National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form



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

1. Name

historic	Stillwate	er State P	rison Histo	ric Dis	trict				
and/or common	Minnesota	. Correcti	onal Facili	ty Si	tillwater				
2. Loca	ition								
street & number	5500 Pick	ett Avenu	e]	N/A not for	publicati	on
city, town	Bayport		N/ <u>A</u> vicini	ty of					
state	Minnesota	code	22	county	Washington		c	ode 1	63
3. Clas	sificat	ion							
Category x_ district building(s) structure site object	Ownership x_ public private both Public Acqu N/A_ in proces being con	S	Status X occupied unoccupied work in pr Accessible yes: restri yes: unres X no	ogress cted	Present L agricu comm educa entert gover indus milita	ulture nercial ntional ainment nment trial	par priv reli scio trai	seum k vate resid gious entific nsportatio er: Pena	on
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courthouse, regis	try of deeds, e	tc. Washin	ngton County	7 Courth	ouse				
street & number		14900	61st Street	North					
city, town		Still	water			state	Minnesot	a	
6. Repr	esenta	ition i	n Exist	ing S	Survey	S			
title State-Ov	vned Buildi	ngs Survey	y has	this prop	erty been det	ermined e	ligible?	yes	<u>× no</u>
date 1977-197	78	Minne	<u> </u>				ate cou	inty	local
depository for su	rvey records		a State Hist a Historical					Cente	r
city, town		St. Paul				state	Minnesc	ta	

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7. Description

Condition	Check one	Check one	
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Sood realized ruins	altered	moved dateN/A	
fair unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

The Minnesota State Prison at Stillwater is situated approximately one mile south of Stillwater, on the top of a bluff overlooking the valley of the St. Croix River. The main building complex, comprising some 16 major buildings on 22 acres within a rectangular, walled compound, was constructed between 1910 and 1914 to designs by State Architect Clarence H. Johnston, Sr. Although occasional details recall historical precedents, the design of the buildings was intended to be simply "modern" and utilitarian. Principal buildings include the Administration Building, four Cell Halls, a Hospital, a Chapel/Dining Hall/Kitchen complex, and industrial buildings. A 28-foothigh, freestanding wall with guard towers encloses the original complex. Several buildings outside the walls also date from the original construction period and are included in the historic district, which covers 13 additional acres and includes in all 29 buildings and 1 structure. Of the 29 buildings, 8 are non-contributing.

ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

Most of the major non-industrial buildings are laid out in a plan said to resemble a telephone pole, with the central circulation spine as the pole and the buildings themselves as the crossbars. Cell Halls A and B form the top crossbar and also the east edge of the walled compound; they meet at the central spine and in front of them, facing the street, stands the Administration Building, the spine's eastern terminus. Like all the original buildings in the compound, these are faced with orange-brown brick and trimmed in cut, hammered limestone; both materials make up the geometric ornament at cornices and gable ends. Also repeated throughout the complex are the deeply overhanging eaves with ornamentally sawn rafters, ornamented sillhouettes of parapet walls, and square brick cupolas with low-pitched, pyramidal caps. Red tile roofs, another element unifying the original design, now remain only on the Administration Building, Hospital, and guard towers.

The Laundry and Tailor Shop, and Cell Hall C (now altered), form the second crossbar of the telephone pole, with the Operations Building and Canteen (now demolished and replaced by the new Chapel) tucked between them and the cell halls. The third crossbar is shown in early renderings of the site plan as consisting of two more cell halls, like A and B but shorter; but only one of these, Cell Hall D, was eventually built. Although it was added later (1927-1928) and differs from the original design in having a flat roof, Cell Hall D contributes to the historic district because it fulfills the original plan, uses the original unifying materials and details, and was designed by the original architect, C. H. Johnston, Sr. It is balanced across the central spine by the Activities Building, added in 1970. The spine terminates at the west in the large Chapel (now Auditorium)/Dining Hall/Kitchen complex.

(See Continuation Sheet)

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

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Page

Stillwater State Prison Historic District, Bayport, Washington Co., Minnesota Continuation sheet Owner of Property Item number 4 Owner of Property

> Robert Erickson, Warden Stillwater Security Facility P.O. Box 55 Stillwater, Minnesota 55082

Ms. Sandra J. Hale, Commissioner Department of Administration 200 State Administration Building 50 Sherburne Avenue St. Paul, Minnesota 55155



National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

Stillwater State Prison Historic District Continuation sheet 1 Rer Mitty use only received Gale entered

The exercise yard to the north of the telephone pole complex has always had a baseball diamond. To the south, the Hospital stands in what was considered the prison "park," above the site of the now-demolished Paxtonian greenhouse.

A north-south road called "Main Street" divides the telephone pole-plan housing complex from the industrial buildings to the west. The two factories -- the Cordage Factory on the north and the Farm Machinery Industry Building on the south -- flank the central Power House, backed up by the Cordage Warehouse and the Foundry and Blacksmith Shop, respectively. Generally, flat roofs distinguish these industrial buildings from the housing buildings. Centered behind the Power House as the western terminus of the whole axial composition, the octagonal brick water tower (now demolished) had a battered base, a pronounced stone water table, and small windows at the top above a corbel table and beneath a sprocketed, steeply pointed cap. Various small service buildings clustered around its base, not depicted in the original site plans, remain.

The Warden's Residence, directly across the street from the Administration Building, contributes to the historic district by extending the east-west axis and by presenting an image in sharp contrast to that of the prison itself. The difference between the worlds "inside" and "outside" the walls could hardly be drawn more clearly than it is in this Americanized version of an English country house. Also the work of C. H. Johnston, Sr., the Deputy Warden's Residence is a conventional "Midwest Square" that gains distinction by applying scaled-down versions of details from the Warden's Residence. The other staff residences remaining may have been moved from other sites at the time of construction: they appear to be earlier and are in no way unique, but they are placed on the site so as to establish a staff residential area outside the walls.

The other buildings immediately outside the south wall are unrelated to Johnston's design and date from different periods. The two Shipping Warehouses abutting the wall were added immediately after the original construction period and are purely utilitarian in form and materials. The Auto Maintenance Garage does not appear in photographs taken c. 1930; the Minimum Security Building was added in 1940.



Item number 7

Page

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

Stillwater State Prison Historic District Continuation sheet $_2$ Item number

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DESCRIPTION --Inventory (Descriptions based on 1985 field survey. Building/Structure numbers are adapted by the author from maps of the Prison and refer to numbers on the sketch map.)

- (* = noncontributing building or structure)
- Building 1 Administration Building (1910-1914). Three-story rectangular building with projecting central bay. Eastern terminus of central spine. Brick with cut stone trim. Gable roof, cross gable at central bay. Battlemented parapets at gable ends, deeply overhanging eaves with ornamentally sawn rafters. Engaged Doric portico in stone at main entrance. Hammer-finished stone water table, belt course and coping. Brick belt courses, brick and stone panel ornamentation at third story and gable ends. Tile roof. Two brick cupolas on roof. Flagpole mounted on face of gable at central bay. Metal and glass entrance canopy removed; bars removed from second and third story windows; octagonal brick chimney at south end removed. Elevator/stair towers added to north and south ends in 1981.
- Building 2 Cell Hall A (1910-1914). Four-story building -- extended rectangular plan. Three slightly projecting bays with gables. Gable roof. Battlemented parapet at south end; north end adjoins cross-gabled central circulation spine, not considered a separate building although its roof projects above those of Cell Halls A and B at this point. Brick with stone trim. Barred window openings extend full height of facade, from stone water table to just under eave line. Brick and stone panel ornament; stone coping. Two brick cupolas on roof. Roof tile replaced with asphalt shingles.
- Cell Hall B (1910-1914). Mirror image of Cell Hall A. Building 3
- Building 4 Chapel (1978-1979). One-story rectangular brick building. Flat roof. Windowless. Adjoins central spine on south, Cell Hall B on east, Cell Hall C on west: only north wall exposed. NONCONTRIBUTING.
 - Operations Building (1910-1914). One-story brick building; Building 5 "T" plan. Flat roof. Stone water table and coping. Adjoins central spine on north, leg of "T" extends south between Cell Hall A and Laundry and Tailor shop.

3

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only received date entered

Page

Stillwater State Prison Historic District Continuation sheet 3 Item number

* Building 6 Cell Hall C and Security Center (1910-1914; Cell Hall C altered and Security Center added 1964). Cell Hall C originally mirror image of Laundry and Tailor Shop. Onestory, flat-roofed brick Security Center added to north end. Adjoins central spine on south. NONCONTRIBUTING.

- Building 7 Laundry and Tailor Shop (1910-1914). One-story rectangular building. Adjoins central spine on north. Gable roof. Battlemented parapet at south end; north end adjoins circulation spine and Cell Hall C. Brick with stone water table and coping; brick and stone ornament. Brick cupola on roof. Roof tile replaced with asphalt shingles.
- * Building 8 Activities Building (1970). One-story rectangular brick building. Adjoins central spine on south. Gable roof. Stone water table; no other ornament. NONCONTRIBUTING.
 - Building 9 Cell Hall D (1927-1928). Three-story rectangular building. Adjoins central spine on north. Flat roof. Brick. Barred window openings extend full height of facade, from stone water table to brick belt course marking cornice.
 - Building 10 Hospital (1910-1914; now called Health Center). Freestanding one-story brick building. Originally "H" plan with projecting entry bay in center of crossbar facing north; all wings, including both sides of crossbar, extended before 1930. Gable roofs; battlemented parapets at gable ends; deeply overhanging eaves. Stone water table and coping; brick and stone ornament. Tile roof; brick chimneys.
 - Building 11 Chapel (now called Auditorium), Dining Hall and Kitchen (1910-1914; addition at northwest corner). Although considered one building, this is actually a complex: to the east, a two-story rectangular building containing the Auditorium on the north and the Dining Hall on the south; to the west, a smaller two-story rectangular building containing the kitchen. Both buildings have gable roofs, their ridges running north-south. They are connected by a two-story, gable-roofed wing, its ridge running east-west. Both Dining Hall and Auditorium have single, double-height interior The windows of the Dining Hall are continuous from spaces. stone water table to ornamented brick and stone belt course marking the cornice; those of the Auditorium express two levels. The Kitchen building terminates the central spine with a projecting, cross-gabled central bay. Gables end in battlemented parapets with brick and stone ornament similar to other buildings; roofs have brick cupolas and glazed monitors. Roof tile replaced with asphalt shingles.

4

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only received date entered

Page

Stillwater State Prison Historic District Continuation sheet 4 Item number

Building 12 Cordage Factory (now called Industry Building, 1910-1914). Rectangular building, three stories, flat roof. Brick; stone water table and coping; brick and stone panel ornament. Brick parapet wall ornamented to suggest crenelations, end pavilions, and gabled center block. Pivoting industrial steel windows.

- Structure 13 Power House (1910-1914; remodelled 1982-1983). Square, flat-roofed structure. One story, equivalent to two-story height. Brick; stone water table and coping; stone and brick panel ornament. Full-height barred window openings; steel spandrels. Parapet wall ornamented to suggest crenelations, pinnacles, and gables. Squat cylindrical brick chimney with deeply corbelled cornice demolished; metal chimney and pollution-abatement facilities added at west facade.
- Building 14 Farm Machinery Industry Building (1910-1914). Mirror image of Cordage Factory. Some window openings infilled with concrete block and small steel windows.
- Structure 15 Cordage Warehouse (1910-1914). Rectangular brick structure consisting of four bays arranged north to south. One story, equivalent to three-story height. Low-pitched gable roof with deeply overhanging eaves. West facade has low-arched windows above overhead vehicle doors, brick and concrete loading dock. Brick and stone panel ornament. Roof tile replaced with asphalt shingles, gutters and metal fascia added.
- Structure 16 Electric Motor Repair Shop (now called Water Treatment Building; 1910-1914). Rectangular brick structure; one story; flat roof. Utilitarian, unornamented.
- Structure 17 Well House (1910-1914). Square brick structure; one story; flat roof. Utilitarian, unornamented.
- Structure 18 Maintenance Building (now called Building Maintenance Building; 1910-1914). Rectangular brick structure; one story; flat roof. Overhead vehicle doors at south facade. Utilitarian, unornamented. One-story, concrete block Inside Construction Building added on east side.
- Building 19 Foundry (1914; remodelled 1935). Rectangular, one-story brick building, equivalent to two-story height. Flat-roofed two-story block at north end; south section has roof monitor running north-south. Flat-roofed three-story tower at midpoint of south section on west partially demolished. Stone sills and coping; simple brick panels; otherwise unornamented. Original pivoting industrial steel windows now partially covered with corrugated fiberglass.

NPS Form 10-900-a (3-82)

5

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

Stillwater State Prison Historic District Continuation sheet 5

For NPS use only received date entered

Page

Item number 7

Building 20 Blacksmith Shop (1914). Rectangular, one-story brick building, equivalent to two-story height. Roof monitor running north-south. Stone sills and coping; simple brick panels; otherwise unornamented. Original pivoting industrial steel windows now partially covered with corrugated fiberglass.

- Perimeter Wall and Guard Towers (1914). Reinforced concrete Structure 21 wall, 28 feet high, surrounding three sides of original complex. Stone water table and coping at extreme eastern portions of wall (visible from road); brick facing and brick and stone panel ornament on exterior of wall, replaced with rough-finished concrete in some places. Square, three-story concrete guard towers at corners and midpoints of wall. Typical guard tower has brick facing; brick and stone panel ornament with rough-finished concrete in panel; large windows at third story, which projects above top of wall; and low-pitched, pyramidal tile roof.
- * Structure 22 West Shipping Warehouse (1916; remodelled 1929). One-story, rectangular, shed-roofed structure. Corrugated metal siding. Loading dock at south. NONCONTRIBUTING.
- * Structure 23 East Shipping Warehouse (1916; remodelled 1929). Mirror image of West shipping Warehouse. Two gabled porches at south. NONCONTRIBUTING.
- * Building 24 Minimum Security Building (1940). Two-story, flat-roofed brick building; irregular plan. NONCONTRIBUTING.
- Structure 25 Auto Maintenance Garage (after 1916). One-story, wood-frame structure. Gable roof, asphalt shingles. One-story, wood-frame, gable-roofed addition to west. NONCONTRIBUTING.
 - Building 26 Warden's Residence (1910-1914). Two-story, rectangular, wood-frame house. Stucco exterior, wood trim, brick foundation. Palladian-motif portico at west (entry) facade; one-story sunroom at east overlooking river valley. Typical windows double-hung, six-over-six-light; some smaller rectangular double-hung windows; two round-arched divided-light windows at west facade. Hipped roof. Hipped-roofed dormers at north and west, eyebrow dormer at south, shed dormer at east. Tall, stuccoed chimneys. Hipped-roofed porches at north and south ends have been enclosed; "Craftsman"-style trellis removed from north porch. Wood roof shingles replaced with asphalt shingles.

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

Stillwater State Prison Historic District Continuation sheet 6 Item number



Page 6

* Structure 27 Garage (after 1930). One-story, rectangular wood-frame garage. Stucco finish. Hipped roof, asphalt shingles. NONCONTRIBUTING.

Building 28 Deputy Warden's Residence (1910-1914). Two-story, rectangular, wood-frame house. Stucco exterior, wood trim, concrete foundation. Modest, arched-roofed portico at east (front) entry. Hipped roof; small shed dormer at east. Enclosed porches at north and south. Stuccoed chimney. Wood roof shingles replaced with asphalt shingles.

- Building 29 Residence (c. 1910). Two-story, cross-gable, wood-frame house. Two-story enclosed porch at east front.
- Building 30 Residence (now called AA House; c. 1910). One-and-one-half-story, cross-gable, wood-frame house. One-story porch at east front. Brick chimney added at south facade.

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

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Stillwater State Prison Historic District, Bayport, Washington Co**rport State** Minnesota Continuation sheet Resource Count Item number 8 Page 1

The Stillwater State Prison Historic District Nomination contains

21 Contributing Buildings:

Administration Building Cell Hall A Cell Hall B Operations Building Laundry and Tailor Shop Cell Hall D Hospital Chapel, Dining Hall and Kitchen Complex Cordage Factory Power House Farm Machinery Industry Building Cordage Warehouse Electric Motor Repair Shop Well House Maintenance Building Foundry Blacksmith Shop Warden's Residence Deputy Warden's Residence Residence Residence

1 Contributing Structure:

Perimeter Wall and Guard Towers

8 Non-Contributing Buildings:

Chape1

Cell Hall C and Security Center Activities Building West Shipping Warehouse East Shipping Warehouse Minimum Security Building Auto Maintenance Garage Garage

8. Significance

Specific dates 1910-1914/1928

1400–1499 1500–1599 1600–1699X 1700–1799 1800–1899	archeology-historic agriculture architecture art commerce	conservation economics education engineering exploration/settlement	military music philosophy politics/government	 religion science sculpture social/ humanitarian theater transportation other (specify)
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Builder/Architect C. H. Johnston, Sr., St. Paul, Minnesota

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Repeatedly cited for its excellence of design, the second Minnesota State Prison at Stillwater (Stillwater Prison) is particularly significant as an early and influential American instance of the widely-used French "telephone pole" plan for maximum-security institutions.

The original Stillwater Prison, in use since the mid-nineteenth century, had become overcrowded and dilapidated by 1900. A physically constricted site prevented expansion, and the state legislature authorized an entirely new prison in 1905. Designed by Clarence H. Johnston, Sr., the state architect for the Board of Control who was responsible for most of the state's institutional buildings during the first 30 years of the century, the new facility was under construction from 1910 to 1914. The earlier prison's profitable twine-producing industry was retained in the new plan, along with facilities for the production of farm machinery, which remain in operation today.

The new prison attracted widespread attention, probably most significantly for its "telegraph pole" or "telephone pole" plan. First developed at Fresnes-les-Ringis, near Paris, France, in 1898, this plan used a single central circulation spine to connect all cell blocks and other facilities, which were laid out perpendicular to the spine like the crossbars of a telephone pole. Although Johnston's use of the plan at Stillwater was not complete -- the spine stopped short of connecting the western industrial buildings -- it was probably the earliest American instance of the plan subsequently used for state prisons in New Mexico, Ohio, Oregon, Texas, Massachusetts, 1 Connecticut, and Oklahoma; and for the federal penitentiary at Lewisburg, Pennsylvania.

As late as 1949, Stillwater Prison was still being called "modern . . . one of the most satisfactory and attractive physical plants of any state prison of the maximum-security pattern."² Most of the original buildings connected by the central spine survive very largely intact, their intricate geometric ornament belying the usually grim image of a prison. It is interesting to note of recent additions to the facility that while the buildings themselves cannot be considered significant, they have for the most part used the original planning concept and contributed to its strength.

Notes

- 1 United States Bureau of Prisons, <u>Handbook of Correctional Institution Design</u> and Construction, Washington, D. C., 1949, p. 62.
- 2 Ellis L. Armstrong, ed., <u>History of Public Works in the United States</u>, 1776-1976, Chicago: American Public Works Association, 1976, p. 499.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet.

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For NPS us	e only certify that this property		National Regi red in the		
Keeper of t	ne National Register		onal Regi		date 770-86
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National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

Stillwater State Prison Historic DistrictContinuation sheet7Item number

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Armstrong, Ellis L., ed. <u>History of Public Works in the United States</u>, 1776-1976. Chicago: American Public Works Association, 1976.

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Minnesota Legislative Manual, 1911.

Minnesota Legislative Manual, 1925.

- Murphy, Patricia. <u>The Public Buildings of the State of Minnesota: An Architectural</u> <u>Heritage</u>. St. Paul, Minnesota: State Historic Preservation Office of the Minnesota Historical Society, July, 1985.
- United States Bureau of Prisons. <u>Handbook of Correctional Institution Design and</u> <u>Construction</u>. Washington, D.C.: United States Bureau of Prisons, 1949.
- O'Neill, Todd. "Minnesota State Prison, Stillwater." n.p., August, 1984. Report prepared for the State-Owned Buildings Survey.
- Various historic photographs on file at the Washington County Historical Museum, Stillwater, Minnesota.



Page

OMB No. 1024-0018

Exp. 10-31-84

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

From the southwest corner of the intersection of Pickett Avenue and 56th Street North, proceed 300' south along Pickett Avenue to a Point A on the west curb of Pickett Avenue. Thence proceed south along the curb 400' to Point B; thence east 200' to Point C; thence south 200' to Point D; thence west 200' to Point E on the west curb of Pickett Avenue; thence south 800' along that curb to Point F at the northwest corner of the intersection with the unnamed road leading to the Shipping Warehouses. Along the north curb of that road, proceed west 1150' to Point G; thence north 1550' to Point H; thence east approximately 1000' to return to Point A.

JUSTIFICATION

NPS Form 10-900-a

The boundaries described enclose the original walled compound designed by Clarence H. Johnston, Sr. and constructed in 1910-1914, along with its associated staff housing area. The remote farm complex, of no significance with regard to the telephone pole plan, is excluded, as are other facilities added later.



STILLWATER PRISON HISTORIC DISTRICT

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Source: Legislative Interim Commission to Study State Building Needs, map, "Minnesota State Prison, Stillwater, Minnesota," January 1957.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Jelou Keeper/

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page ____

Note: These changes apply to Stillwater State Prison Historic District in Washington County, Minnesota.

REFERENCE NUMBER: 86001574

STATE: MINNESOTA

COUNTY: Washington

RESOURCE NAME (HISTORIC): State Prison Historic District

CITY:

VICINITY OF:

ADDRESS:

CERTIFICATION DATE:

REMOVED DATE:

COMMENTS:

r. archabal

Nina M. Archabal State Historic Preservation Officer

JUN 1 7 1988 Date