NPS Form 10-900
Oct. 1990

OMB No. 10024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER
LISTED

NOV 17 2005

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A) Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-9000a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

Historic name Sylvia Rural High School

Other name/site number Sylvia Grade School and currently, Fairfield West Elementary

2. Location

Street & number 203 Old Highway 50 ☐ not for publication

City or town Sylvia ☐ vicinity

State Kansas Code KS County Reno Code 155 Zip code 67581

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 ☐ nationally ☒ statewide ☐ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Christy Davis 10/6/05

Signature of certifying official/Title Date
Kansas State Historical Society

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional Comments.)

Signature of commenting official /Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I herby certify that the property is Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

☐ entered in the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined eligible for the National Register
☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register
☐ removed from the National Register
☐ other, (explain:)

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☐ private
- ☒ public-local
- ☐ public-State
- ☐ public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- ☒ building(s)
- ☐ district
- ☐ site
- ☐ structure
- ☐ object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	3	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	3	total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)
Historic Public Schools of Kansas

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register
0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter Categories from instructions)

EDUCATION: School

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION: School

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19th and 20th CENTURY REVIVALS:

Colonial Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation: Concrete

Walls: Brick

Roof: Clay tile

Other: Stone Detailing

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register

☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history

☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

☐ **D** Property has yielded, or likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

☐ **B** removed from it original location.

☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.

☐ **D** a cemetery.

☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

☐ **F** a commemorative property.

☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

Narrative Statement of Significance
(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1926 - 1955

Significant Dates

1926

1949

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Routledge & Hertz, Architects (Hutchinson)

Roy Hatfield, General Contractor (Kinsley)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography
(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: Approximately 15 acres

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	14	551898	4201005
2			
3			
4			

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description
(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification
(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

Name/title Brenda R. Spencer

Organization Preservation Planning and Design Date 13 April, 2005

Street & number 10150 Onaga Road Telephone 785-456-9857

City or town Wamego State Kansas Zip code 66547

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

name USD 310 Fairfield

street & number 16115 S. Langdon Road telephone 620-596-2152

city or town Langdon state KS zip code 67583

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. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503

Narrative Description

Sylvia Rural High School, designed by Hutchinson architects Routledge & Hertz, was completed in November of 1926. A March 4, 1926 article in *The Sylvia Sun* stated that it was "the plan of the school board and the desire of the patrons of the district to build a good, plain substantial building without any expense for show or embellishment and that would be adequate to all the needs of the school."[1] Despite the modest intentions, the two story red brick school stood as a monument to education, in the small community of 600. Although modern in plan design with separate gymnasium and auditorium and customized spaces for a science laboratory, manual arts, and domestic science classrooms, the building's red brick exterior is Colonial Revival, defined by its formal, symmetrical composition.

The school is comprised of a two and a half story center section flanked by two story end wings. The center section has a clay tile truncated hip roof with brick parapets on the ends and is distinguished by oversized auditorium windows which are 6/6 double hung wood windows with fan light arched transoms. The main building entrance is centrally located with an ashlar stone surround featuring Ionic pilasters. The flanking end wings have an intersecting clay tile truncated hip roof and feature a set of arched tripartite windows with an ornate carved stone entablature.

The school resembles at least two existing red brick Colonial Revival schools: McKinley School in Newton (now the school administrative center), and Eugene Ware Elementary School in Fort Scott designed by Wichita architects Lorentz Schmidt and Glen Thomas respectively.

Site

The school is located on Old Highway 50 at the southern edge of Sylvia in western Reno County. The site bordered by Old Highway 50 on the north. Facing north, the school is setback from the road with a large front lawn. A drive/ parking area is located off the highway in front of the school. A concrete sidewalk extends from the drive to the front central entrance and along the west drive. A sidewalk also extends along the front of the school to the gymnasium. The gym addition is located off the east side of the school, recessed from the front facade. Two sidewalks extend from the front drive to the twin gym entrances. Large cedar trees frame the gymnasium. Young Bradford pear trees frame the central sidewalk to the school and flowering shrubs and evergreens are planted along the front of the school. A gravel drive on the west side of the school provides access to parking on the west side and rear of the school. The playground and former ball field are located south of the rear parking in back of the school. There are three outbuildings along the west drive. The northern most structure is a one story clay block building, constructed around 1950 to house a new boiler and industrial arts/vocational agriculture shop. It has also served as an art class room. The block building has an overhead garage door and a multi-paned steel window on the south end. It appears that the building has been expanded at some point in the past. The northern two-thirds of the building is a different color of brick. It appears that former garage bays may have been infilled. Wood double hung windows are extant. The building continues to house the boiler and is used for storage. An arched metal bus barn is located south of the block structure and a small portable storage shed is located immediately south of the bus barn.

Exterior

The original school building is comprised of three distinct sections: the two and a half story center section (auditorium with gymnasium at the rear) and the two story flanking end bays. The original red clay tile is in place on the intersecting hip roofs. The center section has brick parapets on the east and west ends with a chimney on the west side. The main building entrance is centrally located on the front facade. Ionic pilasters with a stone surround and projecting cornice frame the entrance. The exterior doors and transom have been replaced but the multi-light doors and transom are in place at the foyer. The center section of the front facade is defined by six sets of regularly spaced windows. Ground floor windows are 6/6 double hung wood windows paired on the outer four bays with single windows flanking the central entrance. Integral stone sills form a water table around the building. The upper level windows are pairs of oversized 6/6 double hung wood windows with fan light transoms. These windows have individual stone sills and arched brick lintels.

Recessed from the center section, a stepped parapet rises above the roofline of the flanking bays and provides a transition from the taller center section to the end wings. There is a single 6/6 double hung window in these flanking bays. The remainder of the end wings is defined by a set of arched tripartite windows with an ornate carved stone panel over a

projecting cornice above the set of windows. The windows are 6/6 double hung, matching the other ground floor windows. An arched stone label surround extends between the windows and the arches are infilled with brick above the windows. The original windows are in place on the front (north) facade; some have aluminum storms in place and there are window air conditioning units in several of the windows. The flanking bay and tripartite windows project from the front facade the width of a single brick.

Six pairs of double hung windows divide the west facade into six equal bays. These windows have recently been replaced with aluminum double hung windows. Although the replacements do not have true divided lights, the windows do resemble the style of the original wood windows. Originally, the east facade was identical to the west but it is partially obscured by the 1949 addition. The upper windows on the east facade have been replaced like those on the west.

The rear facade is similar to the front in that the projecting central section is flanked by two end wings, however all sections are of equal height at the rear. Vertical brick pilasters divide the central rear (south) facade into five equal bays. A pair of multi-light steel windows with operable awning panels is located on each floor in each of these bays. The center section of the south facade is the gymnasium. The end wings are plain brick walls with the exception of rear entrances flanking the central gymnasium. A pair of contemporary metal framed glass doors with a transom is in place at each floor on the west side of the gym. A plain brick enclosure provides protection for the rear entry and a steel fire escape provides egress from the 2nd floor. Originally the two end wings were identical but the 1949 gym addition connects to the east end wing at the rear. A new pair of doors was installed flanked by three-light horizontal steel windows. The original upper level exit and steel fire escape is in place on the east end.

Sylvia High School underwent a major expansion in 1949. Representative of the era in which it was constructed, the gymnasium addition is simple and utilitarian. It is clearly distinguished from the original school and connected to the school in a manner that does not detract from the original character of the school. The addition included a new gymnasium with separate entrance/foyer, concessions area, and a home economics class room. A one and a half story red brick structure with a concrete foundation and minor stone detailing, the gym has a low-pitched gable roof. A stone panel with a stylized "S" (for Sylvia) is located at the north gable peak and a large square chimney extends well above the roofline at the rear. The front of the gym faces north like the school; it is recessed off the east side of the school. A one-story foyer projects from the front of the gymnasium with twin entrances on each end of the north facade. The east and west facades of the gym feature horizontal bands of glass block with small operable awning panels. Horizontal steel windows are in place at the ground level, providing natural light into the locker rooms located beneath the gymnasium bleachers. A one-story brick and concrete mechanical bay projects from the southeast corner of the gym and a one-story bay extends along the west side of the gym behind the original school, housing the concessions area and classroom. The rear of the gym and the west classroom wing feature the original horizontal steel windows. The addition is accessed from the original school through a corridor off the east end wing.

Sylvia Rural High School retains a high degree of integrity. The exterior of the school is in near original condition and clearly portrays the 1926 design. The doors and some windows have been replaced but the original foyer doors are in place to reflect the original style and configuration of the front entrance and an attempt has been made to retain the appearance of the multi-light original windows with the choice of the replacement double hung windows. A prominent significant feature, the original red clay tile roof, is in place. The 1949 addition reflects the limitations of the original gym and the need for additional space. The gymnasium addition is representative of the time in which it was constructed and has gained significance in its own right. The gym is connected to the original school in a way that does not significantly alter the original massing nor proportions of the school.

Interior

The plan configuration is a modified "T". Although the central section does project slightly from the end wings on the front facade, it is barely noticeable on the interior. The gymnasium projects from the center of the rear facade, forming the stem of the "T". The corridor forms a "U" around the central rear gymnasium providing access to class rooms around the perimeter of the building. The original circulation pattern remains intact with the main entrance at the center of the front facade and two rear entrances on each side of the gymnasium. Twin stairways are also located on each side of the rear gym. A distinguishing feature of the original plan was the upper floor auditorium, separate from the gymnasium. The

original auditorium was located on the second floor, in the center of the front (north) side. The auditorium was one and a half stories in height, accounting for the increased height of the center section on the front facade. The inclusion of a separate auditorium and gymnasium was a national trend that emerged as schools became centerpieces of communities. These spaces were designed to serve social needs of the entire community, not only school students. Another national trend impacting the design of the school was the provision of spaces for specialized training. The design of the new school provided specialized classrooms for domestic science, manual training, art, and science.

At its opening, the school was described as semi-fire proof with the roof framing being the only wood component of the structure. The building was also promoted as safe and sanitary, referring to the hardened finishes including quarry tile corridors and concrete stairways. Before the dedication in December of 1926, a description of the building was published in *The Sylvia Sun*, (December 2, 1926). The headline expressed the community's pride in the new facility, "Our New High School Building Now a Reality, Will Dedicate December 3, 1926 with Proper Ceremonies – A Source of Pride to Everybody in the Community, Modern to the last Word in School Building Construction, Equipment Second to None in This Part of the State." The article described the new school:

> There are six regular recitation rooms, domestic science, art, manual training, study hall with a library, and a science laboratory. The gymnasium is 48' x 70' with a spectator's balcony on all four sides and large locker and shower rooms for boys and girls. The auditorium has a seating capacity of 500; its ceiling acoustically treated so that speakers from the platform could be heard anywhere in the room. The class room floors are wood, the corridors tile, and ¼ inch thick battleship linoleum on the office, domestic science and rest room floors. The building is equipped with an electric clock and signaling system to regulate the classes. The heating system is vapor heat with a boiler in the basement.[2]

The interior of the school retains significant features and finishes although some alterations have taken place in the past eighty years. Interior finishes are utilitarian. The corridors retain their original red quarry tile and the original concrete stairways are extant. Cast iron railings and newel posts are in place on the rear stairways. Carpeting has been installed over most wood floors in classrooms although the original tile is exposed in one ground floor class room. The original plaster walls are in place throughout and the original plaster ceilings remain exposed in the ground floor corridor. Two-light wood clerestory windows are in place in the corridors. Suspended ceilings have been installed in most classrooms and the second floor corridor. The original foyer doors with multi-pane sidelights and transom are in place at the main entrance and the original three light over a louvered panel wood doors with operable transoms are in place throughout the interior of the building. Original wood trim, including baseboards and door and window surrounds, is also extant.

There have been some alterations, primarily in the use of particular spaces. The major modifications occurred after the expansion in 1949. A new gymnasium and home economics classroom was constructed off the east side of the school in 1949. Around 1950, a separate shop building was constructed that also served as a new boiler room. The original manual training room was located in the northwest corner of the building on the ground floor. An overhead garage door was removed and windows installed when the shop was moved to the new free-standing building. The domestic science or home economics room was originally located in the northeast corner of the ground floor. Built-in wood cabinets including a pass-though serving window are still in place although the home economics classes were moved to the new addition in 1949. These spaces were converted to regular classrooms with only minor modifications.

Sylvia Grade School was located a couple of blocks north of the high school. The high school was not built with a kitchen or cafeteria. For over forty years, the high school students walked to the grade school for lunch. Following state mandated consolidation in the mid-1960s, a new high school was built in Langdon and Sylvia High School closed in 1969. The grade school moved into the high school at that time and the original gymnasium was converted to a kitchen a cafeteria. The gym balcony was enclosed with a dropped ceiling; the west half is visible from the second floor above the suspended ceiling. The original gym floor is in place in the cafeteria. A library was built over the kitchen on the second floor replacing the former east half of the balcony. The original multi-light steel windows with operable awning panels remain in place in the former gymnasium.

As uses changed, some classrooms have been expanded requiring removal of some original partition walls. A few modifications have taken place in the past twenty years. In the 1980s, the original auditorium was subdivided and converted to a music room and computer room. The former sloping floor was leveled and the balcony was enclosed with a dropped ceiling. Like the gymnasium, the balcony remains in place above the ceiling. Two years ago, the school began a window replacement program for energy efficiency. The replacement windows are aluminum and resemble the style of the original windows. Windows on the east and west sides have been replaced to date. The front (north) and rear facades retain the original windows at this time; aluminum storm windows have been installed on most north windows.

The 1949 addition is in near original condition with only minor changes in use and configuration. The addition is accessed from the original school by a corridor off the southeast corner of the building. Corridors in the addition have plaster walls and ceilings, ceramic tile wainscoting and vinyl tile flooring. Four-light clerestory windows are in place in the corridors. The original concessions area now serves as a pre-kindergarten classroom and the former home economics classroom serves as the kindergarten class room. The gym is in excellent condition. Constructed with a steel truss and beam system, the structure is exposed on the low-pitched gable ceiling. There is a stage on the south end with a ceramic tile surround. Bleachers are concrete with wood plank seats and glass block windows above. A separate entry foyer is located on the north end of the gym with rest rooms on each side. The locker rooms are located beneath the bleachers; the girls locker room has been reduced in size with the south half being used for a custodial closet and storage.

Despite the former alterations, the interior of the school retains significant historic character that portrays much of the original design. The corridor configuration including, entrances and circulation patterns, remains intact. Extant significant features include the original metal lockers, and steam radiators in addition to finishes described above. Many classrooms reflect the original design with original chalkboards, arched openings, and original doors. The interior of the Sylvia school reflects common alterations resulting from continued use as a public school.

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[1] E.S. Ping, "Sylvia School Reminiscences," The Sylvia Sun. March 4, 1926.
[2] "Our New High School Building Now a Reality," The Sylvia Sun. December 26, 1926.

Narrative Statement of Significance

Sylvia Rural High School is significant on a state and local level under Criterion A as the only existing public school in Sylvia, an important component in the development and survival of the small rural community in western Reno County. The school is also significant under Criterion C as a representative of a Colonial Revival educational structure and the work of regional school architects Routledge and Hertz. The two-story red brick school with its oversized six over six double hung windows with arched transoms and formal central entrance embodies prominent characteristics of the Colonial Revival Style. The school also reflects tenets of the Progressive Era with a focus on safety and interior spaces designed for a specialized curriculum. Sylvia High School was designed with a separate auditorium and gymnasium, as well as, classrooms designed for specific uses including domestic science, manual training, science and art. The Sylvia School is an excellent example of the work of Hutchinson architects Routledge and Hertz. Harry R. Routledge and Henry Potter Hertz partnered for only a short time, from 1925 – 1932; yet during that period, they were responsible for the design of no less than six county courthouses and numerous public schools in Kansas. Built as a Rural High School, the Sylvia school is a representative of the Town High School property type and meets the registration requirements set forth in the multiple property documentation form, *Historic Public Schools of Kansas*.

The Town of Sylvia

Sylvia is a small community located in western Reno County just south of Highway 50, one of the many towns founded along the Santa Fe Railroad. The land on which Sylvia is located was deeded to the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Company by the State of Kansas in 1884. Railroad Companies encouraged development of cities along their lines by offering railroad land at reasonable prices. In 1886, the land was sold to H.S. Thompson and his wife Mary and immediately transferred to the Sylvia Town Company. Mr. Thompson had come to Kansas from Kentucky in 1882. In April of 1996, the town company platted the town of Sylvia. Sylvia was incorporated as a city of the third class in January of the following year.[3]

A Start Route post office called Zenith had been located on Mr. Thompson's ranch.[4] The new town was named Sylvia by A.A. Robinson, a vice-president of Santa Fe Railroad, in honor of his wife. Mr. Robinson is credited with building over 5,000 miles of Santa Fe track.[5] It is reported that Mr. Thompson wanted to call the new town Zenith like the original post office however, Mr. Robinson prevailed; Robinson did however, agree to put in a station five miles to the west and call it Zenith (extant in Stafford County).[6]

The new town grew rapidly. It boasted a newspaper, two elevators, three lumber yards, a bank, livery stable, and a hotel the year it was founded. Prosperity and growth continued through the turn of the century. Brick sidewalks were installed in 1900, a telephone system in 1903 and street lights in 1911. By 1929 there were 625 people living in Sylvia and the community's businesses provided all basic goods and services.[7] The local co-op, flour mill, and the railroad stock yard were primary supporters of the local agricultural economy. The town endured the challenges of the World Wars, Great Depression and the Dust Bowl however, transportation advancements following World War II led to a dwindling local economy. The Sylvia depot, that had served as a busy freight and shipping center for more than seventy years, ceased major operations in the 1960s. It continued to be used for the next twenty years as office space for the Santa Fe signal crew and was finally removed in 1886.[8] Today Sylvia has a population of approximately 300. A few local businesses remain but residents travel to Hutchinson for most services. The school remains an important focal point in the small community.

Sylvia Schools

Reno County was organized in 1868, formerly a part of Marion County. Four years later the first school district was formed in the county, District No. 1 in the city of Hutchinson.[9] The first district to organize in the present Sylvia school district was the Reno School District in the Peace Creek Settlement; bonds were issued for this school in 1875.[10] Ten years later, the Sylvia school district was organized, prior to the official formation of the town; it was the 102nd district in Reno County. Sylvia erected its first schoolhouse in 1886. It was a two-story frame building with a reputation for swaying with the Kansas wind.[11] This building was later replaced by a one-story frame structure. That structure became overcrowded and an additional building was moved onto the site. It was clear that the community needed a quality school

building. A two story brick building with a full basement was constructed on the same site in 1910. Quite modern for its time, the first brick school had a room for domestic science, a laboratory and rest rooms in the basement; intermediate grades on the first floor and upper grades including a two-year high school, on the second floor.[12] The school was dedicated on February 11th, 1910 and named Lincoln High School in honor of President Lincoln, on whose anniversary the school was dedicated.[13] Originally, students completing the two years of high school in Sylvia were sent on to the Reno County High School at Nickerson for their final two years. The inconvenience of this set up, combined with the high cost of travel and room and board, led local residents to petition for establishment of a four-year high school in Sylvia. The four-year high school received state accreditation and the first class graduated from high school in Sylvia in 1916.[14]

Initially, there were only two high schools in Reno County, Hutchinson High School and Reno County High School in Nickerson. The Sylvia Rural High School District No. 7 was organized in 1917. By 1918, there were one hundred and sixty school districts in the county including eighteen graded schools. In addition to the two original county high schools, by 1918 there were nine Rural High Schools (Pretty Prairie, Arlington, Partridge, Langdon, Plevna, Abbyville, Haven, Turon, and Sylvia), and District High Schools in South Hutchinson and Buhler.[15]

For nearly ten years the high school met in the same building as the grade school in Sylvia but overcrowding led to high school classes being held in various buildings around town.[16] By 1925, high school enrollment was 81, larger than ever; grade school enrollment was 140 for a total of 231 students.[17] In September of 1925, the School Board had a tract of land surveyed for construction of a new high school; it was located just south of the city limits in the "Thompson 80."[18] By the end of the year, the School Board was busy planning the new school. They spent six days visiting new schools in the region. Hutchinson architects Harry Routledge and Henry Hertz were hired to design the new school. The cost of the school was estimated at $55,000 to be financed through the issuance of warrants instead of a bond issue. Guarantee Title and Trust Company of Wichita issued the warrants.[19]

The architects' plans were approved in March and the construction contract was let a short time later. Roy Hatfield, of Kinsley, was hired as the general contractor with a bid of $54,990. Excavation began in April of 1926. The cornerstone was laid on August 5, 1926 with Bishop Arthur B. Statton of the United Brethren Church officiating. The school was not finished in time for school to begin in the new building in the fall of 1926; the board accepted new high school building from the architect and contractor in November. Teachers and students moved into the new school over Thanksgiving break in 1926 and the official building dedication was held December 3, 1926.[20]

T.W. Bucher, president of the Kansas State Teachers College of Emporia delivered the dedication address. All patrons of the district were invited for a basket dinner and tour of the building. The day's festivities concluded with an operetta given by the Grade School in the new high school auditorium that evening. The school was touted as semi-fireproof, "modern to the last word in school building construction with equipment second to none in this part of the state."[21] The gymnasium and auditorium were key features of the new school that were designed and open for pubic use. The school became an important part of the community and served it well for more than twenty years. A new gymnasium was built on the east side of the school in 1949. A new shop building was constructed shortly after and manual training was moved out of the school into the new building. A new boiler was also placed in this building (instead of in the basement of the school) and a new line laid to the school building.

In 1966, Unified School District 310 – Fairfield was formed. Schools in the communities of Sylvia, Arlington, Plevna, Abbyville, Langdon and Turon were eventually consolidated in the new Fairfield district. A new high school was built in Langdon (Fairfield) at this time. Sylvia was the last to join the new district. The last graduating class from Sylvia High School was the Class of 1969. Sylvia Grade School moved into the former high school and the old grade school was dismantled (the brick being used for construction of three houses on the old grade school grounds).[22] Sylvia Rural High School became Sylvia Grade School serving kindergarten through 8th grade. The school was remodeled to accommodate this change in use. The original gymnasium was converted to a kitchen and cafeteria because the school did not have a cafeteria; high school students had walked to the grade school for lunch since the school opened. The school has undergone other alterations over the years. In the 1980s, the auditorium was converted to music and computer rooms. Some classrooms have had minor modifications and suspended ceilings have been installed. A new middle school was

constructed at the high school in Langdon and the Sylvia school became pre-kindergarten through fifth grade. Today the school is called Fairfield West Elementary and continues to serve area residents.

Summary

Sylvia Rural High School was constructed in 1926 as the town's first freestanding high school, built to serve the community's growing high school enrollment. Although modern in plan and curriculum, the school is classified as a Late 19th and 20th Century Revival structure. The two story red brick school exemplifies the Colonial Revival Style of architecture. The plan configuration, however, was clearly influenced by the Standardization Movement emerging from the Progressive Era that resulted in spaces designed for specialized uses and an emphasis on safety and sanitation.

The school was designed by Hutchinson architects, Harry Routledge and Henry Hertz, who during their brief partnership designed county courthouses in Comanche, Edwards, Finney, Gray, Hodgeman, and Sherman counties, and public schools in Sylvia, Longford, Protection, and Winona. The design reflects the period in which it was constructed and the architects' exploration of a variety of architectural styles.

The Sylvia school maintains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, and association. The school retains the general characteristics of the property type including: its original site and setting, the original building form, the original roof form, the exterior brick and pattern of window and door openings, original ornamentation in the brick and stone detailing, and the primary interior configuration. Alterations to the school are a reflection of changing trends in school design and the change in use. The 1949 addition included a second gymnasium and home economics classroom. It was constructed off the east side of the school and almost appears freestanding. Utilitarian in design, the one-story brick addition is representative of the period in which it was constructed and has gained significance in its own right.

The major interior alteration occurred when the school became a grade school in 1969. Because the high school was constructed without a kitchen and cafeteria, those facilities had to be added when the old grade school (where high school students ate lunch) was scheduled for closure. The original gymnasium was converted to the kitchen and cafeteria on the ground floor and a library on the upper floor. The original gym floor and windows are in place in the cafeteria but the remodeling resulted in the enclosure of the gym balcony. Ironically, the west half of the balcony is extant, although obscured by a suspended ceiling; it is accessible through a locked door in the second floor corridor. The conversion of the high school to a grade school also resulted in modifications of some classrooms, primarily expansions involving the removal of original partition walls to make larger classrooms. In the 1980s, the original auditorium was similarly modified with suspended ceilings obscuring the balcony. The auditorium was also sub-divided creating two classrooms however, like the gym, the balcony is extant and visible above the existing ceiling. The modifications to the school are within the parameters defined in the multiple property submission and do not sufficiently impact the integrity of the building as to make it ineligible for listing.

The school does retain significant features including original windows on the north (front) and rear facades and the original red clay tile roof. On the interior, significant features and finishes include plaster walls and ceilings, quarry tile floors, concrete stairways with cast iron railings, original doors, some original varnished woodwork (other original woodwork is in place although it has been painted), and cast iron radiators.

The Sylvia Rural High School is a traditional example of the Town High School property type as the public high school built to serve community residents. Although it no longer serves that function, it continues use as a public school – Fairfield West Elementary, one of two grade schools in Unified School District #310. The school is significant as a representative of a Colonial Revival educational structure and the work of Hutchinson architects, Routledge & Hertz. The Sylvia Rural High School is nominated for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under the multiple property documentation form, *Historic Public Schools of Kansas* as a representative of the Town High School property type.

[3] Sylvia Centennial Committee, Sylvia, Kansas 1887 – 1987. (Shawnee Mission, Kansas: Kes-Print, Inc., 1987) 7.
[4] Sylvia Centennial Committee, "Seniors in the Schools – Program 2 – The Town." 1987, 1.
[5] Robert L. Collins, Touring Reno County. 1994, 34.
[6] Centennial Book, 7.
[7] Ibid, 8-25.
[8] Ibid, 19.
[9] Charlene Basmett Schoonover, "Sylvia High School Class of 1938 50th Year Anniversary Booklet," 1988, 9.
[10] Sylvia Centennial Committee, "Seniors in the Schools – Program 3 – The Churches and Schools," 4.
[11] E,S, Ping, "Sylvia School Reminiscences" *The Sylvia Sun*, March 4, 1926.
[12] Class of 1938 50th Anniversary, 90-91.
[13] Centennial Book, 41.
[14] Class of 1938 50th Anniversary, 90-91.
[15] Ibid, 9.
[16] Interview with Ruby Witte in Sylvia (member of first graduating class in new high school), March 31, 2005.
[17] *The Sylvia Sun*, September 10, 1925.
[18] *The Sylvia Sun*, September 3, 1925.
[19] "New Rural High School Building for Sylvia," *The Sylvia Sun*, March 4, 1926.
[20] *The Sylvia Sun*, March 4, April 1 & 15, August 5, November 25, and December 2, 1926.
[21] "Our New High School Building Now a Reality," *The Sylvia Sun,* December 2, 1926.
[22] Centennial Book, 41.

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Markle, Claude. "Sylvia – My Hometown As I Remember it." Unpublished manuscript written to celebrate Sylvia's Centennial, 1987. (Available at Sylvia City Library).

Personal interviews with local residents Larry Belton (1969 graduate and current school board member), Ruby White (of the first graduating class in new school, 1927), and Bill Hudson (local resident and graduate of Sylvia High School) March 31, 2005 in Sylvia.

Routledge and Hertz. Original watercolor rendering by architects (hanging in Sunflower Center in downtown Sylvia), 1926.

Schoonover, Charlene Basmett ed. "Sylvia High School Class of 1938 50th Anniversary 1938 – 1988." Unpublished booklet available at Sylvia City Library.

Spencer, Brenda R. *Historic Public Schools of Kansas*, National Register Multiple Property Nomination, 2004.

Spencer, Brenda R. *Reconnaissance Survey of Sylvia Rural High School,* May, 2004.

Sylvia Centennial Committee. Sylvia, Kansas 1887 – 1987, Centennial Program." (program text available at Sylvia City Library), 1987.

Sylvia Centennial Committee. Sylvia, Kansas 1887 – 1987. Shawnee Mission, Kansas: Kes-Print, Inc., 1987.

The Sylvia Sun. 3 and 9 September, 1925; 4 March, 1 and 15 April, 5 August, 25 November, and 2 December, 1926.

Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description – E 13.5 Acres in N ½ W NW ¼ Excluding Road ROW; Sylvia Township. Section 22 Township 24 Range 10W. The site is bordered on the north by Old Highway 50.

Boundary Justification – The site is comprised of the original tract acquired for the construction of the high school in 1925. It includes the school, gymnasium, out buildings and outdoor recreational facilities.

Additional Documentation

Maps
USGS map attached
Figure 1 – Site Plan Sketch (Spencer, 2004)

Historic Views
Figure 2 – Architects' Rendering
Figure 3 – Historic Views of Sylvia Schools

Photographs

Sylvia Rural High School (aka Sylvia Grade School and now, Fairfield West Elementary School)
Reno County, Kansas

Photos were taken by Brenda Spencer March 31, 2005. KSHS holds the original negatives.

#	Description of View [direction of camera]
1	Front (north) facade [south]
2	Detail of front (north) main entrance [south]
3	Detail of windows, roof and parapet on north [south]
4	Detail of tripartite windows on north facade, east end wing [southeast]
5	West facade [northeast]
6	Outbuildings along west drive (shop, bus barn and storage shed) [southwest]
7	South facade [north]
8	Gym addition at southeast corner of original school [northeast]
9	Corridor connection between school and gymnasium addition at east end wing [north]
10	Gymnasium rear (south) and east facades [northwest]
11	Gymnasium front (north) facade [south]
12	Front facade of school and gymnasium [southeast]
13	Foyer at front (north) entrance, office on left [northwest]
14	Ground floor corridor, looking east [east]
15	One of two twin stairways flanking rear gym, from 2nd floor corridor [south]
16	Original doors in second floor corridor [north]
17	Replacement windows and original radiator in typical classroom, northwest corner of ground floor [west]
18	Original multi-pane steel windows with operable awning panel on rear facade of original gymnasium, now kitchen [south]
19	Cafeteria in original gymnasium, south side of ground floor [southwest]
20	Library on second floor over west half of original gymnasium [southeast]
21	Gymnasium balcony on upper floor (obscured by suspended ceiling), over east half of original gymnasium [south]
22	Window (with original varnished trim) and column at original proscenium arch in second floor auditorium (now music room). Balcony obscured by suspended ceiling. [northeast]
23	Typical class room, northeast corner, ground floor [northeast]
24	Built-in cabinets and pass-through window in original domestic science room, northeast corner of ground floor [north]
25	Corridor connection to gymnasium addition, at southeast corner of original school [south]
26	1949 gymnasium with stage on south end [south]

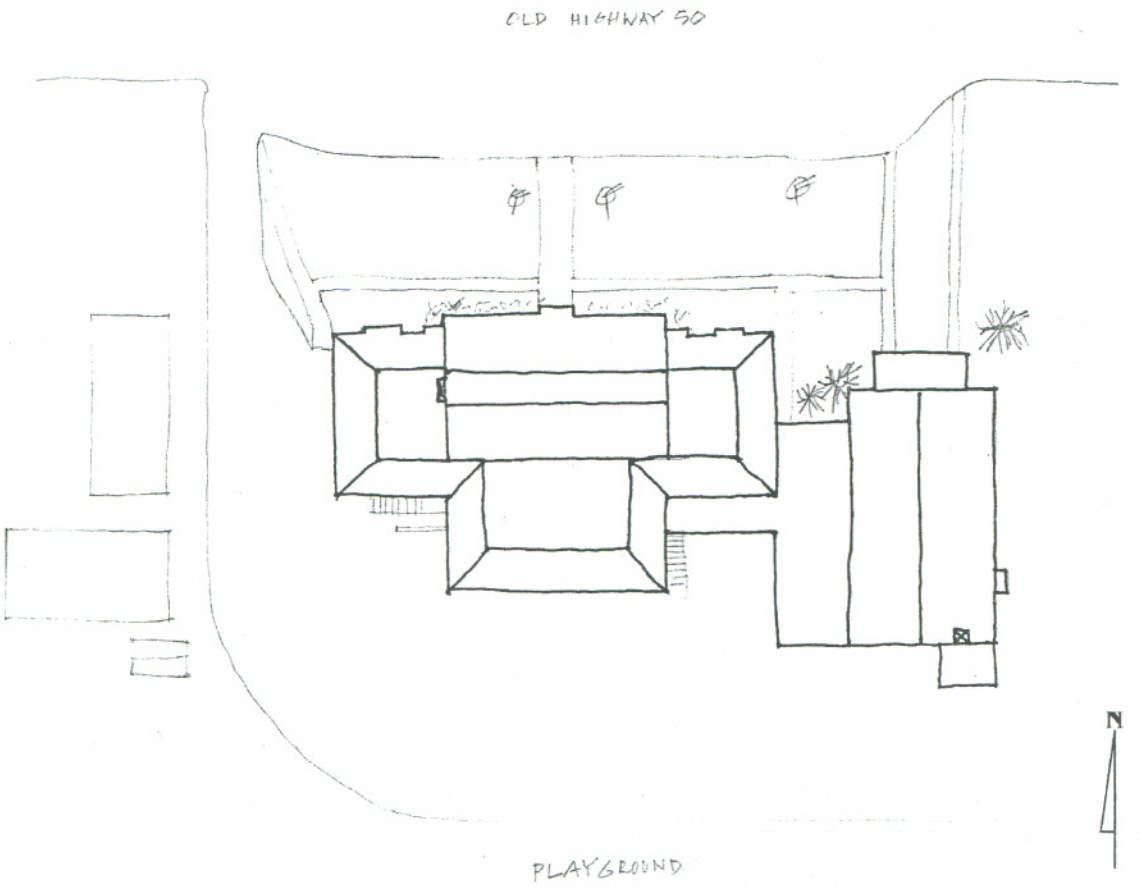


Figure 1 – Site Sketch Plan (Spencer, 2004)

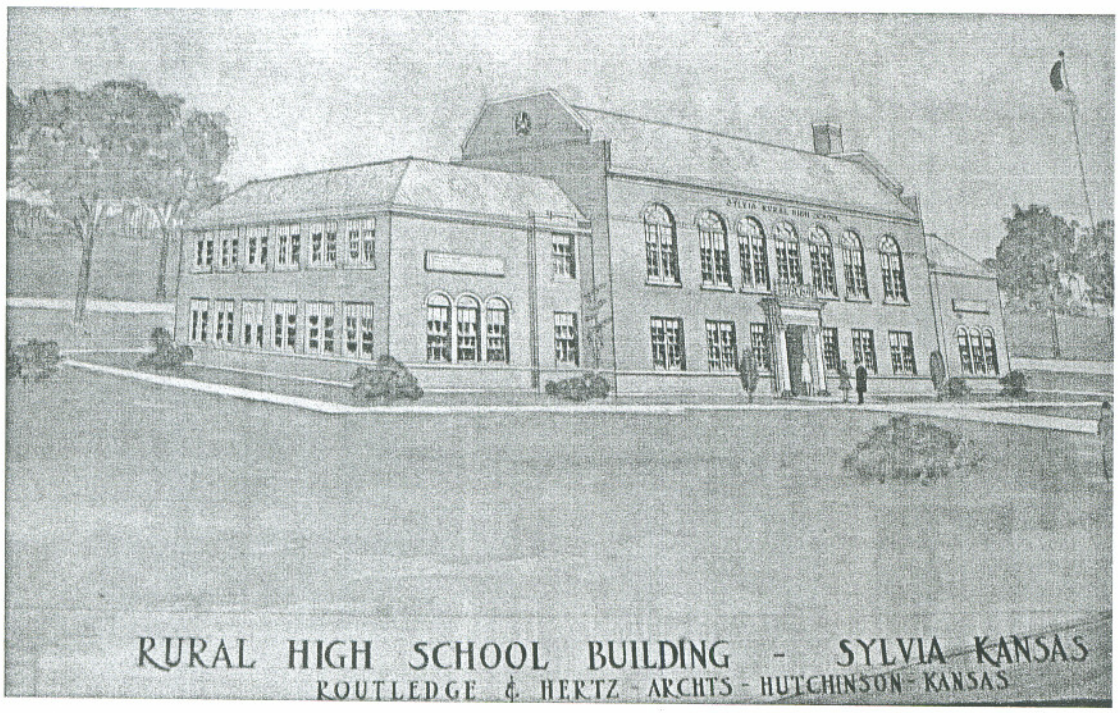


Figure 2 - Architects Watercolor Rendering (Routledge & Hertz, 1926)
Picture is hanging in Sunflower Center in downtown Sylvia

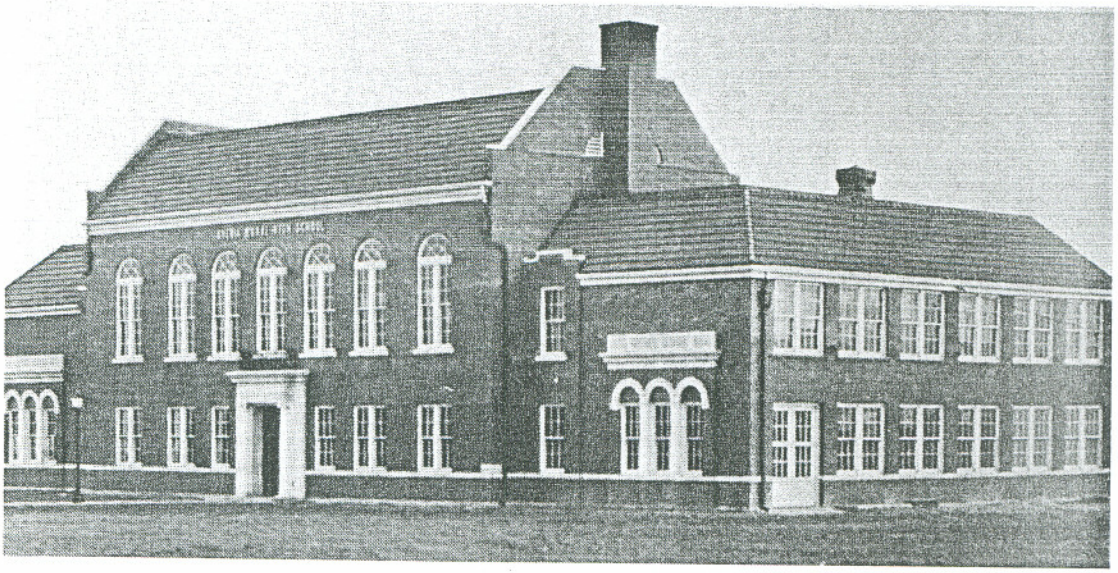
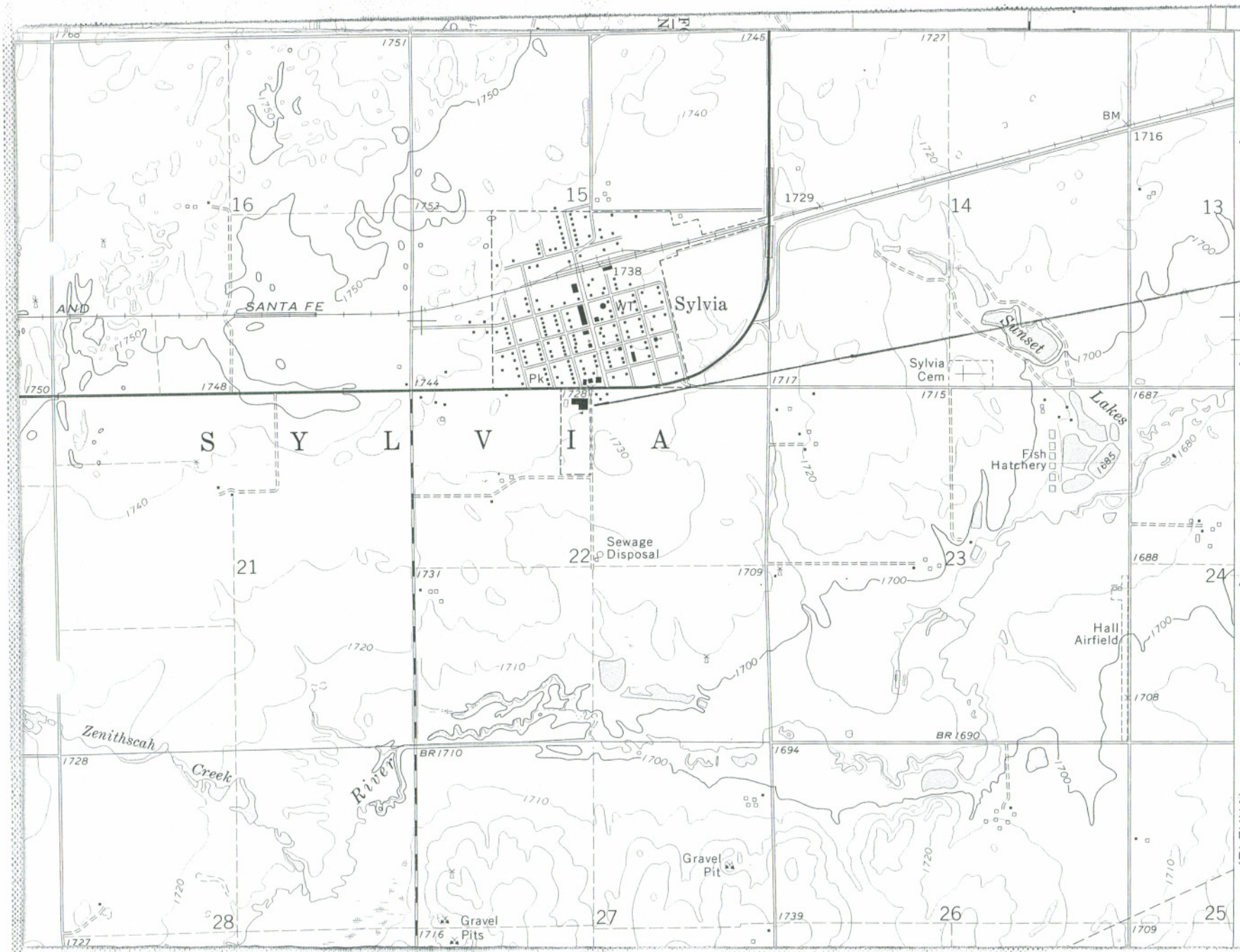


Figure 3 – Historic Views of Sylvia Rural High School
Source: Sylvia, Kansas 1887 – 1987 Centennial Book, 1987, no date on photo.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