

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received APR 25 1983

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Wyoming State Penitentiary *dist.*

and/or common Wyoming State Penitentiary

2. Location

street & number Sixth and Walnut Sts. not for publication

city, town Rawlins vicinity of

state Wyoming code 56 county Carbon code 007

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a/n process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a/being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Unused

4. Owner of Property

name State of Wyoming; administered by Board of Charities and Reform

street & number Barrett Building

city, town Cheyenne vicinity of state Wyoming 82002

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Carbon County Courthouse

street & number Third and Pine Sts.

city, town Rawlins state Wyoming 82301

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Wyoming Recreation Commission has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1967 (revised 1973, 1981)  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Wyoming Recreation Commission, 1920 Thomes Avenue

city, town Cheyenne state Wyoming 82002

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved      date _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Wyoming State Penitentiary is located at the intersection of Sixth and Walnut Streets in Rawlins, Wyoming's sixth largest city. Situated five blocks north of the downtown business district, the penitentiary has been met by the growth of business, residential and other urban development on three sides. The north end of the penitentiary is bordered by a barren, rocky bluff. The prison complex, containing approximately 65 acres, is divided into several distinct areas. These areas consist of buffer strips of landscaped property located along the fringe of the complex, an outer compound that is enclosed mainly by a chain link fence topped by strands of barbed wire and which incorporates approximately half of the penitentiary acreage, and an inner compound enclosed mainly by concrete walls. Only 30 acres are included within the boundaries of the State Penitentiary Historic District. The six-acre, rectangular inner compound, aligned in a north-south direction, is enclosed by one-foot thick walls of poured concrete, intersected at regular intervals by ten-foot high towers. The inner compound is divided by a wall into two approximately equal areas. The north area is an open recreation yard while the south area contains the main complex of penitentiary structures. At one time the main complex housed most of the inmates and today includes some of the oldest and most significant penitentiary buildings. A watertower and cemetery also contribute to the penitentiary's history and are located within the historic district's boundaries.

The Wyoming State Penitentiary compound contains very formidable sandstone buildings. The buildings within the complex physically illustrate the history of Wyoming's first state penitentiary. Construction on the complex began in the late nineteenth century and continued through the years until it was abandoned in 1981. The diversity of the penitentiary structures might be attributed to the many different architects, building superintendents and general contractors that contributed their expertise to the construction of the penal facility. Historic buildings within the complex, excluding employee housing, can be divided into three stylistic categories: Romanesque, Mission, and utilitarian. The sandstone structures, including those of ashlar and non-coursed masonry construction, are Romanesque in character while the stucco buildings exhibit architectural features that are associated with the Mission style. Vocational shops within the walled compound and older maintenance buildings do not represent a specific architectural style. These utilitarian buildings were constructed in response to specific needs therefore, they were designed without consideration for exterior appearances.

The condition of the prison structures varies from poor to good although most of the historic buildings are structurally sound. Over the years the prison buildings have been altered to meet requirements of the day yet, basically, they have retained their architectural integrity. All of the historic buildings are in their original location. Analyzed as an entire prison complex, the State Penitentiary's integrity has not been compromised as it still immediately conveys the sense of a penal institution.

Because of the close quarters within the concrete walls, the interrelationship of the buildings is an important aspect of the architectural description. The State Penitentiary must be reviewed as an entire complex where buildings and their functions each played a significant role. Yet for the purposes of the nomination, the penitentiary buildings can be placed into separate categories, contributing and noncontributing. An individual designation is reached after evaluating each building's historical and architectural significance as well as its integrity. If a structure adds to the historic district's sense

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** ca. 1891–1980      **Builder/Architect** Walter E. Ware, William DuBois, Frederick H. Porter, others.

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Due to its relationship to historical events and ideas, the penitentiary is one of Wyoming's most significant historic sites. The State Penitentiary complex in Rawlins, Wyoming, is historically and architecturally significant on both a local and regional level. The placement of the State Penitentiary in Rawlins reflected the political and economic realities of nineteenth century Wyoming, and its construction and use provided a stabilizing influence for the railroad town. As one of the oldest state-supported institutions, it serves as a physical reminder of the tenets of the Wyoming Constitution and associated legislation. The expressed desire for Wyoming's people to punish deviant behavior and attempt to reform criminals is a significant portion of the state's social history; the methods of punishing and the procedures in treating the deviant behavior mirrored and reinforced cultural values. The function of each building within the prison identified the various activities and goals of the penal institution. The tremendous expansion of prison facilities over the years reflected Wyoming's political climate as citizens and politicians felt obligated to fund this powerful institution. Today, the old State Penitentiary represents Wyoming's need to impose restrictions on human behavior and it is therefore symbolic of the development of a fledgling western society as it progressed through changes.

The Romanesque buildings at the state prison architecturally describe the prevalent stylistic concerns in Wyoming in the late nineteenth to early twentieth century. Within the boundaries of the State Penitentiary's Historic District are buildings that range in construction date from 1891–1980 and many are identified as contributing structures. The historic buildings can generally be divided into three stylistic categories: Romanesque, Mission, and utilitarian. The Romanesque structures (such as the administration building, cell block A, laundry, guard quarters–powerhouse complex, and commissary) are distinctive public buildings constructed of stone and should be considered as architecturally significant. Some of the more obvious justifications for the penitentiary's architectural importance pertain to the small number of nineteenth century public buildings that remain standing today in Wyoming; only a few structures are made of stone. A very limited number of Wyoming buildings can be considered Romanesque; the administration building represents Wyoming's adaptation of the Romanesque style. Finally, the prison's association with a prominent architect, Walter E. Ware, augments the penitentiary's architectural importance.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

See Addendum, Item #9, page one.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 30 acres

Quadrangle name Rawlins, Wyoming

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A 

1	3	3	1	3	8	9	5	4	6	2	9	3	1	0
Zone			Easting					Northing						

B 

1	3	3	1	3	9	4	5	4	6	2	9	0	4	0
Zone			Easting					Northing						

C 

1	3	3	1	3	6	6	0	4	6	2	8	9	4	0
Zone			Easting					Northing						

D 

1	3	3	1	3	6	6	0	4	6	2	8	9	1	0
Zone			Easting					Northing						

E 

1	3	3	1	3	5	5	5	4	6	2	8	8	8	0
Zone			Easting					Northing						

F 

1	3	3	1	3	5	5	5	4	6	2	9	1	7	0
Zone			Easting					Northing						

G 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

H 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

Verbal boundary description and justification

See Addendum, Item #10, page one.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state n/a code n/a county n/a code n/a

state n/a code n/a county n/a code n/a

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Wyoming Recreation Commission Staff

organization Wyoming Recreation Commission date 1982-1983

street & number 1920 Thomas Avenue telephone 307-777-6301

city or town Cheyenne state Wyoming 82002

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Alvin J. Bastron

title State Historic Preservation Officer date April 6, 1983

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

for Alvin J. Bastron Entered in the National Register. date 5/26/83  
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

Chief of Registration



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ADMINISTRATION BUILDING-Contributing (Structure #3 on site plan)

The Administration Building at the Wyoming State Penitentiary is a massive stone structure built in different stages during the 1890's. The design of the building is attributed to a Salt Lake City architect, Walter E. Ware. Generally, the structure is Romanesque in style but Ware also utilized non-Romanesque features. Ware's Romanesque elements include: the simple treatment of stonework, the large stone semicircular arch, the vermiculated stone sills; the short columns with foliated capitals, and the conical-shaped roofs on the tower.

The Administration Building is a four-story rectangular structure with a twentieth century rectangular addition on the east side. The original cell block, Cell Block A, is located on the west side of the Administration Building and the two structures connect. The Administration Building's hipped roof is sheathed in metal and covers the original slate roof that was also hipped. A decorated gable dormer intersects the roof on the south side. This structure has rock-faced sandstone laid in regular courses; stone lintels with vermiculated sills contrast with the coursed masonry. The stone lintels on the first story consist of large sandstone blocks while the other lintels are flat stone arches. The sandstone used in the penitentiary was cut in the Rawlins area.

The main facade has a symmetrical appearance with a five bay front. The barred windows, spaced at regular intervals, help to define the prison's awesome appearance. A large central entrance with a stone arch and recessed doorway dominate the facade. Two short columns with elaborate foliated capitals accent the semicircular arch. A massive iron gate shields the front door, sidelights, and transom. The leaded and stained glass sidelights and transom appear to be original but the front door is not.

A variety of decorative elements adorn the building such as: a stone watertable, which is currently obscured by new flower beds, and two narrow stone turrets which are located on the east and west corners of the main facade. The window treatment on each turret emphasizes the verticality of the structure and conical-shaped roofs crown each turret. Another notable decorative feature is the pressed metal cornice that ornaments the eaves.

Although the interior of the structure has been remodeled, interesting architectural elements still remain. These significant interior features include: pressed metal ceilings, an elegant softwood balustrade, newel posts and staircase.

The building appears to be in good condition. Through the years the stonework has been repointed and has, in a few places, retained water.

CELL BLOCK A-Contributing (Structure #4 on site plan)

Cell Block A, one of the original penitentiary structures, was built in the 1890's

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while construction proceeded on the adjoining Administration Building. The original design is attributed to Walter E. Ware, well-known Salt Lake City architect. In comparison to the Administration Building, Cell Block A projects a very stark appearance, but still retains a Romanesque feeling. Today, the view of this original cell block is obscured by the prison's walls and a new visitors center.

Cell Block A is approximately three stories high, rectangular in shape, and punctuated by long, narrow, barred windows. Historic photographs indicate that originally the building had a seven bay front with regular fenestration. Cheyenne architect, William DuBois, designed a 1905 addition, and starting that year frequent changes were made to the cell block. The structure's stonework is similar to that of the Administration Building: rock-faced sandstone is laid in courses and stone lintels accent the windows. The gable roof is covered with metal sheathing and a pressed metal cornice decorates the eaves.

This cell block is the largest structure that housed inmates at the penitentiary. The cell block, built according to the nineteenth century Auburn Plan, contains 135 cells located in the center of the block, back to back, four tiers high, 17 cells to a tier. Each cell, except for 32 double cells on the west end of the block, is 5' wide, 7' long, and 7' high.

For the most part, Cell Block A is in good condition except for a few water-related problems. Unfortunately, moisture is harming some of the stonework, especially on the north side.

KITCHEN-AUDITORIUM-Contributing (Structure #5 on site plan)

This Mission style building was designed by Baerresen and Weiger, the same architectural firm that was responsible for the hospital-death house. Attached to Cell Block A, the kitchen-auditorium is located on the north side of the cell block. Constructed in 1916, the structure is a rectangular two-story building covered with painted stucco. Parapeted gables and ceramic tile roof are distinctive architectural features characteristic of the Mission style.

At one time, the building enjoyed a variety of functions; the kitchen and dining room occupied the basement and first floor, while the auditorium was on the second. Access to the ramped, 200-seat auditorium is via a metal stairway and landing. The auditorium is typical in its design; a stage at the north end, rows of seats facing the stage, and a projection room at the back, or south, end of the room. Like other buildings within the penitentiary complex, this structure is in fair condition.

CELL BLOCK B-Noncontributing (Structure #6 on site plan)

Completed in 1960, Cell Block B is a four-story, rectangular, poured concrete structure

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capped by a flat, built-up roof. It is aligned in a north-south direction and, parallels Cell Block C and the Kitchen-Auditorium and is also perpendicular to the north end of Cell Block A. Its dimensions are 125' x 42'. Interior space is in the style of the Auburn Plan and there are 144 cells, back to back, 18 to a tier, and four tiers high. Guard watches extend along the south wall of the cell block, one on each level of the cell tiers.

CELL BLOCK C-Noncontributing (Structure #7 on site plan)

Parallel to Cell Block B, perpendicular to Cell Block A, and situated near the southwest wall of the inner compound, is Cell Block C. The dimensions of the three-story structure are 170' x 52'. The lower story is constructed of concrete; the upper two stories, completed in 1969, are of concrete block infill. A gabled, built-up roof caps the cell block. The interior main level contains a guard's watch and eighteen, maximum security cells. Between the two, nine-cell sections is a maintenance tunnel containing electrical and sewage lines, and controls for showers located at the north end of the block. Above the maximum security cells are classrooms, chapel and a large gymnasium.

LAUNDRY-Contributing (Structure #8 on site plan)

The laundry, located behind the Administration Building, is a small yet interesting structure. It was constructed during 1901 and 1902, and concrete block additions were built in 1968. At the present time, the architect that designed the laundry building is unknown. Originally the structure was utilized as a boiler house but was converted into a laundry in 1922. This structure is very similar to the other stone buildings within the prison complex.

This single, detached building is rectangular in shape and one story in height. Rock-faced sandstone is laid in regular courses and dressed lintels and sills decorate the building. The main gable is intersected by another gable and the entire roof is covered with composition shingles. Even though concrete block additions have changed the architectural integrity of the laundry, much of the structure's original character remains.

The building is in good condition. Similar to the other stone structures, the stonework has been repointed.

VOCATIONAL SHOPS-Contributing (Structure #9 on site plan)

This large, concrete block industrial building was constructed in 1923. A band of clerestory windows acts to illuminate the rather tall first story below. Utilitarian in appearance, the vocational shop's primary facade is punctuated by typical shop windows and doors. The building measures 200' x 130'.



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HOSPITAL-DEATH HOUSE-Contributing (Structure #10 on site plan)

The Cheyenne architectural firm of Baerresen and Weiger designed the hospital-death house building in 1916. The structure displays design qualities that are associated with the Mission style and the hospital is very similar to the kitchen-auditorium.

The hospital-death house is located behind Cell Block C. This two-story facility is really two separate buildings connected by a passageway on the second story. The complex is rectangular in shape and covered with painted stucco. A ceramic tile roof, and the parapet-rimmed gables help to define the Mission character of the building. Fenestration is irregular and windows are double hung.

This multi-use building at one time housed the prison hospital, gas chamber, and death row. Unfortunately, the building is deteriorating and is in only fair condition.

GUARD QUARTERS-POWERHOUSE COMPLEX-Contributing (Structure #11 on site plan)

The guard quarters-powerhouse complex is situated outside the inner compound. Cheyenne architect, William DuBois, designed this distinctive stone building and construction was completed in 1922. This building is both functional and aesthetically appealing. Through the years, the guard quarters complex has enjoyed a variety of uses.

The building is rectangular in shape and has a built-up, gravel roof. The south half of the building is two stories but the north portion is only one story. Architect DuBois utilized the same stonework treatment that is reminiscent of the Romanesque style. The sandstone blocks were cut as rock-faced material and were laid in regular courses. Dressed sills and lintels add decorative interest to the structure.

The guard quarters complex can be distinguished from the other stone structures in the prison complex because of its row of battlements along the roof line.

PUMP HOUSE AND SUBSTATION-Contributing (Structure #12 on site plan)

This building is attached to the southeast corner of the guard quarters-powerhouse complex and has dimensions of 47' x 18'. Constructed of cut sandstone, it has a flat roof topped by a wooden derrick. The substation distributes electricity for the buildings east of the inner compound. The derrick is used in pumping irrigation water, while domestic water is supplied by the City of Rawlins.

EQUIPMENT STORAGE BUILDING-Noncontributing (Structure #13 on site plan)

Aligned in a north-south direction is this one-story, parabolic arch, corrugated steel, quonset. It measures 100' x 37' and contains an electrical shop and miscellaneous equipment and supplies. The building contains seven or eight rooms which are partially divided. This structure was probably built in the late forties or fifties.

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GARAGE-WAREHOUSE-Noncontributing (Structure #14 on site plan)

This modern structure faces west and has dimensions of 104' x 62'. It is a one-story, concrete block and stucco building with a flat, built-up roof. The north end is a storehouse for tools, pipe and other materials, and the south end contains a warehouse and a machine and welding shop.

COMMISSARY-Contributing (Structure #15 on site plan)

The commissary storehouse is one of the stone buildings that is located outside the penitentiary's walls. Unfortunately, extensive research has not discovered who was its architect.

Constructed during the early twenties, it is one story in height. Basically, the structure is rectangular in shape with an attached wing that intersects the primary facade. The roof of the main building consists of a built-up gravel mixture, although ceramic tiles cover the front wing. When the laundry was constructed, the builders employed the same type of sandstone that had been utilized in other penitentiary structures. The main facade has three openings: two doors, and a garage entrance. The building is in good condition.

WATERTOWER-Contributing (Structure #16 on site plan)

The 130-foot-high tower is 26' in diameter and has a capacity of 75,000 gallons. The oblong-shaped reservoir is supported by four, braced, steel-beam legs. The entire structure is painted silver and on either of the north and south sides of the reservoir tank are the words, "Wyoming State Penitentiary." The tower was probably erected in the twenties.

TAG PLANT-STORAGE-Noncontributing (Structure #17 on site plan)

This steel panel building, with low-pitched steel panel roof, faces east and is one-and-one-half stories in height. Dimensions are 77' x 43'. Within is a large space serving as storage for license plates formerly made at the factory in the penitentiary's inner compound.

PENITENTIARY WALLS AND GUARD TOWERS-Contributing (Structures #18 on site plan)

Constructed in 1914-1915, the walls surrounding the inner compound at the penitentiary are constructed mainly of reinforced concrete, and as 12"-18" thick. The length of the west wall is 745' and the east wall would be the same length except that at the southeast corner of the compound the wall abuts the northeast corner of the administration building. The length of the north wall and the wall that divides the inner compound into two parts is 322'. The south wall ends at the southwest corner of the administration building. Steel catwalks built in the early 1960's run the length of the top of the walls. Spaced along the walls are high intensity lights, augmented by lights on poles situated along the exterior perimeter of the walls. The south wall and a portion of wall at the southeast corner of the compound are supported on the exterior by concrete buttresses spaced about 14' apart.

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The structures within the walls of the south portion of the inner compound have already been described. The north portion, access to which is provided via a steel gate controlled by the guard in Tower #5, encloses a recreation yard.

Access to the inner compound is provided by a single door entrance located in the main, or south face, of the penitentiary's administration building and by a double entrance sally port located in the east wall. The large, north cage of the sally port is designed for vehicle access to the inner compound while the adjacent, south cage is designed for pedestrian traffic. Each cage has two gates for security purposes, and all gates are controlled from above by the guard in Tower #1.

All but one of the six guard towers atop the penitentiary walls are built of poured concrete. The exception is wooden Tower #1, located east of the laundry and above the sally port entrance to the inner compound. Tower #1 is made of wood, is square in shape and has a bay window on the west facade. It is situated over the iron-bar, double entrance sally port. Each of the concrete towers is octagonal in shape, 12-15 feet wide, and capped by a hipped roof covered with asbestos shingles. Rising ten feet above the 18-foot-high concrete walls, the guard towers collectively provide nearly a comprehensive view of the prison and its immediate environs. Each face of each tower, except for the face containing a single-door entrance, contains a casement window.

CELL BLOCK C BOILER-Noncontributing (Structure #20 on site plan)

The structure is 19' square and faces east. It is made of brick and capped by a gable roof covered with composition shingles. Within is a boiler and heater used to supply hot water heat for Cell Block C.

DEPUTY WARDEN'S HOUSE-Contributing (Structure #23 on site plan)

Designed by Cheyenne architect, Frederick H. Porter, the structure was built in 1930. Originally, the warden's home, now this building is used as a residence by the deputy warden. The house is a two story brick building with a hipped roof. The dimensions of the L-shaped structure are 48' x 52' for the south, or east-west, leg of the home, and 24' x 26' for the north leg. The windows are double hung and some have sidelights. A small projecting porch with a shed roof and single wood door accent the entry way. Decorative features include: brick quoins, brick belt-course and watertable, brick arches and keystones, and corbeled chimneys. The symmetrical appearance of the structure is sometimes associated with the Georgian Revival style.

PUMPHOUSE-STORAGE BUILDING-Contributing (Structure #26 on site plan)

The pumphouse is a one-story concrete structure with a flat roof. It is topped by a wooden derrick similar to that on the pumphouse-substation. The exact construction date of this building remains unknown but it was probably constructed during the twenties.

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PAINT SHED-Contributing (Structure #27 on site plan)

This one-story storage building faces west. It is built of salvage stone and capped by a flat, built-up roof, and is similar to the other stone structures in the complex. This building was probably constructed in the twenties.

HORSE BARN-Noncontributing (Structure #30 on site plan)

This one-story structure is built of wood and capped by a steel, shed roof. Once used as a horse barn, it is today used for paint storage.

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In anticipation of statehood, the Wyoming Territorial Legislature in 1886 made provisions for establishment and construction of major public buildings: a capitol building in Cheyenne, a university at Laramie, an insane asylum at Evanston, and a school for the blind, deaf and dumb at Cheyenne. The City of Rawlins tried to obtain a \$75,000 appropriation for a penitentiary but had to wait two years. In 1888 a territorial building act authorized construction of a penitentiary facility not to exceed \$100,000 although only \$30,000 in bond issues was approved for initial costs. That year penitentiary commissioners purchased a tract of land at Rawlins.

Although Wyoming became a state in 1890, it was not until 1893 that the first state legislative appropriations were authorized for penitentiary construction work. In May of that year the first construction contract was awarded, and by December 7, 1894 all stone work on the combination administration-cell block building had been completed, the first stage of the facility cost about \$70,000.00. Two years later the building was reported complete, but it sustained some damage and was in custodial status until June, 1898 when bids were advertised for its completion. Two more years elapsed before the Board of Penitentiary Commissioners ordered the removal of property and prisoners from Laramie to Rawlins. It was not until the end of October, 1901, after nearly twelve years of effort, that the state finally had its' penitentiary. On December 12, 1901 Warden Hehn took the first group of 40 prisoners to Rawlins on the Union Pacific Railroad, and another group of 40 arrived the next day. Rumors were afloat that members of George Curry's gang intended to hold up the train carrying the prisoners to Rawlins, but the transfer took place without event.

Not long after the transfer of prisoners from Laramie to Rawlins both major and minor changes were made in the prison structures at Rawlins, the most significant being an addition to Cell Block A. More than a dozen structures of an auxiliary nature were built prior to September 30, 1902. Among the work projects was one which called for repair of a portion of the wooden stockage that enclosed penitentiary buildings.

Although the framers of the Wyoming State Constitution assigned jurisdiction of the penitentiary to the Board of Charities and Reform, from 1901 until 1911 actual operation of the facility was carried out under contract with private parties, the two most notable contractors being N.K. Boswell and Otto Gramm. The first was a famous western lawyer from Laramie and the second a prominent Laramie businessman and lawyer. In 1911 the state terminated its lease arrangement and took over operation and management of the penitentiary, assigning responsibility directly to the Board of Charities and Reform. Thus the board's role was extended from one of policy-making to one of direct authority over construction of the physical plant and maintenance of the campus, as well as administration of penitentiary inmates and employees.

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In the first decade under board control, a number of significant accomplishments were made both in prison life and in the prison's physical plant. Convict labor was used for construction of public roads and thus a beginning was made in the establishment of the first state highway system. The health of inmates was improved. The Wyoming Industrial Institute was built at Worland, making possible the segregation of young inmates from adults. Both the educational and recreational systems were expanded, and a newspaper, the Wyoming Pen, was established. A number of structural changes were made under board management. In the years 1914-1915 a sturdy wall of reinforced concrete was built around the prison and at the same time running water and electricity were installed. A broom factory was built to replace one which was destroyed by fire in 1912. In 1916 a structure was built to house a kitchen, dining room, bakery and chapel, providing more space in the original administration-cell block building for offices. Another significant structure built that year was the hospital-death row-death house.

Throughout the 1920's and the 1930's, reformers strove for better living conditions and rehabilitation programs throughout the United States. Activities in the state penitentiary reflected this national trend. One person in particular was responsible for many changes, warden Frank Hadsell (1920-1927). For example, under Hadsell's leadership a prison farm was begun at Saratoga, where inmates raised most of the prison's vegetables.\* Night school, as well as the general educational curriculum, was expanded. The Reliance Manufacturing Company, which had a contract to operate the prison's shirt factory, reported in 1922 that production per man at the factory had increased 30% since Hadsell's appointment. However, in 1929 the stock market crash and the passage of the Hawes-Cooper Act controlling interstate commerce in prison goods ended the expanding business that we developing in the prison. During the war years business picked up but postwar productivity was down.

The period from 1920-1946 was also a period of physical plant growth at the penitentiary. In 1922 a cut-stone building was constructed to house work release inmates, and to provide space for shops and a heating plant. The old heating plant within the inner compound was converted for use as a laundry. A fire destroyed the broom factory in 1923 but a new structure, housing a shirt factory and eventually various other shops, took its place. A water tower and a smokestack rose from the horizon in 1922 and 1927, respectively, and in 1929 prison labor was used to landscape the penitentiary grounds. Plans for a new warden's residence were drawn by Cheyenne architect Frederick H. Porter in 1929 and the structure was completed the following year. Among other changes was the adoption of lethal gas to replace the gallows method of execution.

The concern for rehabilitation programs and living conditions declined after World War II. With decreased national and state funding, facilities deteriorated and some recreational and educational programs were cancelled. In response to these conditions, the prisoners rioted on July 16, 1955.

\*In 1921 the legislature appropriated \$50,000 for the purchase of a penitentiary farm near Riverton, and eventually a plot of 720 acres was purchased and farming operations transferred to that location.

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Inmate demands for better living conditions initiated another era of prison reforms. As in the past, concern for rehabilitation represented the thrust of prison activity. Throughout the 1960's and 1970's, increased national and state funding allowed officials to restore cancelled programs. The state began a pre-release orientation program, honor camp, and a work-release policy which allowed some prisoners to labor in the local community. Finally, educational programs included provisions for full time instructors and adult education classes.

Because of its age and design the State Penitentiary did not meet modern safety requirements. Penologists found the early twentieth century buildings unacceptable for treating prisoners in the 1980's, therefore in 1981 the historic state penitentiary was abandoned. Currently, a number of adaptive use plans for the complex are being considered by the Board of Charities and Reform.

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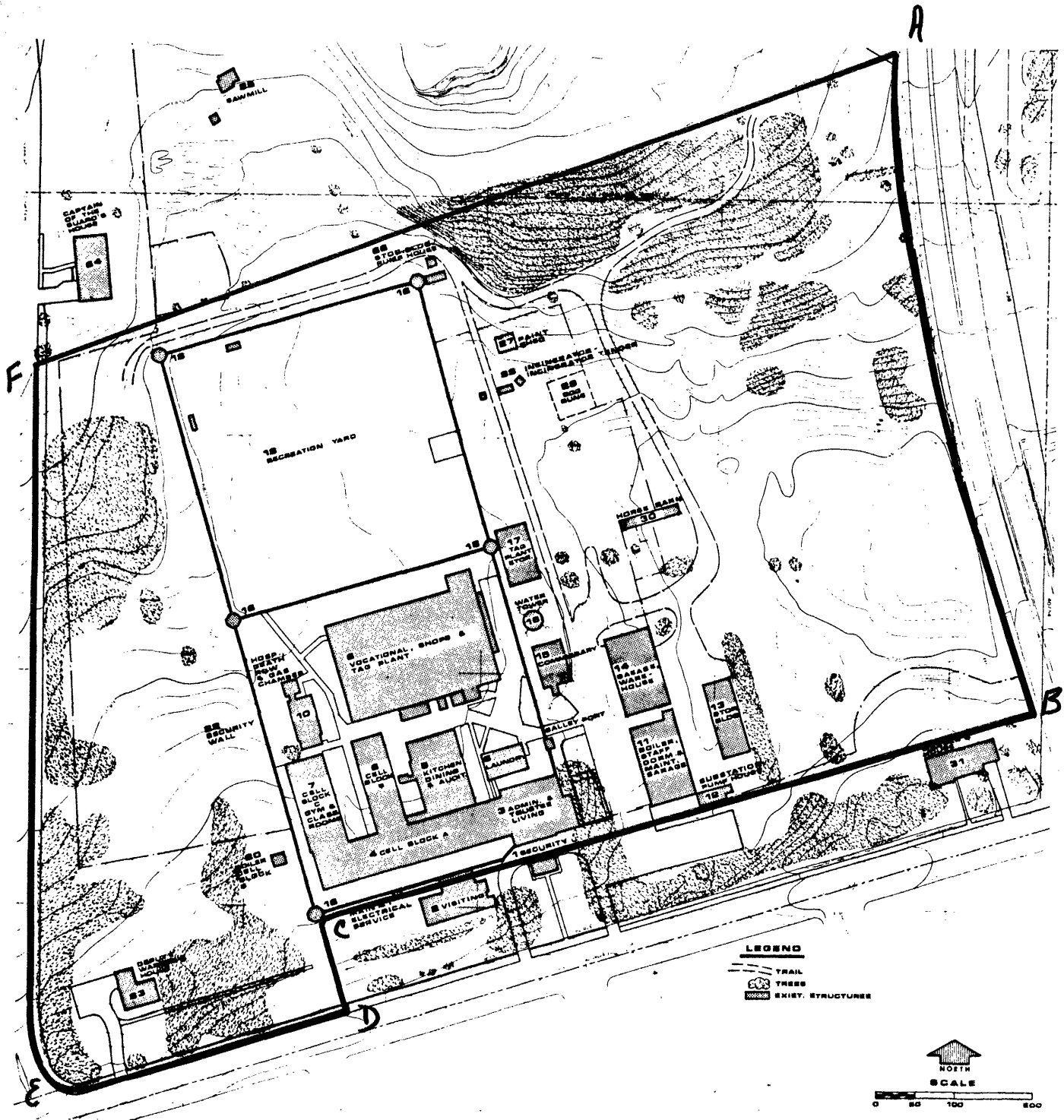
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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION AND JUSTIFICATION

The boundaries of the State Penitentiary Historic District were drawn to include all the historic structures and sites but to exclude noncontributing modern buildings such as employee housing and the visitor's center. The polygonal historic district's boundaries are defined by major streets and arbitrary lines. The east boundary of the district is the west curb of Highway 287 and this eastern boundary is drawn from point A to point B. The southern boundary, from point B to point C is based on the south concrete wall of the penitentiary complex. Point C is located at the southwest guard tower of the prison complex and point B is the intersection of Highway 287 and the arbitrary south-concrete wall-line. Another line, an arbitrary extension of the prison's west concrete wall, is drawn from point C to point D. The other portion of the south boundary, drawn from point D to point E, is defined by the north curb of Walnut Street. Point E is located at the intersection of Walnut and Seventh Streets. The west boundary of the historic district is the east curb of Seventh Street running from point E to point F. The north boundary is based on the north fence of the cemetery so an arbitrary line is drawn from point F to point A.



# EXISTING PLAN

— Historic District Boundary