

MONTANA HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL INVENTORY

Site # 032



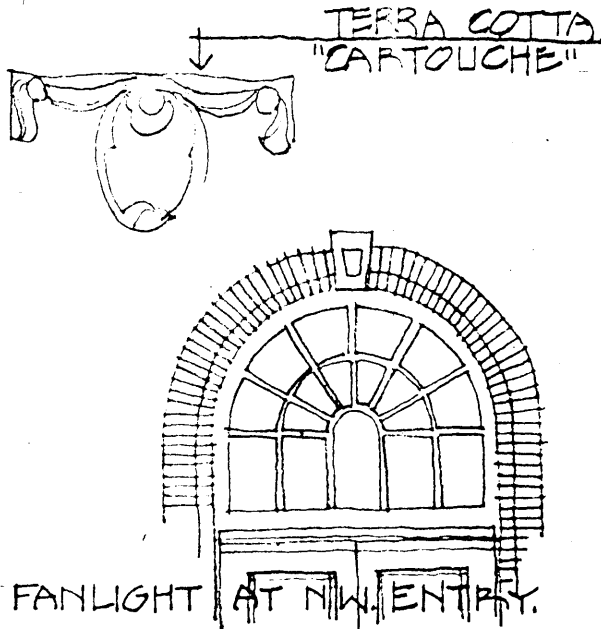
Legal Description: Morase Addition Blk 10 Lt 1-12

Address: 412 6th Ave So

Ownership: name: Lewistown School District #1

private address: 215 7th Ave So, Lewistown, MT 59457
 public

Roll # 3 Frame # 6



Location map or building plan with arrow north.

Historic Name: Fergus County High School

Common Name: High School

Date of Construction: 1919-1927-1937 estimated documented

Architect: J. G. Link (1st & 2nd Units)

Builder: Gagnon & Co. (1st Unit)

Original Owner: Fergus County

Original Use: County High School

Present Use: District High School

Research Sources:

- abstract of title
- plat records/maps
- tax cards
- building permit
- Sanborn maps — dates: 1922, 1929
- city directories
- sewer/water permits
- obituaries
- biographies

Bibliography: Appraisal Card

Minutes of Fergus Co. H. S. Board

Office of District Clerk L. S. D. #1

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

This high school complex covers one city block. It includes a large auditorium, separate gymnasium building, and central heating plant, as well as the main two-story classroom area of the school. Visually, all of these areas have been integrated to read as a large flat roof two-story rectangular mass. It is built on the brow of a hill overlooking Sixth Avenue South and is therefore elevated from the street; the added height contributes to the formality of the symmetrical entrance facade. It is a common bond brick structure that rests on a combination cut sandstone and concrete foundation wall. The main facade has a center entrance section of three bays featuring two-story high pilasters with a large arched opening at the first floor of each bay. A slightly sloped coping at the roofline above is suggestive of a pediment. Each end of the entrance facade has bricked-in two-story high end bays that again feature two-story high pilasters surrounding a bricked-in arch. The field between the three center and end bays has groupings of double hung windows serving classrooms on both floors. The entire facade (and extending around all sides of the building) is embellished with an entablature consisting of a slightly projected terra cotta cornice, a brick frieze with regularly spaced square terra cotta accents, and a narrow string course of terra cotta. Other terra cotta appointments include doric capitals at the giant order brick pilasters, and cartouches below the entablature in the two bricked end bays of the front and back (northeast and southwest facades). A brick parapet occurs above the entablature and is capped with a terra cotta coping. All corners of the building are articulated (or pronounced) slightly to add to the architectural interest of the various elevations. A one-story cut stone lower level entrance provides access on the main facade; the words, "Fergus County High School",

5/17/85

are incised in a dressed stone lintel above the doors. Classroom windows are wood double hung 1/1 units ganged in a series of three or four each. They have soldier brick head trim with corner accents and are spanned by steel lintels on the first floor; they are accented by full width terra cotta head trim on the second floor. All window sills are sandstone. Archivolts over the arched openings feature a soldier course above a rowlock that continue on down the jambs past the springline of the arch. A decorative fanlight fills the arch above the northwest entrance doors. Transom areas of some arched openings have been filled in. A large concrete chimney can be seen in the interstice between gymnasium and classroom buildings.

This composite structure qualifies for register listing under Criteria C. It represents competent execution of architectural thinking of the period and includes the use of stone that is so prolific in Lewistown. The massing and detailing are strong contributors to the study area.

Classification: Renaissance linearity can be seen in the horizontal bands of the parapet; Beaux-Art classicism can be seen in the heraldic cartouches and fanlights; some commercial or transitional impact is felt with the simplicity of the brick walls; and minimal stone craftsman effects are seen in the entrance and foundation details.

5/12/85

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE: Justify how the persons, important events, and/or historical patterns associated with the structure/site and surrounding area lend the property significance.

This property is significant because it is associated with events important in local history and meets Criteria A in the evaluation material for National Register eligibility.

The school was built in 1919, replacing a structure which had been burned to the ground on April 30, 1918, during World War I hysteria. Because of depressed economic conditions during the 20s and the 30s, the school was built in units rather than in one single structure as originally planned in 1918. The County High School Law, passed by the Montana State Legislature in March 1899, required that the school be built to accommodate all high school students in Fergus County, which at that time was comprised of all Fergus, Petroleum, and most of Judith Basin counties. By means of the Milwaukee Railroad, the high school dormitory, and employment in private homes, students could commute to, and room and board, in Lewistown, no matter where they lived in the vast county.

The Trustees desired uniformity in design and composition on the second and third units, which were built in 1927 and 1937. The foundation, particularly under the first unit, which rises from a hillside in a central location, is of handcut local sandstone, as is the enclosed entrance, which was built to protect waiting students from the elements. Improved railroad service by 1908 provided more ready access to a variety of building materials and the stone masonry building tradition that characterized the early structures in Lewistown began to pass (except for additions to extant structures and foundations). The impervious dark brick of the Lewistown Brick & Tile Co. was used in the construction of all three units.

Link & Haire were the architects for the first unit; J. G. Link and William S. Devine (the local representative for the Link & Haire firm for many years) for the second; and G. G. Cottier for the third. Builders of the first unit were Gagnon & Co.; for the second, Hugh Johnson, and for the third, Lovering Longbotham of St. Paul.

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

Original construction (1919 basic school and 1927 gymnasium respectively). The gymnasium basically matches the detailing of the classroom building. All elements occupy their original site.

INFORMATION VALUE: Explain how the extant structure/site may demonstrate or yield information about its historic use or construction.

FORM PREPARED BY: Ken Sievert, Historical Arch	GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:
Name: Ellen Cornwall, Survey Coordinator	Acreage: Less than one acre
Address: P. O. Box 739, Lewistown, MT 59457	USGS Quad: Lewistown S15 T15N R18E MPM
Date: December 15, 1983	UTM's:

5/17/83

