is Foch Street. To the south is Farm House Way, a newly paved street that formerly was an unpaved road along an abandoned railroad right-of-way. It was paved and slightly reconfigured around the time that Trail Drive was constructed through the parking lot.

The Public Schools Gymnasium's design expresses elements of Modernism through features such as its three-dimensional massing, minimalist ornamentation—in this case achieved through color, and metal multiple-light windows. The field house has the appearance of being two-stories but is actually only one story with basement (Photos 23-25). It consists of a large rectangular block constructed of concrete block faced with yellow brick with projecting wings. The roof of this central block has a slight barrel pitch which is mostly concealed by the parapet (Photo 28). Projecting north from the main block is another large block. This block has metal windows with cast sills at the first floor level as well as a few feet below the roof's parapet. The lower and upper windows are connected by spandrels of red brick which give the façade a vertical emphasis (Photo 24). The use of two contrasting colors of brick was a common design feature of Fort Worth public schools constructed in the early post-World War II era, adding visual interest at minimal cost. Above the center windows is the name "Jack A. Billingsley/Field House" written in free-standing metal letters. Extending from the center of this block and only one-story in height is a three-sided ticket booth with ticket windows in each wall. It is approached by two concrete stairs with brick cheek walls. Metal stanchions are in front of each window. On either side of the ticket booth is an entrance with paired doors with three vertical lights. Above the doors is a large transom (the east transom has been filled in). A flat concrete canopy edged with metal extends beyond the ticket booth and provides cover over the two entrances (Photo 25).

² Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, access to the interior of the building was not attempted. Interior descriptions are based on photographs taken in 2012. It is believed that features depicted in the photographs are still present.

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The east and west sides of the projecting block each have two sets of paired doors with three vertical lights and transoms that are partially filled in above them. Above the entrances is a flat concrete canopy with metal edge. The canopy is supported by a metal pole on top of a cheek wall. The entrances are approached by two concrete steps (Photos 24 and 26). Between these doors and the wall of the building's rear block are one-story wings. Their north and side walls have a ribbon of multiple-lights metal windows. The east and west elevations of the rear block are identical with five sets of multiple-light metal ribbon windows (Photos 28-30). The rear (south) elevation has entrances near the east and west ends of the building, each with two sets of paired doors with three vertical lights. The transoms above the doors have been filled in. These entrances are above grade and are accessed by a flight of concrete steps flanked by brick cheek walls. The entrances and the stairs are sheltered by a flat concrete canopy edged with metal. The canopy is supported by a metal pole above each of the cheek walls. At the center of this elevation is a large patch of corrugated metal panels with two metal vents. These panels extend from the roofline to approximately the height of the flanking entrances (Photos 29-30).

Most of the interior walls are constructed of concrete block. In many areas, the lower portions of the walls are covered with a glazed block (Figures 30 and 36-38). After entering the north doors, one encounters a large lobby with a concession stand that extends the length of the room. The lobby floor is of terrazzo (Figure 30). To the south is the gymnasium. It has a hardwood basketball court that measures 94 feet by 50 feet with an east/west orientation. Concrete bleachers are located on the east, north, and west sides of the court (Figures 27 and 31-32). The original wood seats remain (Figures 31-33). These bleachers originally had a capacity for 3,600 spectators. The west bleachers were constructed with a "dugout" for players as well as room for the press, the scorekeeper, and timekeeper (Figure 27). The dugout's floor has been infilled, likely as a safety precaution, but its shell remains (Figure 35). The south wall was constructed without bleachers but it was thought that they could be easily added. This may be the reason why the upper portion of the wall was constructed of metal panels (Figure 36). The panels could be removed to facilitate the construction of concrete bleachers. The ceiling is supported with exposed metal trusses. The building has a basement that housed a laundry.

The interior retains a great deal of integrity. The original concrete bleachers with wood plank seats are still present. Other original details include the lobby's terrazzo floor, phone booths with wood door and seat, and dressing rooms that appear to retain their original wood benches and wood clothes cubbies (Figures 30 and 37-38).

The Public Schools Gymnasium/Billingsley Field House is surrounded on all sides by an asphalt parking lot. The parking area immediately behind the building is enclosed by a chain link fence. Metal pipe railing and bollards protect the east, north, and south elevations of the building and pipe railing borders the parking lot on its north and east sides. A concrete sidewalk was recently constructed along West Lancaster Avenue and below the approach to the West Lancaster Avenue Bridge.

Alterations

Historic photos reveal that the building originally had multiple-light metal awning windows on the façade (Figures 25-26). These have been replaced with metal windows with three horizontal divisions (Photo 25). Window air conditioning units have been placed in a few of the lower windows on the façade. An accessibility ramp has been added to the west entrance. Inside, the dugout along the west bleachers has been removed. However, its location is delineated with a very low concrete curb and the shelter around the dugout has been retained (Figure 35). These alterations have a minimal impact on the historical and architectural integrity of the building.

Integrity of Public Schools Gymnasium/Jack A. Billingsley Field House

The field house retains excellent integrity. It retains integrity of design and materials as it has experienced few alterations and replacement of materials. The most noticeable alteration is the replacement of the windows on the north elevation. Workmanship is evident in the lobby's terrazzo floor and the concrete bleachers with wood seats. The setting has changed

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slightly with the reconfiguration and paving of the road to the south and the construction of Trail Drive. It retains integrity of location as it has not been moved. It has the feeling of a field house constructed in the early post-World War II era through the retention of historic features. It retains integrity of association as it is still used as an athletic and event venue for the Fort Worth Independent School District.

Trail Drive (Extension) (noncontributing structure)

After the completion of Public Schools Gymnasium (Billingsley Field House), it and Farrington Field were separated by a large asphalt parking lot. Access to the parking lot was from Crestline Drive to the south (this street has been removed), from Foch Street on the east side, and West Lancaster Avenue to the north. Between c. 2017-2019, a curvilinear extension of Trail Drive was constructed through the parking lot. The road begins south of Farrington Field and follows a curvilinear route in a northeasterly direction to West Lancaster Avenue where it terminates south of Crockett Street. Concrete sidewalks and ornamental street lamps with pendant globes line the road. The road was constructed by McClendon Construction Company. It is counted as a noncontributing structure. (Photo 32)

Summary of Resources

Description of Resource	Type of Resource	Date	Contributing status
Stadium (East and West Stands)	Buildings (2)	1938-39	Contributing
Playing Field	Site	1938-39	Contributing
West (Home) Ticket Office	Building	1938-39	Contributing
East (Visitor) Ticket Office	Building	1938-39	Contributing
Perimeter wall and Piers	Structure	1938-39	Contributing
Gymnasium	Building	1953	Contributing
Trail Drive	Structure	c.2017-19	Noncontributing

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Statement of Significance

For decades, Farrington Field and the Public Schools Gymnasium have served the Fort Worth Independent School District (FWISD) and the larger community as important venues for athletic and community events. Completed in 1939, Farrington Field is a monumental reinforced concrete stadium designed by the firm Preston M. Geren and constructed by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in the Classical Moderne style. The Public Schools Gymnasium, now known as Jack A. Billingsley Field House, was completed in 1953. It was designed by the same architectural firm and erected by Rambo Construction. Both resources are individually eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criterion A in the area of Entertainment/Recreation for the prominent role they have played as venues for public school and college athletics as well as community events. Farrington Field is also eligible at the local level of significance under Criterion A in the area of Social History as a massive project of the WPA in Fort Worth and Criterion C for Architecture as an excellent local example of the Classical Moderne style as applied to a stadium. Although both are individually eligible for the National Register, they are being nominated together because they are functionally related. The period of significance is 1938 to 1972. This period encompasses the year that construction began on Farrington Field and corresponds to the National Register's 50-year guidelines while acknowledging the resources' continued use for the purposes for which they were built.

Historic Context

Between 1920 and 1930, Fort Worth's population grew from 106,482 residents to 163,347, boosted in part by the city's role as the gateway to Northwest and West Texas oilfields and the strength of its livestock industry. It also annexed eight suburban communities in 1922 that significantly added to the city's physical size and population. Although several schools were constructed in the 1920s, the Fort Worth Independent School District (ISD) found it difficult to keep up with the demand for new and modern schools. In 1930-31, George D. Strayer of Columbia University and Fort Worth ISD Superintendent M. H. Moore each conducted a survey of school facilities. Both studies identified a variety of inadequacies. But with the deepening depression, it was difficult for the district to fund the construction of more buildings. With the establishment of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal programs such as the Civil Works Administration (CWA), the Public Works Administration (PWA), and the Works Progress Administration (WPA), the district was able to build fifteen new schools, construct additions for fourteen others, and to provide a comprehensive landscaping program for fifty-four school playgrounds and campuses. The building program totaled more than \$4,000,000 with substantial funding provided by the PWA. The landscaping program was accomplished in cooperation with the city's park department through funding from the CWA and its successor agency, the WPA.³

During the early decades of the twentieth century, the city's public high school football games were played at an athletic field north of downtown and the West Fork of the Trinity River between Northeast 5th on the south, North Jones Street on the west, Northeast 6th Street on the north, and North Grove Street on the east. It was known as Worth Field until September 1927 when the school board changed the name to Louis J. Wortham Field as a memorial to a former Tarrant County state legislator and co-founder of the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*. The facility consisted of a playing field with a grand stand that was protected by a canopy on one side of the field and a long bank of open bleachers on the opposite side. A second field came into use by the early 1930s. It originally was the home field for the semi-professional baseball team, the Fort Worth Panthers, and was located immediately north of Wortham Field (see Figure 1). Originally known as Panther Park, its name was changed in 1929 to La Grave Field in memory of Paul La Grave, the late business manager and part owner of the Panthers. It also had covered grand stands. By 1933, daytime football games were played at Wortham Field and night games were played at La Grave because it was a lighted field. But because the latter was

³ City of Fort Worth, Planning Department, "Eight Decades of School Construction," (2003), 8-9.

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designed for baseball, teams were hampered by the lack of turf and the infield's dirt. Both fields lacked adequate seating capacity and only Wortham had a track although it was not a cinder track.⁴

The campuses of each of the five high schools constructed with PWA funding between 1935 and 1937—Arlington Heights, North Side, Riverside, Polytechnic, and I. M. Terrell, Tarrant County's only high school for African Americans at the time—had practice football fields and tracks but they were not designed with spectators in mind. E. S. (Ervin Stanley) Farrington, the district's athletic director, campaigned for a new stadium for the city's schools as early as 1936. Farrington began his career with the district as the football coach for North Side High School in the early 1920s. He was quickly elevated to director of physical education, a position he held for fourteen years. Farrington envisioned a stadium on the site of Wortham Field that would seat twenty thousand spectators with a cinder track surrounding the football field. In 1936, an application for the stadium was submitted to the WPA as a component of the district's third phase of its landscaping program.⁵

When that attempt failed, Farrington and school officials set their sights on a City-owned 38-acre tract that was west of downtown and the Clear Fork of the Trinity River and adjacent to Trinity Park. Again, school district representatives planned to seek WPA funding for its construction. The site was just east of the Frontier Centennial grounds where in 1936, Fort Worth staged its own celebration of the centennial of Texas' independence from Mexico. Farrington believed the location was “ideal in every respect,” especially as it was nearly equidistant from most high school and easily accessible from all parts of the city. The *Fort Worth Press* recorded Farrington's enthusiasm for the site:

“Think of this—W. Lancaster will run right by the Stadium when the new bridge is built over the Trinity [a reference to the soon-to-be-constructed 3,000-foot-long bridge over the Clear Fork, connecting the west side with downtown]; T. C. U. and South Side traffic can move over Burleson St. [later University Drive], through Forest and Trinity Parks, directly to the stadium; North Side people can drive straight from the north on Burleson St; Arlington Heights folks have a straight shot down El Campo; Poly comes in over Lancaster, and Riversiders use Belknap and West Seventh.”

The stadium would take up approximately fifteen acres of the site. By placing it on the west side of the tract, there would be parking space for 5,000 cars to the east and south. Terms of the sale included a reversion clause in the event the stadium was sold or leased for any uses other than recreation or athletics. Other conditions included that the facility would be available for city athletic and recreational purposes and that the parking lot would be available for the City's use when not being used for school events.⁶

⁴ Notes compiled by Billy W. Sills. Courtesy Lenna Hughes Recer, Billy W. Sills Center for Archives, Fort Worth Independent School District. A photograph of Worth Field can be found in *Report of the Public Schools of the City of Fort Worth*, 1924, 44. Sills' notes state the name was changed November 13, 1927 but the correct date was September 13, 1927. See “School Body Pays Tribute to Publisher,” *Fort Worth Record-Telegram*, September 14, 1927, 13. For use of the fields during the day or night, see “29 Games Have Been Carded by Director E. S. Farrington,” *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* [hereafter cited as *FWST*], July 30, 1933, 11. For the location of the two fields, see Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Map, Fort Worth, Texas, Volume 3, Sheet 339 (Figure).

⁵ Leroy Menzing, “This Morning's Fare for Fans,” *FWST*, January 22, 1936, 10; Amos Melton, “Farrington Field Lights Best in the West, Says Expert,” *FWST*, August 27, 1939, 11.

⁶ “Fort Worth Hi Schools May Get Athletic Plant Similar to Local Setup,” *Dallas Morning News*, November 11, 1937, 5; “Athletic Field Here Looms Near,” *FWST*, November 9, 1937; “Stadium Site Sale is Nearer,” *FWST*, November 26, 1937, 14; Zeke Handler, “Posterity Will See Concrete Evidence of Farrington's Work,” *Fort Worth Press*, November 9, 1937, from Farrington Family Scrapbook, Courtesy Evan S. Farrington, III, Austin, Texas, and Historic Fort Worth, Inc., Fort Worth, Texas; Carol Roark, *Tarrant County Historic Resources Survey: Fort Worth Central Business District* (Fort Worth: Historic Preservation Council for Tarrant County, 1991), 128.

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At its meeting on Monday, November 8, 1937, the city council approved selling the tract to the school district at \$200 an acre. That afternoon, the plans for the stadium were approved by the district WPA office in Fort Worth. The following day, Farrington and Raymond C. Morrison, the park department's head forester and supervisor of the school district's landscaping program, presented the city's proposal to the school board at a special called meeting. Sketches prepared by E. H. Carter and G. O. Gregory of the district's landscaping program depicted a field with an overall length of 700 feet. It was circled by an eight-lane quarter-mile track with a 220-yard straightway and was flanked by two banks of concrete stands that rose to fifty-four rows. Each stand had a seating capacity of 10,000 with the potential for adding a third component on the north end, giving the stadium a horseshoe-shape (Figure 2). Beneath the stands were dressing rooms, school athletic offices, a centralized storeroom, and a repair shop for sports equipment. The school board approved the purchase. Funds for the \$7,600 purchase came from two sources; \$2,500 came from the athletic fund and the remaining \$5,100 would be borrowed so that the City could be paid in full. Upon the board's approval of the purchase of land, the plans for the stadium were forwarded to the state WPA headquarters in San Antonio. The application requested \$160,000 from the WPA which would be used mostly for materials and labor. The school district's share was placed at \$84,000. The school funds would come from revenue bearing bonds which would be paid off by receipts from football games, track and field meets, and other events. WPA district director Maj. Karl E. Wallace practically assured local officials that the project would receive final approval as H. P. Drought, Texas' WPA administrator, had informally approved it "because it is a project both permanent and self-liquidating." It was anticipated that construction would start in January 1938 and that the project would employ 550 men over the projected six months it would take to build it.⁷

For E. S. Farrington, the new stadium was "the capstone—the crowning achievement—of the school ground landscaping program" and would give the district "a plant excelled by none in the United States." Unfortunately, he did not see the fruition of his dream. Four days after the stadium plans were submitted to state WPA administrators, Farrington became ill during an evening football game between I. M. Terrell and the African American high school team from Waco. He died at home early in the morning on November 14, 1937 of "acute indigestion" but more likely of a heart attack. On January 19, 1938, the school board approved naming the as-yet-to-be-built stadium "Farrington Field" in his memory. Fittingly, this was the same meeting that the board gave final approval to the plans for the stadium as presented by prominent Fort Worth architect Preston M. Geren.⁸

Construction of the stadium was delayed a few months when WPA administrations requested additional specifications on the facility, particularly in regard to safety features. The public gained a sense of the structure's design and scale when the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* published an image of it on February 15, 1938. Although Preston M. Geren received credit for the design, it was the work of two designers in his firm, A. (Arthur) George King and Everett L. Frazier. The published design shared similarities with Carter and Gregory's plan from November 1937 but unlike that image, it depicted an oblique view that included a classical-inspired design for the west elevation. That elevation's concrete stand was supported by tall square columns which reinforced the structure's monumental presence (Figure 3). On February 23, the school board issued a contract to the General Construction Company of Fort Worth for excavation work at the site.⁹

A ground-breaking ceremony was held on March 8, 1938. Stanley Farrington (E. S. Farrington, Jr.), the ten-year old son of the late district athletic director, had the honor of turning the first shovel of dirt. Music was provided by the city's WPA orchestra and the all-city high school band. On March 10, 1938, school administrators and district coaches who had

⁷ "Plans for Stadium Forwarded to WPA," *FWST*, November 9, 1937, 1 and 4; "Athletic Field Here Looms Near."

⁸ "Athletic Field Here Looms Near;" "E. S. Farrington, School Play Director is Dead," unidentified newspaper article in Farrington Family Scrapbook; "'Farrington Field' Selected as Name of New Stadium," *FWST*, January 20, 1938, 3.

⁹ "Stadium Work to Begin Soon," *FWST*, February 24, 1938, 8; "An Architect Envisions \$275,000 Farrington Memorial Field," *FWST*, February 15, 1938, 11. Judith Singer Cohen identifies King and Frazier as the designers of Farrington Field in her book *Cowtown Moderne: Art Deco Architecture of Fort Worth, Texas* (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 1988), 177, although Frazier's name is spelled Frazier in the book. See also "Architect Designed Cowtown Landmarks," *FWST*, November 18, 2009.

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worked with or under Mr. Farrington and former high school football standouts gathered at the future playing field to “spud” it with plugs of Bermuda grass to give the turf time to establish itself before the first game (Bermuda grass remained the turf of choice for many years). In October 1938, the grounds were being landscaped with 1,600 trees and plants. A few weeks before its first football game in September 1939, the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* grandiosely described the stadium as “being situated in a grove of towering trees at University Drive and West Lancaster.”¹⁰

School officials hoped the stadium would be completed in time for at least part of the 1938 season but that was not the case. Reportedly, gravel for the structure was dug from the site as tests revealed it was a good quality aggregate. The concrete stands were poured in sections (see Figures 5 and 8) The west stand of bleachers was constructed first and completed by January 1939 but work on the east stand lagged behind. Local newspapers covered progress on the stadium and the *Dallas Morning News* published an article with a photograph of work in progress in October 1938. Despite the construction delay, even the Dallas newspaper recognized the stadium’s state-of-the-art amenities and predicted that the west stand’s press box would be “second to none in the South, for it will contain the latest thing money can buy” including a broadcasting booth, a “comfort station,” and steam-heat (Figure 16).¹¹

Local sculptor and art teacher Evaline Sellors (1903-1995) was selected to create two *bas relief* panels to adorn the stadium as part of the WPA project. The subject matter for the left panel was a male football player with the right arm cocked, about to release a forward pass. Reportedly, she spent hours studying game films and photographs of the Texas Christian University (TCU) football team. Many assumed that the image was meant to depict Samuel Adrian “Slinging Sammy” Baugh (1914-2008), the TCU Horned Frog’s All-American quarterback who by 1938 was the quarterback for the Washington Redskins. But Sellors later denied it represented an individual player and said it was meant to represent all players. The second *bas relief* panel was a female relay sprinter. Originally, Sellors proposed depicting a male sprinter but school trustees requested a female figure to better depict the stadium’s function as an athletic venue for both sexes. Each sculpture was eight-and-one-half feet tall. Sellors first modeled the stylized figures in clay while working from a scaffold. They were then cast in concrete. By January 1939, the sculptures had been installed in cast frames situated just below the press box windows above the west entrance (see Figures 6 and 7).¹²

In early 1939, rumors circulated on the sports pages of several state and at least one out-of-state newspapers that Amon G. Carter, the publisher of the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, planned to use a trip to Washington, DC to lobby for additional government funding to enlarge Farrington Field to a seating capacity of 62,000. It was speculated that the hush-hush campaign to build a stadium that would surpass the 46,000-seating capacity of Dallas’ Cotton Bowl was launched by Carter and local businessmen following a dispute between the Cotton Bowl Association and the Southwest Conference.

¹⁰ “First Earth Turned for New Stadium,” unidentified newspaper article from Farrington Family Scrapbook; “Ceremony Set for Stadium: Ground Will Be Broken at Site of New Athletic Plant Tomorrow at 4 O-Clock,” *FWST*, March 7, 1938, 11; “An Architect Envisions \$275,000 Farrington Memorial Field,” *FWST*, February 15, 1938, 11; Amos Melton, “Friends at ‘Planting’ of Farrington Field,” *FWST*, March 11, 1938, 26; Julian Read, “Meet Caretaker of Farrington Field: Art Huff Grows Grass Tough Enough to Withstand 48 Games,” unidentified newspaper article in Farrington Family Scrapbook; “Fort Worth Erects Stadium for Athletes,” *Dallas Morning News*, October 30, 1938, Section II, 11.

¹¹ Notes from Raymond C. Morrison, “U. S. Community Improvement Appraisal, Fort Worth, Texas: Before and After Work Relief, 1932-1938,” located in file for “1501 University Drive,” Tarrant County Historic Resources Survey, Historic Fort Worth, Inc., Fort Worth, Texas; Roark, *Fort Worth’s Legendary Landmarks*, 214; “Fort Worth Erects Stadium for Athletes;” “Exposition Track Meet Set for March 17, 18,” *FWST*, January 13, 1939, 9.

¹² Bud Kennedy, “PWA Moderne treasures adorn Farrington Field,” *FWST*, August 27, 2010, A5; Martin Donell Kohout, “Baugh, Samuel Adrian [Slingin’ Sammy],” *Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed January 28, 2021, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/baugh-samuel-adrian-slingin-sammy>. Published by the Texas State Historical Association; “All That Passes is Not Baugh, Sports Fan Told,” *FWST* (morning edition), August 3, 1938, Fort Worth Star-Telegram Clippings Collection, AR406-7-143-202, Special Collections, University of Texas at Arlington Libraries. Baugh first earned the nickname “Slinging Sammy” for his skills as a baseball player. See Cohen, *Cowtown Moderne*, 178.

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The Dallas venue had been home to the annual New Year's Day Cotton Bowl Classic since 1937. According to the rumor, Carter offered to donate additional land to accommodate the bigger structure but that was unlikely given that the stadium was being constructed on such a large tract owned by the Fort Worth ISD. Carter's rivalry with Dallas was legendary and his Washington ties, including a personal friendship with President Roosevelt, often benefited Fort Worth. However, the "Southwest Bowl" never came to fruition and Farrington Field was constructed with a seating capacity of 20,000 as initially planned.¹³

In a push to complete the stadium, supplemental WPA funding was approved in May 1939. The \$43,567 award was dedicated for additional landscaping which included "winding drives through the stadium grounds, driveways and walks under the stadium, and sodding of the grounds with the exception of the large parking area." It was anticipated that this work would allow for the completion of the stadium in time for the fall football season. By mid-June 1939, the twelve-foot-high concrete wall around the south end was approximately half completed. Work on the north wall had not started.¹⁴

Among the stadium's amenities were ninety-six boxed seats. Both stands had boxed seats located at the bottom two rows and elsewhere in the stands. Each box contained seating for eight and was surrounded by metal pipe railing. The first year the price ranged from \$65 to \$100 for twenty-seven regular season games or 30 to 45 cents a seat per game depending on the box's location. These were the only reserved seats in the stadium. Season box holders could enter through any gate. Otherwise, unreserved seats for adults cost 35 cents in advance or 50 cents if purchased the day of the game. Student tickets were 25 cents. All seats were set within the five-yard lines. They were constructed of three slats of two-inch redwood although the boxed seats had seat backs (See Figure 10)¹⁵

The month prior to the first game saw a flurry of activity at the stadium. The goal posts were installed in mid-August. Work on the track surrounding the field was rushed and the field's lighting system was tested. Ninety-six 1,500-watt floodlights in groups of eight hung from steel standards behind the last row of seats. The highest standard was 106 feet above the field. A. P. Hammerstrom, an engineer for Westinghouse Electric Company, boasted that the lighting system was "absolutely the finest high school plant west of the Mississippi," had more lights than the Cotton Bowl, and was better than those at LSU stadium in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.¹⁶

The first game was held on September 15, 1939. However, the stadium was not officially dedicated until November 3, 1939 prior to the game between Riverside and Arlington Heights high schools. By then, officials were boasting that the total cost of the stadium was \$400,000. At the dedication, Maj. Karl E. Wallace, the WPA's district director, presented the facility to the school system. Among the more than 10,000 attendees were Sidney King Farrington, E. S. Farrington's wife; his mother, Edna B. Farrington; and his children, Stanley and Helen Farrington. If Amon G. Carter was disappointed that he didn't get his 62,000-seat bowl, he showed no indication of that when he told the assembled crowd "that there was nothing in the city more outstanding or of greater benefit than the stadium."¹⁷ (See Figure 17)

Work began on another WPA-funded project at Farrington Field more than a year after the stadium was dedicated. In February 1941, final approval was given for laying asphalt on roads around the stadium, graveling additional parking

¹³ "Fort Worth Plans Stadium Larger Than Cotton Bowl," *Waco News Tribune*, January 10, 1939, 6. Other Texas newspapers that carried the story on the same day were the *Port Arthur News*, *Corsicana Daily Sun*, and *El Paso Herald Post* in addition to *The Times* (Shreveport, Louisiana). No mention of the proposal was found in the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* or the *Dallas Morning News*. Lisa C. Maxwell, "Cotton Bowl," *Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed November 23, 2020, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/cotton-bowl>. Published by the Texas State Historical Association.

¹⁴ "Stadium Gets Finishing Fund," *FWST*, May 21, 1939, 6; Frank Tolbert, "A Tour Through Sports," *FWST*, June 16, 1939, 15.

¹⁵ "Farrington Field Boxes Go on Sale as Units Thursday," *FWST*, August 9, 1939, 13.

¹⁶ Amos Melton, "Farrington Field Lights Best in the West, Says Expert," *FWST*, August 27, 1939, 11.

¹⁷ "Participate in Exercises at New High School Stadium," *FWST*, November 4, 1939, 1; "10,000 View Dedication Rites at Farrington Field," *FWST*, November 4, 1939, 2.

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space, and planting shrubs. The estimated cost was \$21,141 with \$17,622 coming from the WPA and \$3,519 from the district.¹⁸ As predicted, revenue from events at Farrington Field quickly paid off the bonds that were secured for the district's portion of the stadium's construction costs. By December 1944, the stadium was debt-free.¹⁹

Use of Farrington Field by Schools

Fort Worth's Paschal High School's Panthers had the honor of playing in the first football game at Farrington Field when they faced heavily-favored Amarillo High's Sandies on September 15, 1939. Young Stanley Farrington made the first kickoff in the stadium. Unfortunately for the hometown team and its fans, the Sandies defeated the Panthers, 31-13. Sixty football games were played at Farrington Field during its first season of use. They included twenty-seven Class 2A, two Class A, eighteen junior high, seven African American (presumably high school), one Texas Wesleyan College (Fort Worth), one Texas Christian University freshman, one African American college, and one high school playoff game. The largest attendance, 24,836, was recorded in 1944 during a Thanksgiving Day battle between North Side and Paschal high schools. Many fans watched from the trees outside the stadium's endzones as Paschal won 41-0. In 1948, Farrington Field was the site of the state's first City Conference football championship when Arlington Heights' Yellow Jackets defeated Houston's Lamar Redskins, 20-0.²⁰

I. M. Terrell High School, for many years the only high school for African Americans in Tarrant County, played its first home game of 1939 at Farrington Field on Thursday, September 21. As with most black high schools across the state, the Terrell Panthers played their games on Wednesday, Thursday, or Saturday with Friday night games reserved for the white schools. A large crowd witnessed the Panthers handily defeat the Ennis African American team 51-0 with a section of the stadium reserved for whites. In addition to Texas teams, the Panthers also played at least two Oklahoma teams at Farrington that season. Farrington Field served as the venue for at least five state championship games for the Prairie View Interscholastic League (PVIL), the organization that governed athletic, scholastic, and music competitions for black public schools in Texas. Barely a year after its completion, Farrington Field was the site of the first official PVIL high school football Class 2A championship game in Texas. Fort Worth's I. M. Terrell Panthers soundly defeated Austin's L. C. Anderson High School Yellow Jackets, 26-0. For this game, the west side stands, usually considered the home team's stands, were reserved for whites. In 1959, Fort Worth's Kirkpatrick High School, established in the 1950s in an effort to hold off integration of the city's schools, lost the Class 2A championship to Bay City's Hilliard High School, 22-14. Kirkpatrick lost the 3A championship to Baytown's Carver High School, 21-6 in 1961. But the following year, Kirkpatrick defeated Galena Park's Fidelity Manor, 6-0. Although favored, I. M. Terrell lost the 4A state championship to Houston's Jack Yates High School Lions in 1965 by a score of 18-0.²¹

¹⁸ "Farrington Field WPA Project Okayed," *FWST*, January 3, 1941; "Work ordered on WPA Jobs," *FWST*, February 13, 1941, 15.

¹⁹ "Farrington Stadium is Free of Debt," *FWST*, December 5, 1944 (morning edition), AR406-7-60-44, Fort Worth Star-Telegram Clippings Collection, Special Collections, University of Texas at Arlington Libraries.

²⁰ Amos Melton, "Figures Show Farrington Field Money Well Spent," *FWST*, December 11, 1939, 17; "Panthers and Sandies Ready to Open Farrington Field at 8 Tonight," *FWST*, September 15, 1939, 24; "Football Results," *FWST*, September 16, 1939, 7; Henry, "Field of Dreams."

²¹ "I. M. Terrell Gridders Open With 51-0 Victory," *FWST*, September 22, 1939, 25; Michael Hurd, *Thursday Night Lights: The Story of Black High School Football in Texas* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2017), 4-5; "I. M. Terrell to Play Ardmore Team Tonight," *FWST*, October 11, 1939, 19; "I. M. Terrell Wins, 7-6" *FWST*, November 2, 1939, 11. As the FWISD tried to hold off integration of schools, three more high schools for blacks were opened in the early- to mid-1950s: Como High School on the west side, Kirkpatrick on the north, and Dunbar in far east Fort Worth. Although the Prairie View Interscholastic League was formed in 1920, there was no official process for determining a state championship team until 1940. See Hurd, *Thursday Night Lights*, 12, 230; "I. M. Terrell Seeks Negro State Title Against Austin," *FWST*, December 17, 1940, 12; Hurd, *Thursday Night Lights*, 202, 217, 219-222, 225; Bill Ramsey, "Hilliard Races Past Kirkpatrick by 22-14," *FWST*, December 20, 1959, 25; Harold McKinney, "Yates Muzzles Terrell, 18-0," *FWST*, December 12, 1965, 74.

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Although specifically constructed for the city's public schools, at least two other Fort Worth high school football teams played at Farrington Field. The "Mighty Mites" hailed from the Masonic Home and School of Texas, located on a hill in far east Fort Worth. As the name suggests, the institution, supported by Masons across the state, offered a home and school for the orphaned and needy children of brother Masons. The school functioned as an independent school district and fielded a winning football team in the 1930s and early 1940s, even against big-city high schools, including Fort Worth's white high schools. Overflow crowds attended their games at Wortham Field and a popular history of the team, *Twelve Mighty Orphans*, claims that it was this large attendance that drove the creation of Farrington Field, which the author dubbed "The House the Orphans Built." In 1940, a Thanksgiving Day game between the Masons and Fort Worth's Polytechnic High School Parrots attracted eighteen thousand fans to Farrington Field, the majority of whom reportedly were there to cheer on the Masons. Although favored, the Masons eked out a 7-6 win. The scrappy team made it to the state semi-finals that year but finally succumbed to Amarillo 14-7. Laneri High School, Fort Worth's first Catholic high school, played its first game there in 1945 against Diamond Hill from the city's North side. Laneri later played teams from the Southwestern Academic League at Farrington. In addition to Laneri, the league was composed of parochial schools, institutions, and academies such as Dallas' Buckner Home, San Antonio's Peacock Military Academy, and the Texas State School for the Deaf located in Austin. Farrington Field was the site of the league's championship game in 1954 in which Laneri defeated the Texas School for the Deaf, 20-19.²²

Even high schools outside of the city played games at Farrington Field. In late 1941, eighteen thousand fans watched Wichita Falls' Coyotes play an impressive passing game to defeat the Temple Wildcats, 13-0, earning the state championship title. Four years later, the Coyotes succumbed to the Highland Park Scotties, 18-0 in the District 6 playoffs. That game was attended by 21,500 fans. It is likely that Farrington Field was chosen as the venue for these games because of its seating capacity and its equidistant proximity to the opposing schools. In non-season play, Istrouma High School of Baton Rouge, Louisiana defeated Port Arthur's St. James Catholic High School on a snow-covered field as part of the Charity Bowl sponsored by the Fort Worth Cancer Committee on December 31, 1946. More than five thousand tickets were sold but only two hundred and fifty fans braved the cold to watch the game.²³

In addition to football, Farrington Field hosted other athletic events, particularly track and field meets. In March 1940, the stadium was the venue for the Southwestern Exposition Track and Field Meet (later renamed the Southwestern Recreation, Track, Field and Golf Meet), an event initially organized by City of Fort Worth Recreation Superintendent R. D. Evans in 1923. The first year at Farrington Field attracted the largest number of participants to date with thirteen hundred entrants representing high schools, junior colleges, and colleges and universities across Texas and Oklahoma. It was noted that this meet was the first where that the 220-yard races would take place on a straight-away. Prior to the construction of the track at Farrington Field, such races were held on a course that included one curve. It was noted that wider curves on Farrington's oval would facilitate speed. One disadvantage of the new track was the recently laid red cinders which had not had time to appropriately settle. The *Fort Worth Star-Telegram's* sports writer Amos Melton boasted that with succeeding years "the running surface will be one of the best in the country." Farrington Field's size also allowed event organizers to enforce the "cleared field" rule, meaning that the only people allowed inside the oval were

²² Carol Roark, *Fort Worth's Legendary Landmarks* (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1995), 128; Jim Dent, *Twelve Mighty Orphans: The Inspiring True Story of the Mighty Mites Who Ruled Texas Football* (New York: Thomas Dunne Books/St. Martin's Press, 2008): 196-251. "The House the Orphans Built" is the title of Chapter 23 in Dent's book. Dent claimed that 25,000 attended the game but the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* placed the figure at 18,000, see William King, "Masonic Home Rallies, Shades Parrots by 7-6," *FWST*, November 22, 1940, 9. Tarrant County Historic Resources Survey, *Phase III Fort Worth's Southside* (Fort Worth: Historic Preservation Council for Tarrant County, 1986), 135; "Laneri to Play First Time at Farrington," *FWST*, October 19, 1945, 11; Jim Jenkins, "Laneri Gains Victory Over Big, Tough Team," *FWST*, December 2, 1957, 13.

²³ Frank Tolbert, "Coyotes Ride Passing Attack into State Championship, 13-0," *FWST*, December 28, 1941, Section II-1; Lorin McMullen, "Scots Throttle Wichita Falls, 18-0," *FWST*, December 23, 1945, 9; "George Kellam, "Istrouma Scores in Third to Beat St. James, 6-2," *FWST*, January 1, 1947, 13; Nona Lou Greene, "Charity Football Contest Draws 250 Brave Fans," *FWST*, January 1, 1947, 2.

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officials and athletes participating in the particular event being staged. Meets sponsored by the Fort Worth ISD also occurred at Farrington. Just as in football, teams from the Southwestern Academic League, including Fort Worth's Lanier High School participated in meets at the stadium.²⁴

Although many track and field meets were restricted to male athletes, female athletes had the opportunity to participate in sporting events at Farrington Field. As suggested by Evaline Sellors *bas relief* sculpture of a female relay runner, there were track and field events that included girls, particularly elementary-aged contestants (see Figure 18). Other events included Jennings Avenue Junior High's Spring Festival where three hundred and fifty girls participated in folk dances, marches, and massed formations. The annual city Senior High School Girl's Archery Tournament was held there in May in the 1940s and 1950s. Sometimes the tournament was held in conjunction with the boys' tournament.²⁵

The school district used Farrington Field for events unrelated to sports. Baccalaureate and/or commencement services for the white high schools were often held there, sometimes in all-school ceremonies. But by the 1960s, graduations were often held indoors at places such as Daniel-Meyer Coliseum at TCU, Will Rogers Auditorium, or an individual school's auditorium. I. M. Terrell High School typically held its baccalaureate service at a church and its commencement service at the amphitheater on the school grounds. After the opening of other black high schools, their commencements were often held at Will Rogers Coliseum. Commencement services in 2020 occurred at Farrington Field and Clark Stadium due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Their outdoor setting combined with their large seating capacity provided social distancing opportunities for family and friends watching from the stands and participating graduates seated on the field, bringing a bit of normalcy to a very abnormal school year.²⁶

The Fort Worth ISD currently uses the facility for football and soccer games and track events. Its seating capacity presently is given as 18,500.²⁷

Community and Other Uses of Farrington Field

At least three pro-football exhibition games occurred at the stadium. In 1964, the Kansas City Chiefs, formally the Dallas Texans, played the Denver Broncos in a game that drew "a crowd generously estimated at 19,400." The Chief pulled out a 14-10 victory in the last two minutes of a game that Sam Blair of the *Dallas Morning News* described as "a thrill-an-hour."²⁸

²⁴ Susan Allen Kline, "History of Fort Worth Parks" (prepared for the Fort Worth Parks and Community Services Department, 2014), 279; Amos Melton, "'Expo' Meet Comes of Age—in Farrington Field First Time," *FWST*, March 15, 1940, 28; "Forest Oak scores sweep in track meet," *FWST*, April 25, 1975; "Academic League Meet Slated Tomorrow," *FWST*, March 27, 1954, 9.

²⁵ WBAP-TV (Television station: Fort Worth), [News Script: Football] November 20, 1951.

(<https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc705394/ml/1/?q=%22Farrington%20Field%22&rotate=>), accessed September 22, 2020), University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <https://texashistory.unt.edu>, crediting UNT Libraries Special Collections. "High Archery Tourney Scheduled Here Today," *FWST*, May 12, 1949, 13; "Girls' Physical Education Group Presents Festival," *FWST*, April 14, 1940, 30; WBAP-TV (Television station: Fort Worth), [News Script: Poly girls win archery title] May 5, 1953. (<https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc721702/ml/1/?q=%22Farrington%20Field%22&rotate=>), accessed September 22, 2020), University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <https://texashistory.unt.edu>, crediting UNT Libraries Special Collections. See also "Femster of Poly Wins Boys' Archery Title," *FWST*, May 13, 1944, 10.

²⁶ Commencement Service of the Fort Worth Public Schools, Farrington Field, Sunday, May 28, 1944 [program], Farrington Family Papers; E. Clyde Whitlock, "9 City High Schools to Offer Significant Musical Programs," May 27, 1945, Section 2, 8; Brian Gossett, "Fort Worth's graduation celebrations a success after plans changed due to coronavirus," *FWST*, July 9, 2020.

²⁷ "Farrington Field," *Fort Worth Independent School District*, accessed August 28, 2020 (<https://www.fwisd.org>).

²⁸ "Former SWC Stars Will Go Against Denver," *FWST*, August 16, 1964; Sam Blair, "Chiefs Topple Denver, 14 to 10," *Dallas Morning News*, August 29, 1964.

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A variety of community celebrations and commemorations have occurred at Farrington Field. It was the site of an Easter morning service in April 1942 with thousands of soldiers from the 155th Regiment of the 31st (Dixie) Infantry Division of Camp Bowie as part of the city's observance of Army Day. Later that afternoon it was the scene of mock battles and displays of weaponry. From July 16-July 23, 1949, it was the venue for Fiesta-cade, an extravaganza commemorating the centennial of the founding of the military outpost from which Fort Worth received its name. The event necessitated covering the field with the sawdust. When it was removed, it was found that the soil was moist and it was speculated that the treatment might even benefit the turf.²⁹ General Douglas A. MacArthur gave a speech there on June 16, 1951 at the conclusion of a four-day tour of Texas and a confetti-strewn parade through downtown Fort Worth. Although more than 150,000 viewed the parade, approximately 7,500 people braved the summer sun at Farrington, far less than the 30,000 spectators boosters claimed would fill the stands (see Figure 21). In 1956, a thirty-by-fifty-foot all-wool United States flag, the largest in the South, was unfurled at a Fourth of July celebration at the stadium. Community Voice, a patriotic organization composed of business and civic leaders, sponsored the event. Farrington Field was chosen over the previous location because of its seating capacity. On November 25, 1963, Fort Worthians collectively mourned the death of President John F. Kennedy at a solemn ceremony at the stadium, three days after Kennedy addressed an enthusiastic crowd outside of the city's Hotel Texas just hours before he was assassinated in Dallas. These are just a few of the many community events held at the stadium during the period of significance.³⁰

In 1985, four years short of the fiftieth anniversary of its completion, Farrington Field was threatened with demolition. Its prime location in the city's growing Cultural District made the land on which it sat extremely valuable. Dallas-based Trammell Crow Co. envisioned redeveloping the parcel for a hotel and retail complex. While contemplating the idea, Fort Worth ISD Superintendent Carl Candoli remarked "Nothing, including the stadium, is cast in concrete . . . Of course, before we ever talk (to) someone about developing the (Farrington Field) area, we have to have something to replace it with. I'm sure that would be the school board's position." Reportedly, the development company was willing to build a new football facility on other property owned by the district. Fortunately for those who objected to the sale, the deal fell through when it was assumed that proceeds from the sale of the property would go to the City of Fort Worth due to the reversion clause included in the deed when the school district purchased the property from the City.³¹

Public Schools Gymnasium (Jack A. Billingsley Field House)

Between 1940 and 1950, Fort Worth's population grew from 177,662 to 278,788 people, an increase of 57 per cent as area defense-related jobs attracted new residents and the birth rate "boomed." As the United States' involvement in World War II was ending, it was estimated that Fort Worth's birth rate was up 50 per cent from the previous five or six years.³² This increase placed heavy demands on public services and, most especially, the Fort Worth ISD. To raise the necessary funds

²⁹ "Fiesta-cade Regarded as Big Success," *FWST*, July 26, 1949, 16.

³⁰ George Dolan, "MacArthur Heads Army of 150,000" *FWST*, June 17, 1951, 1; "Giant Flag Will Be Seen at Celebration," *FWST*, July 1, 1965, 7; WBAP-TV (Television station: Fort Worth, Texas), [News Script: Patriotic Speaker] July 3, 1956, (<https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc333636/ml/1/?q=%22Farrington%20Field%22> accessed September 22, 2020), and WBAP-TV (Television station: Fort Worth, Texas), [News Script: Memorial Service], item, November 25, 1963, (<https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc954295/ml/3/?q=%22Farrington%20Field%22> accessed August 27, 2020) University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <https://texashistory.unt.edu>, crediting UNT Libraries Special Collections.

³¹ Jeff Guinn, "Developer wants Farrington Field," *FWST*, November 23, 1985, 1, 17; Madeline Williams, "Schools Would Get Nothing From Farrington Field Sales," *Fort Worth News-Tribune*, December 20, 1985, 10B, article found in "1501 University" file, Historic Fort Worth, Inc.

³² W. L. Redus, "Fort Worth's Arithmetic Problem: 4-Phase School Expansion Program Depends on Voters' Bond Approval," *FWST*, September 30, 1945, 2.

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for building new schools and expanding existing ones, the school district looked to voter-approved bond issues. In the early post-war years, bond issues were approved in 1948 (\$8,250,000), 1952 (\$14,990,000), and 1956 (\$20,000,000).³³

The construction of new schools was a high priority for the Fort Worth ISD in the post-World War II era, but even before the war was over, a plan published by the Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce's included the construction of a new field house as "Second on the list . . ." The plan called for the building to be constructed east of Farrington Field and of concrete to complement the stadium (see Figure 22). High school gymnasiums, some of which were constructed less than ten years before, were inadequate to house all the spectators who wanted to attend basketball games. Paschal High School had the largest gymnasium at the time but it could only seat 1,000. When the school played North Side High School for the District 7-AA championship in 1945, the game had to be played at Texas Christian University's field house to accommodate more fans.³⁴

Based on the success of Farrington Field, the construction of a field house was thought to be a "riskless" venture. Originally, it was expected that Farrington Field would amortize its original cost in fifteen years. However, revenue from events at the stadium had "paid operating expenses, financed improvements, and accumulated enough to pay off its indebtedness" in six years. In addition, it was believed that revenue from Farrington Field could be applied to the indebtedness of the field house should it be needed.³⁵

In July 1946, the Federal Works Agency (FWA), a holdover agency from President Roosevelt's New Deal, advanced \$13,500 to the school district for the architectural planning expenses for a \$462,500 field house. Preston M. Geren had already begun work on the plans at the time the funding was received. In October 1946, the *Fort Worth Press* reported that the school board had approved preliminary plans for a gymnasium adjacent to Farrington Field. However, school officials expressed concern that the building could not be constructed for the revised budget of \$260,000. In addition, the board had to choose whether to spend its limited resources on classrooms or sports facilities. Geren's plan for the massive concrete and steel building appears to have included two levels with a seating capacity of 5,600 people on three sides of the court with the ability to add seating on the fourth side. The proposed design included dressing rooms for the use of eight teams at the same time, offices for the district's athletic department, and space to store equipment.³⁶ Unfortunately for players and fans, this field house was never constructed (see Figure 23).

Nearly seven years passed before a gymnasium was constructed. In early 1953, the Fort Worth ISD's Board of Education gave its approval for a building that was a scaled-back version of Geren's earlier design. Instead of concrete and steel it was constructed of concrete block, brick, and steel and only had one level not including the gymnasium seating and a basement. The new plans may have been the work of Geren's son, Preston M. Geren, Jr. (1923-2013). As had been hoped

³³ Planning Department, City of Fort Worth, "Eight Decades of School Construction: Historic Resources of the Fort Worth ISD, 1892-1961," (2003) 10.

³⁴ Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce, *Fort Worth Plans for the Future* (January 1, 1945), 47, Genealogy, Local History and Archives Department, Fort Worth Public Library; "Building Costs, Needs May Delay Field House," *Fort Worth Press*, October 17, 1946, from an unidentified file at the Genealogy, Local History and Archives Department, Fort Worth Public Library, a copy of which is located in the file "1501 University Avenue," Preservation Resource Center, Historic Fort Worth, Fort Worth, Texas; "Paschal Defeats Steers for Title," *FWST*, February 18, 1945, 10.

³⁵ Redus, "Fort Worth's Arithmetic Problem." The article stated that the debt was paid off in seven years but it was actually six.

³⁶ "FWA Advances Planning Funds for Field House," *FWST*, July 11, 1946, 2; Redus, "Fort Worth's Arithmetic Problem." The FWA was created in 1939. Initially, it administered the Public Buildings Administration (PBA), Public Works Administration (PWA), Works Progress Administration (WPA), Public Roads Administration (PRA), U. S. Housing Authority (USHA), Federal Fire Council (FFC), and Bureau of Community Facilities (BCF). It was succeeded by the General Services Administration in 1949. See *National Archives and Records Administration*, Guide to Federal Records in the National Archives of the United States, General Records of the Federal Works Agency [FWA], Record Group 162 (accessed January 25, 2021) archives.gov/research/guide-fed-records/groups/162.html.

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in 1946, school board members selected a spot near Farrington Field with the façade facing northwest toward West Lancaster Avenue. The construction of the building was financed through the sale of \$200,000 of revenue bonds and an additional \$100,000 from a surplus in the athletic department thanks to revenue from events at Farrington Field. Bids for the construction of the building were taken in April 1953.³⁷ Fort Worth's Rambo Construction Company returned a low bid of \$219,621 as the general contractor. Fortune-Blanke received the heating and plumbing contract and General Engineering Company received the contract for the electrical work.³⁸

Unlike Farrington Field, the gymnasium was constructed in less than a year. The completed building varied from an earlier plan by including more windows and the elimination of a one-story projection on the façade (see Figures 24-26). The public was invited to an open house for the facility on December 13, 1953. The gym's bleachers were installed along the east, west, and north sides of the court for a total capacity of 3,600 spectators. The interior was designed so that the south wall could be modified with little effort for the installation of additional bleachers, giving the venue capacity for 4,500 fans. A "dugout" for players, the press, timekeepers, and scorekeepers, a feature envisioned by Athletic Director Herman Clark, was located at the base of the west bleachers. The basketball court was the standard size—94 feet long and 50 feet wide. Other court amenities included glass back boards and two large electric "instant-view" scoreboards installed diagonally at the northwest and southeast corners of the gym (Figure 27). The boards cost \$1,000 each and were paid for by the Coca-Cola Bottling Company and First National Bank. Two dressing rooms were installed under the west stand of bleachers and plumbing was roughed in under the east stand for two additional dressing rooms. A laundry was located in the basement. It was anticipated that all senior and junior high school athletic uniforms would be laundered there. The equipment cost \$6,000 and it was believed it would pay for itself in two years.³⁹

Initially, the building was reserved for the use of boys' 4A-3 (white) high schools on Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday with two games a night. In its first season at the gym, I. M. Terrell played games on Wednesday nights and possibly other night the gym was not in use by the white teams. Junior high school teams also played a few games there, including teams from the black schools. By the mid-1960s, public school basketball games were played there every night except Sunday during January and February. Reflecting the growth of the city and the construction of more high schools in the 1950s and 1960s, the gym was used for 4A-5 double-headers and a few triple-headers on Monday, Wednesday and Friday nights for the white schools with Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturdays reserved for teams from the city's black high schools.⁴⁰

Texas Christian University was granted use of the gymnasium for its men's basketball team for its Southwest Conference games after its field house was destroyed by fire in December 1953. In the 1960s, the gym also served as one of two home courts of the Texas Wesleyan College Rams. Depending on the high schools' schedules, the Rams had to play some home games at the City of Fort Worth's Southside Recreation Building.⁴¹

³⁷ "Low Bid of \$261,591 Offered on Field House," *FWST*, April 7, 1953, 14. Preston Geren, Jr.'s name appeared in several *Star-Telegram* articles regarding the construction of the field house. The paper also included a photo of him marking the site of the southwest corner of the building (see *FWST*, January 21, 1953); Dick Moore, "City to Display \$300,000 High Gym at Open House Sunday," *FWST*, December 11, 1953, 38 and 40.

³⁸ "Low Bid of \$261,591 Offered on Field House."

³⁹ Moore, "City to Display \$300,000 High Gym at Open House Sunday."

⁴⁰ "Negro Junior Cage Race Starts Jan. 5," *FWST*, December 25, 1955, 19; "Terrell Opens Season Against Lincoln Here," *FWST*, January 6, 1954, 20; Bill Van Fleet, "Any Old Night, Game is On at Schools Gym," *FWST*, December 7, 1965, 17.

⁴¹ Dick Moore, "Fieldhouse Nears Completion," *FWST*, October 21, 1953 (evening edition), Fort Worth Star-Telegram Collection, AR406-7-60-45, SCUTA; "TCU's Field House Destroyed in 40 Minutes By \$60,000 Fire," *FWST*, December 16, 1953, 32. Galyn Wilkins, "There's No Place Like Home, Or What's Become of Elmer's?" *FWST*, November 15, 1964, 59.

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Non-athletic public school events that occurred there included a music festival presented by eight hundred students from the district's twelve black elementary schools. This program occurred in 1961, two years before the district began a staggered plan for the integration of public schools. The festival included a five hundred-member chorus, fifty string players, and 265 wind players and percussionists.⁴²

Like Farrington Field, the gym was used for other events not directly associated with the Fort Worth ISD. These included the Easter Twirling Festival in 1964. It attracted 500 school-aged competitors from six states and was sanctioned by the National Baton Twirlers Association. In 1969, 250 contestants competed for the Texas State Karate championship. It included divisions for pee wee, women, and belt. Immediately following that tournament karate champions from nearly every state in the county, plus Japan, Canada, and Mexico City competed in the Tournament of Champions.⁴³

For nearly three decades, the building was known generically as the Public Schools Gymnasium (or Gym). It received the name Jack A. Billingsley Field House in 1982. Jack A. Billingsley (1920-2006) had a 39-year career at the Fort Worth ISD, serving various capacities as a coach, principal, athletic director, and assistant superintendent until his retirement in 1980. Mr. Billingsley's obituary referred to him "as a kind, gracious and fair man who 'lived for the district.'"⁴⁴

The gym continues to function as a venue for Fort Worth ISD basketball games as well as volleyball and wrestling matches. Its present seating capacity is given as 3,500.⁴⁵

The Designers and Builders of Farrington Field and Public Schools Gymnasium

Preston M. Geren, Sr. (1891-1969), architect

Preston Murdoch Geren, Sr. was born on November 2, 1891 in Sherman, Texas. He graduated from Texas A&M College in 1912 with a Bachelor of Science in architectural engineering. Following graduation, he was the supervising architect for buildings on the A&M campus for two years and was then a partner in the firm Giesecke and Geren for two years (Geren married Giesecke's sister, Linda, in 1921). After service in World War I, he joined the construction firm of J. F. Johnson in Austin as chief engineer. From 1921 to 1923, he was Professor of Architecture and Head of the Department of Architecture at Oklahoma A and M College in Stillwater.⁴⁶

Geren was the chief engineer for the prominent Fort Worth firm Sanguinet, Staats, and Hedrick (later Wyatt C. Hedrick, Inc.) from 1923 to 1934. While with this firm he worked on the Fort Worth Club, Texas & Pacific Passenger Terminal, the Fair, and the Electric buildings, all important buildings in downtown Fort Worth. He started his own architectural and engineering firm in 1934 and in 1949, was joined by his son, Preston M. Geren, Jr. (1923-2013). Prominent structures designed by the firm included Farrington Field, Elmwood Sanitarium, and the Public Schools Gymnasium (Jack A. Billingsley Field House), as well as numerous banks, churches, schools, and residences. Geren often collaborated with other architects on large projects. These included Greater Southwest International Airport (with Joseph R. Pelich),

⁴² "Negro Elementary Pupils Offer Music Festival Today," *FWST*, April 16, 1961, 35.

⁴³ WBAP-TV (Television station: Fort Worth, Texas). [News Script: Twirlers], item, March 28, 1964 (<https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/87531/metadc954436/ml/1/?q=%22Public%20schools%2220%22fort%20worth%22>; accessed September 25, 2020), University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <https://texashistory.unt.edu>. Crediting UNT Libraries Special Collections; "Karate Champs Gather for Tournament Tonight," *FWST*, August 23, 1969, 25.

⁴⁴ Carlos Mendez, "Teacher and coach 'lived for the district:' Jack A. Billingsley—1920-2005 [*sic*]," *FWST*, January 4, 2006.

⁴⁵ "Billingsley Field House," *Fort Worth Independent School District*, accessed August 28, 2020 (<https://www.fwisd.org>).

⁴⁶ Judith S. Cohen, "Geren, Preston Murdoch, Sr.," *Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed January 30, 2021, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/geren-preton-muroch-sr>. Published by the Texas State Historical Association.

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McCloskey Army Hospital in Temple, Harmon Army Hospital in Longview, and various airfields and military facilities with Wiley G. Clarkson, Joseph R. Pelich, and Joe Rady. The firm also designed numerous buildings for the University of Texas at Arlington and Austin, University of Dallas, Texas Woman's University, Denton; and Texas Christian University and Texas Wesleyan College, both in Fort Worth. Geren was also associate architect on Louis Kahn's internationally known Kimbell Art Museum in Fort Worth but died before it was completed in 1972.⁴⁷

An active participant in professional architecture and engineering organizations, Geren was a charter member of the Texas Society of Architects and the Fort Worth chapter of the American Institute of Architects. The Texas Society of Professional Engineers selected him as Engineer of the Year in 1956 and he was elected a Fellow of the American Society of Civil Engineers in 1959. Geren was twice presented honors by the City of Fort Worth for his civic affairs work. He remained active in his firm until his death on September 21, 1969.⁴⁸

Everett Lee Frazier, Sr. (1912-2005), architect

Everett Lee Frazier, Sr. was born in Dublin, Texas in 1912. His family moved to Fort Worth where he graduated from Polytechnic High School in 1930. As the country plunged into the Great Depression, he lacked the funds to attend college and instead, studied architecture through the International Correspondence School. He also educated himself through reading on the subject and his associations with other architects. He gained professional experience under Fort Worth architect E. W. Van Slyke, the grandfather of his future wife, Anna. Later in the 1930s, he was employed by Preston M. Geren, one of Fort Worth's most prominent architects. His first design for Geren's firm was the Pittsburgh Plate Glass Co. office. Another early project was Farrington Field which he designed with coworker A. George King. Other Fort Worth work included an annex for Harris Hospital and First Presbyterian Church, as well as Continental National Bank and Brown-Lupton Student Center at Texas Christian University. He also designed the elliptical staircase at Colonial Country Club, also in Fort Worth. Frazier worked for Geren's firm for forty-three years. He died in 2005.⁴⁹

A. (Arthur) George King (1906-1984), architect

A. George King was born in Corsicana, Texas on May 20, 1906. He attended Rice Institute in Houston, receiving a B. A. in 1927 and a B. S. in Architecture in 1928. He worked as a draftsman for Wyatt C. Hedrick in Fort Worth from 1928 to 1934 although in 1931 he was awarded the Mary Baker Elliott Scholarship from Rice Institute. This scholarship allowed him to travel in England, Germany, Holland, Belgium, and Italy. From 1934 to 1943, he was a draftsman for Preston M. Geren. It was during this time that he and Everett Lee Frazier, Sr. designed Farrington Field. King also designed several residences under his own name. In 1939, he became a registered architect in Texas. From 1941 to 1943, while still working for Geren, he also served as a supervising architect for Clarkson, Pelich, Geren & Rady, a cooperative association of prominent Fort Worth architects who worked on government projects. From 1943 to 1946, he was a First Lieutenant in the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers. Beginning in 1946, he was a partner in the firm of W. G. Clarkson in Fort Worth. He started his own firm, A. George King & Associates in 1952. During the 1950s, the firm designed several notable modernistic buildings that included the Fort Worth Art Center (with Herbert Bayer, 1954) and the geodesic-domed Casa Manana Theater (1958). Both buildings are in Fort Worth's Cultural District and Casa Manana is directly west of Farrington Field on University Drive. Other works included the Navarro County Memorial Hospital, Corsicana (1953), First Methodist Church, Waxahachie (1955), All Saints Episcopal Hospital, Fort Worth (1957), and Richland

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ David Casstevens, "Architect designed Cowtown landmarks," *FWST*, November 18, 2009.

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High School (1961). King closed his practice in 1966 when both he and his wife were in poor health and received AIA Emeritus status in 1967. He died January 5, 1984.⁵⁰

Evaline Sellors (1903-1995), sculptor

Evaline Sellors was an influential artist, teacher, and figure in Fort Worth's art community and a recent study of Modernism in the state referred to her as "Texas's doyenne of bronze casting." She was born in Fort Worth on August 30, 1903. At the age of eight, she began taking art classes with Christina MacLean, an artist and former instructor at Fort Worth University. Later, she enrolled in the prep school for girls at Texas Women's College (later Texas Wesleyan College) in Fort Worth where she studied under Samuel Ziegler, a graduate of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. At seventeen, her work *Still Life* was accepted into the *Eleventh Annual Exhibition of Paintings by Texas Artists* held at the Fort Worth Museum of Art (now the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth). From 1921 to 1923, she attended St. Louis School of Fine Arts at Washington University. There she studied modeling under Victor Holm and her work was included in an exhibition at the St. Louis Museum of Fine Arts. She continued her studies at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts where she won the William Emlen Cresson Scholarship twice (1929 and 1930) which allowed her to study sculpture in Europe. Four of her pieces were displayed at the Pennsylvania academy between 1928 and 1932.⁵¹

When she returned to Fort Worth, Sellors gained a prominent reputation as an artist and teacher. In 1932, along with artists Blanche McVeigh and Sallie Gillespie, she founded the Texas School of Arts, which was renamed the Fort Worth School of Fine Arts in 1933. As noted in her obituary, Sellors, her co-founders, and Jennie Scheuber, founder of the Fort Worth Art Association, "were the perpetrators of anything that went on in the fine arts in Fort Worth . . . Without them, Fort Worth would not have become an arts center. They fought for art, they foisted sculpture on people, they got the avant-garde people here, and introduced them to Fort Worth."⁵²

In 1934, her sculpture *Lieutenant-Commander Frank Hawks* was exhibited at the National Academy of Design in New York City. That same year she created a bronze bust of Al Hayne as a replacement of the original stone bust atop a monument erected in 1893 for the hero of the Texas Spring Palace (Fort Worth) fire of 1890. This piece was commissioned through the Public Works of Art Project (PWAP), a New Deal program that employed artists for the creation of public art. The bronze memorial she created for the grave of Maj. Ripley Arnold, the founder of the military outpost from which Fort Worth drew its name, was installed in Pioneers Rest Cemetery in 1936 as part of the community's observance of the Texas Centennial. That same year, her sculptural work *E. M. Daggett* (the "father of Fort Worth") was shown at the Dallas Museum of Fine Arts, also in observance of the state's centennial. Other works in the Fort Worth area include the bronze *Finials* installed at the Fragrance Garden at the Fort Worth Botanic Garden, and *The Song*, a life-sized sculpture of a young girl at the Child Study Center. She also sculpted busts of the children of prominent Fort Worth families. Sellors also worked in stained glass. Examples included the mural *Sunset* (1979) for a chapel at Beth-El Congregation, Fort Worth, and windows at Grace First Presbyterian Church, Weatherford.⁵³

⁵⁰ *AIA Historical Directory of American Architects*, Membership file, A. George King, ahd1023907, accessed January 19, 2021, <https://aiahistoricaldirectory.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/AHDAA/pages/36892749/ahd1023907>; A. (Arthur) George King, *AIA Historical Directory*, 1956, 299 (content.aia.org/sites/default/files/2018-09/Bowker_1956_K.pdf) accessed October 14, 2020; *AIA Historical Directory*, 1962, 379 (content.aia.org/sites/default/files/2018-09/Bowker_1962_K.pdf) accessed October 14, 2020.

⁵¹ "Evaline Sellors Art Work and Papers: A Guide to the Collection," Jerry Bywaters Special Collections, Hanson Arts Library, Southern Methodist University, accessed September 9, 2020.

⁵² Ibid; Janet Tyson, "Evaline Sellors, 91, sculptor, city art leader," *FWST*, May 19, 1995. The statement regarding Sellors' influence on Fort Worth's art scene was made by Reilly Nail, founder of the Old Jail Arts Center in Albany, Texas, which owns several of her works.

⁵³ "Evaline Sellors Art Work and Papers;" "Public Works Art Project," Federal Writers' Project, Texas, "Fort Worth and Tarrant County, Texas," [unpublished manuscript] Fort Worth Public Library Unit, 1941, 21152-53, Genealogy, History and Archives Unit, Fort Worth Public Library; "Descendant Unveils Arnold Monument," *FWST*, October 8, 1936, 10; Tyson, "Evaline Sellors, 91,

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During World War II, the Fort Worth School of Fine Arts closed but not before it had incubated the talents of a group of modernist artists that included Bror Utter, Dickson Reeder, and Lia Cuilty who became known as the Fort Worth Circle. After the school closed, Sellors worked at North American Aviation where she was an instructor in the Pattern Department. However, she continued to practice her craft and helped found the Texas Sculpture Group which had its first annual exhibition at the Dallas Museum of Art at Fair Park.⁵⁴

Sellors's early work reflected her traditional training but with the growth of Modernism between the two World Wars, her work began to display the characteristics of the movement. The two *bas relief* panels she created for Farrington Field, arguably her most notable work in Fort Worth, demonstrate this transition. The stylized forms of the two figures—the left, a male football player with a cocked right arm about to throw a pass and on the right, a female relay runner in mid-stride—were complementary to the Moderne styling of the stadium and to its function as an athletic venue for both sexes. Sellors died in 1995 at the age of 91.

Rambo Construction

Rambo Construction, a general contracting firm in Fort Worth, was the builder of the Public Schools Gymnasium, now known as Jack A. Billingsley Field House. It was founded by Zinn Irva Rambo (his name was listed as Irva Zin Rambo in some documents). Rambo was born in 1902 in Fort Smith, Arkansas. He worked as a carpenter there before moving to Houston where he worked as a general contractor. Among the work his company built in the area were a science building for Travis Junior High School and a hospital addition, both in Harlingen, Texas in 1943. Apparently, he moved the firm to Fort Worth after World War II. An early project was a terminal facility for Red Ball Motor Freight in Dallas. In 1951, Rambo Construction was the low bidder for a training aids building, an ordnance facility, and a photographic laboratory at James Connally Air Force Base in Waco. That same year, the firm won the contract to construct Congregation Ahavath Sholom's new Fort Worth synagogue designed by architect C. O. Chromaster (since demolished). As the demand for new schools rose, Rambo Construction built numerous educational facilities in the 1950s including the student union building at Arlington State College (now University of Texas at Arlington); an addition and press box for Kyle Field at Texas A&M; Mitchell Boulevard Elementary School, the Public Schools Gymnasium, and Forest Oak Junior High, all in Fort Worth; a new \$1 million high school in Arlington; a new high school in Nocona, and dormitories at Texas Christian University. Other work that decade included a new unit at a state tuberculosis hospital in Harlingen and the new Smith County Courthouse. Additional work in Fort Worth included two small commercial buildings on Summit Avenue, the 30-story Continental National Bank building, the Children's Museum, Texas Employment Commission building, and residential work in the Wedgwood addition. Zinn Rambo retired from the firm in 1967 and died in 1973 at the age of 70.⁵⁵

sculptor, city art leader." K. Robinson Edwards used the appellation "Texas's doyenne of bronze casting" in "Liberty and Lone Star Modernism" in Ron Tyler, ed., *The Art of Texas: 250 Years* (Fort Worth: TCU Press, 2019): 377. The mural at Beth-El Congregation consisted of five panels that were backlit on an interior wall. In 2000, they were removed, refurbished, and installed on a west wall of the congregation's new building where they are illuminated by the setting sun. Hollace Ava Weiner, Director, Fort Worth Jewish Archives, Beth-El Congregation, email to Susan Allen Kline, September 9, 2020.

⁵⁴ Light Townsend Cummins, "Texas Sculpture: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," in Ron Tyler, ed., *The Art of Texas: 250 Years* (Fort Worth: TCU Press, 2019), 152; "Evaline Sellors Art Work and Papers."

⁵⁵ National Archives and Records Administration, St. Louis, Missouri; World War II Draft Registration Cards for Texas, 10/16/1940-03/31/1947; Records of the Selective Service System, 147, Box 1221, "Irva Zin Rambo," Ancestry.com, U. S. World War II Draft Cards for Young Men, 1940-1947 [database online, Lehi, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2011, accessed November 9, 2020 (https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/2238/images/44040_01_00087-00628)]; "Harlingen Gets School Annexes," *Brownsville [Texas] Herald*, June 6, 1943; "Hospital Job Going to Rambo Company," *Valley Morning Star* [Harlingen, Texas], July 29, 1943, 2; "Bids on 3 AF Projects Opened by Engineers," *FWST*, June 27, 1951, 11; "Fort Worth Firm Low Bidder on Air Base Work," *FWST*, June 28, 1951, 12; Rambo Construction Co. congratulatory advertisement for Red Ball Motor Freight, *Dallas Morning News*, April 16, 1949, 12; "Two Fort Worth Firms Bid Low on Connally Jobs," *FWST*, June 29, 1951, 28; "Congregation Ahavath

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The Future of Farrington Field and Billingsley Field House

The Fort Worth ISD is again considering selling Farrington Field as well as other underutilized district-owned facilities and repurposing the property on which the Public Schools Gymnasium/Billingsley Field House sits. The sale of several properties, including the district's central administration building, has already occurred. Superintendent Kent P. Scribner said "Their sale can and will support a brighter future for public education in Fort Worth." As contended by school officials, the sale of these properties to commercial entities would also increase the city's tax base.⁵⁶

Funds from these sales could be used to build a new administration building and possibly two football stadiums. Administrators are looking at constructing the administration building within the Farrington Field complex which would likely lead to the demolition of Billingsley Field House. The district asserts that the field house needs \$10 million in repairs and the football stadium is too large for current needs and requires \$20 million in repairs, including new turf, ADA modifications, and upgrades to HVAC systems and locker rooms. Current thought among district officials is that previous restrictions placed on the property are not enforceable. The sale of Farrington Field could lead to the redevelopment of the site. One concept includes transforming approximately thirty-two acres of the site into "a tech and business incubator that combines research, small business and possibly a major corporate anchor." Proponents maintain that such a project would not preclude the preservation of a portion of the stadium, particularly its west elevation and the Evaline Sellers sculptures.⁵⁷

Other Fort Worth ISD Athletic Facilities (not including baseball and those at individual schools)

In the decades since Farrington Field and Public Schools Gymnasium/Billingsley Field House were constructed, the Fort Worth Independent School District has added two football fields and one field house/activity center to its inventory of athletic facilities.

Scarborough-Handley Field is located at 6201 Craig Street in far east Fort Worth. Fort Worth annexed the community of Handley in 1946. Handley High School became a part of the Fort Worth ISD which built the stadium in 1946. That stadium only had a seating capacity of 1,500. Currently, it has a seating capacity of 5,000. Like Farrington Field, the field is of synthetic turf. Football and soccer games are held at this facility.⁵⁸

Herman Clark Stadium is located immediately south of the Wilkerson-Greines Activity Center (see below). It is named for former district athletic director, Herman E. Clark (1902-1979). The stadium was constructed in 1970 and has a seating capacity of 12,000. It does not have a monumental presence like Farrington Field. The football field is covered with artificial turf and the track has an all-weather surface.⁵⁹

Shalom Church Contract is Awarded," *FWST*, August 5, 1951, 56; "A&M to Spend \$1.9 Million on Water Research Program," *FWST*, May 5, 1952, 15; "Texas Aggies Let Pact to Add Gridiron Seats," *Odessa [Texas] American*, March 1, 1953, 11; Public Schools Week advertisement for Rambo Construction, *FWST*, February 28, 1954, 27; "High School Building to be in Use Next Year," *Arlington Colt* (Arlington, Texas), January 10, 1954, 1; "Work to Begin on New Nocona High School," *FWST*, January 13, 1952, 16; "Services Tomorrow for Zinn Irva Rambo," *FWST*, July 23, 1973, 4; "Hospital Board OKs \$5 Million for Buildings," *FWST*, December 15, 1953, 8; "Fort Worth Firm Gets Courthouse Contract," *FWST*, February 13, 1954, 7; "Building on Summit," *FWST*, May 23, 1954; "New Office Building Takes Place Along Mansion Row," *FWST*, November 20, 1955; "Homes Styling Given Variety," *FWST*, February 23, 1958; "Lone Star track owes \$2 million to contractors," *FWST*, September 2, 1994, 27.

⁵⁶ Anna M. Tinsley, "Fort Worth schools have sold first excess properties. But what about Farrington Field?" *FWST*, May 13, 2020.

⁵⁷ Joyce Marshall, "Grandson hopes restrictions can preserve Farrington Field," *FWST*, June 16, 2020; Luke Ranker, "Will Farrington Field become just an extension of Fort Worth's West 7th bar district?" *FWST*, December 2, 2019

⁵⁸ "Handley Football Field Under Construction," *FWST*, June 13, 1946, 12; "Scarborough-Handley Field," *Fort Worth Independent School District*, accessed August 28, 2020 (<https://www.fwisd.org>).

⁵⁹ "Clark Stadium," *Fort Worth Independent School District*, accessed August 28, 2020 (<https://www.fwisd.org>).

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The Wilkerson-Greines Activity Center is located in far southeast Fort Worth at 5201 C. A. Roberson Boulevard. This facility hosts basketball and volleyball games as well as swimming in its Olympic-sized pool. A new gym and pool had been proposed in 1964 but it was not until 1981 that it was constructed. The gym has a seating capacity of 4,759 and a hardwood court.⁶⁰

According to an article published in the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* in 2016, the school district's three football stadiums are at near capacity programmatically. With fifteen high school gridiron teams needing a place to play home games, finding time slots for each team on a Thursday, Friday, or Saturday is extremely difficult. This shortage could work in favor of preserving Farrington Field until new stadiums are constructed. These new stadiums could be built on the north and west sides of the city, potentially making access to them more difficult, particularly for those from schools in the central part of the city.⁶¹

Significance of Farrington Field and the Public Schools Gymnasium under Criterion A: Entertainment/Recreation

Both Farrington Field and the Public Schools Gymnasium (Jack A. Billingsley Field House) are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criterion A in the area of Entertainment/Recreation as public school athletic plants as well as venues for community events. Farrington Field was the primary venue for the Fort Worth Independent School District's high school football games and track and field events for nearly thirty years. Even after the construction of other stadiums, it remained a beloved facility among students and fans. It was also the location of important community celebrations and commemorations. Similarly, the Public Schools Gymnasium/Billingsley Field House was the school district's primary gymnasium for nearly thirty years and also served as an important venue for events not associated with the school district. Both facilities are still in use by Fort Worth ISD's schools. The period of significance is from 1938 when construction began on Farrington Field to 1972. The latter date corresponds to the National Register's fifty-year criterion and acknowledges their continued use.

Significance of Farrington Field under Criterion A: Social History

Farrington Field is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criterion A in the field of Social History. It was constructed by the WPA, a federal program of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal created to provide employment for those on the relief rolls. The agency was organized in 1935 as the Works Progress Administration. In 1939, the year Farrington Field was completed, the name was changed to Work Projects Administration. Although the agency was often criticized for sponsoring projects of questionable worth, thus earning the sobriquet "We Piddle Around," many of the agency's projects in Fort Worth provided a degree of economic relief for individuals and their families and produced much needed infrastructure improvements or community services. While some work was of an ephemeral nature, such as the millions of garments produced by Fort Worth's WPA sewing rooms, other projects still serve a useful purpose. Due to its monumental size, prominent location in the Cultural District, and importance as a sports and events venue for the city's public schools and the community at large, Farrington Field is arguably the most recognized WPA project in the city.

To be eligible for employment by the WPA, an individual had to be the economic head of his or her household. Typically, eligible workers were referred (or certified) to the agency by local public relief programs. Workers were often unskilled laborers but professionals such as artists, musicians, librarians, surveyors, and engineers also found employment through

⁶⁰ Brian Howard, "School board may cut activity center plans again," *FWST*, January 22, 1980, 2B; "Good Things at School," December 14, 1981, 5D; "Wilkerson-Greines Activity Center," *Fort Worth Independent School District*, accessed August 28, 2020 (<https://www.fwisd.org>).

⁶¹ Matthew Martinez, "With 15 teams, 3 stadiums, FWISD nears 'tipping point'" *FWST*, August 24, 2016; Tinsley, "Fort Worth schools have sold first excess properties."

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the program. The federal government provided the majority of a project's funding while the sponsor, usually a municipal or county government, made a small contribution, often in the form of materials, work space, or utilities.⁶²

Although there was a segment of Fort Worth's population that remained largely unscathed by the Great Depression, many in Tarrant County were not as fortunate. According to historian Harold Rich, "in 1934, Tarrant County was rated as the poorest urban county in Texas, having 25 percent of its families on relief compared to 22 percent in Bexar County, 19 percent in Dallas County, and 17 percent in Harris County."⁶³ The need for federal work relief programs in Tarrant County remained throughout the rest of the decade and into the early 1940s. In 1939, the year Farrington Field was completed, Maj. Karl Wallace, the WPA's district director, reported that since the WPA was created in 1935, "the agency had spent \$7,851,501 in the Fort Worth area with only \$944,046 going for materials and 5,907,738 for wages, a figure he claimed was sufficient to support 4,500 families (twenty thousand people) for four years . . ." Based on this figure, each of these families would have received \$436 per year.⁶⁴

Fort Worth benefitted from numerous WPA projects due in large part to previous planning efforts undertaken by the Fort Worth ISD and the Board of Park Commissioners. As mentioned, George D. Strayer of Columbia University and Superintendent M. H. Moore each completed surveys of school facilities that identified numerous inadequacies. Similarly, Hare & Hare, a landscape architecture and planning firm from Kansas City, Missouri, completed a master plan for the city's park system in 1930. The plan identified park needs throughout the city and included drawings for proposed improvements at seventeen parks. Such work was used in WPA project applications to demonstrate the need for proposed projects and gave Fort Worth an advantage over other cities in regard to park development.⁶⁵

Park improvements that benefitted from WPA funding included the construction of a clubhouse and landscaping at the golf course in Rockwood Park; construction of a shelter with toilet facilities, landscaping, and infrastructure improvements at Old Trail Drivers Park; construction of a stone terrace overlooking the lake, new tennis courts, picnic areas, baseball diamonds, a casting dock, and landscaping at Oakland Lake Park; completion of a picnic area at Lake Worth's Casino Beach that had been started by the Civilian Conservation Corps; grading and sodding of the esplanade along Camp Bowie Boulevard; and improvements at Forest Park Zoo. Hare & Hare's 1930 park master plan advocated cooperation between the park department and the school district for the use of school playgrounds as neighborhood parks where such facilities were lacking. To that end, the park department supervised the landscaping of public school grounds for the Fort Worth ISD. The program first used FERA/CWA funding until 1935 when the WPA took over. In all, fifty-four school campuses and playgrounds (not including Farrington Field) were landscaped under this program. It was hoped that WPA funding for the construction of a football stadium would be included in the third phase of the landscaping program but that would not be the case.⁶⁶

⁶² Susan Allen Kline, "We Patch Anything: WPA Sewing Rooms in Fort Worth," in *Conflict and Cooperation: Reflections on the New Deal in Texas*, Milton S. Jordan and George Cooper, editors (Nacogdoches, Texas: Stephen F. Austin University Press, 2019), 131.

⁶³ Harold Rich, *Fort Worth Between the World Wars* (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 2020), 121.

⁶⁴ Rich, *Fort Worth Between the World Wars*, 117.

⁶⁵ Hare & Hare, Landscape Architects and City Planners. "A Comprehensive Park System for Fort Worth, Texas" (1930). For instance, in 1937, members of Dallas' park board toured Fort Worth parks. During the tour, S. Herbert Hare, one of the principals of Hare & Hare, extolled the benefits of a park master plan in guiding park development. See "Fort Worth's Beautification is Inspected by Park Board," *Dallas Morning News*, June 28, 1937, 1.

⁶⁶ Board of Park Commissioners, General Activity Report, Fiscal Year Ending September 30, 1938, City of Fort Worth, Mayor and Council Proceedings, 1938, Box 2, November 1938, File 1 of 2, Fort Worth Library Archives, Fort Worth, Texas; City of Fort Worth. Bureau of Municipal Research. *Annual Report of the City of Fort Worth, Texas for the Fiscal Year October 1, 1936-September 30, 1937*, 50, 57, and 65; Hare & Hare, "A Comprehensive Park System for Fort Worth, Texas," 39.

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As in many Texas cities, WPA projects in Fort Worth also included street and sewer improvements and malaria control as well as lighting runways at the Municipal Airport. Hundreds of wood bridges were replaced with steel and concrete structures in Tarrant County. Educational and service projects included literacy classes for adults, a nursing project that provided follow-up care for patients discharged from the City-County Hospital, emergency defense training, typing classes, first aid training, and school lunch programs. Projects of an ephemeral nature included sewing rooms and toy-making shops.⁶⁷

Construction of Farrington Field began in March 1938 and was complete by the start of the fall football season in 1939. Its Official Project Number was 665-66-2-235 and its Work Project Number was 12007.⁶⁸ During a visit to Fort Worth in January 1940, Perry A. Fellows, assistant chief engineer for the Work Projects Administration, praised Farrington Field as one of the outstanding WPA projects in the country. By the end of that year, three “super” stadiums had been constructed in Texas—Fort Worth’s Farrington Field (1939), Dallas’ Dal-Hi Stadium (1939), and San Antonio’s Alamo Stadium (1940). Houston’s Public School Stadium became the fourth super-stadium in 1942. Alamo Stadium was constructed of native stone, concrete, and steel in an old quarry. The other three were constructed of reinforced concrete. Of the four stadiums, only Farrington Field and Alamo Stadium survive. The latter was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2012.⁶⁹

In addition to these four monumental examples, stadiums of all sizes were constructed in Texas with assistance from the WPA. In March 1940, the *Dallas Morning News* reported that through the WPA, sixty-three stadium with a total seating capacity of 150,000 had been constructed in the state. Twenty stadiums were improved, and five had received additions. By the time San Antonio’s Alamo Stadium was dedicated in September 1940, the numbers had increased to seventy-nine constructed, twenty-four improved, and seven had received additions. More were likely added to this list before the WPA was abolished in 1943. The following is a sample of Texas stadiums that were constructed, improved, or received additions with WPA funding. It includes high school and college stadiums.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ “WPA Closes \$96,000,000 Business Here,” *FWST* April 15, 1943, 29. A visual overview of WPA projects in Fort Worth and Tarrant County is available in the Tarrant County photo album, “Texas and the WPA,” www.flickr.com.

⁶⁸ These project numbers are from Texas Works Progress Administration index cards attached to the backs of photographs of Farrington Field taken on October 7, 1939. See Tarrant County photo album, “Texas and the WPA,” www.flickr.com.

⁶⁹ “Repaving Plan Here Boosted,” *FWST*, January 12, 1940, 9; “Super-Stadium to be Dedicated at San Antonio Today,” *Bonham [Texas] Daily Favorite*, September 20, 1940, 8.

⁷⁰ “Much Building Erected Under WPA Direction,” *Dallas Morning News*, March 23, 1940; “New Stadium 79th for WPA,” *San Antonio Express*, September 20, 1940, 12-A.

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WPA Stadiums in Texas: New, Improved, and Additions⁷¹

Location & Name	Date	Capacity	N=New I=Improvements A=Addition	Status
Bonham	1940	3,000	N	
Burkburnett	c. 1940		I (reconstructed)	
Childress: Fair Park Stadium	c. 1939-40	3,500	N	Extant
Cisco	1937		N?	
Cleburne: Yellow Jacket Stadium	1940-41	5,400 (or 3,800)	N	Extant
Dallas: Dal-Hi Stadium (P. C. Cobb Stadium)	1939	22,000	N	Demolished 1981
Denison: Munson Stadium	1940-41		A	
Fort Worth: Farrington Field	1938-39	20,000	N	Extant
Gorman: Brogden Field	1938-40	1,000	N	Extant
Greenville: Majors Stadium Entrance	1940		I	Extant (non-WPA stadium demolished)
Hamlin: Piper Stadium	1939	2,746	N	Extant
Henderson	c. 1940	1,800	N	
Hico: Tiger Stadium	1941	2,500	?	Extant
Houston: Public School Stadium (Jeppesen/Robertson)	1942	20,500	N	Demolished 2012
Huntsville: Joseph Pritchett Field (Sam Houston St. Univ)	1938	5,000	I	Extant (east side bleachers removed in 1967)
Jacksonville: Tomato Bowl	c. 1938- 1940	7,000	N	Extant
Linden	c. 1939-40		N	
Memphis: George Berry Memorial Stadium	1936		N	Extant
Mesquite	c. 1939-40	750 1,500	N I	
Orange	c. 1940		I	
Paris: Noyes (Paris Jr. College) Stadium	1941	6,000	N	Extant
San Antonio: Alamo Stadium	1940	22,700	N	Extant
Sherman: Bearcat Stadium	1940	4,500	N	Extant
Somerville: Yeguas Field	1940	1,447	N?	Extant
Sweetwater: Mustang Bowl	1939	9,300	N	Extant
Wortham: Bulldog Field	1938	500	N	Extant (fence & 2 ticket offices)

⁷¹ This list is based on information from the National Register nomination for Alamo Stadium, Bexar County, Texas (2011), *The Living New Deal* website (<https://livingnewdeal.org/projects>); "Texas WPA Football Stadiums" *TexasBob.com* (www.texasbob.com/wpa_index.php), and newspaper articles from the *Dallas Morning News* and *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* via *NewsBank* (<https://infoweb.com/resources> . . .). The list does not include other types of stadiums such as Tyler's baseball stadium at the East Texas State Fair fairgrounds.

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In addition, some communities had stadiums constructed through other New Deal agencies such as the PWA. They include Austin (House Park, 1938-39) and Waco (Municipal Stadium, 1936).⁷²

Significance of Farrington Field under Criterion C: Architecture

Farrington Field is also eligible for listing in the National Register at the local level of significance under Criterion C for Architecture as an excellent example of the Classical Moderne style, sometimes referred to as PWA Moderne or Stripped Classicism, as applied to a stadium. With the advent of the Great Depression, the style became popular for public buildings, a notable shift from the “exuberance and wealth of the 1920s” to “the somber mood of the 1930s.”⁷³ These structures were constructed in a classical form but with restrained ornamentation, a vertical emphasis, and smooth wall surfaces. The City of Fort Worth adopted the style for numerous public buildings constructed in the 1930s with the assistance of federal funding. They included the Municipal Airport Administration Building (1937, Wiley G. Clarkson, demolished), the new City Hall (1937-38, Wyatt C. Hedrick and Elmer G. Withers), the Public Library, (1938, Joseph R. Pelich, demolished 1990) and the Will Rogers Complex (Coliseum, Pioneer Tower, and Arena, 1936-37, Wyatt C. Hedrick and Elmer G. Withers, NR 2016). The latter is located to the west of Farrington Field in the Cultural District. Jointly, the City and Tarrant County were the sponsors for the PWA-funded City-County Hospital (1939, Wiley G. Clarkson, significantly altered). In addition, Fort Worth’s United States Courthouse (1933, Paul Philippe Cret and Wiley G. Clarkson, NR 2001) was also designed in the Classical Moderne style.⁷⁴

The Fort Worth ISD built only three facilities in the Classical Moderne style during its building program of the 1930s despite using a variety of architects, including those involved in the design of the public buildings previously mentioned. Instead, the school district favored Georgian Revival and Mediterranean or Spanish Eclectic styles. Those that were constructed in the Classical Moderne style included Ernest Parker Junior High School Gymnasium (1935, Clyde H. Woodruff, demolished 1999), the highly acclaimed North Side Senior High School (Wiley G. Clarkson, 1936-37), and Farrington Field (Preston M. Geren—A. George King and Everett Lee Frazier, Sr). The latter reflects the style through its concrete surfaces, numerous squared columns (some with fluting), stylized lettering, and Evaline Sellors’ *bas-relief* sculptures. In her book *Cowtown Moderne: Art Deco Architecture of Fort Worth, Texas*, art historian Judith Singer Cohen praised Farrington Field as a noteworthy melding of architecture and art, noting that it “is a good architectural example of those structures built during the 1930s when the PWA and WPA were major patrons of the arts. The stripped-down neoclassicism of its square, fluted piers and stylized trim, together with its cast-concrete relief figures and patriotic emblems, clearly mark it as a piece of public art.”⁷⁵

⁷² *Living New Deal* website (<https://livingnewdeal.org/projects>) and Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works, Projects and Statistics Division, Alphabetical Index to Non-Federal Projects, Texas, 117-125, February 8, 1939, copy in author’s possession.

⁷³ Cohen, *Cowtown Moderne*, 91.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 113-19, 122-135, 156-60, 172-75.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 148-51, 176-78; Historic Preservation Council for Tarrant County, *Fort Worth Southside* (Fort Worth, 1986), 34.

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Farrington Field and Public Schools Gymnasium, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: Approximately 36 acres

Coordinates:

- A. Latitude: 32.445020 N Longitude:-97.214250 W
- B Latitude 32.445007 N Longitude:-97.212397 W
- C Latitude 32.444199 N Longitude:-97.212428 W
- D Latitude 32.443817 N Longitude:-97.214084 W
- E Latitude 32.444714 N Longitude:-97.214240 W

Verbal Boundary Description:

The boundary of the nominated resources is defined by the coordinates shown on Map 3 and as follows: A) Latitude: 32.445020 N, Longitude:-97.214250 W; B) Latitude 32.445007 N, Longitude:-97.212397 W; C) Latitude 32.444199 N, Longitude:-97.212428 W; D) Latitude 32.443817 N, Longitude:-97.214084 W; E) Latitude 32.444714 N, Longitude:-97.214240 W.

Boundary Justification:

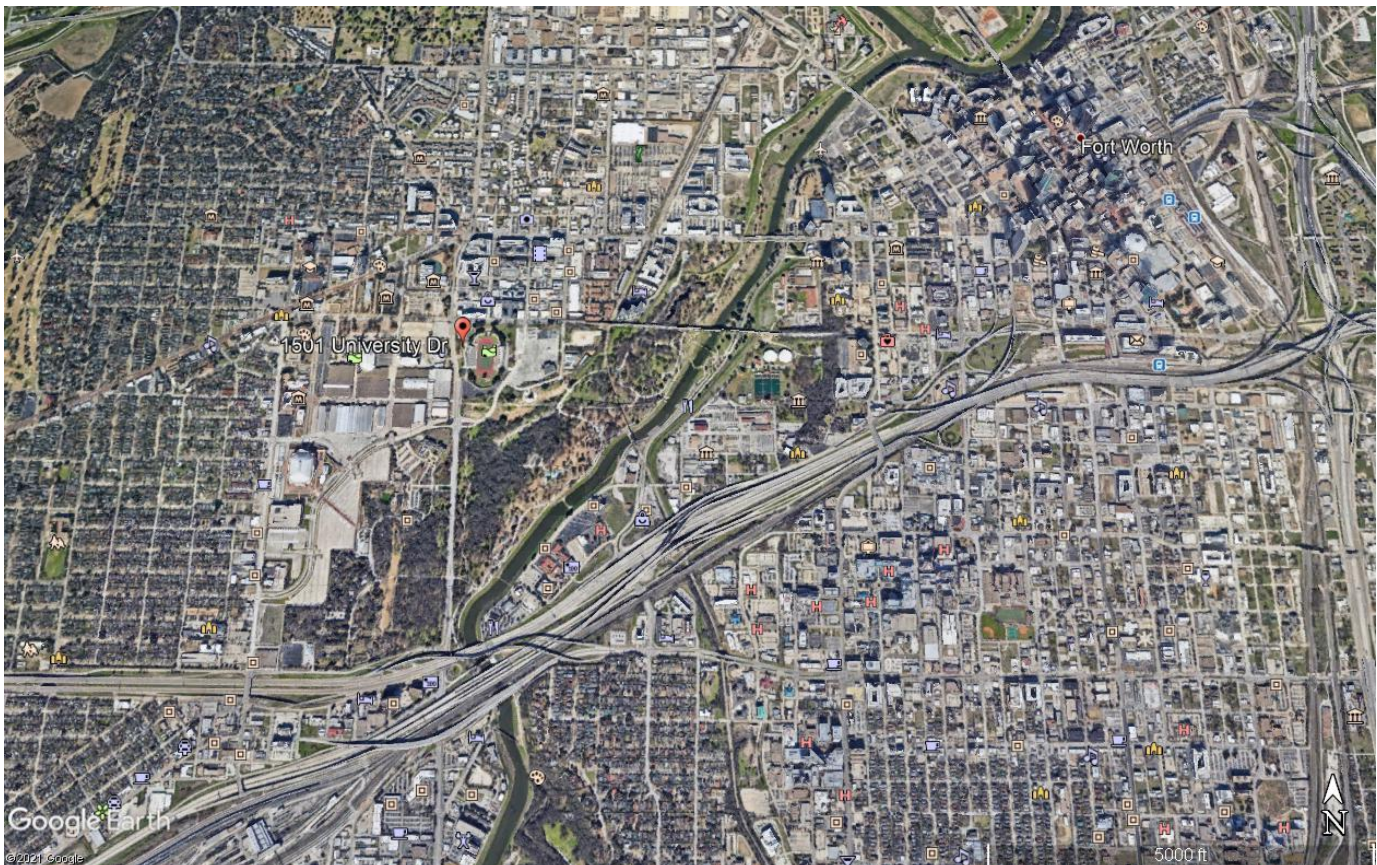
The Tarrant Appraisal District identifies the property Farrington Field sits on as John P. Montgomery Survey, Abstract 1030, Tract 2F (Account #04027280) and Josiah M. C. Lynch Survey, Abstract 955, Tract 1L & Vacated Railroad [right-of-way] (Account #04005759). The Public Schools Gymnasium/Jack A. Billingsley Field House's parcel is identified as Josiah M. C. Lynch Survey, Abstract 955, Tract 1K (Account #04005740). The selected coordinates exclude some of the roadwork and landscaping associated with the recent construction of Trail Drive and Farm House Way to the south, thereby excluding features not historically associated with the nominated resources.

Farrington Field and Public Schools Gymnasium, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

Map 1: Location of Tarrant County, Texas.



Map 2: Location of Farrington Field & Public Schools Gymnasium in Fort Worth. Google Earth Pro images, accessed February 4, 2021.



Farrington Field and Public Schools Gymnasium, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

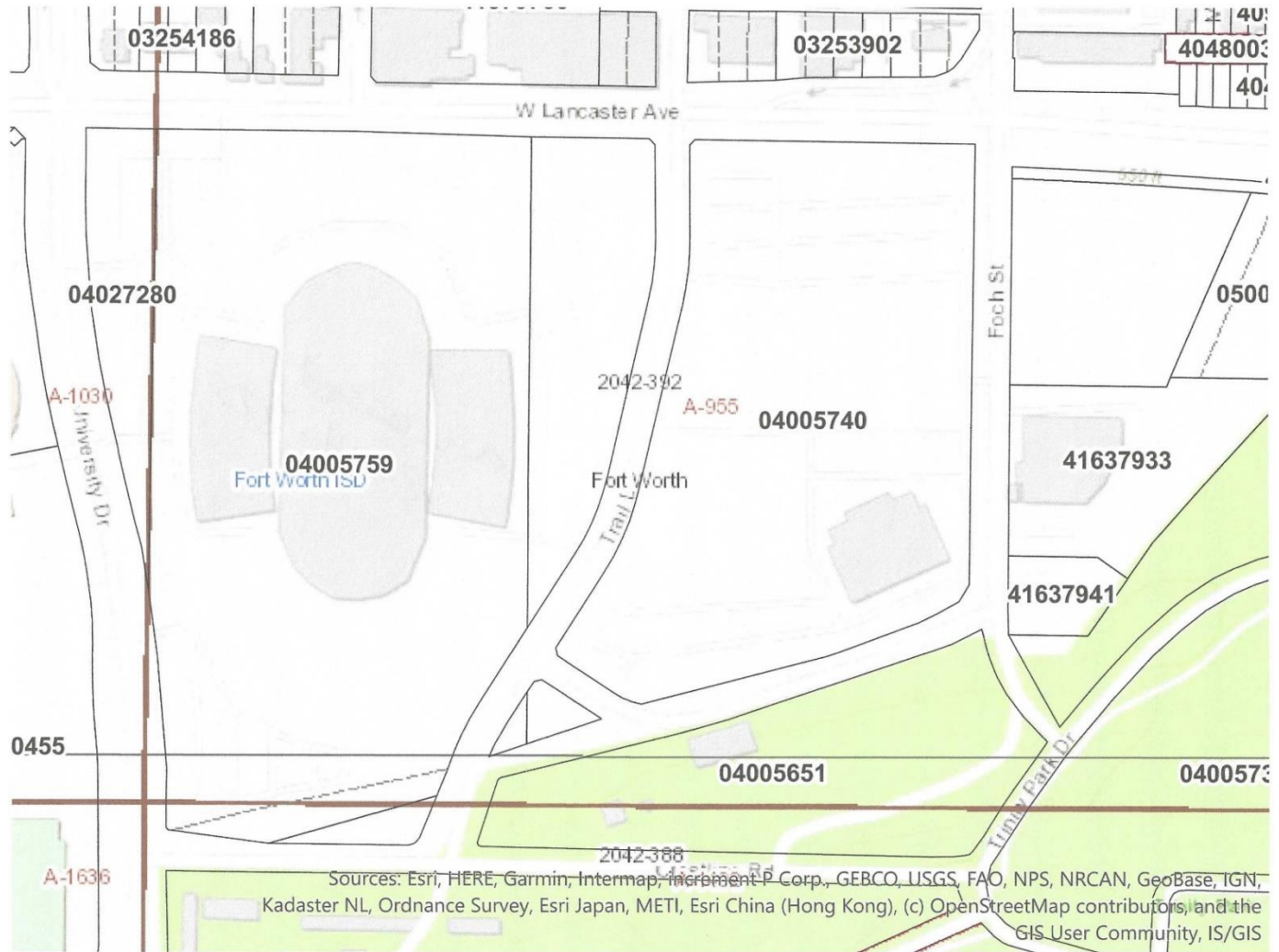
Map 3: Google Earth Pro image, accessed February 3, 2021.

- A. Latitude: 32.445020 N Longitude:-97.214250 W
- B Latitude 32.445007 N Longitude:-97.212397 W
- C Latitude 32.444199 N Longitude:-97.212428 W
- D Latitude 32.443817 N Longitude:-97.214084 W
- E: Latitude 32.444714 N Longitude:-97.214240 W



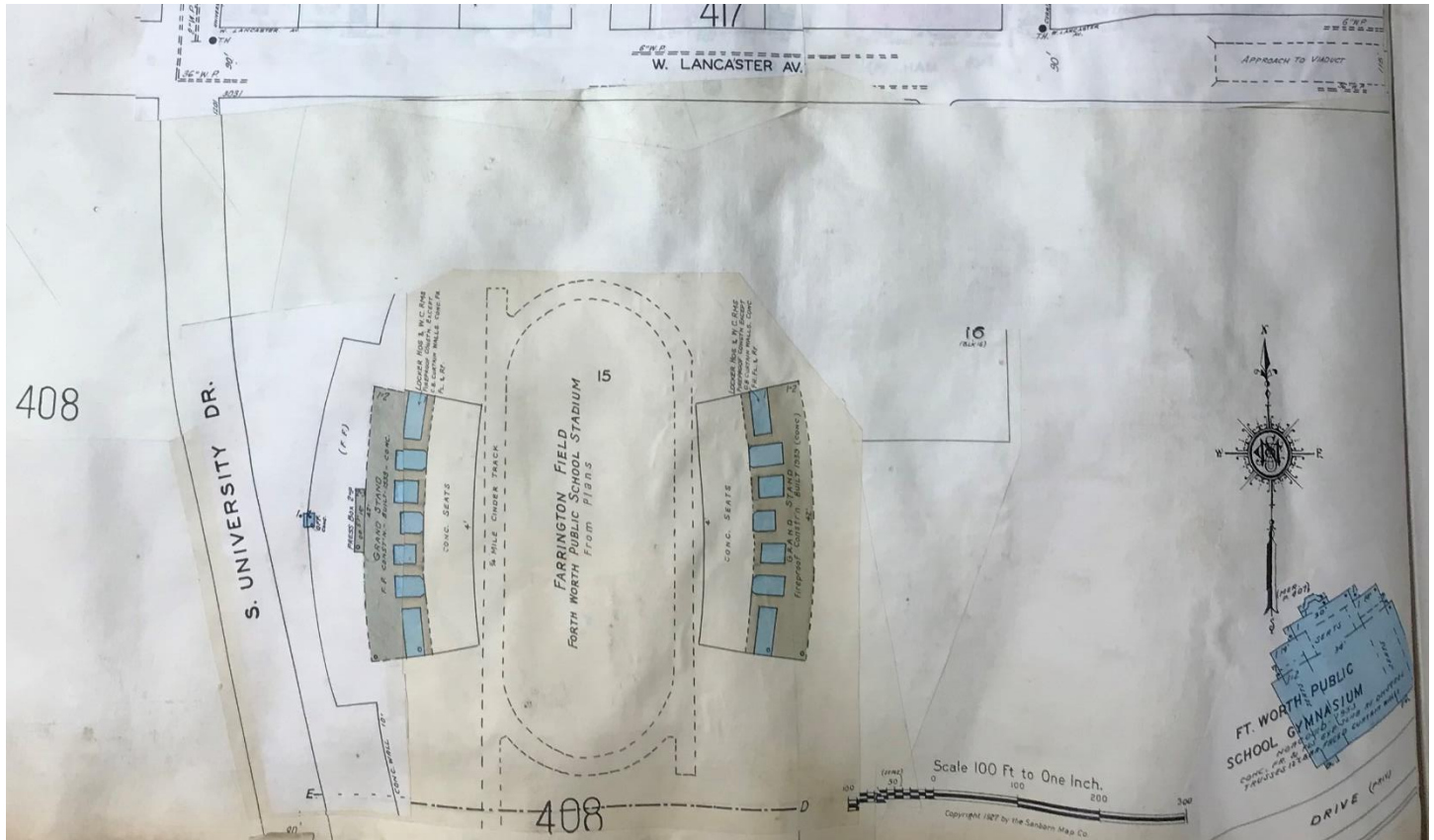
Farrington Field and Public Schools Gymnasium, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

Map 4: Tarrant Appraisal District Map, accessed August 14, 2020 (tad.org/resources/interactive-maps/). Crestline Road shown at the bottom of the map has been eliminated (compare with Map 3). N↑



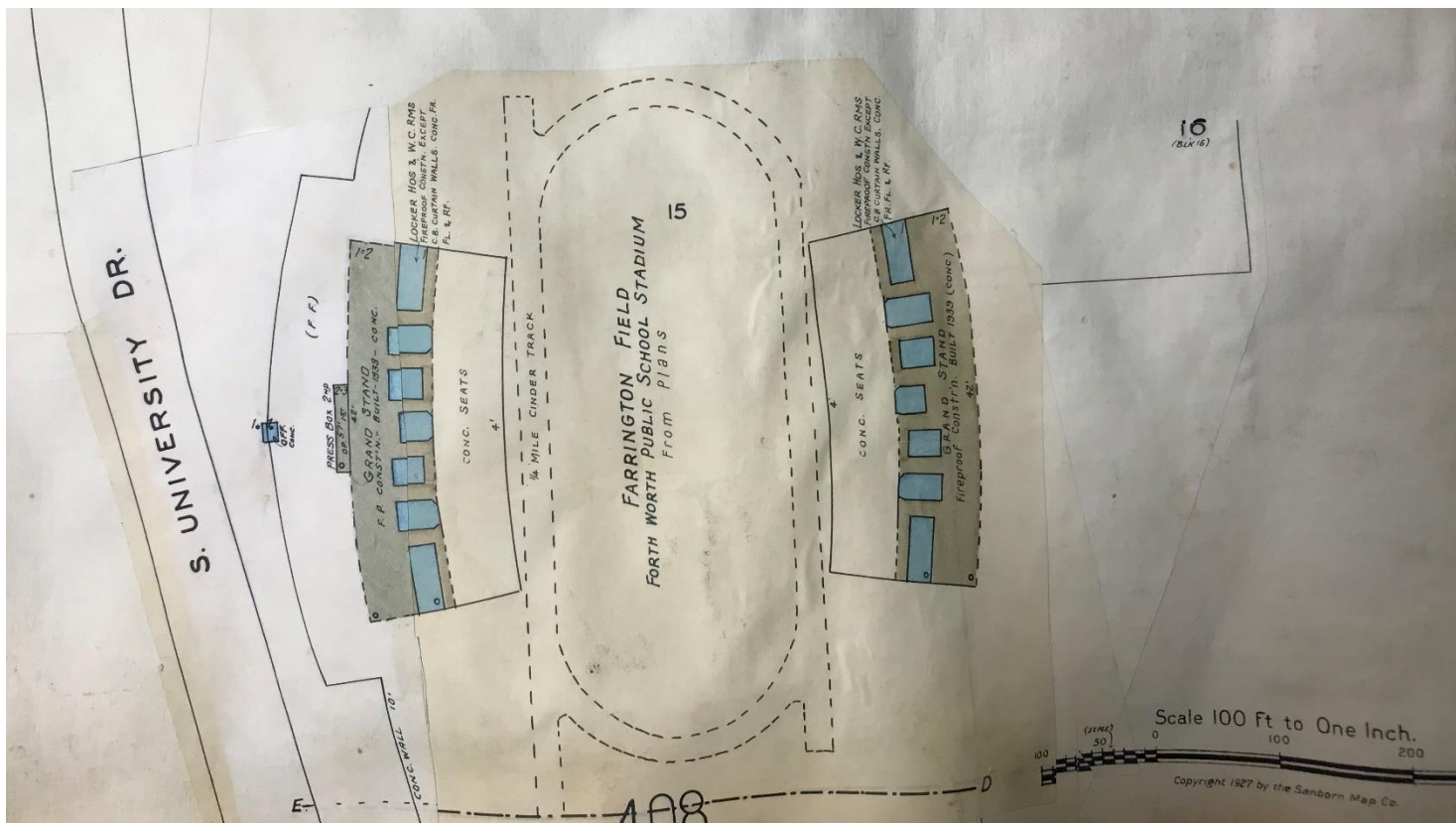
Farrington Field and Public Schools Gymnasium, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

Map 5: Farrington Field and Fort Worth Public Schools Gymnasium. Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Map, Fort Worth, Texas, Volume 4, Sheet 407, 1927-updated to September 1962. Courtesy, Historic Fort Worth, Inc.



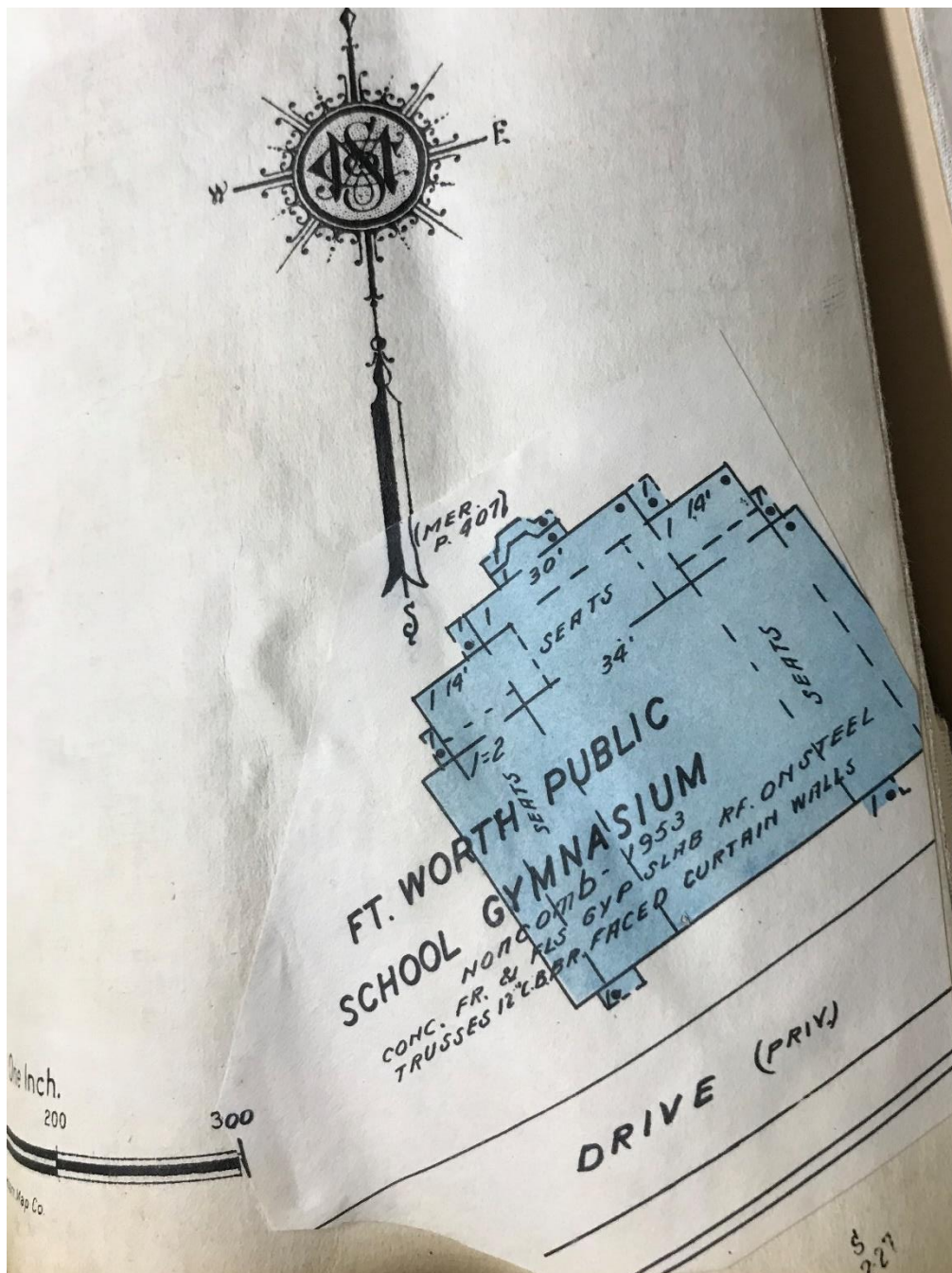
Farrington Field and Public Schools Gymnasium, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

Map 6: Farrington Field. Detail, Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Map, Fort Worth, Texas, Volume 4, Sheet 407, 1927-
updated to September 1962. Depicts ticket booth and wall/fence on the west side of the stadium. Courtesy, Historic Fort
Worth, Inc. N↑



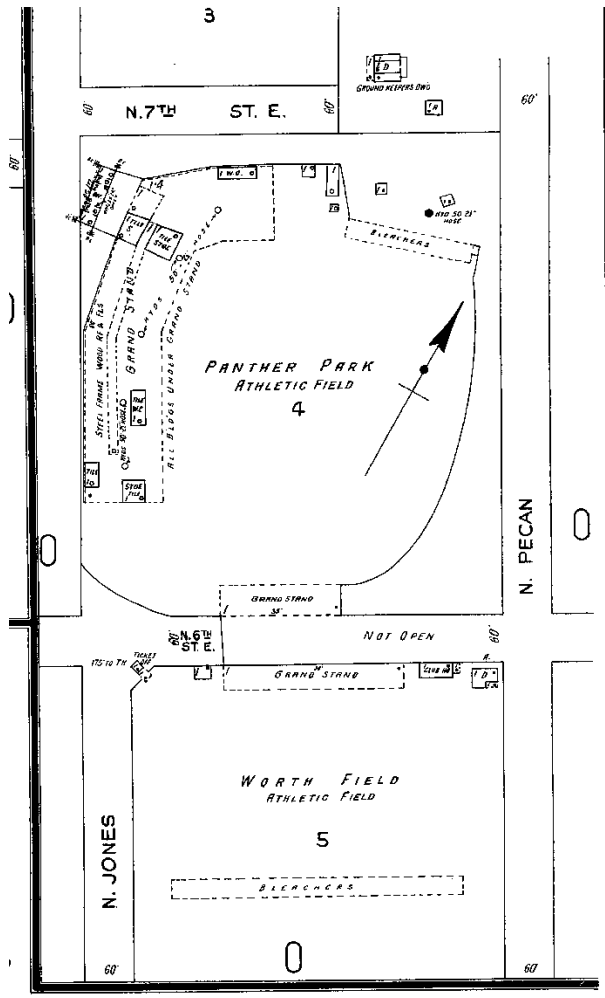
Farrington Field and Public Schools Gymnasium, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

Map 7: Fort Worth Public Schools Gymnasium. Detail, Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Map, Fort Worth, Texas, Volume 4, Sheet 407, 1927-updated to September 1962. Courtesy, Historic Fort Worth, Inc.



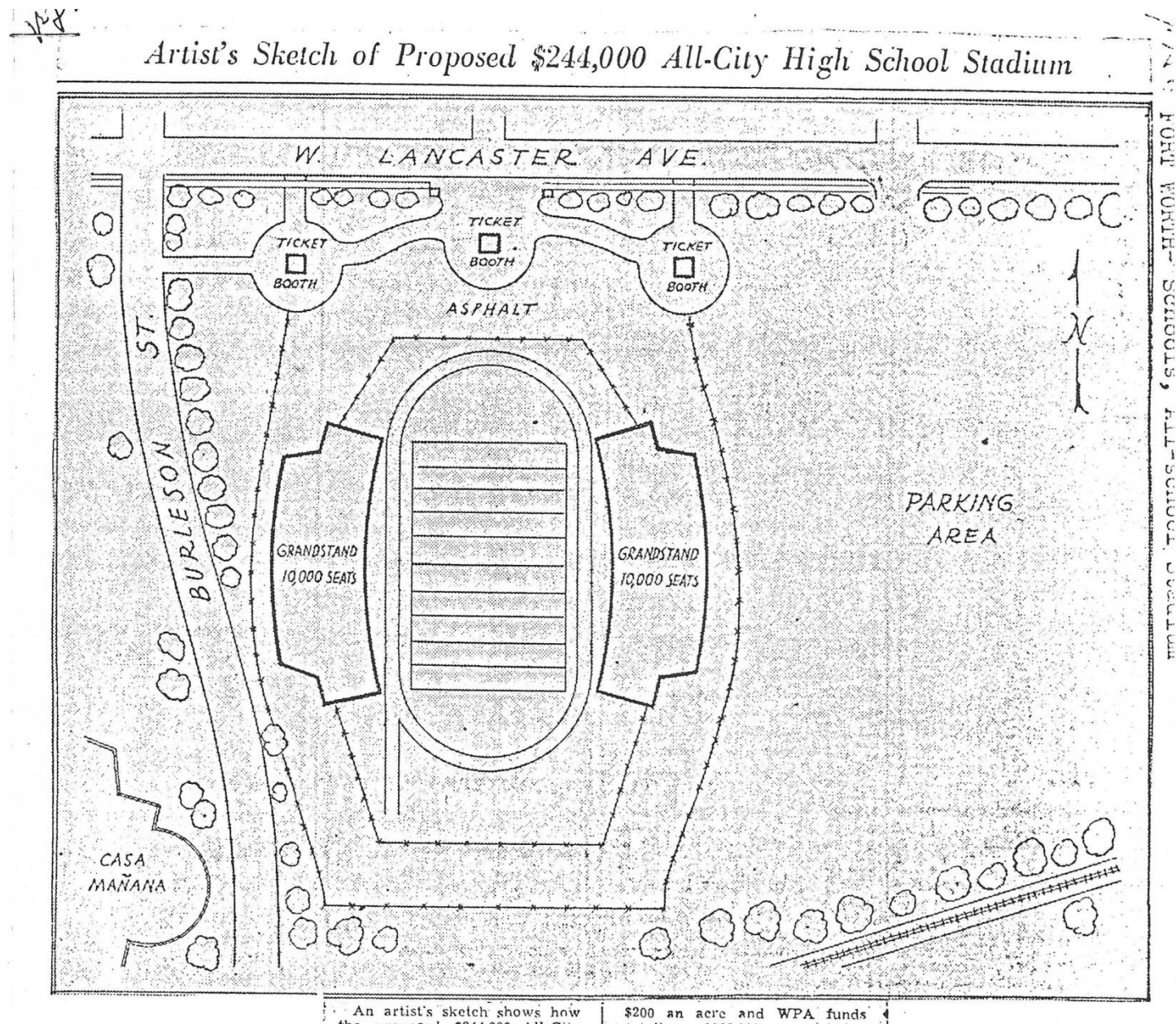
Farrington Field and Public Schools Gymnasium, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

Figure 1: Location of Worth/Wortham Field and Panther Park/La Grave Field, the Fort Worth ISD's primary football venues prior to the construction of Farrington Field. Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Map, Fort Worth, Texas, 1927, Volume 3, Sheet 339.



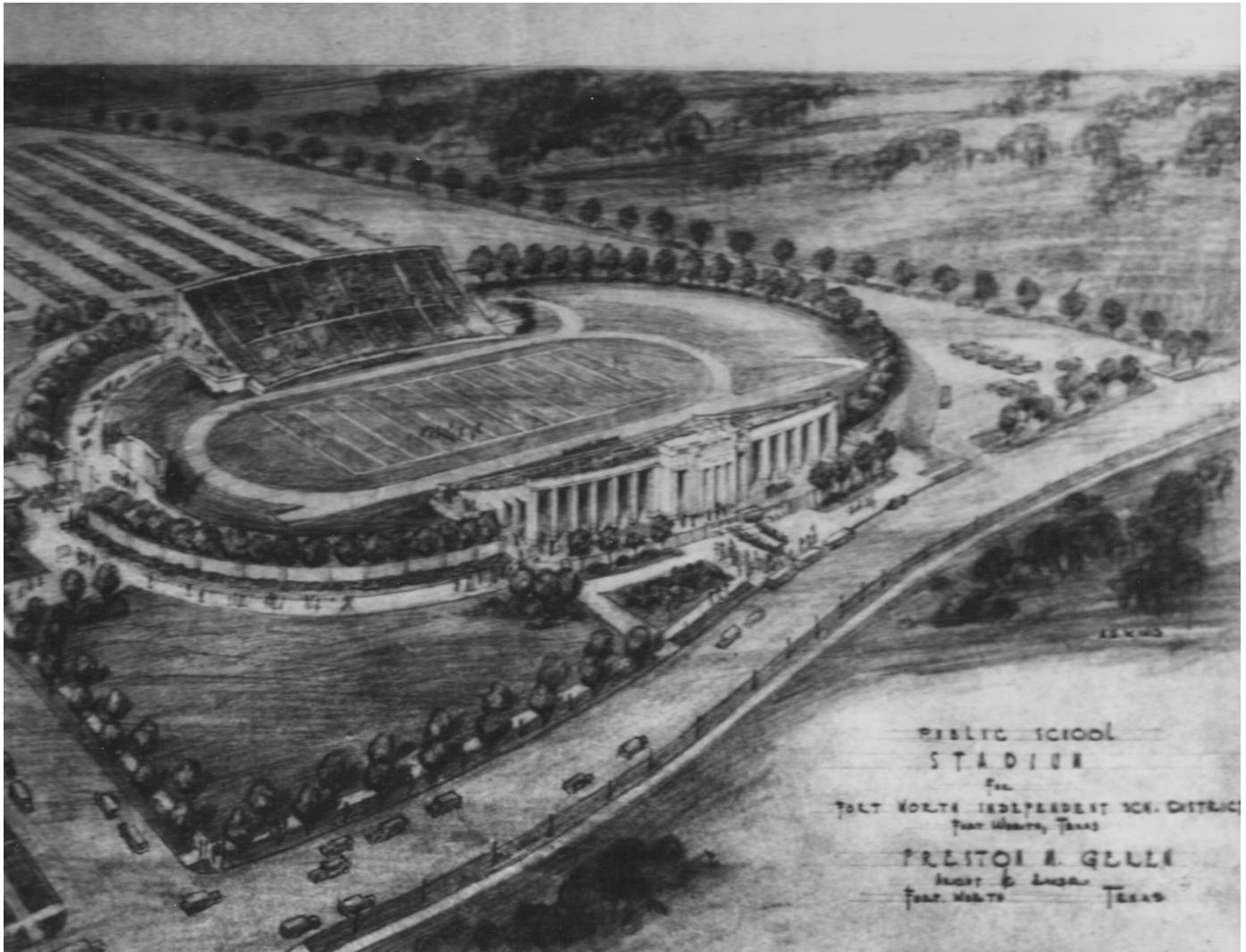
Farrington Field and Public Schools Gymnasium, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

Figure 2: Sketch of proposed stadium, likely created by E. H. Carter and G. O. Gregory. *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, November 9, 1937.



Farrington Field and Public Schools Gymnasium, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

Figure 3: Rendering of the proposed Fort Worth Public School Stadium, Preston M. Geren, architect (A. George King and Everett Lee Frazier, Sr., designers). Courtesy, Fort Worth Parks and Recreation Department. A cropped version of this image appeared in the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* on February 15, 1938, 11. View looking southeast.



Farrington Field and Public Schools Gymnasium, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

Figure 4: Rendering of proposed Fort Worth Public School Stadium's west entrance. Courtesy, Fort Worth Parks and Recreation Department.



Farrington Field and Public Schools Gymnasium, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

Figure 5: Courtesy, *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* Collection, Special Collections, The University of Texas at Arlington Libraries. "Farrington Field stadium under construction" UTA Libraries Digital Gallery. July 31, 1938. Accessed December 8, 2020. <https://library.uta.edu/digitalgallery/img/1004939>. Looking southwest at west side.



Farrington Field and Public Schools Gymnasium, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

Figure 6: Courtesy, *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* Collection, Special Collections, The University of Texas at Arlington Libraries. AR406-6-729. "Evaline Sellors working on clay model of Texas Christian University (T. C. U.) football player Sam Baugh" UTA Libraries Digital Gallery. July 7, 1938. Accessed December 8, 2020.

<https://library.uta.edu/digitalgallery/img/1004940>. Sellors claimed that the figure represented all football players.



Farrington Field and Public Schools Gymnasium, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

Figure 7: Courtesy, *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* Collection, Special Collections, The University of Texas at Arlington Libraries. AR406-6-739. "Construction of Farrington Field football stadium for high school games, Fort Worth, Texas." UTA Libraries Digital Gallery, January 6, 1939. Accessed December 8, 2020. <https://library.uta.edu/digitalgallery/img10011766>. View looking northeast at west entrance with *bas relief* sculptures installed. Windows have not been installed in the press box.



Farrington Field and Public Schools Gymnasium, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

Figure 8: Courtesy, *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* Collection, Special Collections, The University of Texas at Arlington Libraries. AR406-6-739. "Construction of Farrington Field, football stadium for high school games, Fort Worth, Texas." UTA Libraries Digital Gallery. January 6, 1939. Accessed December 8, 2020.
<https://library.uta.edu/digitalgallery/img/10011763>. View looking northeast at east side with west side seating in foreground.



Farrington Field and Public Schools Gymnasium, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

Figure 9: West stand of bleachers with press box and lights installed looking southwest, October 7, 1939, Texas Works Progress Administration, NARA RG69, "Texas and the WPA." Accessed July 8, 2020, www.flickr.com.



Farrington Field and Public Schools Gymnasium, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

Figure 10: Boxed seats at the bottom two rows of the west stand. , October 7, 1939, Texas Works Progress Administration, NARA RG69, "Texas and the WPA." Accessed July 8, 2020, www.flickr.com.



Farrington Field and Public Schools Gymnasium, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

Figure 11: East stand of bleachers from top of west stand, looking east with downtown skyline in distance, October 7, 1939. Texas Works Progress Administration, NARA RG69, "Texas and the WPA." Accessed July 8, 2020, www.flickr.com.



Farrington Field and Public Schools Gymnasium, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

Figure 12: North entrance to Farrington Field with ticket booth, terrace, stairs, and ornamental standards (since removed), looking south, October 7, 1939, Texas Works Progress Administration, NARA RG69, "Texas and the WPA." Accessed July 8, 2020, www.flickr.com.



Farrington Field and Public Schools Gymnasium, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

Figure 13: Interior of dressing room under the east stand, October 7, 1939, Texas Works Progress Administration, NARA RG69, "Texas and the WPA." Accessed July 8, 2020, www.flickr.com.



Farrington Field and Public Schools Gymnasium, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

Figure 14: Courtesy, *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* Collection, Special Collections, The University of Texas at Arlington Libraries. AR406-6-739. "Aerial of Farrington Field, Fort Worth's new high school stadium" UTA Libraries Digital Gallery. October 31, 1939. Accessed December 8, 2020. <https://library.uta.edu/digitalgallery/img/10011839>. Note north ticket booth and stairs to West Lancaster Avenue (not extant).



Farrington Field and Public Schools Gymnasium, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

Figure 15: West stand with seating and press box, looking northwest. October 7, 1939, Texas Works Progress Administration, NARA RG69, "Texas and the WPA." Accessed July 8, 2020, www.flickr.com.



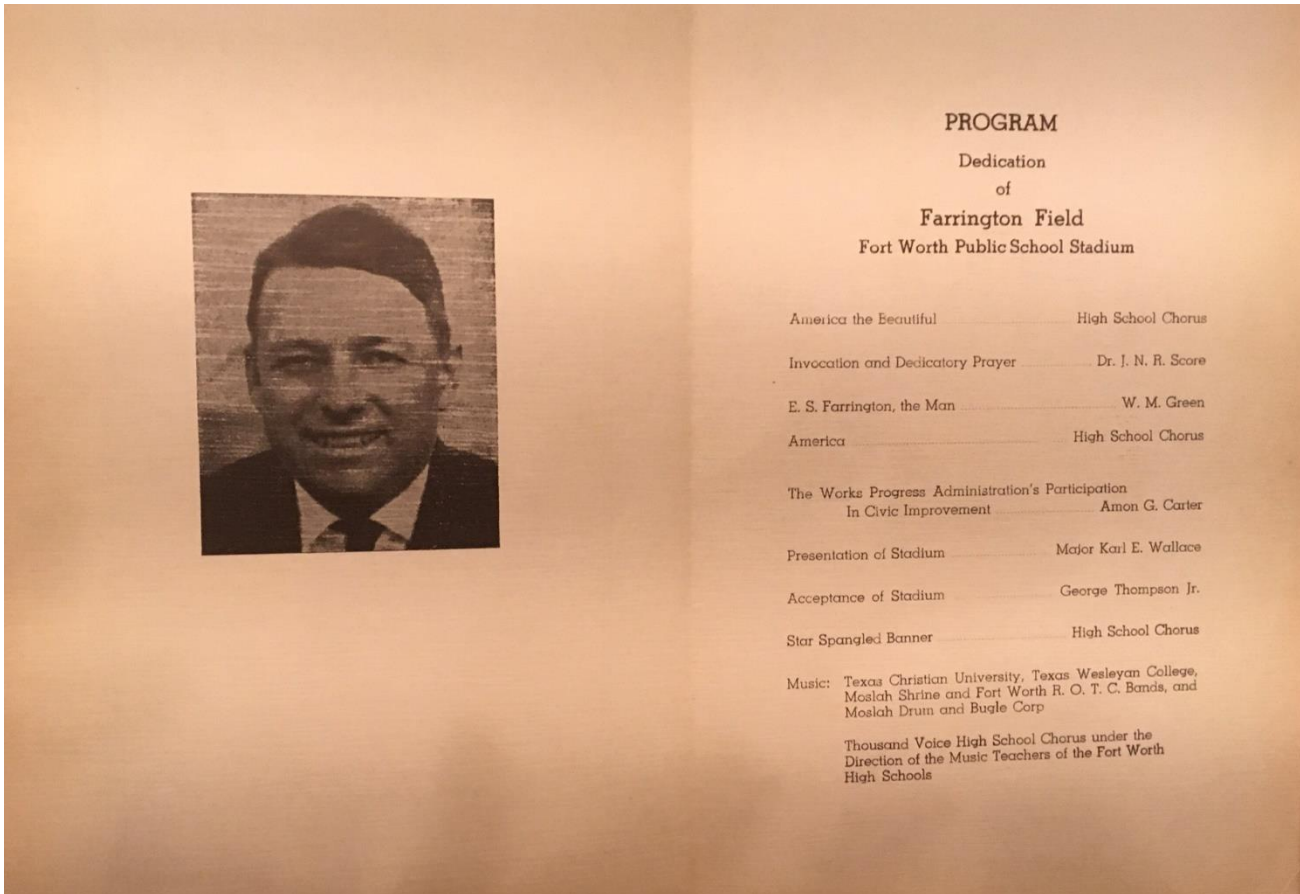
Farrington Field and Public Schools Gymnasium, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

Figure 16: Courtesy, *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* Collection, Special Collections, The University of Texas at Arlington Libraries. AR406-6-739. "Farrington Field Stadium, Fort Worth, Texas." UTA Libraries Digital Gallery. November 21, 1939. Accessed December 8, 2020. <https://library.uta.edu/digitalgallery/img/10007999>. Inside press box.



Farrington Field and Public Schools Gymnasium, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

Figure 17: Farrington Field Dedication Program, November 3, 1939. Courtesy, Evan S. Farrington, III and Historic Fort Worth, Inc.



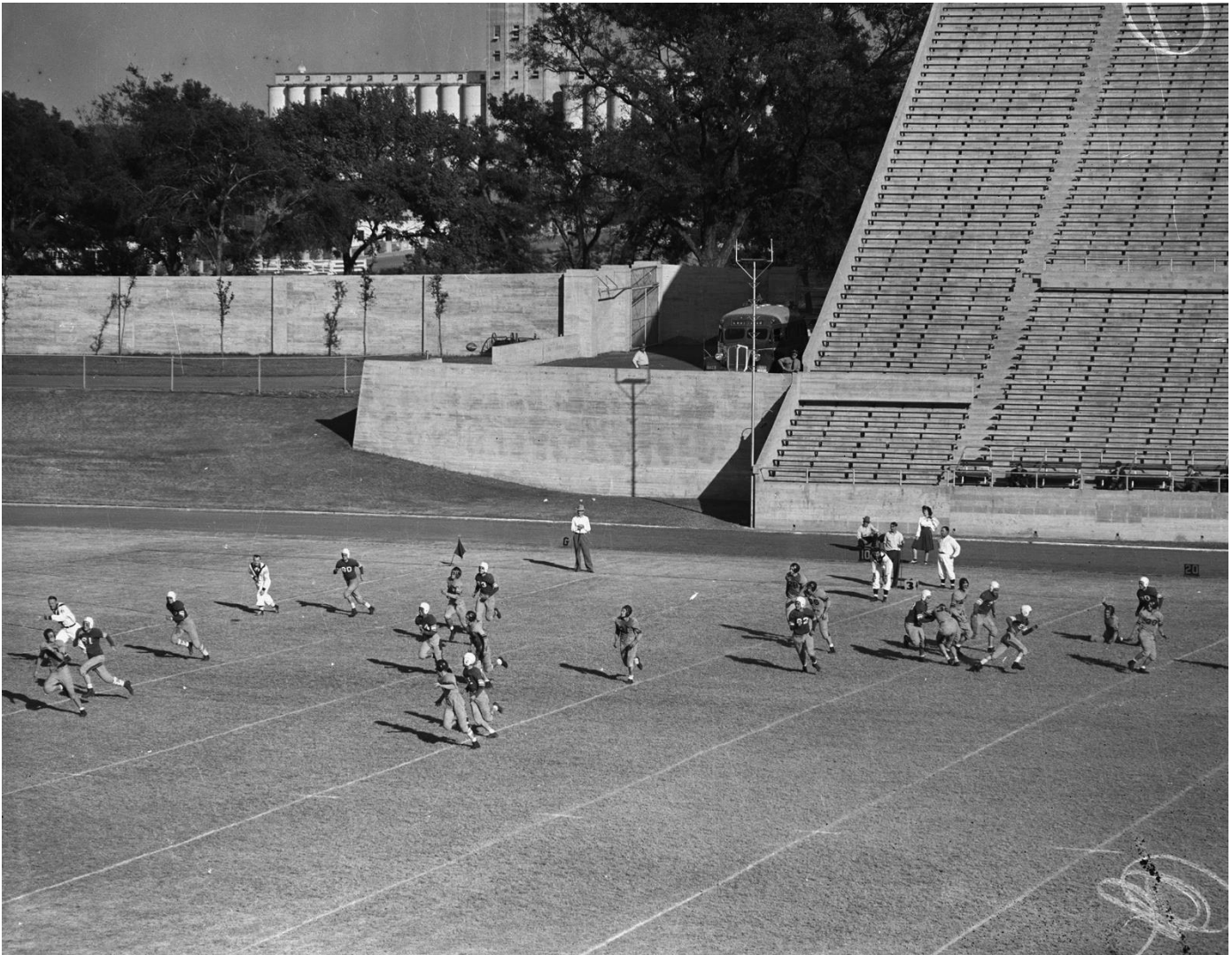
Farrington Field and Public Schools Gymnasium, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

Figure 18: Courtesy, *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* Collection, Special Collections, The University of Texas at Arlington Libraries. AR406-6-1349. "Barbara Jean McDaniel in relay race." UTA Libraries Digital Gallery. 1941. Accessed December 9, 2020. <https://library.uta.edu/digitalgallery/img/20048044>.



Farrington Field and Public Schools Gymnasium, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

Figure 19: Courtesy, *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* Collection, Special Collections, The University of Texas at Arlington Libraries. AR406-6-1411. "Fort Worth Technical High School vs. Paschal High School." UTA Libraries Digital Gallery. 1941. Accessed December 9, 2020. <https://library.uta.edu/digitalgallery/img/20050338>. *FWST* photographer Tom Dillard.



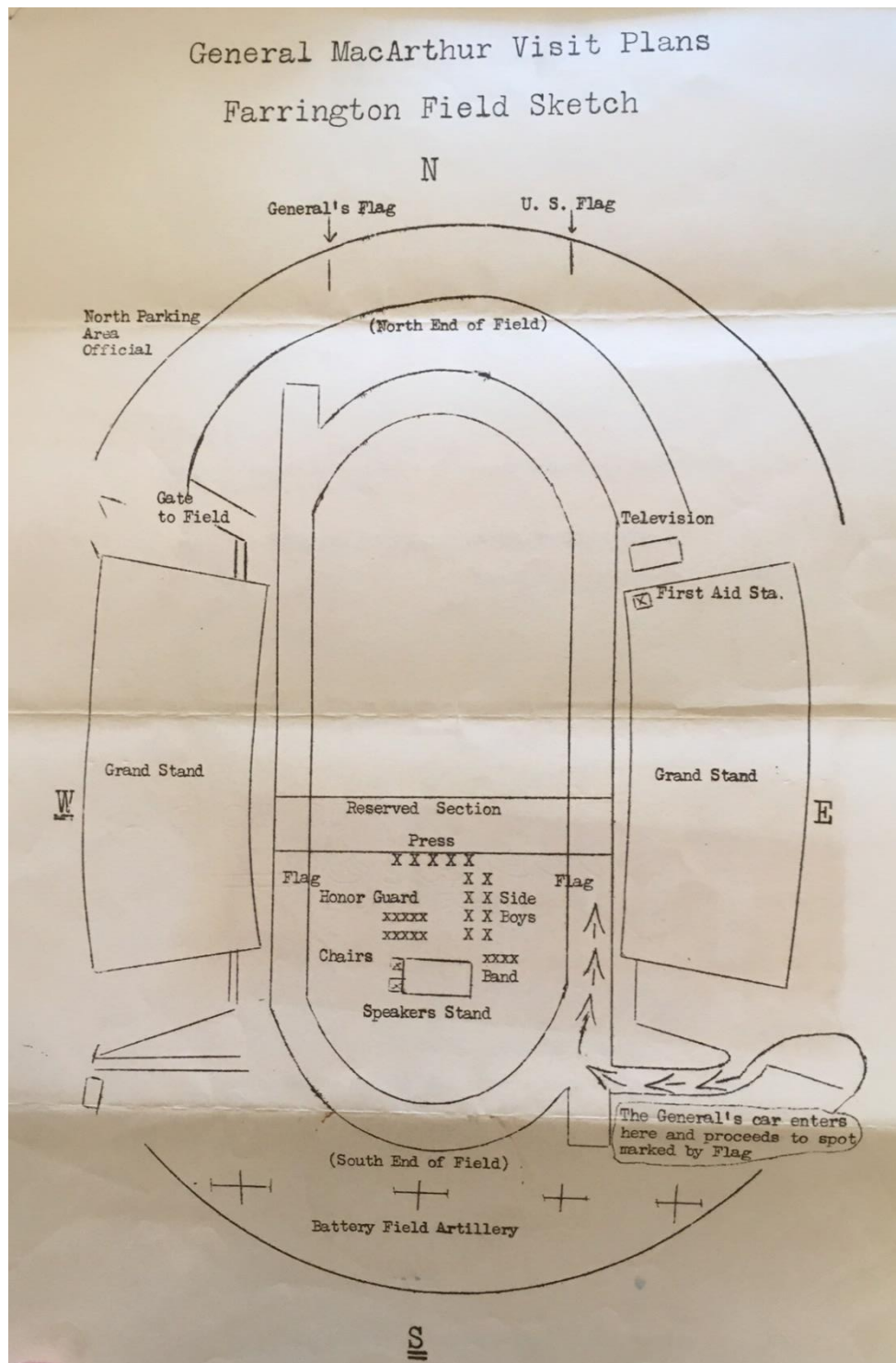
Farrington Field and Public Schools Gymnasium, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

Figure 20: Courtesy, *Squire Haskins Photography, Inc.* Collection, Special Collections, The University of Texas at Arlington Libraries. "Aerial of 1949 flood in Fort Worth, Texas," UTA Libraries Digital Gallery. 1949. AR447 negatives Box 2. Accessed December 9, 2020. <https://library.uta.edu/digitalgallery/img/10008732>. View looking northeast. Note site-seers on top of the east stand of bleachers.



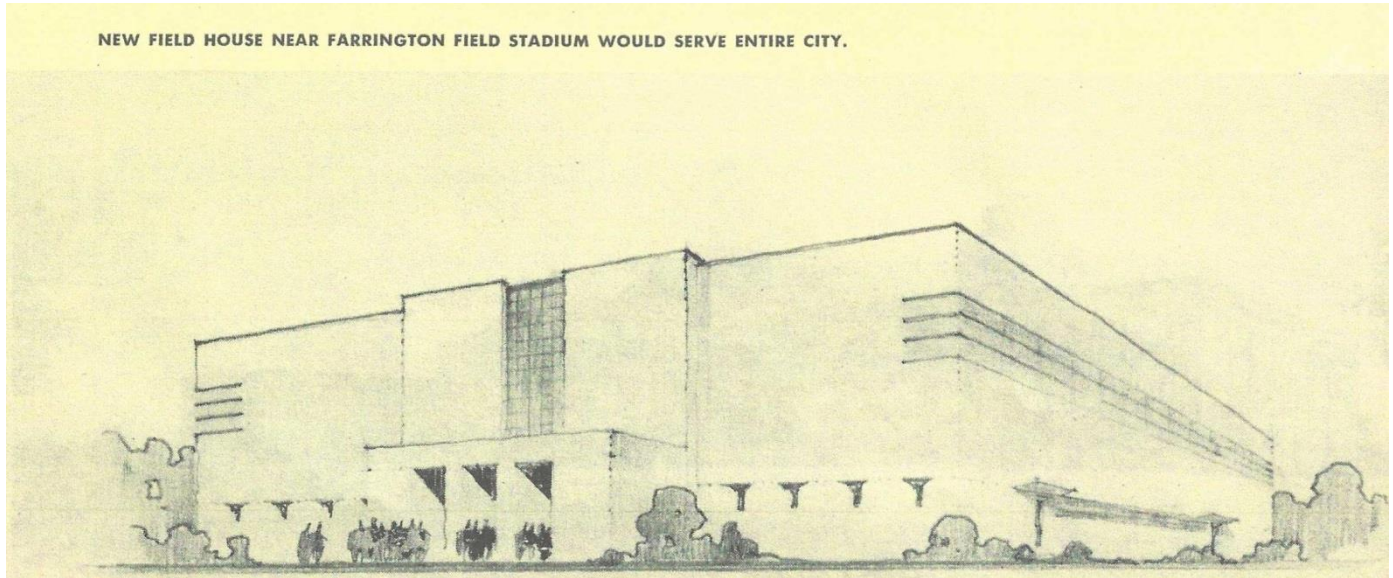
Farrington Field and Public Schools Gymnasium, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

Figure 21: Site map for General Douglas A. MacArthur's visit to Farrington Field, June 16, 1951. Farrington Family Papers.



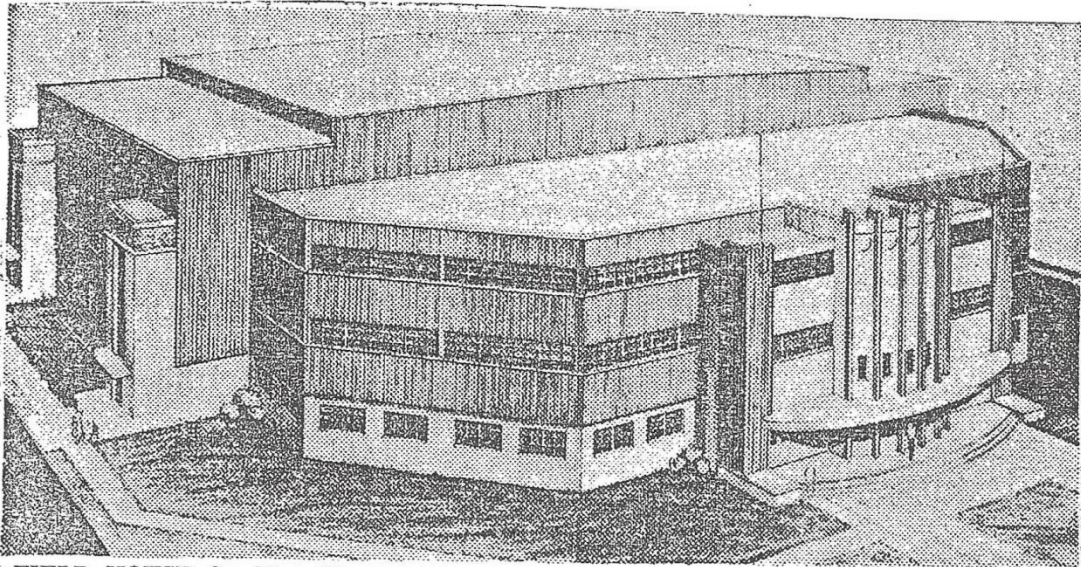
Farrington Field and Public Schools Gymnasium, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

Figure 22: Postwar vision for new field house. From Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce, *Fort Worth Plans for the Future*, January 1, 1945. Courtesy Genealogy, History and Archives Unit, Fort Worth Public Library. Accessed March 21, 2018, Part 2, <http://www.fortworthtexasarchives.org/digital/collection/p15461coll3/id/78>.



Farrington Field and Public Schools Gymnasium, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

Figure 23: 1946 vision for new field house, Preston M. Geren, architect. *Fort Worth Press*, October 17, 1946. Vertical file, Genealogy, History and Archives Unit, Fort Worth Public Library; copy on file, Historic Fort Worth, Inc.



FIELD HOUSE for Fort Worth high schools is planned with a seating capacity of 5600. The steel and concrete building will be located adjacent to Farrington Field. Architect Preston M. Geren's preliminary plans have been approved by the Board of Education.

Building Costs, Needs May Delay Field House

The decision on whether to call for contract bids for the high school field house when final blueprints are complete, rested today with the Board of Education.

In making the decision, the board will consider the need for classroom space and rising building costs, school officials said.

School authorities now are doubtful that the structure can be built for \$260,000 as originally planned.

Preliminary plans, prepared by Preston M. Geren, architect, have been approved by the board.

Bonds to finance the steel and concrete building would be retired by revenue from athletic contests instead of by tax receipts.

When built, the gym will be adjacent to Farrington Field and will seat 5600 sport fans, as compared with 1000 in the Paschal gym, largest in the city. The field house will be used for all city

basketball games and for other indoor sports. Plans include space for athletic department offices and storage of athletic equipment.

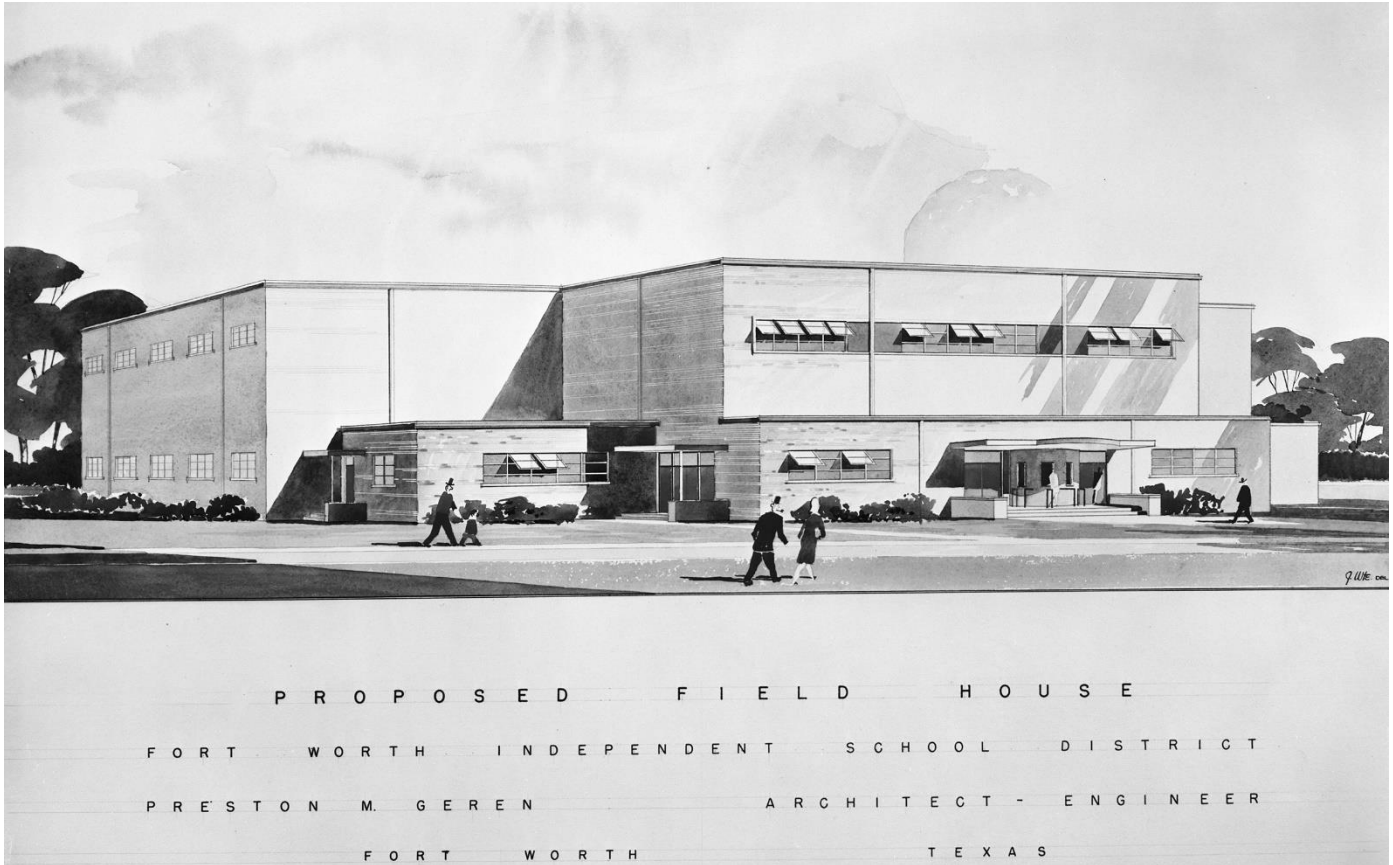
Bleachers will occupy three sides of the playing court and a stage will occupy the side opposite the entrance. Using the floor space for seats during stage productions or school concerts, the building will seat about 6400 with a clear view of the stage. The five main exits called for in the plans should allow the gym to be emptied completely in five minutes, according to Mr. Geren's estimate.

The playing area of the basketball court will be 90 by 50 feet, largest size of the three regulation sizes for courts, and 10 feet of clearance will be allowed between the sidelines and the spectators.

Dressing rooms for eight teams to change at once are provided in the plans and a separate dressing room for officials.

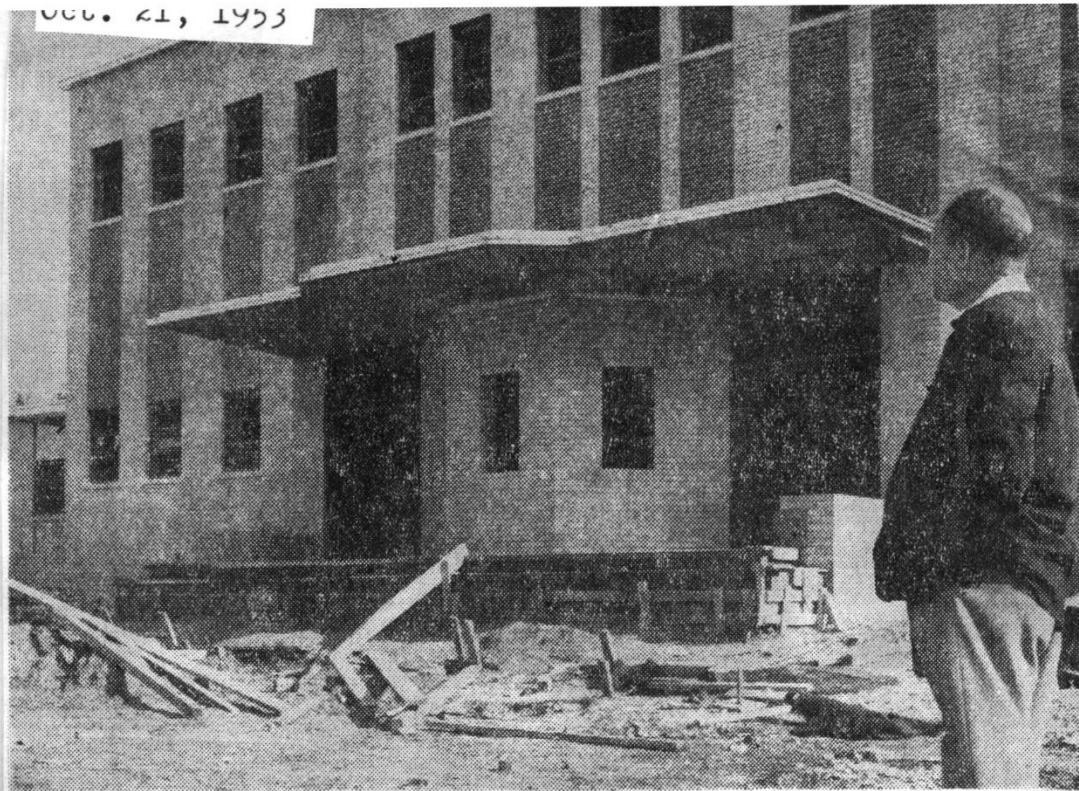
Farrington Field and Public Schools Gymnasium, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

Figure 24: Courtesy *W. D. Smith Commercial Photography, Inc.* Collection, Special Collections, The University of Texas at Arlington Libraries. AR430-53-99-1. "Proposed Field House, Fort Worth Independent School District (drawing)." UTA Libraries Digital Gallery. 1953. Accessed December 8, 2020. <https://library.uta.edu/digitalgallery/img/20097834>. Preston M. Geren, Architect-Engineer.



Farrington Field and Public Schools Gymnasium, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

Figure 25: Public Schools Gymnasium. From *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, October 21, 1953. Courtesy, Billy W. Sills Archives, Fort Worth Independent School District.



—Star-Telegram Photo.

ATHLETIC DIRECTOR HERMAN CLARK LOOKS OVER NEW FIELDHOUSE
... Paschal, Arlington Heights matched in opening district contest.

FIELDHOUSE NEARS COMPLETION

BY DICK MOORE.

Star-Telegram Sports Writer.

Paschal and Arlington Heights will officially launch conference basket ball play in the new Public Schools Gymnasium Jan. 7, Athletic Director Herman Clark revealed Tuesday with the release of the 4A-3 schedule.

The Paschal-Arlington Heights game will be the first half of a doubleheader with Amon Carter Riverside meeting Technical in the nightcap.

Actually the new \$300,000 gymnasium will be in use before conference competition begins, Clark said.

"Construction is due to be completed Dec. 1," Clark related. "However, asphalt must be laid around the buildings, backboards installed and the electric scoreboards put in place."

Clark said that as soon as all the minor details were finished, practice games would be scheduled during December.

The gymnasium, which is being built on the south-east corner of Farrington Field's east parking lot, will seat 3,500 fans.

The 4A-3 schools will have games on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday of each week with doubleheaders being played on those nights.

The first game will start at 7 p. m. with the second one following 20 minutes after the initial one is completed.

"That'll mean the second game will usually start around 8:45 p. m." Clark said.

Monday, Wednesday and Saturday nights have been reserved for TCU games, which will be

played in the gymnasium this year, Clark said.

The proposed 4A-3 conference schedule:

Jan. 7—Paschal vs. Arlington Heights; Carter vs. Technical.

Jan. 8—North Side vs. Poly; Paschal vs. Carter.

Jan. 12—Arlington Heights vs. Poly; North Side vs. Technical.

Jan. 14—Poly vs. Paschal; Carter vs. North Side.

Jan. 15—Technical vs. Arlington Heights; North Side vs. Paschal.

Jan. 19—Technical vs. Poly; Carter vs. Arlington Heights.

Jan. 22—Technical vs. Paschal; Arlington Heights vs. North Side.

Jan. 28—Poly vs. Carter; Arlington Heights vs. Paschal.

Jan. 29—Technical vs. Carter; Poly vs. North Side.

Feb. 1—Carter vs. Paschal; Poly vs. Arlington Heights.

Feb. 3—Technical vs. North side; Paschal vs. Poly.

Feb. 4—North Side vs. Carter; Arlington Heights vs. Technical.

Feb. 9—Paschal vs. North Side; Poly vs. Technical.

Feb. 11—Arlington Heights vs. Carter; Paschal vs. Technical.

Feb. 12—North Side vs. Arlington Heights; Carter vs. Poly.

Farrington Field and Public Schools Gymnasium, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

Figure 26: Public Schools Gymnasium nearing completion. From *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, November 18, 1953. Courtesy, Billy W. Sills Archives, Fort Worth Independent School District.




Figure 27: Courtesy, *Fort Worth Star-Telegram Collection*, Special Collections, The University of Texas at Arlington Libraries. AR406-6-3152. Interior of Public Schools Gymnasium after installation of electronic scoreboard; dugout on left with table for press, timekeeper, and scorer. December 8, 1953. View looking northwest. *FWST* photographer Al Panzera.



Farrington Field and Public Schools Gymnasium, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas


Figure 29: Rambo Construction advertisement for Fort Worth Public Schools Week, *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, February 28, 1954. The Public Schools Gymnasium is shown in the lower photograph.



**the "little
RED SCHOOLHOUSE"
has retired!**

**In it's place are modern, beautiful schools with complete
up-to-date facilities for your children ...**

RAMBO
Construction Company
is proud to have played a part in the progress of the
Fort Worth Public Schools



MITCHELL BLVD. ELEMENTARY



FOREST OAK JUNIOR HIGH

We join with Rambo Construction Co. in saying we are proud to have had a part in the progress of our excellent School System.

BUCK-INGRAM LUMBER CO.
Millwork

BEALS PLUMBING & HTG. CO.
Plumbing Contractors

BUILDERS MATERIAL CO.
Builders' Supplies

S. A. ELLSBERRY CO.
Steel Windows, etc.



PUBLIC SCHOOL GYMNASIUM
We also built South Fort Worth Elementary School and the School Warehouse.

We join with Rambo Construction Co. in saying we are proud to have had a part in the progress of our excellent School System.

RAY F. HOLMES CO.
Steel Windows and Frames

HENDERSON & WEBB
Builder Hardware

A. A. SCOTT
Painting Contractors

LYDICK ROOFING CO.
Over 40 Years in the Southwest

★ **REMEMBER! THIS IS PUBLIC SCHOOL WEEK! VISIT YOUR SCHOOLS AND SEE WHAT YOU
YOURSELF HAVE DONE TO IMPROVE YOUR PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM!**

Farrington Field and Public Schools Gymnasium, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

Figure 30: Public Schools Gymnasium/Billingsley Field House. Concession stand in lobby, looking E/SE. Photo by Ruth Resurrecion, September 24, 2012. Courtesy, Historic Fort Worth, Inc.



Figure 31: Public Schools Gymnasium/Billingsley Field House. Gymnasium and roof trusses, looking N across covered court to north bleachers Photo by Ruth Resurrecion, September 24, 2012. Courtesy, Historic Fort Worth, Inc.



Farrington Field and Public Schools Gymnasium, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

Figure 32: Public Schools Gymnasium/Billingsley Field House. Gymnasium bleachers, looking N. Photo by Ruth Resurrecion, September 24, 2012. Courtesy, Historic Fort Worth, Inc.



Figure 33: Public Schools Gymnasium/Billingsley Field House. Gym bleachers with row number. Photo by Ruth Resurrecion, September 24, 2012. Courtesy, Historic Fort Worth, Inc.



Farrington Field and Public Schools Gymnasium, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

Figure 34: Public Schools Gymnasium/Billingsley Field House. Gymnasium ceiling trusses and catwalk, N/NW Photo by Ruth Resurrecion, September 24, 2012. Courtesy, Historic Fort Worth, Inc.



Figure 35: Public Schools Gymnasium/Billingsley Field House. Gymnasium, players' seats in dugout, west side of court, looking S/SW. Photo by Ruth Resurrecion, September 24, 2012. Courtesy, Historic Fort Worth, Inc.



Farrington Field and Public Schools Gymnasium, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

Figure 36: Public Schools Gymnasium/Billingsley Field House. Gymnasium, south wall without bleachers, looking S/SE
Photo by Ruth Resurrecion, September 24, 2012. Courtesy, Historic Fort Worth, Inc.



Figure 37: Public Schools Gymnasium/Billingsley Field House. Team locker room, original wood bench and clothes cubby. Photo by Ruth Resurrecion, September 24, 2012. Courtesy, Historic Fort Worth, Inc.



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Figure 38: Public Schools Gymnasium/Billingsley Field House. Original telephone booth on north side of lobby. Photo by Ruth Resurreccion, September 24, 2012. Courtesy, Historic Fort Worth, Inc.



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Figure 39: Dal-Hi Stadium, west stand, Dallas, Texas, constructed by the WPA. Photo dated September 22, 1939. Texas Works Progress Administration, NARA RG69, "Texas and the WPA." Accessed August 12, 2020, www.flickr.com. Stadium no longer extant.



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Figure 40: Alamo Stadium, San Antonio, Texas . Constructed by the WPA. Photo dated August 3, 1940. Texas Works Progress Administration, NARA RG69, "Texas and the WPA." Accessed November 19, 2020, www.flickr.com.



Farrington Field and Public Schools Gymnasium, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

Figure 41: Fair Park Stadium, Childress, Texas. Constructed by the WPA. Photo dated August 15, 1940. Texas Works Progress Administration, NARA RG69, "Texas and the WPA." Accessed November 19, 2020, www.flickr.com.



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Figure 42: West Entrance (2012)



Farrington Field and Public Schools Gymnasium, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

Photo 1: Farrington Field, West elevation of west stand, looking SE



Photo 2: Farrington Field, West elevation of west stand, looking N/NE



Farrington Field and Public Schools Gymnasium, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

Photo 3: Farrington Field, Under upper tier, west stand; Photographer: John. Roberts, February 15, 2020, looking S



Photo 4: Farrington Field, Entrance of west elevation of west stand and west ticket booth, looking E



Farrington Field and Public Schools Gymnasium, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

Photo 5: Farrington Field, Evaline Sellors' sculpture of football player, entrance to west stand, looking E



Photo 6: Farrington Field, Evaline Sellors' sculpture of female sprinter, entrance to west stand, looking E



Farrington Field and Public Schools Gymnasium, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

Photo 7: Farrington Field, Entrance to tunnel, Section D, west stand, looking E

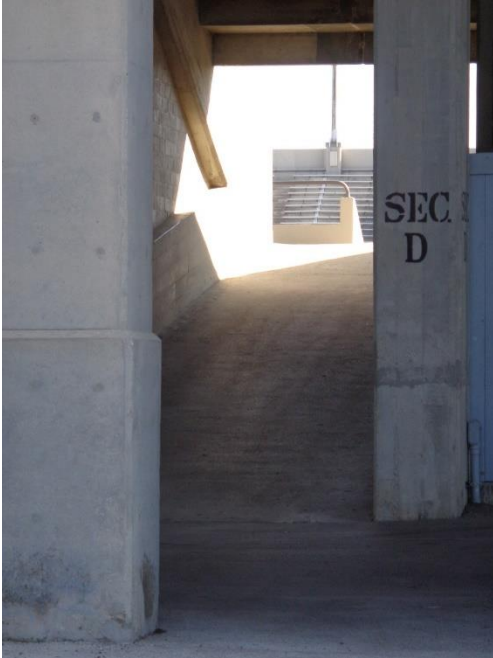


Photo 8: Farrington Field, South elevations of (left to right) west stand and east stand, looking E



Farrington Field and Public Schools Gymnasium, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

Photo 9: Farrington Field, East and north elevations of west stand, looking SW



Photo 10: Farrington Field, Looking across field to east elevation of west stand; Photographer: John Roberts, February 15, 2020, looking NW



Farrington Field and Public Schools Gymnasium, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

Photo 11: Farrington Field, East elevation of east stand, looking W



Photo 12: Farrington Field, South half of east elevation of east stand, looking NW



Farrington Field and Public Schools Gymnasium, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

Photo 13: Farrington Field, Under upper tier of east stand; Photographer: John Roberts, February 15, 2020, looking S



Photo 14: Farrington Field, East elevation of east stand and east ticket both, looking W



Farrington Field and Public Schools Gymnasium, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

Photo 15: Farrington Field, South and east elevations, east stand showing enclosure of bays, looking NW



Photo 16: Farrington Field, Looking across field to west elevation of east stand; Photographer: John Roberts, February 15, 2020, looking NE



Farrington Field and Public Schools Gymnasium, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

Photo 17: Farrington Field, Ramp to exit from north (home) locker room, east stand; Photographer: John Roberts, February 15, 2020, looking W



Photo 18: Farrington Field, View from south end zone to north end of field; Photographer: John Roberts, February 15, 2020, looking N



Farrington Field and Public Schools Gymnasium, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

Photo 19: Farrington Field, View from north end zone to south end of field; Photographer: John Roberts, February 15, 2020, looking S



Photo 20: Farrington Field, Fence, wall, and mature trees at northeast corner of stadium, looking NW

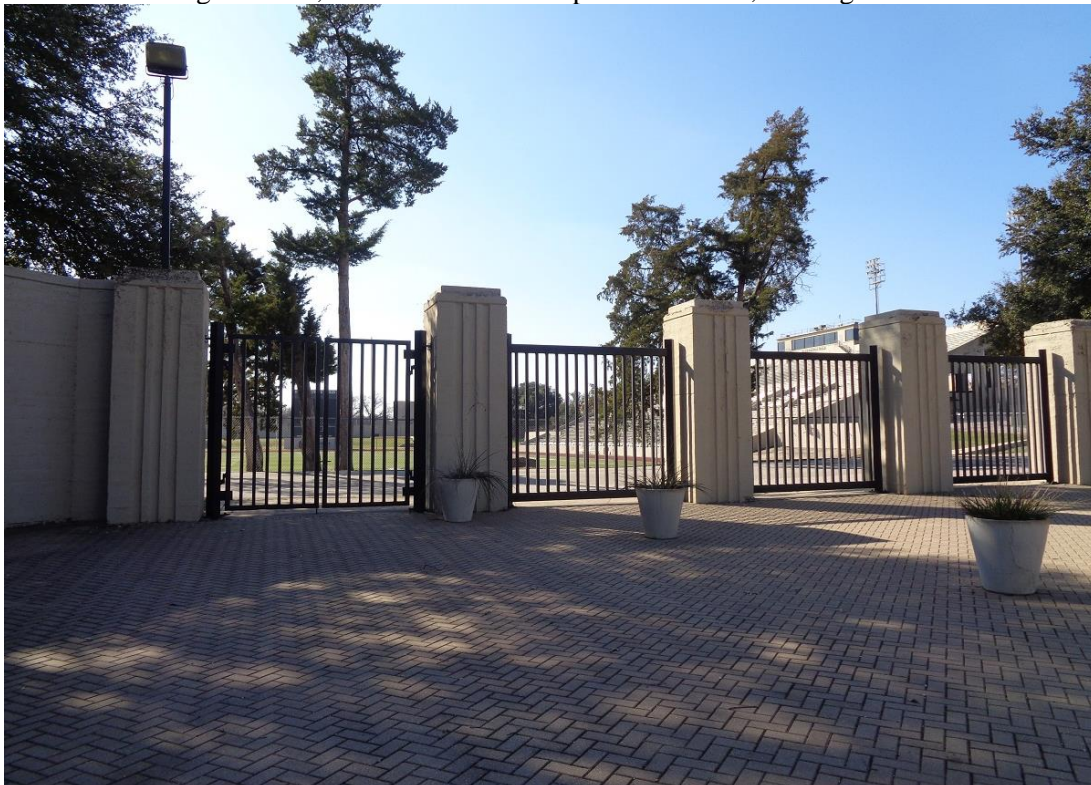


Farrington Field and Public Schools Gymnasium, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

Photo 21: Farrington Field, South parking lot and wall with west stand (left) and east stand (right), looking NE



Photo 22: Farrington Field, North entrance with piers and fence, looking SW



Farrington Field and Public Schools Gymnasium, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

Photo 23: Public Schools Gymnasium, East and north elevations, looking SW



Photo 24: Public Schools Gymnasium, north elevation, looking SW



Farrington Field and Public Schools Gymnasium, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

Photo 25: Public Schools Gymnasium, entrance and ticket booth, north elevation, looking E/SE



Photo 26: Public Schools Gymnasium, West elevation entrance, looking E



Farrington Field and Public Schools Gymnasium, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

Photo 27: Public Schools Gymnasium, West elevation entrance to one story wing, looking SE



Photo 28: Public Schools Gymnasium, West elevation with barrel roof, looking E/NE



Farrington Field and Public Schools Gymnasium, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

Photo 29: Public Schools Gymnasium, West and south elevations, looking NE



Photo 30: Public Schools Gymnasium, South and east elevations, looking NW



Farrington Field and Public Schools Gymnasium, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

Photo 31: Public Schools Gymnasium (left) and Farrington Field (right) from Foch Street, looking SW



Photo 32: Trail Drive, Noncontributing structure, looking N



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