

IF THESE WALLS COULD TALK...

A Short History of the Fifth Street School

If the walls of the Historic Fifth Street School could talk, they'd speak of dusty Depression-era days during 1936 when a much-needed grammar school opened to serve a bustling Las Vegas population of approximately 12,000.

It wasn't until the late 1920s and early 1930s, when construction of the federally funded Hoover Dam took place that the need for a much larger school developed. Hoover Dam construction, as well as the reduced residency requirements for divorces, and the legalization of gambling - both occurring in 1931 - had a huge impact on Las Vegas' economic growth during this time. These developments helped Las Vegas avoid many of the economic problems associated with the Great Depression and created a population boom for the city, thus the need for a new school.

The school was built for \$230,000 (\$85,000 in federal funds were funneled through New Deal agencies; the balance came from the sale of school bonds).

Officially called the Las Vegas Grammar School, the complex has informally been referred to as the Fifth Street School almost since its inception, due to its location on Fifth Street (renamed Las Vegas Boulevard in 1959) in downtown Las Vegas.

The complex functioned as a school, each year serving between 150 to 200 students in grades first through eighth, until 1966. It sat empty until 1970, when it was converted into Clark County offices. It was acquired by the city of Las Vegas from the county in 1996.

The Las Vegas City Council saw great potential for this historic landmark in the heart of downtown and showed their commitment to the project by transferring title of the school to the Redevelopment Agency on Aug. 4, 2004. This crucial move allowed for the use of much-needed redevelopment funds for the rehabilitation of the historic building.

Built in an era before air conditioning, construction of the school incorporated many design features that

helped cool it under the intense desert sun, including heat-resisting overhangs, 10-inch thick concrete walls, north- and east-facing windows and cooling breezeways.

Open and semi-enclosed courtyards add to the ambiance of the Spanish Mission-style architecture at the Historic Fifth Street School. This architectural style experienced a resurgence of popularity from the 1910s through the mid-1930s.

Preserved were the green and blue mosaic tile patterns and decorative fountain in the building's center courtyard. Approximately 85 percent of these tiles are original, with the balance replaced by replicated tiles.

More than 141 doors and windows also were carefully recreated; only 30 of the original structures could be salvaged at the historic school.

The entire complex has been returned to what historic research has determined were the original colors. Slicing through layers of paint, a historic consultant painstakingly took samples of concrete and wood, and then performed microscopic analysis to determine what the original colors were for all of the building's surfaces.

Today, the former school serves as a "cultural oasis" in the heart of downtown Las Vegas and as home to an assortment of local arts and architectural organizations.

Now officially called the Historic Fifth Street School, the building and its site are listed in the National Register of Historic Places and the city of Las Vegas Historic Property Register.

More than \$13.4 million in funding for this building's cultural transformation was provided by the Las Vegas Redevelopment Agency.

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HISTORIC FIFTH STREET SCHOOL

DOWNTOWN LAS VEGAS

MEETING FACILITIES

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RENTAL INFORMATION

Many of the common areas of the Historic Fifth Street School are available for public or private functions. These areas include a multipurpose performance area/auditorium capable of accommodating up to 400 people, a gallery space for exhibitions and smaller meetings able to hold up to 200 people and a 30-person conference room. In addition, there are open courtyards available for outside activities, as well as the 16,000-square-foot Centennial Plaza that can be used for outdoor gatherings. Further details are provided below.

ROOM	DIMENSIONS	USABLE SQUARE FEET	CEILING HEIGHTS	MAXIMUM CAPACITY				AMENITIES
				Reception	Banquet	Theater	Classroom	
Auditorium	70' x 80'	5,600'	22'	400	240	350	200	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hardwood floor • 24' x 35' permanent stage with curtain • Stage lighting consists of 33 DMX lights • 200-amp sound system company switch • 400-amp light system company switch • 5000-pound lift for accessing stage
Gallery	23' x 98' (U-shaped)	2,254'	11'	200	160	—	—	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warming/caterer's prep kitchen
Conference Room (30-seat Conference Table)	23' x 31'	713'	11'	—	—	—	—	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full audio/visual system
Fountain Courtyard	40' x 96'	3,840'	—	150	80	100	—	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electricity available
Exterior Courtyard	110' x 45' - 75' (U-shaped)	6,600'	—	200	—	—	—	
Centennial Plaza	126' x 126'	15,876'	—	400	—	—	—	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 200-amp company switch available



COURTYARD



AUDITORIUM



GALLERY



CONFERENCE ROOM

