

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

DEC 13 1988

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Northern Montana State Fairground Historic District
other names/site number State Fairgrounds

2. Location

street & number 3rd St. NW n/a not for publication
city, town Great Falls n/a vicinity
state Montana code 030 county Cascade code 013 zip code 59401

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<u>12</u>	<u>2</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>14</u>	<u>4</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: _____
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register _____

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official *Maurella Sheffy* Date 12-2-88
SHRC

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:) _____

Andrew Ryan Entered in the National Register 1/13/89

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Recreation

Culture

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Recreation

Culture

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals

Art Deco

Other: Exposition

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Wood

Stucco

roof Asphalt

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The North Montana State Fairground Historic District is composed of ten historic exposition buildings and two historic support buildings situated on formally landscaped grounds, which are accessed by a system of entrances, two of which are historic, cut stone structures that contribute to the significance of the district. Of the total 18 resources in the district, only four are non-contributing: a re-located school building, a post-historic period fire house, a modern stage and a gazebo. Only the small contemporary stage and the gazebo, both located in the center park, exist as structures that serve to detract from the architectural significance of the district.

A "wall" of exhibition buildings, 3rd Street NW, and the Milwaukee Railroad right-of-way form the boundaries for the nearly 22 acre triangular district, which lies in the southernmost corner of the total 102 acre fairgrounds complex. Located in the northwestern section of Great Falls, the 3rd St. NW boundary is shaped by the Burlington Northern Railroad tracks, which were, in turn, shaped by the curve of the Missouri River to the east.

Careful planning in the initial stages of the fairground development is evident today in the mature landscaping and the formal walk and drive ways, as well as in the design of the exhibition buildings and their placement. Four entrances provide access to the exhibition area; the southern tip of the triangle offers access to both automobile and pedestrian traffic through a stone gate system (A08) with the vehicular road continuing up the western boundary of the fairgrounds and a sidewalk which leads to the apex of a semicircular central park, allowing access to exhibition buildings along the way; a canopied entrance (A07) shelters visitors at the 3rd St. NW pedestrian entrance, which also leads to the central park and exhibition buildings; automobiles enter the grounds between stone pylons (A06) with the road forking to carry visitors to the racing barns in the northeastern corner of the grounds and westerly, across the base of the semi-circular park; entrance (A09) allows access to the grounds from the south-western side. The drive around the central park continues in a northerly direction past exhibition barns which line the entire west side of the grounds; it parallels a drive on the northeastern side of the park base, which continues past the grandstand and midway area to the Four Seasons arena. The stone gates are significant structures within the district. Openings (A07) and (A09)

 See continuation sheet

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Period of Significance

Significant Dates

Architecture

1919-1938

1919, 1928

Community Planning/Development

1934, 1937

1938

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Significant Person

n/a

Architect/Builder

Shanley, George M.

Cottier, Gordon G. and others

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The North Montana State Fairground Historic District meets criteria A and C for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Developed for the expressed purpose of promoting agriculture in north central Montana, the nearly 22 acre district is the major exhibition area of a multi-use, 102 acre fairground complex.

The land and an existing pavilion building were purchased by Cascade County in 1926. Five years of careful planning and development occurred before the first fair was held in 1931. New buildings were added to the physical plant through the 1930's, in spite of the national economic depression and resulting unemployment. The federal government's Public Works Administration provided financial aid for the continued development of the complex, affording employment for the local contractors and architects, as well as adding substantially to the built environment of the grounds. The resulting "Exposition" and support buildings reflect the careful planning and have continued to entice, educate and entertain fair goers with exhibits ranging from livestock to the fine arts.

Fairground History

The tradition of holding fairs is firmly rooted in Montana's history. Residents gathered in Helena for Territorial Fairs before Montana became a state and early in its history Montana's governing body adopted legislation which enabled counties to levy funds for the purpose of acquiring, maintaining and operating county fair facilities. By 1909 fairs were a familiar event throughout Montana and the first State Fair, "The Montana Agricultural, Mineral and Mechanical Exhibition," was held in the Capitol City. The legislature ceased funding for the Helena fair in 1925, though it

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of property approximately 22 acres

UTM References

A

1	2	4	7	6	1	0	0	5	2	6	1	9	9	0
Zone	Easting		Northing											

C

1	2	4	7	6	1	8	0	5	2	6	1	5	4	0
Zone	Easting		Northing											

B

1	2	4	7	6	2	4	0	5	2	6	1	9	8	0
Zone	Easting		Northing											

D

1	2	4	7	5	8	8	0	5	2	6	1	8	4	0
Zone	Easting		Northing											

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

T20N; R3E SW 1/4 of Section 2

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Ellen Sievert

organization Cascade County Historical Society date October 1988

street & number 1602 3rd Westhill Drive telephone (406) 761-6955

city or town Great Falls state Montana zip code 59401

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are both portable ticket booths. A07 has a single pole canopy, but both entrances are insubstantial in size and scale, and are not included in the building count.

The original, professionally designed landscaping currently defines the exhibition area along its east and west boundaries. Mature, deciduous trees shelter visitors and line the walkways and roads that lead to the various exhibition buildings. Conifers provide variety around the exhibition area and at some building perimeters. The semi-circular central park is host to the only intrusions in the historic district. A stage and an open shelter/gazebo were added to the park in 1971. Although they are both small in scale, the design, materials and colors are incompatible with the exhibition area.

The majority of the exhibition buildings, as well as the grounds, are indicative of design influences which were introduced in 1893 at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. With minimal classical detailing, they exhibit a style and function so matchless they have been given a separate stylistic classification; that of Exposition or Pavilion architecture. The large clear span exhibition buildings clearly serve a unique and, for the most part, seasonal purpose; to attract large numbers of people to a wide variety of exhibits. They signal this architecturally by the "application" of a scaled down classical entry complete with flagpoles, which lend a somewhat "ephemeral" quality to the style. This design concept is applied to a variety of buildings, including otherwise typical barn structures; and invite the public to step in and view the world of prized livestock.

Three Art Deco buildings also play an important role in the district. The massive "Mercantile" exhibition building with its 60', highly sculptural central tower, anchors the exhibition area at the base of the semi-circular central park. This "block-long" Deco building neatly separates the passive exhibit area from the midway to the north. The Deco Administration building is the only two-story building on the grounds, though many are over two stories in height. It lies perpendicular to and north of the Mercantile and "overlooks" the varied activities of the fairgrounds. The rounded "L" shaped Fine Arts building, also of the Art Deco style, delineates the north-eastern corner of the exhibition pavilion by literally wrapping around the corner and encompassing the main entrance to the grounds.

Two barns are located near the northwest boundary of the North Montana State Fair Historic District. One, a typical wood frame, gable roofed barn, serves its original function; the other was originally a sheep exhibition barn, with the walls directly under the roof line properly open for ventilation. It is likely the barn's openings were enclosed during a 1940's building restoration program, and it currently serves

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as exhibition space for less odorous commercial enterprises.

The "Nature's Den" building, located near the southwestern tip of the district, represents a dramatic change of style from the exhibit buildings clustered around the central park. The dark color, somewhat remote siting, and wood materials give the impression of a rustic log cabin and serve to reflect the "natural" character of the exhibits within, which are put on by the USDA Forest Service and the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

The scale of the major exhibition buildings corresponds with civic architecture of the region; of necessity a size that can accommodate the public, but stopping short of being "monumental". The predominant construction methodology is wood frame with stucco surfacing. The wide public concourses and evident building entrances also serve the needs of this unique type of building occupancy.

Historic photographs indicate that the buildings were originally white, with the exception of the "Nature's Den", but have evolved to less stark cream colors. A notable exception is the Fine Arts building, which exhibits "ice cream" pastel colors in its impressive facade, a change which is typical for many buildings in the Art Deco style.

An architectural and historical survey of the entire fairground complex was conducted in the summer of 1988. It revealed that only the exhibition area reflects the original planning and development. The district contains a cohesive collection of exhibition and support facilities, united in purpose, design, age and historical significance. The continuity is further enhanced by the similarity of scale, materials, color, and construction methodologies shared by most of the buildings within the district. Alterations are minimal, as are non-contributing elements.

The portion of the fairground north of the exhibition area has been excluded from the nomination because it no longer exhibits the historical and architectural integrity necessary to make a positive contribution to a historic district. Two exhibit barns at the north west edge of the fairgrounds retain significance enough to be contributing elements, but have been "cut off" from the district by the addition of a 172' x 300' metal building, which represents a change in design, scale, materials and color; additionally it violates the historic "set back" and covers the original sidewalk which served the exhibit barns to the north. The metal building replaces a large livestock pavilion, which was damaged by fire and ultimately demolished.

A collection of concession-related booths spill over from the midway

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into the historic district in the area of the Trades & Industries, the Mercantile, and the Administration buildings. The booths are a serious detriment to the historic feeling and association of that portion of the district, but are portable and could easily be moved to a more appropriate location. Because these portable booths are of insubstantial size and scale, they have not been included in the building count.

A description of each building and object in the North Montana State Fairground Historic District follows. The numbers are keyed to the site map.

A01 Administration. Built in 1934, Primary.

This Art Deco building is a two-story, articulated rectangular plan, flat-roof facility. A wide projecting monumental entrance faces east and extends above the roof line of the basic rectangular shape and wraps back over the roof to the center of the building. An 8' width back entrance is centrally recessed into the west elevation of the basic rectangle. The entrance projection has 3 deeply recessed vertical articulations, symmetrically placed along the front. Opposite ends of the north and south articulation are splayed, and the separations between them are geometric triangular pylons that extend from base to parapet. The wood main entrance door is located in the center recess of the first floor; it has a small transom above, and is flanked by 3/4 industrial sash windows. A row of similar windows occupy the 3 recesses at the second floor level above. The north and south segments of the east elevation, which flank the projecting entrance, both contain tall narrow steel sash windows on each floor. A marquee occurs directly above the entrance door; it projects as a narrow canopy that is a circular section in plan. The articulated metal fascia of the canopy supports metal letters that project above the edge of the canopy and spell "Administration." The plain stucco wall surface is trimmed by a "belt", created by a pair of closely spaced flat wood trim boards, which extend around the exterior walls approximately 6' above the second floor line. In 1956, a one-story shop addition was built, which links the Administration building to the Mercantile. The stucco addition is neatly tucked behind the major buildings and does not detract from the significance of either building.

A04 Fire House. Constructed in 1941, Noncontributing.

Built to replace an earlier version which was destroyed by fire, this small (36'x21') one story utility building is rectangular in plan, 10' high to the eave, and is sheltered by a gable roof with a 1' overhang. The roof is wood shingle and the exposed square-cut rafter tails extend to the edge of the roof. Entry for vehicles and personnel is

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through two large wood, sliding, "cross-buck" doors on the north gable end. Sidewalls each feature two double-hung wood windows located at approximately the quarter points; a fifth window is located on the extreme east end of the south elevation. Walls are covered with drop siding; trim includes corner boards and door/window casing. Sub-structure is a perimeter concrete grade beam. The floor is concrete. The quaint fire house contributes functionally to the fairgrounds, if not architecturally. While a non-contributing element in the district, it does not detract significantly, due to its small scale and remote location at the western edge of the district.

A06 Main Gate Constructed in 1928, Contributing.

Among the first improvements on the fairgrounds in 1928, these two cut stone pylons support and frame the large, chain link gate panels that allow vehicular access to the fairgrounds. The stone pylon on the southeast (street) end of the gates is approximately 10' wide, 2' deep and 8' high; it has articulated corners and a cut stone cap. It supports a sign which announces the events of the fairgrounds. The northwest pylon is a Greek cross in plan; the projections to the SW and NE extend up to 12' and the SE/NW projections extend up to 7' and read as pilasters or buttresses to the rectangular surface above. The stone is pitched-face, squared masonry and is laid in coursed bond. The pylons are supported by concrete foundations below.

A08 South Gate. Constructed in 1937, Contributing.

This architecturally interesting feature was built in 1937, recycling stone used in a 1928 entrance to the fairgrounds. It is divided into three sections; the west portion houses a pair of chain link gates for vehicles, the center section is a 12' width, cut sandstone panel, and the east portion is a 12' section with swinging chain link gates to admit pedestrians. The sections above the swinging gates feature a 5' wide canopy of closely spaced 2x4's; the ends of the members are shaped. Wood letters spelling "State Fair" sit above the arbor on the vehicular side of the gate. The pitched face stone is laid in coursed bond and the stone rests on a concrete sub-structure. The south gate maintains its original integrity.

All Manager's Residence. Constructed in 1929, Contributing.

Built as a residence for the fair manager, this bungalow is located close to the Main Gate of the fairgrounds at the center of the southwest boundary. Originally it was a simple rectangular, gable roof, one-story building, oriented north-south. When the first fair manager was hired, in 1930, a bedroom addition extended the basic rectangular plan to the south and a small single car garage was added as a subservient, gable roof, intersecting wing, projecting from the north-

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east corner of the building to create an L-shaped plan. The main entrance is approximately centered on the west elevation; the elevation has two nearly square, equally spaced windows north of the door and one window at the extreme south end of the addition. A projecting flat canopy extends from the eave to shelter the front door and a concrete stoop below. Windows are typically double-hung wood units with aluminum storm sash. The roof material is wood shingles, there is no roof overhang, and the wall intersects the edge of the roof with a flat trim, an exaggerated cornice mold, and the drip edge of the shingles. The wall surface is painted stucco. The stucco is without adornment and returns into the jambs of the door and window openings. A masonry chimney projects from the north end of the ridge of the roof; a metal chimney flue penetrates the west downslope of the gable near the north end. The foundation for this wood frame structure is concrete. This small bungalow retains a high degree of historic architectural integrity and makes a positive contribution to the district.

E12 The Mercantile. Constructed in 1937; Addition 1939, Primary.

This 325' long, one-story exhibition building with its prominent central tower is aligned east-west, at the base of the semi-circular park. In 1939, an addition was made to the north of the plan to form a shortened "T" shape. The main entrance to the building is centered on the south wall, directly opposite the addition. It is recessed below the 3-story central tower, which serves as an important architectural element for the building, and as a point of visual reference or focus for much of the fairgrounds. The one-story wings have flat, built-up roofs; the metal flashing at the edge of the roof is plain, narrow and painted to match the stucco wall surface. There are no windows in the walls; the doors that access the exhibit areas are located at the main center entrance described above, and at the ends of the east, west and north wings. They are massive wood rolling assemblies, of "public concourse" width, and are full wall height. Typical walls are straight, planar surfaces with the exception of vertical metal clad fins at the corners of the building, at each side of the main entry, and at the midpoint of the wall between entrance and corner. The central tower is highly sculpted, with with three closely spaced vertical fins at the center of each face. The vertical fins project above the tower mass and are rounded at the top. A narrow, rounded-corner, flat marquee extends from the top of the entry doors; it is appointed with letters extending across the top spelling "Mercantile." The substructure for the facility is concrete. This flamboyant, Art Deco exhibition building, built in 1937, maintains its original integrity.

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E13 Trades & Industries. Built in 1932, Contributing.

This large 80' x 200' "Exposition" building is rectangular in plan with a wide, projecting entrance that is centered on the west side-wall. It has a large, barrel-vaulted roof that clear-spans the exhibit floor; the entry projection is sheltered by a smaller barrel-vaulted roof that intersects the main roof. The building is divided into 11 equal bays in length; the bays are articulated by subtle pilasters and a spandrel beam at the edge of the roof. Each bay circumscribes 2 large square windows (currently filled in and painted) that are placed high in the wall. Roofing is roll-roofing; overhangs are minimal, the roof edge is trimmed with a narrow flat wood fascia. The stucco end walls are an arched form that follows the curve of the barrel vault. The top of the wall projects slightly above the roof line and is articulated with a narrow projecting trim; a second arched trim projects from the wall to create a decorative arched band in the upper part of the wall. Five narrow windows are symmetrically placed in each north and south end wall. They have rounded tops and progressively grow in height following the arched curve of the roof. Four large rectangular pilasters adorn the corners of the facility. They partially intersect the roof line at the edges of the barrel shape and visually serve as a place for the curve to terminate. Two smaller rectangular projections extend from the face of each pilasters; they extend nearly to the top of the larger articulation and have surface mounted flagpoles on each of the projections at each corner of the building. The main entrance repeats the motif of the end walls and contains a pair of large wooden rolling doors. The rolling doors are decorated with geometric wood trim shapes that reflect the spirit of the adjacent Art Deco buildings. A pair of wood entrance doors are located in the south wall, below the windows. The sub-structure is concrete and the floor is scored concrete slab-on-grade. This building retains a high degree of its original historic integrity. Side wall windows are in place under simple coverings and could easily be restored.

E14 Fine Arts. Built in 1938, Primary.

This highly sculptural building has a flat roof and is L-shaped in plan. The L is softened by a generous radius at the re-entrant corner to create a shape that flows in a gentle curve within the corner. The inside curve is articulated by a series of 9 pairs of vertical fins that project above the roof line and are rounded at the top. The roof parapet between fins also extends above the typical wall height, stopping short of the radius of the verticals. A series of louvered wood trims occurs at door head height between each pair of fins; two sets of entry doors are located within each end space of the series of fins. Two other public entries allow access to the building; they are at each end of the legs of the L-shape and face inwardly toward the

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space encompassed by the L. The remainder of the wall on the inside of the L is a planar surface of textured stucco. Three parallel "belt courses" made of narrow flat wood trim occur across the lower part of the wall. The back and end walls continue the motif of textured stucco and belt courses, punctuated by pairs of regularly spaced, wall height shallow fins. These fins house roof drainage elements. The extreme outside corners of the ends of the building are slightly rounded. There are no openings in the walls other than the four, painted wood, flush entry doors. The built-up roof is supported by open web steel joists. The floor is scored concrete slab-on-grade. The flamboyant Art Deco exhibition building maintains its original historic integrity and is a primary element in the district.

E15 Zion School. Moved to site 1975, Noncontributing.

Although this small one-room school house is a non-contributing architectural element in the district, it contributes functionally as an exhibit itself. Originally built in Chouteau County in 1913, the school was moved to the site in 1975 and has been carefully restored and furnished to provide fair visitors a step into the educational past of rural Montana students. It is a one-story building with a projecting front entry vestibule and cloak room that is slightly narrower than the dominant classroom mass. The roof is a steep, wood shingled gable; the entry is sheltered by a lower gable roof of the same slope. Roof overhangs are modest, plumb-cut rafter tails are exposed at the eaves, and a rafter-width barge trims the gable ends. A series of tall, narrow, 1/1 wood windows line one side of the school only. Students entered through a single wood panel front door, placed in the center of the front elevation. Wall surfacing is beveled wood siding trimmed with narrow corner boards and a wide plinth board at the base. The re-located building rests on a treated wood foundation. A single masonry chimney projects through the ridge of the main roof.

E16 Montana Livestock Pavilion. Built in 1919, Primary.

This building anchors the SE corner of the North Montana State Fair-ground Historic District. It is a voluminous (100' x 150') rectangular, barrel-vaulted mass. The sidewalls are a tall one-story height; seven outward facing pilasters at the sidewalls delineate the structural bays of the building. A continuous clerestory monitor extends the full length of the top of the vaulted roof. The sidewalls are divided into 8 equal bays by the pilasters which are constructed of brick and structural clay tile. The top of each pilaster features a barrel roofed wall dormer at the eave line. Each of the "blind" dormers features a centrally mounted flagpole at its apex. The central bay on each side features double-width, wood entry doors. The arch-shaped end walls extend slightly above the height of the clere-

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story and the top follows the shape of the barrel vault roof; the arch shape terminates at a squared off pilaster at each corner. The endwalls are subdivided into 3 bays in width by the pattern of windows and doors; and are divided into an upper and lower section with header lintels occurring at the height of the sidewalls. The upper pattern of the window openings follows the arch roof shape. A continuous multiple course stacked bond brick lintel extends above all three openings gracefully repeating the arch shape of the roof. The center lower opening houses massive rolling wood doors; the other openings are multiple light single-pane windows. Pairs of multiple light wood windows occur on each wall surface between pilasters. Although currently covered, the original windows are in place under simple painted coverings. The sub-structure is concrete and the floor is a scored concrete slab-on-grade. Two chimneys are located within the north end wall construction. This "Exposition" building retains excellent historical integrity, with the exception of the simple window coverings. In addition to being an important anchor building, its design, location, setting, association and feeling established the basis for the design of many other buildings in the district.

E17 Nature's Den. Built in 1937, Contributing.

This one story, low building is T-shaped. The wings of the T extend to the north, south and west; the main entrance projects to the east under a smaller roof canopy that intersects the T opposite the west wing. A moderate-to-steep slope, wood shingle gable roof with a substantial overhang extends over all wings and the entry to impart a feeling of "shelter" to this facility. Ridge heights are aligned on the three exhibit wings; the ridge over the entry is lower. The gable over the entry is snubbed and the fascia of this rake is scrolled to emulate a Swiss chalet. A skylight runs full length of the ridge of the north and south wings. It is a low profile and carefully follows the ridge shape with a series of flat glass panels. The skylight terminates at each end against large stucco chimneys that project through the ridge from the end walls of the interior below. Typical wood frame walls occur at the ends of the wings of the T and below the canopy sheltering the main entrance. Surfaced with wide exposure beveled wood siding, this type of wall construction stops short of the full width of the end walls. The remainder of the walls are enclosed with a post and beam system with wood timber columns on approximately 18" centers with beams above to support the roof. Intermediate wood "girts" span horizontally from column to column and also occur as an overscaled sill plate at the base of the wall. This structural assembly is exposed to the exterior, similar to wood granery construction. The wall surfacing is rough-sawn board and batten that is applied from the interior side of the wall. The rustic character of this stylization with its dark brown color is further enhanced by the wood pole columns that support the main entry. They are over-

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scaled and occur in groups of three on each side of the snub-gable entry overhang. Pairs of rolling wood framed doors occur at the main entrance and at the end of the north wing for service. The sub-structure for the facility is concrete; the floor is scored concrete slab-on-grade. Nature's Den maintains excellent historical integrity and is a contributing element in the district.

E18 F.F.A. Built in 1937, Contributing.

This tall one-story building has a T-shaped plan, intersecting gambrel roofs, and arched pavilion facades at the end of each wing of the T. The T-shaped volume is equivalent to a two story height; lower, one story flat roof constructions are built into the re-entrant corners of the T and also extend full length across the back (or top) of the T. The end walls of the three wings created by the T all have arched stucco facades that conceal gambrel roofs. Each facade includes a pair of large double wood doors with a large, full archtransom above; vertical mullions occur at the 1/4 points of the transom. The uppermost part of the sidewalls of the wings at the top of the T, contain a continuous series of 3/4 industrial steel sash windows on each side. The overall effect is similar to a large clerestory. These windows are covered but in place. Walls of the one story corner constructions and extension across the back are without openings. Materials include a wood shingle roof with a very minimal overhang, stucco wall surfaces and narrow wood painted trim and metal coping at the top of the curved facades and one story walls. The east entry facade has been altered by the addition of a full width elevated platform stage with a canopy above and light construction plywood wings on each side. The sub-structure of the facility is concrete and the floor is a scored concrete slab-on-grade. The F.F.A. exhibition building has sustained some modifications, such as the covered windows and the stage addition, both of which are easily reversible. The majority of its historical integrity has been retained, however, and it remains an excellent example of "Exposition" architecture in its original location and important setting.

E19 Schools. Built in 1929, Primary.

This voluminous open-structured pavilion is a 72' x 100' one-story plan that arches up into the exposed wood trusses of the gambrel roof. The gambrel roof abuts low height parapets at each end; the shape of the parapet is unique among all the buildings at the fairgrounds in that it parallels the steeper downslope of the gambrel on each side and culminates in a gentle arch at the slopes of the upper part of the gambrel. The bottom corners of the shape have a very subtle flare at the ends. The roof is shingle, there is no overhang at the eaves, and a cornice mold and narrow flat fascia trims the top of the wall along the edge of the roof at the sidewalls. The walls are stucco and are

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articulated with industrial steel sash windows that are divided into multiple panes. The end walls feature seven arched windows that progressively grow in height to follow the shape of the end wall. The central (tallest) window occurs above a pair of service doors on each end. The windows in the sidewalls are rectangular multi-light industrial steel. Windows in the south sidewall have been covered and painted to match the stucco wall surface. The main entrance is located at the center of the northeast elevation; it is emphasized by a stucco wall element that projects slightly from the wall and extends slightly above the eave line. Its top of the element is a segmental arch that steps down to a squared "shoulder" at each corner; a stucco pilaster occurs at each corner below the stepped transition. The double entry doors are wood with a segmental transom above, that is divided into multiple lights. The substructure is concrete and the floor is a scored concrete slab-on-grade.

E20 Family Living. Built in 1931, Contributing.

This exhibition building originally served as a poultry display barn. The plan of this one-story building is in the form of a Greek cross. The northwest-southeast axis is dominant and it is roofed by a barrel vault. The southwest wing is gable roofed, as is the northeast wing, which covers the projecting main entrance. The end walls of the barrel vaulted roof extend slightly above the roof line and follow the roof line in a gentle curve; the end of the gable roof tucks up under the edge of the roof. Other than the parapet, the edge of the roof has no overhang and is trimmed with wood cornice mold. Each curved end wall features 5 arched windows in a symmetrical pattern. The center window is wider and is a semicircular arch above double wood entry doors below. The end wall of the dominant gable repeats the same pattern with rectangular windows. Sidewalls in the re-entrant corners of the plan have four spaced window openings in each wall. Other than the doors, all openings have been infilled. A small shed roof vestibule has been added in front of the doors of the north end wall. All wall surfacing is stucco. The end wall of the narrower northeast projection is a stucco "facade" with an arched top which steps to squared "shoulders." Wide wood doors with transom above are inset into an 8' x 13' high arched opening. The substructure for the building is concrete. Although windows have been covered in this building, they are in place under simple coverings. It remains a contributing element in the district because it retains a majority of its historic integrity.

E21 Commerce. Constructed in 1931, Contributing.

This long, one-story, rectangular building was built in 1931. Originally designed to house sheep competing at the fair, in the 1940's it was adapted for other exhibition purposes. The structure is

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aligned on a northwest-southeast axis and the formal main entrance is centered on the northeast elevation. The entrance asserts its presence in a 20' wide projecting stucco wall segment or "facade" that extends 5' in front of the plane of the building; the facade houses monumental wood doors inset in an overscale 8' x 13' high arched opening. The parapet of the entry facade extends nearly to the height of the roof ridge over the pavilion; the parapet is a segmental arch that steps down at each outside corner. Wooden masts, replete with bases and finials, extend from each "shoulder" of the facade for flying banners in keeping with the spirit of fairs. The entry foyer created by the projecting facade is protected by a large gabled dormer that is concealed by the parapet described above. Roofing is wood shingle; there is a generous overhang and the edge of the roof is articulated by the exposed tails of the roof trusses. Other than the painted stucco at the entry, the wall surfacing is wood. The wall plane is divided into an upper and lower half by a projecting wood sill member, that originally defined the bottom of a continuous opening for ventilation in the upper wall. This continuous wall opening was enclosed with wooden panels during the 1940's.

E22 Pony Barn Built in 1936, Contributing.

As an exhibition barn for 4-H club livestock, this long linear, one-story stable has two short projecting entrances located midway along its length to form a foreshortened Greek cross in plan. The basic structure and its entrances are sheltered by gable roofs. The building is aligned northwest-southeast with entrances to the northeast and southwest; additions have infilled the re-entrant corners of the cross at the SE, SW and NW corners. Walls are narrow exposure, painted wood, drop siding. The plan is served by alley-width rolling doors at each end as well as rolling doors from the projecting entrances. Rows of square, 3/3 wooden windows line the sides of the long walls. The additions are basically open air stalls, probably made in the 1944 building restoration program. The substructure is concrete and the floor is a concrete slab-on-grade. The pony barn is the only remaining livestock exhibition facility left within the historic district.

N28 Central Park Gazebo. Built in 1971, Noncontributing.

This structure is an open-air, low slope pyramidal roofed canopy supported by four brick piers at each corner. A support beam extends around the perimeter of the structure connecting the tops of the piers. Sloped roof beams follow the ridges of the pyramid to the apex; rafters progressively project over the tension ring to create a roof shape that is octagonal. A small tapered square monitor projects up from the peak of the pyramidal roof. Roofing is wood shake; the fascia is a narrow flat member. The gazebo exists as a popular

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shelter, but a non-contributing element in the central park.

N29 Central Park Stage. Built in 1971, Noncontributing.

Rectangular in plan, this small structure has a low-slope wood shingle roof. It is open on the north side to expose an elevated stage. The stage projects several feet beyond the CMU foundation wall below. The roof has a minimal overhang on three sides, a wider overhang above the stage, and a plywood soffit. The flat fascia is 1 x 8 rough-sawn cedar. The walls are surfaced with cedar siding applied diagonally. The sidewalls of the stage are tapered and surfaced with T-111 siding. The ceiling of the stage is sloped and made of plywood.

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continued under the state's auspices until 1930. Across Montana, the establishment of county fairs started to affect attendance at Helena's State Fair and a direct rail line from Great Falls to Billings meant that railroad travelers from the eastern part of the state no longer had to go through Helena. Thirty counties held fairs in 1928, a number that grew to 37 by 1929. In 1932, the depression delivered the final blow to Montana's State Fair.

Great Falls area residents had gathered for fairs since before the turn of the century, but it was not until 1926 that the Chamber of Commerce initiated the movement to create a permanent fairground facility, to "forward the upward progress" of agriculture in north central Montana. Oliver Sherman Warden, publisher of the Great Falls Tribune, played a significant role in the development of the fairground. He was a major influence in the establishment of the 1919 Montana Livestock Pavilion, which, in 1926, became an integral part of the fair complex. His newspaper publicized and promoted fair activities and development. Warden's association with the Chamber of Commerce, which originated the movement to establish a permanent fairground, and his position on the fair board throughout the developing years document his role in the production of the North Montana State Fairground.

Momentum for a permanent fairground increased when Cascade County commissioners purchased a 102 acre site, with an existing livestock pavilion, and appointed a five member fair commission. The newly appointed commission joined forces with the Chamber of Commerce to raise \$30,000 by public subscription, an amount to be matched by a county tax levy. Met with "unprecedented response", half of the amount needed was raised in one day. \$10,000 of that amount was subscribed in ten minutes by the board of directors of the Chamber of Commerce. A Tribune editorial reported on the new "record in community development," which revealed the "unanimity of feeling on the fair project," and issued a challenge to the rest of the city to join in the fundraising effort.

The financing was secured, in spite of the sagging economy, and the process of planning the North Montana Fairgrounds began. Gradual construction over a period of years was anticipated so an overall plan was developed to accomodate the "pay-as-you-go" building program. Francis A. Robinson of the firm of Pearse-Robinson, landscape architects of Des Moines, was contracted to design the site plan. Robinson had assisted in designing state fairgrounds in Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Massachusetts. He also laid out fairgrounds at Minot and Grand Forks and, as a crowning achievement, the sesquicentennial at Philadelphia. A Tribune editorial spoke to the significance of the planning process. An exerpt follows:

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When a town is started, the founders usually are more concerned with the pressing problems of earning a livelihood than they are in visualizing and planning what their community is to be and how it is to look 25 or 50 years hence. As a result of this, many present day cities are nothing more than a hodge-podge of accretions with no definite general design.

Great Falls has been most fortunate in this respect. When its founders looked across the rolling prairie which so comfortably snuggles in the bend of the Missouri at this point, they saw a city-to-be of at least 100,000 people, and when the townsite was surveyed that goal was kept constantly in mind. Thus it is that Great Falls today is laid out in such a manner that it can keep on growing without having to tear down what has been constructed in the past.

Then, too, our founders and their successors have clung to the idea that no city can be a great city without trees, lawns and flowers along its avenues and streets, with a city park here and there. As a result of this conviction, Great Falls today probably has more trees and more parks than any city its size in the United States.

So it is to the credit of the Cascade County commissioners, the fair board and the Chamber of Commerce that, in planning a new fair grounds, they took a long look into the future and were able to picture in their mind's eye what the west side of this city is to look like 10 years, 25 years and 50 years from now. Instead of planning a temporary recreation center, they have planned one that will compare favorably with any other park of the city in verdant beauty, and will be as permanent as the city itself.

Although the first fair was contemplated for 1928, the fair commission decided instead to concentrate on the building program. Ground development, racetrack, grandstand and exhibit buildings were added until 1931, when the first North Montana Fair opened to a first day crowd of 129,617. It was the only major fair to be held in Montana in 1931. Thirty Montana counties and ten outside states sent exhibits to the fair, which was dedicated by the governor. 1824 exhibitors were represented in 7237 exhibits. New buildings continued to be added to the fair's physical plant during the 1930's and even the continuing national depression failed to dampen the fair-going spirit, as receipts continued to exceed expenditures. The North Montana Fair was

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one of few in the country to actually increase premium money between 1931 and 1932. Fair attendance in 1934 totalled 193,248. Designation of the local fair as the North Montana "State" Fair began in 1937. Several new buildings, including the Mercantile and the Future Farmers' pavilions were added that year, with assistance from the federal Public Works Administration. This assistance provided not only employment for the local building industry, but created the "anchor" exposition building at the fairground.

The 1937 fair rated praises in Billboard magazine, a top show world publication. "Great Falls-Great Draw" bannered the article which expressed the fact that a city with a population of only 30,000 and a county with a population of 46,000 could produce a show that could draw more than 215,000 admissions to a fair. Additionally, the announcement was made that the American Hereford Association awarded the fair the National Hereford Show for 1938, for the fourth successive year. "The \$10,000 in premiums offered in the Hereford department and the \$29,000 in other departments proved a magnet that drew exhibitors from throughout the nation and in many instances necessitated the construction of emergency pens or structures to house the overflow," the article continued. The carnival set records as well, and 400 horses from all parts of the nation were entered in races, overflowing the 304 stalls available.

In 1938, new construction focused on more environmental and cultural activities. A Fish, Wildlife and Forestry exhibition building was added to the grounds and the flowing, Art Deco style Fine Arts building literally "rounded out" development in the exhibition grounds. Both were federally assisted P.W.A. projects. The fair-ground in that year was valued at \$500,000, according to O.S. Warden, then president of the fair commission.

Much of the success of the early fairs was likely due to the managerial skills of Harold F. DePue, who was hired as secretary/manager in October of 1930, nearly a year before the first fair opened. DePue actively assisted in the planning of the physical plant, as well as managing the many activities of the fair. In addition to a starting salary of \$4500.00 per year, he was also provided a residence on the fairgrounds. The residence was immediately expanded for his use in 1930, one year after it was built. Even though the 1931 and 1932 Fairs had been "outstandingly successful," DePue told the Fair Board that in view of the depressed economy, it might be "appreciated by the public if a voluntary reduction in his salary of 5% were made." DePue guided fair activities until 1941, when he was offered the position of general manager of the Grand National Livestock Exposition in San Francisco. Dan Thurber became secretary/manager of the fair in 1941.

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The "mind's eye" vision of the fairground in the 1927 planning stage exists in reality. Exhibitions continue to be the "time-keepers of progress," in areas of agriculture, home & fine arts, commercial & industrial enterprises and education in the "Exposition" complex that over 60 years ago was that vision. After its completion in 1938, 40 years passed before it became necessary to add a major building to the fairground complex. The new building represents an additional function, being a large skating arena, and is located at the north end of the grounds, outside of the historic district boundaries.

Around 1965, the fair assumed the "State Fair" title and friendly rivalry now exists with Billings, also proclaiming "State" status, instead of Montana's Capitol City. The Great Falls State Fair premium book indicates, however, that "competition is open to the world."

Architectural Significance

Daniel Burnham, superintending architect for the World's Columbian Exposition instructed those involved in developing that fair to: "Make no small plans. They have no magic to stir men's blood." On grounds laid out by America's number one landscape architect, the resulting "White City" opened in May of 1893. Hundreds of thousands of Americans, for the first time were exposed to a large group of buildings, harmoniously and powerfully arranged on a plan of great variety. One style dominated all the buildings; officially called "Neo-classical Florentine," it was to usher in an era of Classical Revival architecture. The retrospective style and the formal landscape had a lasting effect of nearly all forms of American public architecture for a considerable period. It was also to have an effect on exhibition architecture and display well into the third decade of the next century. The dignity of the whole concept, by whatever route, "trickled down" to the planning of fairs at all levels, each one desirous of providing the necessary "magic."

The architecture and grounds of Cascade County's "White City" reflect the total concept of "Exposition" planning. Individually and collectively the buildings and the grounds reflect a unity of purpose. Some of the buildings are designed to meet regional requirements in terms of display. Others are simply massive and open, ready to brighten the lives of people with displays of whatever progress has to offer. The buildings, unlike Chicago's disposable city, are permanent. They are seasonal, however, and signal this in the construction methodology and by myriad flagpoles, which are a permanent architectural detail, most commonly used as an integral part of a considerably scaled down Classical Revival entrance. Banners have signaled a colorful invitation to the public to attend fair activities throughout the history of fairs. The "Exposition" or "Pavilion" style

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classification has been applied to those buildings, for clearly the major stylistic influence was the whole exposition concept.

The Art Deco style, a name which originated at a 1925 Paris Exposition, is represented on the fairgrounds by two major exhibition buildings. The Mercantile and Fine Arts buildings continue the established "Exposition" theme in their scale and materials, but the "Modern Movement" is the overwhelming design influence. Massing and detailing together reflect the Art Deco influences. While many of the "Exposition" buildings in the district moderately reflect Classical Revival influences, on some this is evident only in the form of an applied entrance. Both the Mercantile and Fine Arts buildings are highly sculptural, and exhibit the low relief geometrical ornamentation, typical of the Art Deco style, popular in America between 1925 and 1940. The paired flagpoles, which are an obvious feature above the entrances of the "Exposition" style buildings, also occur on the Mercantile and Fine Arts buildings, but they occur above subservient wing entrances, giving precedence to the exuberant Art Deco entrances.

With the exception of the Montana Livestock Pavilion, which was built in 1919, all of the major exhibit buildings in the historic district were brought into being in a relatively short period of time, between 1928 and 1938. Even though the creation of the entire 102 acre complex was essentially completed in this 10 year period, the individuals, planners, builders, and architects represented a diverse range of ages, influences, and exposure to ideas that coalesced at the fairgrounds.

George H. Shanley was an established Great Falls architect when he designed the livestock pavilion, in 1919. His design was to have a profound influence on the style of other buildings constructed after the "fair" was formally established. The Classical Revival motif and detailing as it was applied to the "pavilion" scale structure recurs throughout many of the buildings in the complex. The entrances to many of the livestock barns reflect the style even though they were designed by A. V. McIver (McIver & Cohagen) when "Mac" applied his professionalism to the Poultry, Sheep, and Hog display barns in 1931. McIver was nearly a generation younger than Shanley and he came from a Great Falls background, as opposed to George Shanley's eastern beginnings.

After 1934, the very young and newly formed firm of G.G. Cottier (Cottier and Herrington after 1935) assumed the design responsibilities at this expanding place to entertain and educate the public. They, too, continued the Pavilion/Exposition style with the Trades and Industries building in 1932, and the F.F.A. building in

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1937. A stylistic departure from the "Exposition" architecture was introduced by the young firm with the subdued Deco Administration building (1934). The modern movement exerted its full influence with their execution of the Mercantile building (1937) and the Fine Arts building (1938). Although the styles of these examples differ, there is a substantial thread of continuity to the group of buildings due to the use of similar materials, colors, and scale. The Mercantile, marked an evolution in the original master plan, as it served to separate the exhibition area from the expanding open midway to the north. Their conversion to the modern movement was not complete; in 1938 Cottier and Herrington also designed the chalet-influenced Wildlife building called "Nature's Den" and the "stable" style pony barn in this same period of time.

Landscape Design Significance

Public gathering places have been an important part of community planning in Great Falls since the city was surveyed and platted in 1882. Among the first improvements in the fledgling city, was an extensive system of parks, imitating the Minneapolis park system, which served to ease the strict geometrics of the townsite plan. By 1894, 700 acres had been set aside by the city council and the park commission, for public park use. Landscaping played an important role in the park system, which by 1959 had expanded to over 1000 acres.

It is not surprising that, when faced with developing a permanent fairground for Cascade County, the site plan was a first priority. The elaborate "Pavilion" plan created by Francis A. Robinson for the fair commission, provided the formality of a large oval park, parallel to the smaller oval of the racetrack, with a system of paths connecting peripheral exhibition buildings. The midway was to be contained in a small area to the north between the race track and the top of the oval. The oval park was planned to contain a music court with band shell, a fountain and small landscaped areas created by the system of paths. The long oval is still in evidence. The southern portion forms the semi-circular park directly in front of the Mercantile building. The depression likely had an impact on the elaborate landscape plans, but the rapidly expanding carnival industry definitely required more than a corner of the grounds. Growing in size, noise and thrills, midway attractions were deftly separated from the passive exhibition area by the construction of the Mercantile building in 1937. Landscaping of the exhibition area continued in the mid-1930's with the help of federal PWA funding assistance.

Community Planning Significance

The well-planned grounds provided only the foundation for the facility

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which was originally created, and has successfully served, to promote agriculture in north central Montana. Before mass communication systems were developed and readily available, fairs provided a platform for information exchange between farmers and ranchers. Traditionally held "when the crops were in", the fair offered recreation at the season's end, exposure to new products and equipment, and elaborate competitive exhibits of grains, fruits, vegetables and livestock.

Great Falls was in a period of marked economic decline, due to the lingering agricultural depression and a drop in the market price of the locally smelted copper, when the county purchased the fairground property in 1926. County commissioners, the fair commission and Chamber of Commerce members, involved in planning and developing the fairgrounds, initiated a "pay-as-you-go" building policy, in consideration of the sagging economy. This policy allowed ample planning time, and the result was a facility which basically continues to function, as originally intended. In 1928, the grandstand and racetrack were in place, and were used for rodeos and horse races, before the first fair was held. In 1930, the city of Great Falls issued only \$1.1 million in building permits, compared to \$3.5 million in 1929, as the economy continued to decline, worsened by the 1929 crash on Wall Street. Building at the fairground continued, however, and the first fair opened in 1931, with a plant valued at over \$250,000, which carried no debt. The fair, which offered "something for everyone" opened to a first day crowd of 129,617. Aside from the economic benefits afforded the building industry of Great Falls, the fair had a positive impact on both agriculture and commercial enterprises. Five new automobiles were purchased and given as attendance awards. Cash premiums were awarded to winners in categories ranging from home and fine arts to grains and livestock. A showcase of new products, equipment and machinery, a wide range of entertainment and educational exhibits lifted the spirits of fair visitors, who flocked to the only major fair to be held in Montana in 1931.

Buildings continued to be added and successful fairs were held throughout the 1930's, despite the continuing depression. The building program was completed in 1938 and for over 50 years, the fairground has adapted to changing tastes in entertainment and advances in education, agriculture and commerce with relative ease. Fires have had an effect over the years, in the loss of some barns and an open bleacher. A new ice activity building, was added in the northern portion of the fairground, and the original grandstand was replaced in 1972. Because of their open design, the exhibition buildings have been able to keep pace with the ever-changing whims of progress, with little change.

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The North Montana State Fairground Historic District, from concept to completion, stands as a visual link to the past; the influences and execution are obvious. Contained within the grounds, and not so obvious, is a history of individuals and organizations who promoted the concept, the professionals responsible for the design, the builders, the Public Works Administration assistance through the "hard times" and the successful management of a fair, which has added to the economic and "spiritual" vitality of Great Falls.

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Boundary Description

Beginning at the southern point of the fairgrounds, located at the intersection of 3rd St. N.W. and the railroad right-of-way, the western boundary is formed by the Milwaukee Railroad right-of-way, which runs approximately 1369' in a northwesterly direction; then the boundary runs northeast approximately 852 feet to the northeast corner of the Trades and Industries building, then east approximately 575 feet to the eastern boundary, formed by the west side right-of-way of 3rd St. N.W.; which runs in a south-south-westerly direction in a gentle curve for a total of approximately 1438' to the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification

The approximately 22 acre North Montana State Fairground Historic District is located in the southern-most portion of the total 102 acre fairground property. The roughly triangular district is defined by the property lines along the east and west sides. The northern boundary is drawn behind the Pony Barn, Commerce building, Mercantile, Administration, and Trades and Industries buildings, which visually and functionally separate the midway from the exhibition area of the fairgrounds. The district contains only the major exhibition and related support buildings, the remaining portion of the landscaped grounds and two historic entrance gates, which hold together both visually and historically. The fairgrounds area to the north of the district has been excluded from the district boundaries because of new construction and development.