

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

1. Name of Property

Historic Name: Anderson Stadium
Other name/site number: Yellow Jacket Stadium
Name of related multiple property listing: NA

2. Location

Street & number: South of the intersection of Hargrave Avenue, Rosewood Avenue, and Thompson Street
City or town: Austin State: Texas County: Travis
Not for publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐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 12/22/21
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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___ determined not eligible for the National Register.

___ removed from the National Register

___ other, explain: _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Anderson Stadium, Austin, Travis County, Texas

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

<input type="checkbox"/>	Private
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public - Federal

Category of Property

<input type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
3	2	buildings
1	0	sites
2	3	structures
0	4	objects
6	9	total

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

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions: RECREATION AND CULTURE/sports facility = stadium

Current Functions: RECREATION AND CULTURE/sports facility = stadium

7. Description

Architectural Classification: NO STYLE

Principal Exterior Materials: Concrete

Narrative Description (see continuation sheets 7 through 13)

Anderson Stadium, Austin, Travis County, Texas

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria: A

Criteria Considerations: NA

Areas of Significance: Entertainment/Recreation; Ethnic Heritage: Black (state level)

Period of Significance: 1953-1971

Significant Dates: 1953, 1960

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

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

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance (see continuation sheets 14 through 24)

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography (see continuation sheet 25-29)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested. Part 1 approved on (date)
- ☐ 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: Austin History Center, Austin, Texas

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): NA

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: 7 acres

Coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: NA

1. Latitude: 30.270076 Longitude: -97.710165

Verbal Boundary Description: Hargrave Street from Neal Street north to Thompson Street for the western boundary, Thompson Street east to the historic fence line between Anderson Stadium and L.C. Anderson High School for the northern boundary, south along the historic fence line to Neal Street for the eastern boundary, and then west along Neal Street to Hargrave Street for the southern boundary. The boundary is delineated on Map 4 on page 34.

Boundary Justification: The boundary follows the historic fence line of the Anderson Stadium. The boundary encompasses the topography of the stadium, the grass field, all buildings, and objects historically associated with the Anderson Stadium. The eastern portion of the parcel where the 1953 L.C. Anderson High School sat has been excluded because the school is undergoing reconstruction into a new high school building.

11. Form Prepared By

Name/title: Rebekah Dobrasko (with assistance from NR Coordinator Gregory Smith)

Organization: Original L.C. Anderson High School Alumni Association, volunteer

Street & number:

City or Town: Austin State: TX Zip Code: 78741

Email: rdobrasko@hotmail.com

Telephone: 803-467-6360

Date: June 12, 2021

Additional Documentation

Maps (see continuation sheets 30-34)

Additional items (see continuation sheets 35-46)

Photographs (see continuation sheets 47-59)

Anderson Stadium, Austin, Travis County, Texas

Photograph Log

Anderson Stadium
Austin, Travis County, Texas

Photos 1-21 December 2021 by Gregory Smith
Photos 22-25 March 2020 by Rebekah Dobrasko

Photo 1
Stadium overview from north side facing southeast

Photo 2
Stadium overview from north side facing south

Photo 3
Stadium overview from east side facing northwest

Photo 4
Stadium overview from southeast facing northwest

Photo 5 :North end zone from south end of the field

Photo 6
Looking towards the southeast corner from the track

Photo 7
East side of the stadium bowl from the south end

Photo 8
East side of the stadium bowl from the south end of field with long jump area in foreground

Photo 9
Ticket booth and field house at southwest corner from playing field

Photo 10
Looking southeast toward the field house from the track

Photo 11
Scoreboard and south goalpost, looking north from the track

Photo 12
Scoreboard and south goalpost, looking southwest from the field

Photo 13
Northeast side (bleachers, restrooms/concession stand, new fieldhouse), facing northeast

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Photo 14

Northeast side (bleachers, restrooms/concession stand, new field house), facing southeast

Photo 15

Concession stand, looking northeast

Photo 16

North stairs on east side, facing northeast

Photo 17

Concrete retaining wall, looking north

Photo 18

Ticket booth, looking southwest

Photo 19

South stairs and ticket booth, looking east

Photo 20

Fieldhouse, looking south

Photo 21

Restrooms and concession stand, looking southeast

Photo 22

Interior of second floor of fieldhouse, showing locker room, original benches, and openings to office space

Photo 23

Interior of second floor of fieldhouse, with second locker room, original benches, and openings to office space

Photo 24

Fieldhouse, detail photograph of original water fountain on front façade of building, March 2020.

Photo 25

Fieldhouse, detail of metal windows on second floor for locker room, March 2020.

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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Description

Anderson Stadium, also known as Yellow Jacket Stadium, is a football and track and field facility constructed in 1953 as part of the larger L.C. Anderson High School property, the segregated all-Black public high school for Austin, Texas. The stadium sits at a lower topographical level from the school site, in a partial bowl, and includes a mix of built and landscape features.¹ Contributing resources include a flat, grassy field within the topographic depression of the stadium, along with concrete infrastructure to maintain that bowl; a 1960 two-story concrete block fieldhouse with equipment storage on the first floor and locker and shower rooms on the second floor; a small concrete ticket stand; two concrete stairs leading from the school site down into the stadium; and a one-story concrete block concession stand. From the beginning, Anderson Stadium was unequal to the white House Park Stadium in Austin, as the school district used cheaper building materials of less permanence, such as wooden and metal bleachers for spectators as opposed to the concrete bleachers at House Park. In addition, because of policies and decisions surrounding the closure and ultimate reuse of the original L.C. Anderson High School and Stadium, the stadium suffered from neglect and disinvestment as the Austin Independent School District (AISD) did not maintain any of the buildings or structures at the stadium, causing their loss. At one point in its history, the stadium was paved for parking and many of the original features of the field removed, including the original lights, goal posts, scoreboard, bleachers, the dirt and gravel track, the grass field, and a concrete block restroom building. The stadium sat in this condition until the surrounding community, led by former National Football League (NFL) player Thomas “Hollywood” Henderson, removed the concrete and restored the grass field and track. The current metal bleachers, goal posts, scoreboard, and a one-story concrete block restroom and concession stand date to this restoration in the 1990s. Currently, AISD is constructing a new field house and bathrooms adjacent to the c.2019 restroom building. Anderson Stadium is a mix of original buildings and landscape features, restored landscape features from the 1990s reclamation of the field, and a new building intended to continue the use of the site.

Anderson Stadium sits at the intersection of Rosewood Avenue, Hargrave Street, and Thompson Streets in east Austin. The stadium is part of a larger parcel that encompasses the 1953 L.C. Anderson High School site. Currently, the former Anderson School building is being replaced with a new high school campus. The stadium is distinct within the overall high school site as it sits at a lower topographical level from the high school. The stadium is surrounded by a metal fence. Access to the stadium from the school site is by two 1953 concrete staircases. There is public access to the stadium from a small parking lot along the west from Rosewood Avenue. A 2019 rubber track surrounds a grass football field. Metal football goal posts are located on the north and south sides of the field, with a c. 1994 electronic scoreboard at the south end of the field. The historic buildings (fieldhouse, concession stand, and ticket booth) are all on the east side of the stadium closest to the school site. Both newer buildings, the c. 2019 concession stand and restroom building and the fieldhouse currently under construction, are on the western side of the stadium. Two small c. 1994 sets of metal bleachers are on both the east and west sides of the field. The Austin downtown skyline is visible from the stadium, although the stadium is approximately 2 miles east of the Texas State Capitol. Anderson Stadium is surrounded by residential properties, including the 1953 Booker T. Washington public housing project, and is adjacent to the Boggy Creek Greenbelt.

Anderson Stadium Building Programs

1950s

Anderson Stadium opened in 1953 along with a new L.C. Anderson High School building as part of a 21-acre site. The stadium was built in a natural “bowl” on the school site, taking advantage of the steep topography that was not suitable for buildings. Initial construction work included leveling the ground in the stadium for the grass field and dirt and gravel

¹ Anderson Stadium meets the basic definition of a stadium, which is tiers of seating for spectators around a field. Traditional Texas high school football stadiums, however, often consist of substantial and permanent seating for thousands; buildings for locker rooms, equipment, concessions, restrooms; scoreboards, and fencing.

Anderson Stadium, Austin, Travis County, Texas

track. When the stadium first opened in 1953, it contained minimal features. At that time, the stadium opened with the field and track; high-mast lighting, allowing for night games; two concrete staircases leading from the higher elevation of Anderson High School down into the stadium; goal posts; an electronic scoreboard; and small wooden bleacher only on the west side of the stadium. It is likely that spectators for the early games played at the stadium used the sloping grass hill between the concrete stairs on the east side of the stadium as seating.

Demand from citizen groups to improve the stadium and make it more like the football stadium for the white Austin high schools, House Park, led to additional improvements. By 1955, more wooden bleachers were constructed on the east side of the stadium. The wood and metal bleachers on the western side of the field were enlarged for additional seating. By 1957, these western bleachers contained a large press box at the top of the seating area. The east side bleachers were also enlarged, and stretched up to the top of the “bowl,” completely filling between the two concrete stairways into the stadium. The topography of the stadium continued to provide seating for spectators unable to fit into the bleachers. For important games, one alumni notes that “it was people standing around the fence, it was people standing around the bleachers.”² Often, white spectators would also come to watch the games, typically from outside the stadium around the fence, and the University of Texas at Austin’s football coach, Darryl Royal, attended many Anderson High School games.³

Contributing features to the stadium from this building period include the natural “bowl” and eastern hill of the stadium, the flat grassy field and track space, and the concrete staircases leading from the school into the stadium.

1960

Austin Public Schools constructed the remainder of the historic concrete block buildings at the stadium for use beginning in the 1960-1961 school year. Contributing features to the stadium from this period include the fieldhouse, concession stand, and ticket booth.

1960 Fieldhouse (Contributing Building)

The fieldhouse is a two-story concrete block building constructed into the hill on the southeast corner of the stadium track. The fieldhouse includes an equipment space, restrooms, and locker rooms. Prior to the fieldhouse construction, football and track teams used the locker rooms in the L.C. Anderson High School gymnasium outside of the stadium.

The building has a flat roof with a wooden overhang. On the first floor of the northwest/main façade are five original openings with non-historic doors. One opening is a garage door leading into the equipment storage spaces of the building. The remaining openings lead to restrooms and office spaces. There are two contributing water fountains on the first floor of the fieldhouse. The second floor of the northwest façade has three metal windows for each of the two locker rooms on this floor, for a total of six windows. The fieldhouse is on a concrete slab foundation.

Concrete staircases with metal pipe railing lead to the locker rooms on the second floor. The northeast and southwest facades have the concrete stairs leading to a non-historic metal door on the second floor. The rear façade of the building, the southeast façade, is only one story due to the construction of the fieldhouse into the hill along the east side of the stadium. This façade has two metal windows for each of the locker rooms, for a total of four windows. There is a concrete apron along the back that diverts stormwater away from the building.

The locker rooms include an office/meeting space, shower rooms, and the locker/changing room space. The lockers are no longer extant, but four metal benches for the players to sit while changing are in each locker room, bolted into the

² Bruce Blackwell, “Nathanial Robinson, Class of 1965,” YouTube, September 23, 2012, interview, 1:45, <https://youtu.be/fw3fB661oEw>.

³ Bruce Blackwell, “Ed Roby, Class of 1960,” YouTube, September 25, 2012, interview, 9:20, <https://youtu.be/UUsPVEEi6wM>.

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concrete floor. The walls are of unadorned concrete block and the ceilings are open to the metal rafters. The small square metal window in each locker room allow coaches to watch the game from the office space within the locker rooms.

1960 Ticket Booth (Contributing Building)

The ticket booth sits at the top of the east hill next to the southern set of concrete steps leading from the high school site down in to the stadium. The ticket booth is a small concrete block building with a flat roof. A non-historic door leads to the interior, which is a small open box with a window on the west side of the building. The window opening that allows for selling and taking tickets also allows for viewing of the game in the stadium. While the glass of the window is no longer extant, the opening is extant and boarded closed.

1960 Concession Stand (Contributing Building)

The concession stand is a small concrete block and wooden building at the northeast corner of the stadium track. A similar building, likely including restrooms, was on the northwest corner of the stadium track, but it is no longer extant. The building has a flat roof with a wooden overhang. It is a one-story concrete block building, with the north elevation of the building constructed into the hill behind it. The south elevation of the building has two wooden doors leading into the concession stand. The concession window is currently infilled with concrete block, although the outline of the window remains. There are no windows on the other elevations. The building is on a concrete slab with a concrete walkway leading from the track to and in front of the north elevation.

1980s

The Austin Independent School District (AISD) closed L.C. Anderson High School in 1971 and bused its students to the other schools in the district. AISD chose school closure as its way to integrate the public school system. In 1982, AISD allowed the new Austin Community Center (ACC) to use the old Anderson High School. ACC needed parking for its student commuters, and AISD and ACC paved the track and field of the Anderson Stadium for that parking. Historic aerial photographs indicate the stadium's bleachers, goal posts, electronic scoreboard, and the northeast concession stand/restroom building were removed between 1973 and 1981. The concrete staircases, east ticket booth, fieldhouse, and northeast concession stand buildings all remained during the use of the field as a parking lot. ACC moved from the old Anderson High School in 1989.

1990s

AISD did not maintain the stadium or its buildings after closing L.C. Anderson High School. In 1993, former Anderson High and National Football League (NFL) player Thomas "Hollywood" Henderson decided to restore Anderson Stadium to again serve as a community center in east Austin. AISD was happy to turn over the maintenance and upkeep of the stadium to Henderson's non-profit. Several funding campaigns in the 1990s resulted in the removal of the parking lot concrete and restoration of the grass field; installation of a rubber track in the same configuration as the original track; installation of goal posts and an electronic scoreboard; installation of high-mast metal lights; construction of a small one-story concession stand and restroom building on the northwest end of the stadium, and the installation of small aluminum bleachers. Henderson also installed irrigation and committed to overseeing the use of the stadium by community groups. Although the upgrades and restoration conducted by Henderson are in keeping with the historic character, design, and materials of the stadium, none of the features from this period are contributing to the stadium.

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2010s

Henderson's non-profit continued to make improvements at Anderson Stadium, now renamed Yellow Jacket Stadium after the high school's mascot, in the 2000s. Recent changes in 2019 include the installation of a new running track and the upgrade and replacement of the c. 1994 one-story concrete concession stand building to a larger building with more restrooms. This building is a non-contributing feature of the stadium due to its recent construction.

AISD embarked on a building program to upgrade the historic L.C. Anderson High School site into a new high school building. As part of this recent building program, AISD also replaced the non-historic chain link fencing around Anderson Stadium. AISD is also constructing a new fieldhouse and restroom building. The new one-story fieldhouse sits adjacent to the upgraded c. 2019 concession stand building on the northwest part of the stadium. The new fieldhouse is a metal building with a flat roof and is opposite the stadium from the 1960 concrete block fieldhouse. This building will be non-contributing to the stadium due to its recent construction. A recently built widening concrete accessibility ramp (noncontributing structure) winds down the east side side of the stadium bowl.

Table of Properties

Feature	Year Built	Category	C / NC
Football Field and Track within reinforced earthen depression	1953; rebuilt	Site	C
Goal Posts (2)	c. 1994	Objects	NC
Scoreboard	c.1994	Object	NC
Field House	1960	Building	C
Stair Cases (2)	1953	Structure	C
Ticket Booth	1960	Building	C
Concession Stand	1960	Building	C
East Bleachers	c.1994	Structure	NC
West Bleachers	c.1994	Structure	NC
High Mast Lighting	c.1994	Object	NC
Concession Stand	c.1994, rehabilitated 2019	Building	NC
Field House	2021	Building	NC
East Side Accessibility Ramp	2021	Structure	NC

Integrity

The Anderson Stadium is significant under Criterion A in the area of Entertainment/Recreation and Ethnic Heritage Black. It is locally significant as one of the only statewide examples of a sports stadium built exclusively for the use of a segregated Black public high school. Anderson Stadium retains sufficient integrity to convey its historic significance, which represent the stadium as a center of east Austin's African American community, a place for student sports championships, leadership, and pride, and as one of the only remaining African American high school sports stadiums in Texas.

The integrity of Anderson Stadium has suffered from changes over time. Due to local discriminatory institutional policies surrounding segregation and integration, Anderson Stadium endured a period of neglect and active erasure. The Austin ISD built Nelson Field c.1963 to serve the schools in northeast Austin, and after L.C. Anderson High School closed in 1971, the district no longer had a use for the Anderson Stadium. AISD did not maintain any of the structures or buildings in the stadium, and then removed many of the features, including the large wooden and metal bleachers, the goal posts, and the electronic scoreboard. This decision to dismantle Anderson Stadium and later pave the field and track for parking occurred while AISD continued to maintain and use the previous all-white House Park Stadium adjacent to Austin High School.

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Although the stadium suffered neglect and the removal of features, Anderson alumni and the African American community at large still regard L.C. Anderson High School and the football stadium with pride. The loss of some aspects of integrity is part of the story of Anderson Stadium, reflecting the institutional disinvestment common in Black property and community resources, especially during and after segregation. Evidence of this pride and recognition of the continued importance of the stadium can be seen in Hollywood Henderson's restoration of the facility. After decades of inattention, AISD agreed to allow Henderson to restore and manage Anderson Stadium for the benefit of the east Austin youth and surrounding neighborhood community.

Despite these changes that stemmed from AISD's decisions to close Anderson High School and no longer maintain the school or the stadium, Anderson Stadium retains sufficient integrity to convey its historic significance, especially aspects of location, materials, setting, feeling, and association.⁴ It is clearly recognizable today as a high school sports facility.

Location

Anderson Stadium remains in its historic location in east Austin, where the city of Austin segregated its services to the African American population. It is adjacent to the site of the 1953 L.C. Anderson High School building, which has been demolished and is in the process of being replaced with a new high school. The importance of its integrity of location is the stadium's location on the site of the L.C. Anderson High School. The students at Anderson did not have to share their stadium with the white students and therefore were able to have this central location as a center of pride, achievement, and community. Although the historic 1953 school building is no longer extant, the stadium will continue to be adjacent to a high school and used by the surrounding community.

Design

Anderson Stadium has a typical football and track stadium design. The center of the stadium is a level grass playing field surrounded by a running track. The football field and track are oriented in a north-south direction. The ancillary buildings and objects supporting the stadium ring the outside of the track. The historic buildings include a two-story concrete block field house and a one-story concrete block concession stand. Non-historic buildings and objects include metal bleachers, an electronic scoreboard, high mast lighting, a one-story concession stand, and a one-story field house currently under construction. However, these non-historic buildings and objects are similar in materials and location to the original bleachers, lights, and concession stand, except for the electronic scoreboard, which is now at the south end of the stadium.

Although the design of the stadium has been altered, most notably in the removal of the large wooden bleachers designed to seat thousands at the games, these alterations are part of the story and the significance of Anderson Stadium. Anderson's bleachers were built of a less-permanent material, wood, as opposed to the poured-in-place concrete used in the bleachers of House Park Stadium, the Austin facility that served all but the school district's African American students, faculty, staff, families, and fans. Additionally, the bleachers were often too small to contain all the spectators,

⁴ Integrity issues for sites associated with people of color and marginalized communities have been well documented. However, although the historic places may lose some integrity, the importance of these places to the marginalized communities is significant and strong. The current state of Anderson Stadium shows the dilemma when determining integrity of important African American spaces—neglect, poor initial construction, disinvestment, and systemic racism all took their toll on this important place, but it endures. See National Council on Public History's History@Work blog post, "Repairing National Register Nominations: Underrepresented Communities and Integrity," available online at: <https://ncph.org/history-at-work/repairing-national-register-nominations-underrepresented-communities-and-integrity/>, 21 July 2020; National Trust for Historic Preservation's "Preserving African American Places: Growing Preservation's Potential as a Path for Equity," available online at: <https://savingplaces.org/equity-report>, October 2020; and the recent opinion by Sara Bronin, "How to Fix a National Register of Historic Places that Reflects Mostly White History," in the *Los Angeles Times*, available online at: <https://www.latimes.com/opinion/story/2020-12-15/historic-preservation-chicano-moratorium-national-register>, 15 December 2020 for additional discussion around integrity and minority spaces.

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who would watch Anderson games from the hill created by the topography of the stadium, as well as along the fenceline. Both those features are still extant, although the historic fencing material has been replaced. The removal of the bleachers and other changes reflect the lack of financial investment, maintenance, and continued use of the stadium after racial integration. The flat open spaces where the historic bleachers sat are still extant and can accommodate larger bleachers if additional financial investment into the stadium is forthcoming. The current smaller bleachers are indicative of AISD's historic lack of interest in using the stadium for public school purposes, as accommodation for large crowds is not currently needed.

Setting

Anderson Stadium is located in an east Austin residential neighborhood that is seeing changes as development and gentrification move further east from Austin's downtown. L.C. Anderson High School and Stadium were built across Thompson Street from the Booker T. Washington public housing projects, which opened in 1953 at the same time as the school. The public housing apartments are still visible from the Anderson Stadium. In addition, the stadium sits on a lower topographical level than the high school site, comprising part of a bowl as the land slopes down toward Boggy Creek. The bowl is significant to the seating and viewing of games or meets at the field, as many spectators sat on the bowl to watch competitions. This setting is still evident today. The landscape of open field and spaces for sports is still extant, as well as the orientation of the field and track on a north-south axis.

Materials

Multiple historic materials are still evident at the stadium, including the concrete block used for the buildings and stairs leading down into the stadium, and the grassy field. The historic track was a sand and dirt track, and it has been upgraded to a modern rubber track, retaining its historic configuration and orientation. The non-contributing buildings, such as the concession stand and field house, and the non-contributing stadium lights use materials similar to the historic materials. The wooden bleachers are no longer extant and replaced with smaller metal bleachers.

Workmanship

Anderson Stadium did not have a high level of workmanship in the buildings and landscape of the track, especially as compared to the Moderne-influenced House Park Stadium. The historic buildings are of basic concrete blocks and are simple, square, utilitarian buildings. The stadium retains the simple buildings and open landscape needed for a football stadium.

Feeling

Anderson Stadium continues to evoke the feeling of a special, significant place, especially for the larger African American community and Anderson alumni. Anderson Stadium was never as elaborate or as designed as Austin High's House Park. Anderson Stadium's construction was less permanent in nature, with wooden and metal bleachers. However, the remaining buildings, the field, and open space still evoke a powerful sense of feeling for the alumni and Austin's Black community.

Anderson Stadium is what historic preservationist Ned Kaufman calls a "storyscape."⁵ It is a landscape that evokes strong memories and stories from Austin's African American community. Students won sports championships playing and practicing on the field. Marching band members and dance team members led the crowds in fight songs and cheers.

⁵ Ned Kaufman, *Place, Race, and Story: Essays on the Past and Future of Historic Preservation*, New York: Routledge, 2009, see Chapter 2 starting on page 38.

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Anderson stadium served as a center of Black community life, where people could watch games, cheer on their local team, have fun with neighbors and friends, and celebrate success in sports and leadership.

Despite the changes over time, this sense of feeling remains as indicated in the hundreds of thousands of dollars raised to restore the field from a concrete parking lot. It is evident in the oral histories and memories of the L.C. Anderson High School alumni.⁶ Although some of the stadium's design, materials, and workmanship are not completely intact, the feeling of significance and importance the stadium invokes among the community is extant.

Association

Anderson Stadium retains its identity as a football field and as a place for recreation and sport. It is adjacent to a high school site. The association of Anderson Stadium with the pride of L.C. Anderson High School, with the championships and leadership of its sports teams and marching band, and as a place where thousands of Black Austinites celebrated their community, their children, and their leaders remains. The stadium is still in use as a community center and a place for recreation and games. It sits in the middle of the east Austin African American community, one that is becoming more fractured and displaced every year. But the African American community still claims Anderson Stadium and the site of L.C. Anderson High School as one of the important Black community institutions remaining in Austin.

Anderson Stadium endured through time, despite the attempts to erase it by neglecting maintenance on the buildings, paving the football field for parking, and removing the bleachers, scoreboard, and track. It continues to form a significant part of the landscape of east Austin, one of a few African American historic places that are rapidly disappearing. Although the African American community and the alumni of L.C. Anderson High School may be dispersed across Texas and the nation, the association of Anderson Stadium with school and community pride is very strong, regardless of the changes over time reflective of places associated with African American history. Efforts by the alumni and community to reclaim that history include funding the continual upkeep and maintenance of the stadium. The community even renamed the stadium to Yellow Jacket Stadium, referencing L.C. Anderson High School's mascot that was relegated to memory when AISD closed the high school in 1971.

⁶ Bruce Blackwell conducted many interviews with Original L.C. Anderson High School alumni. The videos of the interviews can be found on his YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCM1hUsOVdr1YRuqq3ypdqTQ>

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Statement of Significance

Opened in 1953, Anderson Stadium, in Austin, Travis County, Texas stands as the last of only a few exclusively African American high school football stadiums ever constructed in Texas. Unlike any extant property in Texas, Anderson Stadium reflects the history of African American high school football, track and field, marching band in a segregated school system, and continues to serve as a place of community gatherings, and stands as a place of high esteem in Austin. In addition, Anderson Stadium tells the story of discrimination and systemic racism faced by the Black community in struggling to obtain “separate but equal” facilities. Anderson Stadium never received the funding lavished upon its whites-only counterpart, Austin’s House Park Stadium, and therefore was built with cheaper materials, such as wooden bleachers compared to the substantial concrete grandstands at House Park. This inequality of segregated school facilities was a direct factor in Anderson’s loss of integrity after integration of schools diminished the utility of the school and its stadium, whose wooden structures could be easily removed. Instead of investing in Anderson Stadium after integration, the school district opted to build a larger and costlier second stadium for district-wide use (Nelson Field, c.1963), an indication that the ISD recognized the inherent inequality of the Anderson facilities. The district discontinued use of Anderson Stadium in 1971 as part of its ongoing school integration plan, and afterward no longer maintained it. While some of the stadium’s built components (most notably its playing field and track) have been rebuilt, the overall historic look and feeling of the facility are intact within its unmistakable bowl-like setting, which allowed for large numbers of attendees far beyond the capacity of its bleachers. Despite the removal of the original bleachers, the stadium continues to convey its prestige within the African American community, for which quality of construction was secondary to the stadium’s role as a venue for student achievement. Anderson Stadium is nominated as a significant cultural landscape at the state level, meeting the Criterion A in the areas Ethnic Heritage: Black and Entertainment/Recreation as an African American high school football, track and field, and marching band stadium, and as a key community property in Austin and the State of Texas. The period of significance is 1953-1971, the years of the stadium’s active use.

East Austin

Development in what is now considered to be east Austin began shortly after the Civil War, as more Texans moved to the capital city. Some of the earliest settlements in east Austin were freedom colonies, concentration of formerly enslaved African Americans that banded together for social, economic, and safety reasons. One freedom colony was Masontown. In addition, Robertson Hill and Pleasant Hill communities also developed in east Austin. As part of these freedom colonies, African American residents began establishing institutions like churches, businesses, and schools.⁷ As African American residents in other part of Austin suffered from flooding or racist actions, they moved to the freedom colonies in east Austin. East Austin continued to grow, especially with the arrival of the railroads to Austin in 1871. In the late nineteenth century, European immigrants, African Americans, and Mexican Americans all flocked to different neighborhoods in east Austin, especially as development pressures in central Austin forced working class people out of the downtown area. However, by the early twentieth century, most of Austin’s African American population lived in east Austin, with only a few Black enclaves in freedom colonies such as Clarksville and Wheatville. The major dividing line in the city was East Avenue (now Interstate 35), approximately seven blocks east of the capitol building. On the west side of East Avenue stood the downtown business district along Congress Avenue, the University of Texas, and most of the city’s paved roads.⁸

⁷ Hardy-Heck-Moore. “East Austin Historic Context, City of Austin Historic Resources Survey,” vol. 1, report for the City of Austin Historic Preservation Office, I-18-I-20.

⁸ Ibid. I-30, I-53

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Early Black High Schools and the Creation of Anderson High School

Early Black public education began in some of Austin's freedmen communities scattered across the new capital city. Black educators founded early schools in Robertson Hill, Clarksville, Masontown, and Gregorytown. What became Austin's first African American high school opened in 1889 in Robertson Hill, on the corner of San Marcos Street and East 11th Street in east Austin. Enrollment quickly caused overcrowding, especially as the Robertson Hill School taught all grades, including elementary and high schools. The high school broke away from the Robertson Hill School and a new, two-story frame high school opened in 1907. This was known as the Olive Street School.⁹

The Olive Street school quickly became unsuitable, as it was the only African American public high school in Austin. Black students came from across the city, and soon AISD needed to build a new, larger brick high school nearby on the corner of Pennsylvania Avenue and Comal Streets. This school opened in 1913 as E.H. Anderson High School, named after Prairie View Normal School's first Black president. E.H.'s brother, L.C. Anderson, was principal of Austin's Black high school from 1896 through 1928, and upon his death, the school was renamed L.C. Anderson High School.¹⁰ Anderson High School began organizing sport teams in the early twentieth century, first focusing on football and basketball. After Rosewood Park opened in 1930, Anderson began using some of the park fields for baseball teams and marching band practice.

The 1928 City Plan Solidifies African American Segregation in Austin

In 1928, Austin hired the engineering firm Koch & Fowler to write a new city plan. In addition to planning street paving, new bridges, wastewater treatment, and a new airport, the city plan recommended that Austin officially segregate African Americans by only providing segregated public city services in east Austin. The creation of this "Negro District" meant that the city would only fund public schools, libraries, water lines, and street paving to Black citizens in east Austin, and nowhere else. The plan specifically chose east Austin as the Negro District as African American institutions were already present and beginning to flourish in east Austin. Samuel Huston College and Tillotson College were two institutes of higher learning for Black students located in east Austin. L.C. Anderson High School was the city's sole Black high school and it was in east Austin. Churches, businesses, doctor offices, and other institutions opened in east Austin. The Austin Black Senators, a semi-professional baseball team part of the Texas Negro League, played games at the Samuel Huston College baseball stadium, which was in deep east Austin right at the city limits. L.C. Anderson High School students also shared the stadium as their high school sports stadium.¹¹

Out of the 1928 plan came additional Black institutions in east Austin. The City of Austin opened Rosewood Park in east Austin in 1930, based on recommendations of the city plan. Rosewood Park, Austin's only park for African Americans, was situated close to the African American business district and residences as part of the plan to only provide city services in east Austin. The new park had two baseball fields, tennis courts, and a swimming pool. The opening of the park created a new community center to watch and participate in organized sports.¹² However, the Black Senators, Samuel Huston College, and L.C. Anderson High School continued to share the Samuel Huston College stadium for their official games.

⁹ "New Anderson High on Most Attractive Sight," *The Austin Statesman*, 25 August 1953;

¹⁰ "New Anderson High on Most Attractive Sight;" Karen Monsho, "Anderson, E.H.," *Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed 6 August 2017, available at: <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fan57>; Karen Monsho, "Anderson, Laurine Cecil," *Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed 6 August 2017, available at: <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fan56>.

¹¹ "Huston-Tillotson University and the Downs Field Legacy," available online at: <https://htu.edu/wp-February-content/uploads/2016/10/DownsFieldMakingtheCase.pdf>, accessed 17 February 2020; Koch & Fowler, "A City Plan for Austin, Texas," 1928.

¹² Marshall, Sarah. "Rosewood Park: A Historic Icon of Austin's East Side," *Preservation Austin*, vol. 23, no. 1 (Summer 2019), 3-6.

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The 1928 City Plan also recommended the construction of a “complete negro play-field in conjunction with the negro high school.” This space, the report stated, should “be provided with ample and adequate playground space and facilities similar to the white schools of the city.”¹³ However, the Austin Public Schools did not move quickly in securing appropriate sporting grounds for Anderson High School. Anderson High School continued playing its football and baseball games at the Samuel Huston College stadium until 1939. The stadium was 1.1 miles away from Anderson High School, down an unpaved and rutted 12th Street across an active railroad line.¹⁴

The Austin Independent School District (hereafter AISD) finally responded to the plan’s recommendations in 1939 by proposing to acquire the Samuel Huston College stadium as the stadium and playing field for Anderson High School.¹⁵ AISD stated they were interested in this field because open land adjacent to the high school was too expensive and the Austin city council refused to let Anderson take part of Rosewood park for the stadium. African American leaders protested AISD’s decision, noting that the stadium was a far walk from the school “through hazardous traffic arteries” and would hamper the school’s efforts in physical education.¹⁶

Regardless of the protests, AISD purchased the stadium and dedicated it in October 1939. The Anderson High School stadium had bleachers for 1100 viewers, a restroom, and lights. Samuel Huston College continued to share the field with Anderson, playing college football on Saturday nights. As part of the segregated Prairie View Interscholastic League, which governed Black high school competitive events, this stadium hosted the 1942 state football championship, which Anderson won 40-0.¹⁷

A Tale of Two High School Stadiums

When the district finally purchased the Samuel Huston College stadium for the L.C. Anderson High School, white students in west Austin had been playing on their own sports field for decades. Austin High School opened in 1881. The school grew quickly and in 1925 moved into a large, three-story brick school on the corner of 12th Street and Rio Grande Street. Near this school was an open, unimproved playing field donated to the City of Austin for the “white children of Austin under 21 for purposes of recreation.” As opposed to the Black high school students, who had to walk over a mile to their sports stadium down an unpaved road and across a railroad track, Austin High students could access their stadium directly behind the school gymnasium. After the University of Texas asked Austin High to stop using its fields for football, the district began improving this field, called House Park, in 1937.

The district built a new concrete grandstand for spectators at the stadium, which sat over 3,000 spectators. When demands for additional seating came from students and the community, the district constructed another concrete grandstand, bringing the total seating to House Park Stadium to close to 6,000 people. AISD continued to improve the stadium with press boxes, a concrete scoreboard dedicated in honor of Austin High School students that fought in World War II, and a fence. In east Austin, L.C. Anderson shared its stadium with other Black schools, and the district only provided enough seating for 1,100 spectators.¹⁸ Anderson’s football team was known across the state for its success, and its games often drew more than the stadium could hold. AISD did not build additional seating at this Anderson Stadium for increased demand, as it did at House Park.

¹³ Koch & Fowler, “A City Plan,” p. 57.

¹⁴ “Negroes Will Protest Purchase of Stadium,” *The Austin American*, 25 December 1938.

¹⁵ All but one school district in Texas is “independent” of county and municipal government, and the acronym “ISD” is almost uniformly applied.

¹⁶ “Negroes Will Protest Purchase of Stadium,” *The Austin American*, 25 December 1938.

¹⁷ “Perfect Anderson Completed ’42 Championship Sandwich,” *Austin American-Statesman*, 23 October 1992.

¹⁸ “7,000 Will Hear M’Craw Praise Constitution,” *The Austin Statesman*, 17 September 1937.

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Prairie View Interscholastic League (PVIL)

On a state level, high school organized sports began in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In response to a growth in sports teams and games in Texas, the University of Texas organized in the University Interscholastic League (UIL) in 1910. Designed to regulate competitions between white high schools across the state in debate, athletics, music, and other contests, the UIL began standardizing rules and holding state championships across Texas.¹⁹

As the state's Black public schools also develop academic contests and began fielding sports teams, African American educators recognized the need for something similar to govern their schools, since the UIL was for "any public white school." Black school leaders formed the Texas Interscholastic League of Colored Schools (TILCS) in 1920. The first state competitions held by the TILCS was at the Prairie View Normal and Industrial College, Texas' sole public African American institute of higher learning. Students from fifteen counties competed in speech, spelling, and track and field.²⁰ As more and more African American schools established sport programs, especially football and basketball teams, Black school leadership pushed to reorganize the TILCS to focus more on developing athletic competitions. In 1940, the TILCS reorganized itself into the Prairie View Interscholastic League (PVIL) and separated the state's Black high schools into four districts for competitions.²¹

Anderson High School competed in District Four, along with Solomon Coles High School in Corpus Christi, Wheatley High School in San Antonio (Anderson's main rival), Gross High School in Victoria, and Moore High School in Waco. Of all these schools, Anderson was the only school with its own sports stadium. All other high schools in the District played football games in the white high school or city stadiums.²²

Anderson High School shone in PVIL competitions, especially in football and marching band. Anderson played in the first PVIL state football championship in 1940, although the school lost badly to Terrell High from Fort Worth. But by 1942, the school was back in the state championship game, this time hosting Gibbons High School from Paris at the first Anderson Stadium. Anderson beat Gibbons 40-0, bringing home the first state football championship for the school.²³ The championship culture permeated the school, as track and field, basketball, and academic teams continued to win in PVIL championships. The marching band won the PVIL championship seven times between 1940 and 1953.²⁴

Post-World War II Austin

AISD began planning for an increase in Austin's population at the end of World War II. The city grew 65 percent between 1930 to 1940, as many people moved from rural farms to the city for jobs in higher education, government, and industry. In addition, the City of Austin began developing around Lake Travis, and growth in the recreation and housing industry there also increased population.²⁵ To accommodate the growth, AISD planned to construct two new white high schools, one in north Austin and one south. AISD also recognized the growth of the Black population, but could only plan a new Black high school in east Austin, in order to maintain the 1928 "Negro District." Early recommendations included moving the new Anderson High School site next to the stadium, even though railroad tracks would bisect the school property. Building a new school in east Austin would ensure "the [African American] population will desire to live there instead of

¹⁹ Hurd, *Thursday Night Lights*, 24.

²⁰ Hurd, *Thursday Night Lights*, 33.

²¹ Hurd, *Thursday Night Lights*, 34-35.

²² Hurd, *Thursday Night Lights*, 35.

²³ Hurd, *Thursday Night Lights*, 202-203.

²⁴ Original Anderson High School Alumni Association, "How the "L.C. Anderson Band Started,"" 2006. Program in possession of the author.

²⁵ Jac L. Gubbels & Associates, "A Report of School Site Selections," Board of Trustees, Austin Public Schools, c. 1946, 1-3.

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moving elsewhere..." keeping Austin's segregation intact.²⁶ As a result of the planned school expansion, Austin would have three white high schools and only one Black high school.

School Equalization Program

In addition to the city's growth, other factors came together in the late 1940s and early 1950s, ultimately resulting in a new school campus for Anderson High. In addition to the school's athletic fields requiring over a mile walk from campus, with less financial investment than in the much larger white House Park Stadium, the existing 1913 school building itself was old and overcrowded. It was the only school remaining in the Austin school district to use coal for heating. Some floors did not have bathrooms. Classrooms needed improved lighting and access to electrical outlets. Science classrooms did not have permanent equipment. Students in home economics classes practiced sewing on discarded aprons from the white high school. The cafeteria could not feed all the students in the school and was "a slight jump ahead of being unsanitary."²⁷

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) began a national campaign to highlight these inequalities among Black and white school facilities across the nation. The NAACP started by challenging states that did not have college or professional schools for African Americans, while operating schools for whites. Texas, and the University of Texas, was one of those states and schools. Houston post office employee Heman Marion Sweatt, with the backing of the NAACP, sued the University of Texas in Austin (UT) in 1946 for admission to its law school. Instead of breaking the color line and admitting Sweatt to UT, Texas lawmakers scrambled to put together a separate law school for Sweatt to attend.²⁸

Austin's Negro Citizens Committee pressured AISD to improve Black education in Austin. They demanded improvements to Anderson High School and asked for teaching of Black history in the schools.²⁹ With the state and national NAACP pushing for equalized schools, the state legislature trying to equalize higher education opportunities, and scrutiny from local Black parents and the Citizens Committee, AISD knew it needed to provide improved Black schools, especially in the face of very visible inequalities between Austin High School and L.C. Anderson High School. Even though the community pushed for equal schools, AISD still did not provide an L.C. Anderson High School that was equal to the white high school facilities.

L.C. Anderson High School and Stadium, 1953-1971

The new Anderson High School sat on a 21-acre site in segregated east Austin, perched on a hill just off Rosewood Avenue. The school's new location was even further east than the previous schools, in an area of Austin that was a mix of residential and rural properties. The new L.C. Anderson High School was further east across the railroad tracks and Boggy Creek, separate from the main African American business district and residences. The new school site was adjacent to the new Booker T. Washington Terrace public housing project, which was under construction in 1951 and opened in 1953. The new public housing, the largest planned in Austin, was for African Americans struggling to find housing during the post-World War II housing shortage in Austin.³⁰ South of the new school and public housing were open tracts of undeveloped land.

²⁶ Gubbels, "A Report," c. 1946, 45-46.

²⁷ Austin Public Schools, "Evaluation of the Anderson High School, Report of the Visiting Committee," 1948; "Retired Teachers Recall Anderson 'Good Old Days,'" *Austin American-Statesman*, 29 August 1971.

²⁸ Laverne, Gary. M. *Before Brown: Heman Marion Sweatt, Thurgood Marshall, and the Long Road to Justice*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 2010, 215.

²⁹ AISD Board Meeting Minutes, 14 February 1949.

³⁰ Lindsey Waldenberg, "Austin's Public Housing: From Assimilationist Projects to Theaters of Black Struggle in Texas, 1937-2017,"

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In directions to bidders for the design of the school, AISD directed that the new school should be limited to only two stories, with one-story wings as “desirable.” The roofs would be flat, with no parapet. The exterior would consist of brick masonry, with the interior having smooth masonry walls. AISD found a combination of metal casement and glass block windows as “considered desirable” and noted that wood was not to be used in windows. The school plant must also have a steam heating system, hot water, and regular drinking fountains.³¹ Students walked to the new school and its football stadium from across east Austin.

The new white high schools, McCallum High School in north Austin, and William B. Travis High School in south Austin, opened around the same time as the new Anderson campus. Both schools appeared similar in design to the new Anderson High School, and also had gymnasiums and practice fields for football and track. All three white high schools, including Austin High School, played all football games at House Park Stadium.³² In an effort to equalize Anderson High School with the white high schools, which each had their own athletic fields, Austin Public Schools constructed a new Anderson Stadium.

Anderson Stadium

The new Anderson High School site had sufficient space for the construction of a football stadium as well. The new stadium was situated in a natural depression lower than the school building itself. Two sets of concrete steps led from the school down in to the stadium. The new stadium had an open grass field, a gravel and dirt track, and high mast lighting allowing for night games or practices in the stadium. At first, there was minimal seating provided for spectators. The African American organization, Travis County Voters League, attended an Austin City Council meeting demanding improvements at the stadium shortly after its opening, especially in the seating provided. The League highlighted the stadium’s inequalities compared to the white high schools, as House Park Stadium could seat around 6,000 fans, and spectators at the new Anderson Stadium had to sit on the hill or lean on the fences to watch sports. In response, AISD erected additional and larger wooden and metal bleachers at the stadium over the next few years.³³

Because of Austin’s racial segregation and commitment to provide African American public facilities only on the east side, the district built a public high school stadium in east Austin. The provision of a stadium solely for use of a Black high school was a rarity in Texas. Only three Black high schools had their own stadiums for use in games, while the rest of the Black schools in Texas shared facilities with the white schools, playing football games on Wednesday and Thursday nights. Many Black schools had practice facilities on campuses, but many were not lit for night practice and were little more than flat grassy spaces.³⁴ Despite demands for equalization, these playing fields often had minimal buildings, seating or other amenities for the spectators.

Anderson Stadium ultimately became the only fully-developed public Black high school stadium in Texas. African American leaders and residents continued to demand improvements and equalization at the stadium, pointing out the better facilities available at House Park. Several construction programs ultimately resulted in a stadium with a concrete block fieldhouse with two locker rooms, offices, and equipment rooms; large wooden and metal bleachers with a press

M.A. thesis, University of Texas at Austin, 2019, 58-59.

³¹ Austin Public Schools, *Agenda for the Construction of the Proposed New High School for Colored*, prepared by Division of School Plant, 26 April 1950.

³² “Board Lets Contracts on Schools,” *Austin Statesman*, 22 May 1953; “M’Callum High Project Bids Win Approval,” *Austin Statesman*, 24 July 1953; McDonald, Tommy, “Austin’s 3 High Schools to Start New Grid Era,” *Austin American*, 30 August 1953. Note how the paper does not even acknowledge Anderson High School as one of Austin’s high schools, but only addresses the white schools.

³³ “League Asks Council Aid on East Side,” *Austin Statesman*, 19 November 1953.

³⁴ Hurd, *Thursday Night Lights*, 4, 18, 56-59.

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box on the west stands; two concrete block concession stands, concrete block ticket booths, and lights for the field. Neither the stadium at Dunbar High School in Conroe nor at Booker T. Washington High School in Texarkana had any buildings or built features at their stadiums other than bleachers.³⁵ Despite the AISD investment in Anderson Stadium, however, it never approached equality to House Park Stadium in amenities, funds spent, or city-wide prestige.

The new stadium (also known as Yellow Jacket Stadium) quickly became the heart of Austin's Black community. Most of Austin's Black residents attended Anderson High School, and continued to support the school either as parents or as community members proud of their alma mater. As alumni Ed Roby noted: "On Friday nights, if everybody wasn't at Yellow Jacket Stadium to see the football game, they were either sick, dead, or something."³⁶ The stadium held football games, marching band expos, and celebrations on their field. In 1957, Anderson once again hosted the PVIL state football championship and came away victorious. A crowd of over 8,000 people watched the Yellow Jackets win at the new home stadium.³⁷ When that many people came to the stadium, "it was people standing around the fence, it was people standing around the bleachers."³⁸

Located adjacent to the high school and much closer to the center of the Black community than the previous field, Yellow Jacket Stadium served as a community place for the celebration of achievement and of the future. Alumni Ada Blackwell noted the importance of the field and its sports teams to the community: "We had a very successful football team. We won awards, we had accolades, our football team was really held in high esteem." She also noted the importance of Anderson's track teams.³⁹ Ed Roby found that "the [marching] band won more than the football team!" It was one of the only places in the Black community to gather and watch organized sports. Generations of families attended and supported Anderson High School sports, with community memories and associations of Anderson High School achievements in the Anderson Stadium. "That was the community. Everybody was there. Everybody was at the stadium."⁴⁰

Integration and Closure of Anderson Stadium

Soon after construction of the new school and stadium, the United States Supreme Court declared segregation in public schools unconstitutional in the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. The plan to "equalize" schools to preserve segregation did not work. Austin Public Schools, now the Austin Independent School District (AISD) implemented a "freedom of choice" plan, where high school students of any race could choose to attend any Austin high school. While a handful of Black students began attending white high schools, no white students chose to attend Anderson High. After a decade of unsuccessful racial integration using the "freedom of choice" plan, the United States Department of Justice sued the school district for remaining racially segregated. Ultimately, in 1971 AISD chose to close Anderson High School and bus its students to other high schools in the city as the solution for integrating the public school system. This occurred across Texas, as most Black high schools closed, like Anderson High, or repurposed into elementary schools or reused for other educational endeavors. The trophies, state championships, and mascots of the PVIL schools were lost in integration.⁴¹ The school closure fractured east Austin's African American community, and the tight knit neighborhood began to decline

³⁵ Hurd, *Thursday Night Lights*, 4, 18, 56-59.

³⁶ Blackwell, "Ed Roby," YouTube.

³⁷ "Anderson Triumphs 22-14 for the Title," *Austin American*, 14 December 1957.

³⁸ Blackwell, "Nathanial Robinson," YouTube.

³⁹ Bruce Blackwell, "Ada Blackwell, Class of 1967," YouTube, September 21, 2012, interview, 3:59, <https://youtu.be/TH-mh42w9Oo>.

⁴⁰ Blackwell, "Ed Roby," YouTube.

⁴¹ Michael Marks, "The Untold Story of Thursday Night Lights, Texas Football's Segregated Past," *Texas Standard*, 24 October 2017, available online at <https://www.texasstandard.org/stories/the-untold-story-of-thursday-night-lights-texas-footballs-segregated-past/>, accessed 22 July 2019.

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Anderson Stadium served the community for less than twenty years. The PVIL merged with the previously whites-only University Interscholastic League in 1966. Prior to the 1960s, approximately 500 Black high schools competed in the PVIL. After the UIL absorbed the Black schools, only 8 of the previously African American high schools remained as high schools. Anderson Stadium stopped hosting Anderson's football games shortly after the integration of the PVIL and UIL. Rival Wheatley High School from San Antonio played the last game in the stadium against the Anderson Yellow Jackets on September 9, 1966. The Yellow Jackets played the remainder of their games in House Park Stadium or at the new 1963 Nelson Field.⁴² AISD did not consider rehabilitating and upgrading the Anderson Stadium after integration of the sports teams. Instead, it built the new Nelson Field that could seat 8,000 spectators and no longer scheduled any games at Anderson Stadium.

Although the Anderson High School building and stadium were less than 20 years old, the school and stadium represented an essential African American community center and institution. The Anderson football team, the marching band, track and field, and debate team were all award-winning sports and organizations. Sports teams, marching band, and the drill teams that all used Anderson Stadium were leadership opportunities for Anderson students, as well as ways to earn scholarships to college. Being on the football team was "my exit door, that was my way to success, my way to make it."⁴³ Athletic or music scholarships were often the only way to college for Anderson students. In addition, younger members of east Austin's African American community looked up to these student leaders. One alumnus recalled her desire to be the drum majorette, a dream she achieved her senior year.⁴⁴ The school proudly displayed all the trophies and ribbons won by the students. When AISD closed the school, it ensured that there would be no more Anderson Yellow Jackets getting experience as and serving as community leaders. The hard-earned trophies and ribbons were put in storage, and lost for several years.⁴⁵

The memories of Yellow Jacket team victories and being one of thousands at the Yellow Jacket Stadium became distant as AISD required the community to send its high school students to schools all over Austin. Integration also meant the loss of Black leadership, as teachers, coaches, principals, and student leaders had to negotiate white systems, and lost positions to white teachers, coaches, and leaders. While it closed Anderson High School and its stadium, AISD continues to use the white House Park stadium and the Nelson Park stadium today.

In 1982, the newly-created Austin Community College (ACC) moved in to the old Anderson High School building. ACC quickly found there was not enough parking on the school site for its commuter student base, and so the college looked to Anderson Stadium to solve the parking problems. ACC paved over the stadium's field. ACC left the old Anderson site in 1989, and AISD opened the Alternative Learning Center on the campus. The stadium remained a parking lot, although the concrete stairs, ticket booth, concession stand, and fieldhouse remained unused but intact.⁴⁶ The changes to the stadium after closure, including the removal of important character-defining features is part of the stadium's story of systemic racism, neglect, and disinvestment in Austin's Black public spaces.

Comparative Properties: African American High School Football Stadiums in Texas

According to journalist and Texas high school football historian Michael Hurd, only three Texas African American high schools had sports stadiums dedicated solely to their use: Booker T. Washington High School in Conroe, Dunbar High School in Texarkana, and L.C. Anderson High School in Austin. Of those three stadiums, the Anderson Stadium was the

⁴² Pat Toth, "Introduction to Old Anderson High School Football"; Marks, "The Untold Story."

⁴³ Bruce Blackwell, "Howard Davis, Class of 1968," YouTube, April 25, 2014, interview, 4:38, https://youtu.be/hK1Y2jXV_eU.

⁴⁴ Barbara Spears Corbett, Class of 1970, personal communication, June 2021.

⁴⁵ "Defunct School's Trophies Scattered," *Austin American-Statesman*, 30 March 2012. Anderson's trophies and awards are now in the collections of the George Washington Carver Museum and Cultural Center.

⁴⁶ "Group Tackles Football Field Plan," *Austin American-Statesman*, 19 August 1993.

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largest and is the sole remaining stadium in Texas.⁴⁷ Very few public school systems across the state chose to invest in Black high school sports stadiums, relegating the Black high school football teams to using white or municipal stadiums on the nights that white sports teams were not using them. Of the school systems that did construct “stadiums,” the places were little more than a playing field surrounded by bleachers for spectators.

Booker T. Washington High School, Conroe, Texas

The Conroe Independent School District constructed a new high school building for its African American students in the 1950s. The new Washington High School opened in 1954 with a stadium onsite with bleachers that could seat around six hundred.⁴⁸ Based on aerial photographs from 1957, the Washington High Stadium did not have a track, only a rectangular football field with bleachers. Both the Washington High School and stadium are still extant, although the stadium has undergone significant changes and now has a track encircling it and smaller bleachers.

Dunbar High School, Texarkana, Texas

Dunbar High School served the African American students on the Texas side of Texarkana. Dunbar High School had a long tradition of educating Black students. Similar to Washington High School in Conroe, Dunbar High School moved into a new school building in the 1950s. Dunbar did have its own football stadium, located down the street from the high school behind Theron Jones Elementary School.⁴⁹ Coaches remember the stadium having poor turf and few stands for the crowds.⁵⁰ While the open field for the stadium remains behind the former elementary school building, no built resources associated with this stadium are extant.

Comparative Property: House Park Stadium in Austin

In Austin, the all-white Austin High School played at House Park stadium. House Park Stadium is adjacent to the historic Austin High School in west Austin, along Shoal Creek and North Lamar Boulevard. Austin High began to use House Park as a sports field in 1913, but as football became more popular, the high school shop class built a set of wooden bleachers in 1922. By 1937, Austin Public Schools (APS, the precursor to AISD) partnered with the federal Public Works Administration to construct the west concrete grandstand and press box. Because football was so popular, the district built the east concrete grandstand in 1939. Together, the grandstands could seat close to 6,000 spectators, with more likely watching from around the fence.⁵¹ When McCallum High School and William B. Travis High School opened in 1953, all three white high schools played at House Park. House Park served as the district’s exclusive white football field until around 1963, when an even larger Nelson Field opened adjacent to the newly-constructed Reagan High School.⁵² This field has remained in use as a football stadium for public schools in Austin.

Based on comparison of the House Park Stadium’s location, design, materials, and workmanship, it is clear that Austin Public Schools intended House Park to be of permanent design and use, while Anderson Stadium’s facilities did not receive the level of financial investment as the white football stadium. The design, materials, and workmanship at Anderson Stadium resulted in smaller buildings and structures made of less permanent materials, especially with regards

⁴⁷ Michael Hurd, *Thursday Night Lights: The Story of Black High School Football in Texas*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 2017.

⁴⁸ Michael Hurd, 18; Sonda Hernandez, “Conroe ISD Educating Area’s Youth for More Than 130 Years,” *The Courier of Montgomery County*, 29 March 2017.

⁴⁹ Hurd, 4.

⁵⁰ Aaron Brand, “The Great Game,” *Texarkana Gazette*, 29 March 2015.

⁵¹ Laura Christman, “House Park Stadium,” draft nomination form for the National Register of Historic Places, in possession of the author, 2020.

⁵² Austin Independent School District, “Overview of Nelson Field,” available online at: <https://www.austinisd.org/construction-management/bond/bond-and-construction-projects/nelson-field>, accessed 13 June 2021.

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to the bleachers and scoreboard. In addition, instead of continuing to use Anderson Stadium during the end of segregation and the beginnings of integration in the middle 1960s, AISD chose instead to build another football stadium, Nelson Field, instead of continuing to use Anderson Stadium. The relative impermanence of the Anderson facilities, combined with the lack of maintenance or use of the stadium after school integration, led to their removal in the 1980s.

House Park Stadium took its current shape in the 1930s and 1940s with minimal Moderne architectural stylings. The oldest feature at the stadium is the west grandstand and the ticket booth, opened in 1937. The school district partnered with the federal Public Works Administration to construct the west concrete grandstand and press box. Because football was so popular, AISD built the east concrete grandstand in 1939. Together, the grandstands could seat close to 6,000 spectators, with more likely watching from around the fence.⁵³ This grandstand is constructed of the poured-in-place concrete, versus the wooden and metal bleachers at Anderson Stadium. This grandstand seats around 2,500 spectators with aluminum bench seats set into the concrete. The 1939 east grandstand is also made of concrete and seats about 3,000 fans. By 1945, Austin Public Schools installed a concrete scoreboard dedicated to students that fought in World War II. Each grandstand contains a press box. The current ones replaced the originals in 1958.⁵⁴

While House Park Stadium has undergone changes over time, such as the construction of new concession stands, new restrooms, ticket booths, and field house, and the replacement of the grass with artificial turf, it still retains historic significance and integrity as a high school football stadium. Although Austin High School is no longer in the school building adjacent to House Park, the historic high school building remains.

Community Reclamation

Anderson Stadium's story does not end buried under a sea of concrete. Former Anderson High School football player Thomas "Hollywood" Henderson returned to his home town in 1993 after a career in the National Football League (NFL), most notably with the Dallas Cowboys. Henderson stated that "If you close a high school in a neighborhood, you kill that neighborhood. That began the destruction and deterioration of East Austin."⁵⁵ Eager to give back to his old neighborhood and restore a community landmark, Henderson worked with AISD to allow him to remove the parking lot, restore the field, rehabilitate restrooms in the 1960 field house, and begin using Anderson Stadium as a community asset once again. Over the years, Henderson's non-profit has installed a running track, an electronic score board, and improved restrooms and a concession stand. Anderson Stadium is now home to the Pop Warner Yellow Jacket football team and serves as a place for community exercise and gathering. AISD is currently building a new fieldhouse with restrooms at the stadium as part of the new school construction project on the site. The new fieldhouse is a low, one-story building located across the field from the historic fieldhouse. Future AISD plans for the site await funding and approvals.

Anderson Stadium stands as the only known remaining Black public high school sports stadium in Texas. Even though not many African American public high school sports stadiums were constructed in the first place, the stadiums were never equal to the white high school stadiums, many of which still exist and are in use today. Anderson Stadium was never equal to its counterpart in House Park, but the stadium was still the center of the Black community and many achievements. Anderson Stadium hosted state champion football teams, track teams, and marching bands. Students went on to careers in music and in the National Football League. In addition to its significance to sports and recreation, the stadium is only of only a few institutional African American places remaining in east Austin. Many historic African American places are being replaced by new construction or are torn down due to neglect or disinvestment. The 1953 Anderson High School, which was constructed along with the stadium, is no longer extant due to the neglect that led to

⁵³ Laura Christman, "House Park Stadium," draft nomination form for the National Register of Historic Places, in possession of the author, 2020.

⁵⁴ Austin Public Schools, School Plant Record—Land Facilities—House Park Subject File, Austin History Center.

⁵⁵ Phillips, Jim. "Ex-football Pro Fast for Eastside Track," *Austin American Statesman*, 30 September 1997.

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the poor condition of the building, although a new high school is on the site. Anderson Stadium is significant as an example of African American student achievement in sports, music, and leadership and as a community center for the east Austin Black community. The fact that it remains through decades of neglect and disinvestment is testimony to the significance, feeling, and association the African American Austin community has to this important place.

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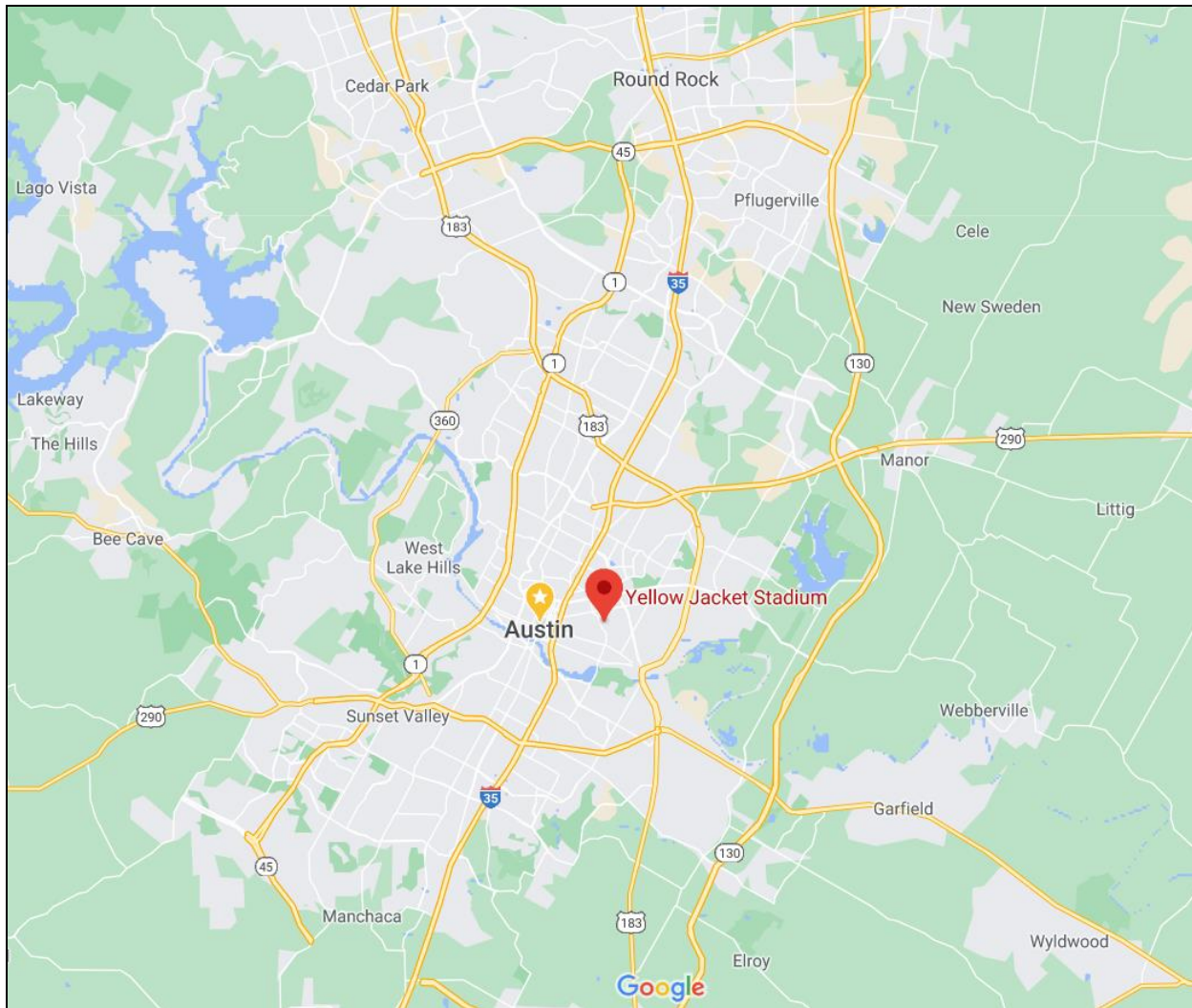
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Map 1: Overview of Anderson Stadium location in Austin, Texas



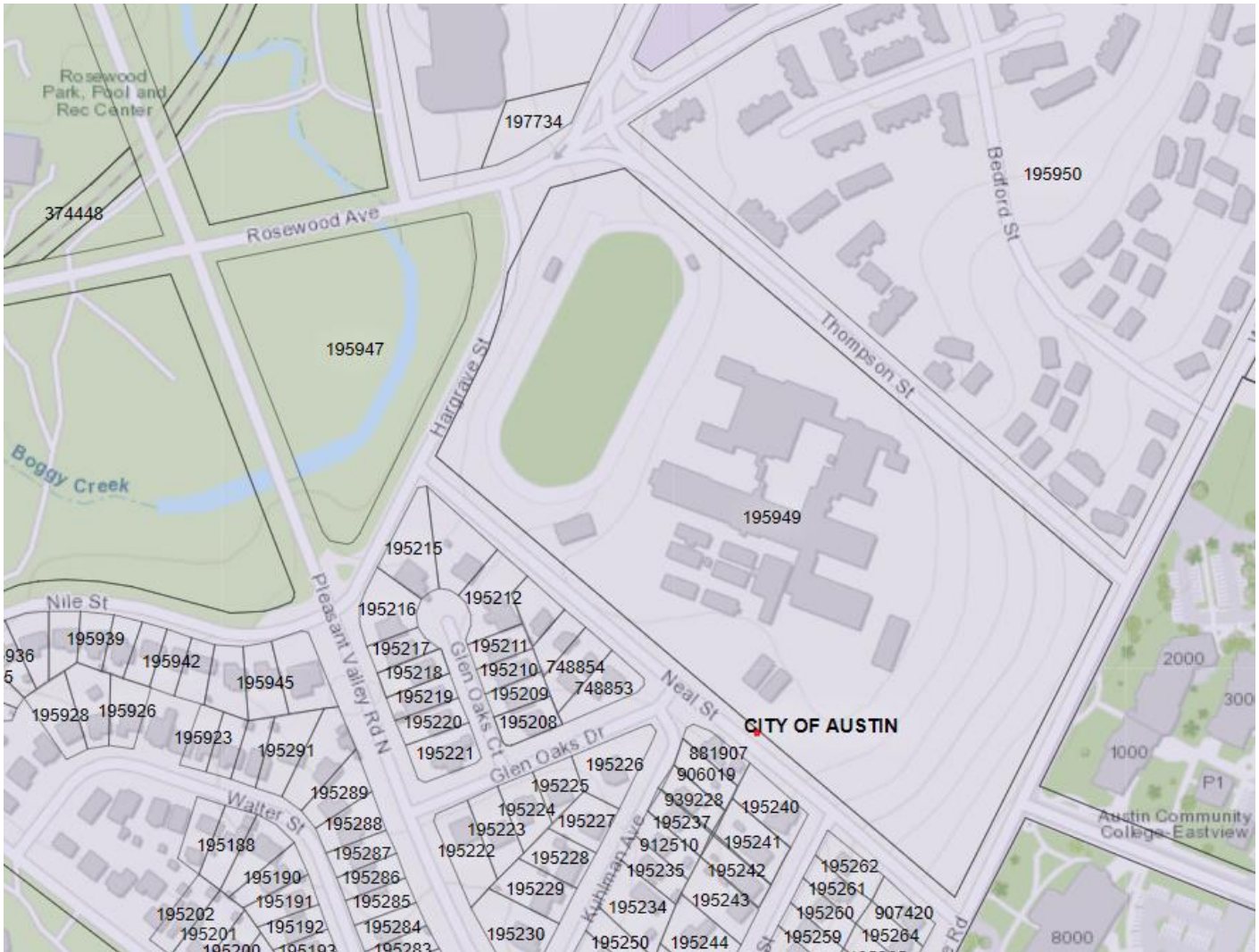
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Map 2: Aerial view of stadium and the immediate neighborhood.



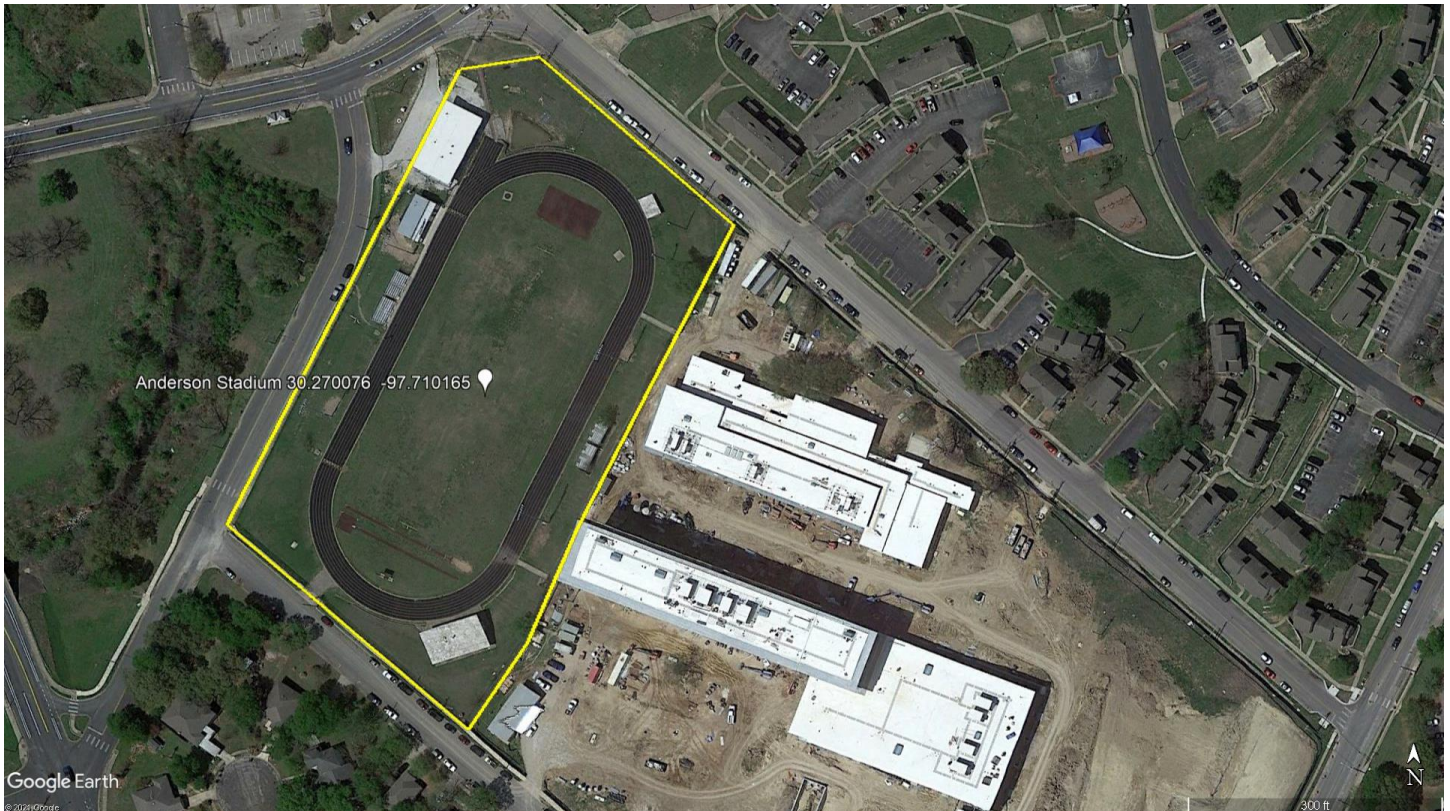
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Map 3: Parcel map with boundaries. Source: Travis Central Appraisal District (TravisCAD).



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Map 4: Boundaries of the Anderson Stadium
Google earth, accessed June 21, 2021



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Map 5: Contributing and Non-Contributing Features



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Figure 1: 1964 Aerial photograph of Anderson Stadium, showing construction of all 1960 buildings and completed bleachers



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Figure 2: 1985 Aerial photograph, showing paved field and track, lack of bleachers, and removal of goal posts and electronic scoreboard



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Figure 3: 1955 photograph of early stadium. The school is to the left of the photograph. Note the small wood bleachers on the east of the stadium, the high mast lights, goal post and irrigation system in the background. Photograph courtesy Austin History Center, through Portal to Texas History.



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Figure 4: 1953 photograph of early stadium, facing west. Note the small wood bleachers on the west side of the stadium, mast lighting, and goal posts. Photograph courtesy Austin History Center, through Portal to Texas History.



PICA 20624, Austin History Center, Austin Public Library

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Figure 5: c. 1956 photograph of track team. Note larger wooden bleachers on the west of the stadium, the gravel track, and the electronic scoreboard in the background of the photograph. Photograph courtesy Austin History Center, through Portal to Texas History.



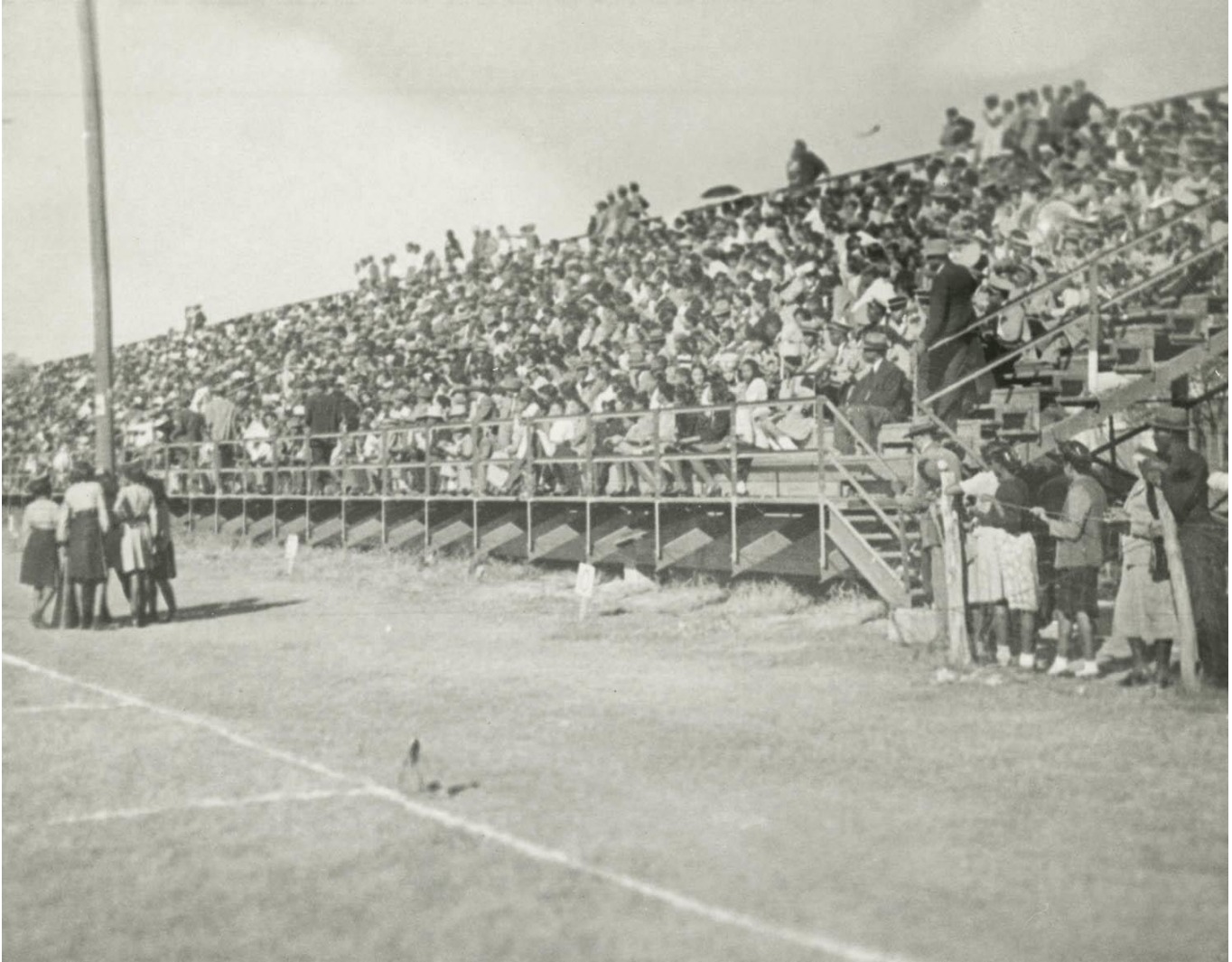
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Figure 6: c. 1961 Anderson High School band. Likely showing west side of stadium with larger wooden and metal bleachers. Photograph courtesy Austin History Center.



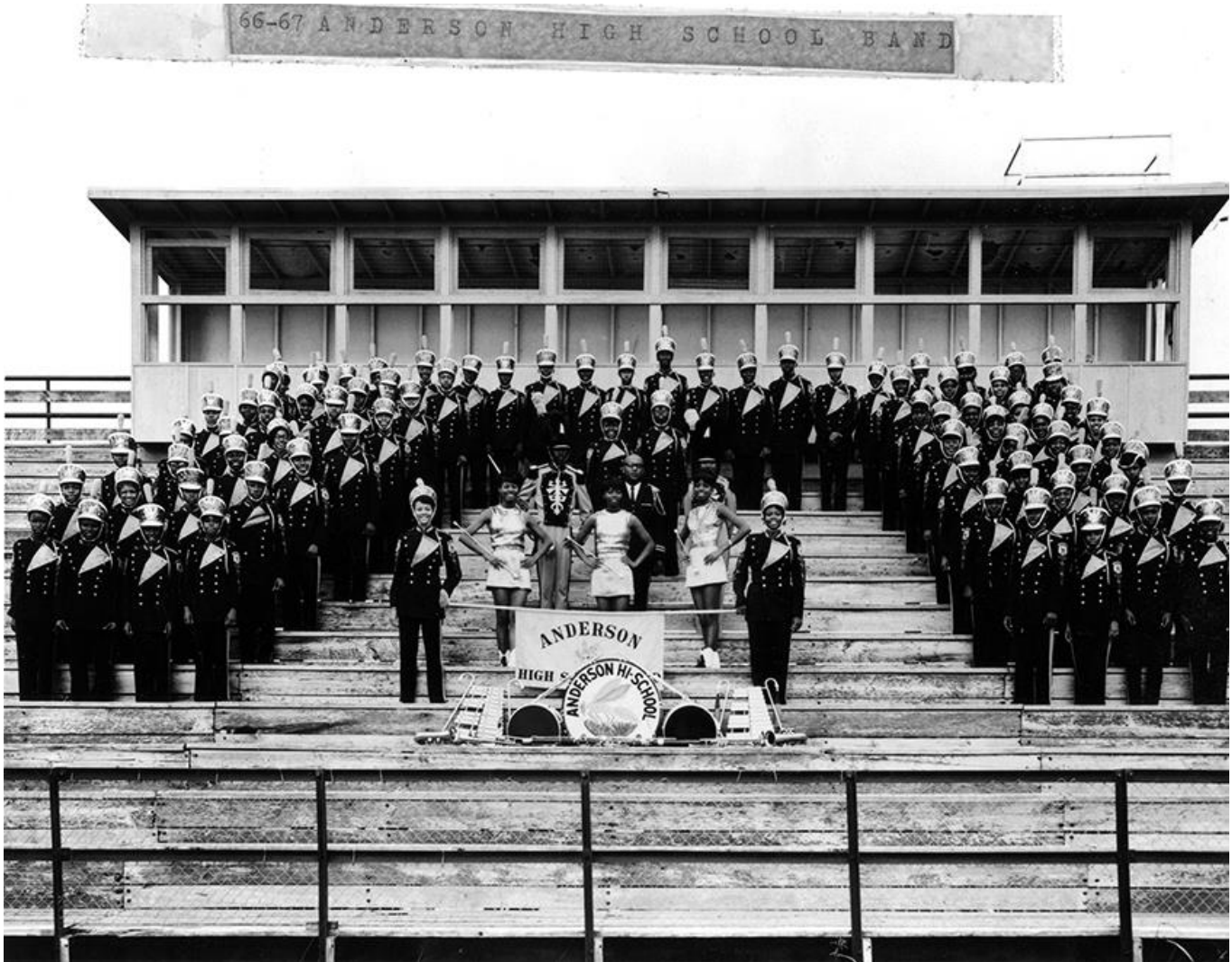
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Figure 7: c. 1961 east side of bleachers, showing fully built wooden and metal bleachers as well as a large crowd. Photograph courtesy Austin History Center.



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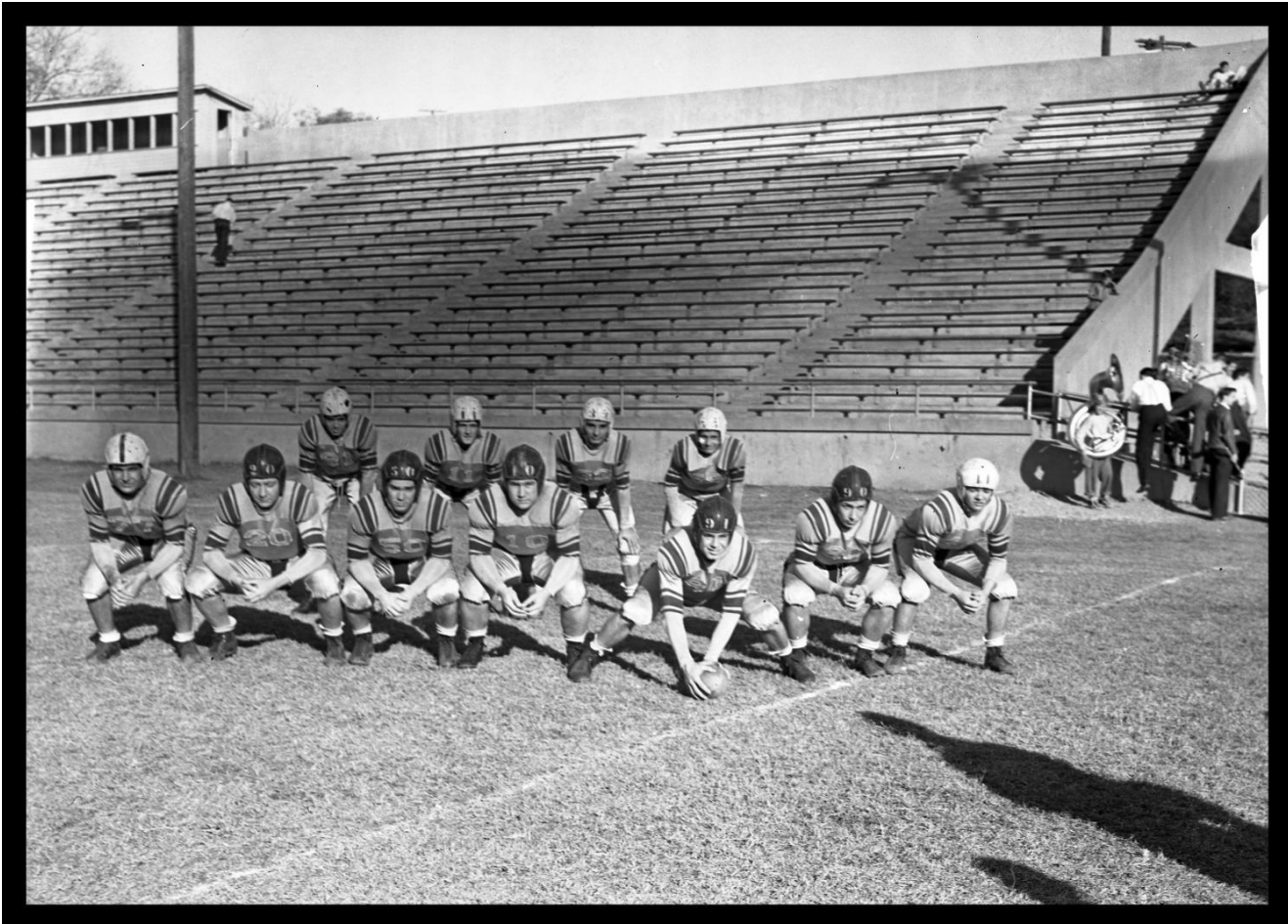
Figure 8: 1966 photograph of Anderson High School band on west stands, showing press box and weathering of wooden bleachers (no longer extant). Photograph courtesy Austin History Center.



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House Park Stadium

Figure 10: 1939 photograph of white Austin High School football players at white **House Park Stadium**. Note the substantial concrete bleachers in the background from the stadium built almost twenty years prior to the Anderson Stadium. The bleachers still exist today. Photograph courtesy Austin History Center through Portal to Texas History.



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Figure 11: 1952 photograph of **House Park Stadium**, with permanent concrete scoreboard in background. The scoreboard is still extant and used today. Photograph courtesy Austin History Center.



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Figure 12: House Park Stadium today. Both the east (1940) and west (1937) concrete bleachers are still extant today. Note the substantial concrete construction of the west bleachers. Photograph by Rebekah Dobrasko, June 2021.



Figure 13: House Park Stadium's east bleachers. The east stand of bleachers can seat over 3,000 people. Photograph by Rebekah Dobrasko, June 2021.



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Figure 14: The concrete scoreboard at **House Park Stadium** memorializes the Austin High School students that fought in World War II. The scoreboard was added to House Park in 1945 and is still used today, although an electronic scoreboard now covers the original clock face. This photograph of the rear of the scoreboard demonstrates how substantial the object is. Photograph by Rebekah Dobrasko, June 2021.



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Photographs

Photos 1-21: December 2021; Photos 22-25: March 2020.

Photo 1: Stadium overview from north side facing southeast



Photo 2: Stadium overview from north side facing south



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Photo 3: Stadium overview from east side facing northwest



Photo 4: Stadium overview from southeast facing northwest



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Photo 5 :North end zone from south end of the field



Photo 6: Looking towards the southeast corner from the track

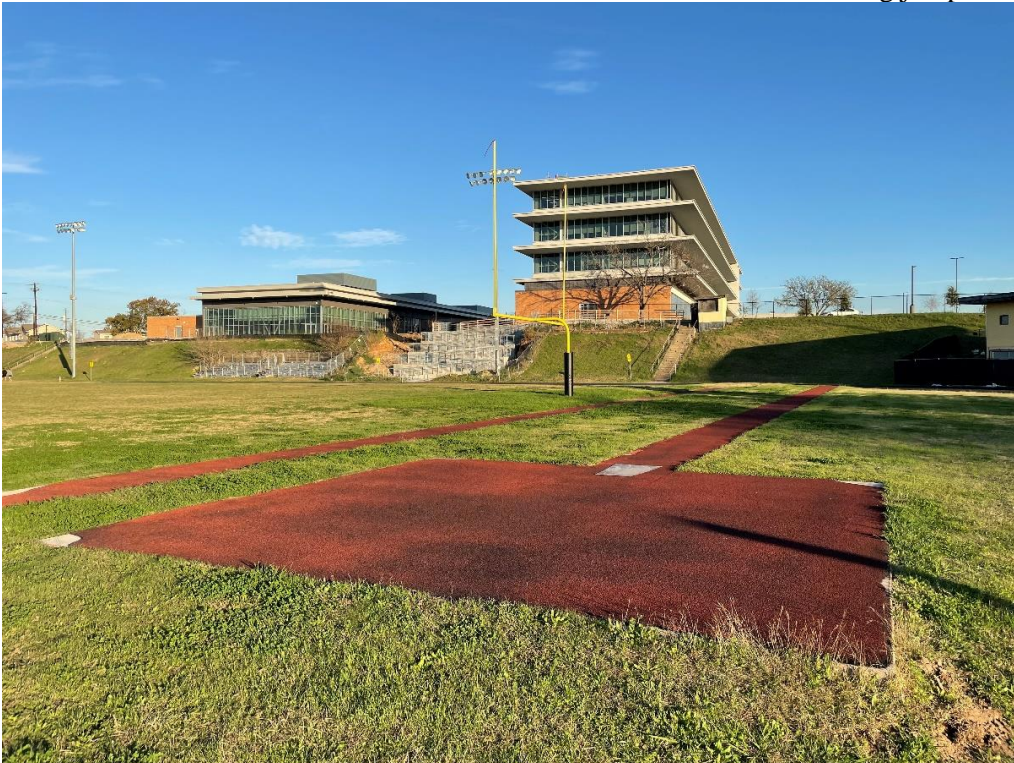


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Photo 7: East side of the stadium bowl from the south end



Photo 8: East side of the stadium bowl from the south end of field with long jump area in foreground



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Photo 9: Ticket booth and field house at southwest corner from playing field



Photo 10: Looking southeast toward the field house from the track



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Photo 11: Scoreboard and south goalpost, looking north from the track



Photo 12: Scoreboard and south goalpost, looking southwest from the field



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Photo 13: Northeast side (bleachers, restrooms/concession stand, new fieldhouse), facing northeast



Photo 14: Northeast side (bleachers, restrooms/concession stand, new field house), facing southeast

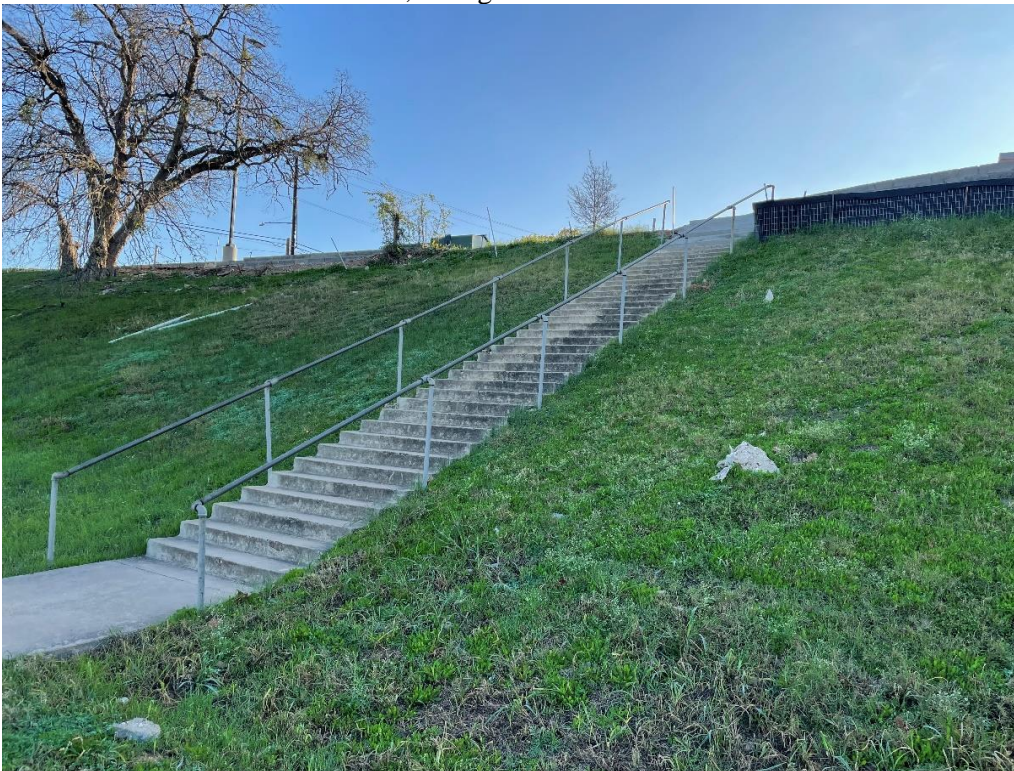


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Photo 15: Concession stand, looking northeast



Photo 16: North stairs on east side, facing northeast



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Photo 17: Concrete retaining wall, looking north



Photo 18: Ticket booth, looking southwest



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Photo 19: South stairs and ticket booth, looking east



Photo 20: Fieldhouse, looking south



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Photo 21: Restrooms and concession stand, looking southeast



Photo 22: Interior of second floor of fieldhouse, showing locker room, original benches, and openings to office space,



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Photo 23: Interior of second floor of fieldhouse, with second locker room, original benches, and openings to office space



Photo 24: Fieldhouse, detail photograph of original water fountain on front façade of building, March 2020.



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Photo 25: Fieldhouse, detail of metal windows on second floor for locker room, March 2020.



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