

# MONTANA HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL INVENTORY

Legal Description: <u>Philipsburg School District No. 1</u>		CONTACT PHOTO
Address: <u>west of Schnepel St.</u>		
Ownership: Name: <u>School District No. 1</u>		
<input type="checkbox"/> private <input type="checkbox"/> public	address: <u>Philipsburg, MT</u>	Roll #      Frame #



Historic Name: <u>Philipsburg Grade School</u>
Common Name: <u>same</u>
Date of Construction: <u>1896</u> <small>estimated</small> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <small>documented</small>
Architect: <u>Bell and Kent</u>
Builder: <u>unknown</u>
Original Owner: <u>Philipsburg School District No. 1</u>
Original Use: <u>school</u>
Present Use: <u>school</u>
<b>RESEARCH SOURCES:</b> Note all records consulted to determine dates of construction, original owners, builders, uses, etc.
Title Search: _____ Tax Records: _____
Bldg. Permit: _____ Census Records: _____
Sewer/Water: _____ Sanborn Maps: <u>1892, '94,</u> '02
Directories: _____ Newspapers: _____

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** Describe present appearance of structure/site, then contrast and compare that with its original appearance, noting additions, alterations, and changes in materials. Discuss significant architectural features.

A 3½ story five bay brick and granite school with a four story tower in the center. The building has an intersecting gable roof with a hip roof on the back addition and the tower. The closed gable ends form a triangular pediment with modillions. Circular windows are located in each of these pediments. Windows are 2/2 double hung throughout the structure, with arches in windows in each end of the two story end bays on the second story. A large, arched granite entrance is located in the center at the base of the tower. Granite is also used for the lintels, floor coursing and foundation. The building is a well-preserved example of the Neo-Classical style. Four additional classrooms and an auditorium were added to the rear of the building in 1927.

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**HISTORICAL INFORMATION:** Describe the persons, important events, and/or historical patterns associated with the structure, site and surrounding area.

Construction of the Philipsburg Grade School began in 1894 with the passing of a bond issue of \$30,000 by the local residents. The school board declared that the cost of the new school would not exceed \$23,000, but it surpassed that amount by the time of completion in 1896. Seven acres of land were purchased from the Philipsburg Real Estate and Water Co. for \$3,476.25. The new building served as both the grade school and high school for Philipsburg students until a new high school was constructed in 1912. In 1927, four additional classrooms and a gymnasium were added to the rear. The building is still actively used for elementary students, and is reported to be the oldest continuously used school building in Montana. The architectural firm of Bell and Kent were responsible for the design of the courthouse and jail in Anaconda, the Flathead County Courthouse, a public school in Columbus, MT., numerous commercial and residential buildings, and the original Capitol building in Helena.

**Footnote Sources:**

McDonald, James R. Historic Structure Report—Montana State Capitol Building, 1981, pp. 19-23. Copy available at the Montana State Historical Society Library.

**INTEGRITY:** Assess the degree to which the structure/site, and surrounding area accurately convey the historical associations of the property.

The Philipsburg Grade School has retained excellent historic architectural integrity since it was constructed in 1896. The building is one of most noteworthy in Philipsburg, and is a good reflection of the community's status from the late 1800s after Philipsburg had prospered from active silver mining and designation as the county seat for newly-formed Granite County.

**HISTORICAL and/or ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE:** Justify how the persons, important events, or historical patterns associated with structure/site lend the property significance and/or describe the ways in which the structure embodies the distinctive characteristics of a particular period, building type, or style.

The Philipsburg Grade School is significant for its architecture as an outstanding example of Classical Revival design. In a community where few buildings were designed by an architect, the school derives additional significance because of its association with the architectural firm of Bell and Kent who designed several other public buildings throughout Montana.

The boundary description is as follows:

Beginning at the southwest corner of Lot 18 in the Schnepel Addition, proceed south 300 feet along the inside edge of the sidewalk; then turn west and proceed 350 feet in the same direction through the playground; turn north and proceed 300 feet north; then turn east and proceed 350 feet back to the point of origin. The boundary has been drawn to include the school and only a small portion of the playground area which surrounds the school building.

**FORM PREPARED BY:**

Name: Michael Koop

Address: Montana SHPO  
June 15, 1986

**GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:**

Acreage: less than one

USGS Quad: Philipsburg

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