

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

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**SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD**

**NRIS Reference Number: 08000823**

**Date Approved: 8/20/2008**

Libby High School  
Property Name


Lincoln  
County

MT  
State

N/A  
Multiple Name

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This additional documentation is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

8/20/2008  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

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**Amended Items in Nomination:**

**Period of Significance/Significant Dates:**

The notations for Period of Significance and Significant Dates were inadvertently switched. The correct Period of Significance is: 1916—1962; the Significant Dates are: 1916, and c. 1926, which correspond to the dates of construction for the major elements of the building. While the end date exceeds the 50-year mark by a few years, it represents the logical end to the historic period of significant school use and need not meet Criteria Consideration G.

**U. T. M. Coordinates:**

The correct U.T.M. Coordinates are: 11 607132 5360540

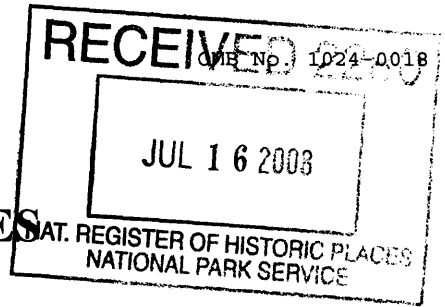
These clarifications were confirmed with the MT SHPO office.

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**DISTRIBUTION:**

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

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# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

## 1. Name of Property

historic name: Libby High School

other name/site number: Central School

## 2. Location

street & number: Southwest Corner of Mineral Avenue and East Lincoln Boulevard

not for publication: n/a

city/town: Libby

vicinity: X

state: Montana

code: MT

county: Lincoln

code: 053

zip code: 59923

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. (  See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

*Mark F. Pomeroy / SHPO* \_\_\_\_\_ Date 7/15/2008

Signature of certifying official/Title

Montana State Historic Preservation Office  
State or Federal agency or bureau

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

Signature of the Keeper  
*[Signature]*

Date of Action  
7/20/2008

entered in the National Register  
     see continuation sheet

determined eligible for the  
National Register  
     see continuation sheet

determined not eligible for the  
National Register  
     see continuation sheet

removed from the National Register  
     see continuation sheet

other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Classification**

Ownership of Property: Private

**Number of Resources within Property**

Category of Property: Building

Contributing

Noncontributing

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

1

0 building(s)

0

0 sites

0

0 structures

0

0 objects

Name of related multiple property listing: n/a

1

0 TOTAL

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions:**

EDUCATION/School

**Current Functions:**

VACANT/Not in Use

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification:**

LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> & 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS/Collegiate Gothic

**Materials:**

foundation:

Concrete

walls:

Brick

roof:

Asphalt

other:

Terra cotta

**Narrative Description**

The historic Libby High School is an outstanding historic and architectural property that has been an anchor at the center of this community since its completion in 1916. Constructed at a time of burgeoning population growth and community maturation, the school reflected the prosperity and stability of this mining and logging region in northwestern Montana. Designed as a standout educational facility in its day, it incorporated many fine features intended to offer a broad and well-rounded experience to local students. For the role that it played in the educational history and community development of the town, and for its architectural values, the building is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places according to Criteria A and C.

**Setting**

The Kootenai River Valley is one of Montana’s most remote river basins, a sharply incised, deeply forested valley set against the backdrop of the Cabinet Mountains. The community today remains isolated, wild and beautiful; still primarily dependent upon mining and logging, the industries that historically shaped the region.

The historic Libby High School stands at the southeast corner of Mineral Avenue and East Lincoln Boulevard, at the entrance to downtown Libby. The school is a stately presence in the heart of the community, the largest and most high-style building in town. Set perpendicular to the town’s main street, the school and its expansive lawn and landscaped boulevard entry is a visual marker that signals the eastern entrance to the downtown heart of the community. From here, the downtown stretches three blocks toward the river, where it meets the Great Northern Railway tracks and its depot on the banks of the Kootenai River.

**8. Statement of Significance**

Applicable National Register Criteria: A, C

Areas of Significance: EDUCATION, ARCHITECTURE

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): n/a

Period(s) of Significance: 1916, c. 1926

Significant Person(s): n/a

Significant Dates: 1916-1962

Cultural Affiliation: n/a

Architect/Builder: Unknown

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

The historic Libby High School is one of northwestern Montana’s finest historic schools and has long been a local landmark in the town. Built at the height of the regional post-railroad boom as logging and mining communities in the area grew, the school was a measurement of Libby’s dominance and its increasing position of permanence in the region. Completed in 1916, the school reflects the maturation of outpost settlement in this remote part of the state.

Libby High School was a modern facility for its time, with specialized classrooms to accommodate educational facility that incorporated many fine features intended to offer a broad and well-rounded experience to local students. For the role that it played in the educational history and community development of the town, and for its architectural values, the building is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places according to Criteria A and C.

**Regional Settlement**

Once the domain of the Kootenai Indian nation, the Kootenai River Valley and the nearby Cabinet Mountains comprise a deeply forested region having steeply incised river valleys surrounded by rugged mountains. Kootenai people lived along the upper and lower stretches of the Kootenai River. The Kootenai language is unique to them, wholly distinct from those of other native peoples and their oral traditions place them here as far back as anyone’s memories can trace. The Kootenai River Valley and the abundant resources of this northwestern region were central to their lifeways. The Kootenai relied upon the river for food and transportation, navigating by canoe and fishing the river with weirs, traps and poles. They also harvested big game of the region such as elk, caribou, moose and deer, made seasonal trips to the Columbia River to spear salmon and, following the introduction of horses, traveled to the plains to hunt buffalo.<sup>1</sup>

David Thompson of the Northwest Fur Company headed the first non-native party to explore the Kootenai River country, scouting out the fur trading potential of the forested region. Thompson established the first fur trading post on the Columbia River in 1807 on Toby Creek, just below Lake Windermere in British Columbia. This was followed over the next half century by eleven more posts along the Kootenai River, in Montana, Idaho and British Columbia. Trade was conducted with the Kootenai and actively pursued into the 1860s.<sup>2</sup>

The area is rich in forestry and mineral resources, and due to the narrowness of the valleys and heavy forest cover, much less hospitable for farming or ranching. The origins of mining in the region date to 1863, when the son of Jaco Finlay, Thompson’s aide, discovered placer gold in the upper Kootenai River drainage. News of his find spread from Fort Kootenai drawing a swarm of miners to the region. Prospectors followed the river from Idaho and Montana up into Canada, establishing a camp at Wild Horse and by 1867, the Montana Post reported 500-600 miners in the Libby Creek mining district. Interest in the Cabinet Mountain range drew veteran prospector John S. “Jack” Fisher, and a prospecting party of 12 miners up Libby Creek in 1867 where they struck gold, and named the creek for the daughter of prospector Stephen Allen.

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<sup>1</sup> Interpretive Plan: Libby Dam, Chapter I, U.S. Corps of Engineers, 1973.

<sup>2</sup> Libby Women’s Club, Nuggets to Timber (no page numbers)

**9. Major Bibliographic References**

See continuation Page 7

**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 # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary Location of Additional Data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository:

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property:** 1.736 acres

**UTM References: Zone: Easting: Northing: (NAD 27)**  
 11 697296 5360322

**Legal Location (Township, Range & Section(s)):** SW ¼ NE ¼ SW ¼ of Section 3, Township 30 North, Range 3 West, MPM

**Verbal Boundary Description:**

All of Block 2 and the adjacent alley, also known as Parcel A PM #4426, Faust Addition, Libby, MT.

See Continuation Page 8

**Boundary Justification:**

The historic property boundaries are the building lots which the school has occupied since its completion in 1916.

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Chere Jiusto date: July 2005  
 organization: MT Preservation Alliance telephone: (406)457-2822  
 street & number: 516 N. Park St, Suite A  
 city or town: Helena state: MT zip code: 59601

**Property Owner**

name/title: Libby School District  
 street & number: 724 Louisiana Ave. telephone: 406-293-8811  
 city or town: Libby state: MT zip code: 59923

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### School Description<sup>3</sup>

The Historic Libby High School exhibits a two-story T-shaped block with major elevations facing Mineral Avenue and East Lincoln Boulevard. The school contains elements of the Collegiate Gothic style; the gym/auditorium added during the late 1920s is a sympathetic transitional modern style. The focal point of the north elevation is the main, centrally placed, Gothic detailed entrance framed symmetrically to each side. The light colored red brick building body exhibits a low rise concrete base and brick water table and contrasting sandstone window sills, continuous belt course, decorative cornice and parapet cap. Windows typically exhibit a soldier course brick header. The out-stepped central entrance pavilion exhibits a low rising, sandstone capped parapet, continuous belt course, and a low rise concrete base at grade. Within its detailing are quoined sandstone pilasters, a sandstone inscribed frieze, Neo-Gothic arch portal, and the recessed entry. The entry is accessed by a set of low rising concrete stairs with concrete abutments.

Separate entrance doors occur, at grade level, at the west end of the north elevation of the gym/auditorium. This portion of the building exhibits a low rise concrete base and brick water table and a repeating eight-course common bond brick body, similar in design to the high school. The light colored red brick building body exhibits a contrasting, monolithic continuous sandstone cornice that coincides with the decorative cornice of the older building and a stepped sandstone parapet cap. Windows exhibit sandstone sills and soldier course brick headers.

The west elevation exhibits a raised entry door, low rise concrete base and brick water table and sandstone detailing similar to that established on the north elevation. The sandstone cornice terminates on the north and south sides of the elevation and transitions to a continuous simply detailed out-stepped brick cornice. The extended center pavilion contains a secondary entry and grand stair. The stair is protected from weather by a modern wood-framed and shake-finished shed roof addition.

The south elevation exhibits detailing similar to the north elevation. The light colored red brick building body exhibits contrasting sandstone window sills, continuous belt course, decorative cornice, and parapet cap. Windows typically exhibit a soldier course brick header. The symmetrically extended central portion exhibits a centrally placed brick chimney, equally spaced brick pilasters, and flat roof, low rising concrete addition which houses the boiler room. The main building body exhibits a sandstone capped parapet and belt course, above a low rise concrete base and continuous brick water table. West of the chimney is a simply detailed entry door and concrete stair accessing the lower floor level of the school. The entry is protected by a modern wood framed and shake finished shed roof. East of the chimney is a metal fire exit stair. The south elevation of the gym/auditorium exhibits transitional modern detailing that includes a low rise concrete base and brick water table, repeating eight-course common bond brick body, contrasting continuous sandstone belt course, and a stepped sandstone parapet cap. Windows exhibit sandstone sills and soldier course brick headers.

The east elevation of the gym/auditorium exhibits brick and sandstone capped pilasters that divide the elevation into four bays. The light colored red brick building body exhibits contrasting sandstone window sills, continuous belt course, decorative cornice, and parapet cap similar to remaining elevations. Windows typically exhibit a soldier course brick header. The northern-most bay contains a pedestrian door which accesses the lower floor level of the school. A single story extended and sandstone arched brick pavilion emphasizes the entry. The main building body exhibits a sandstone capped parapet and belt course, above a low rise concrete base and continuous brick water table.

The historic Libby High School retains its original character-defining double-hung wood windows. Windows in the gym/auditorium are 6/6 double-hung with a 6-lite transom window typically; on the north elevation the 6-lite transom windows units exhibit an arch pattern following the sandstone arched cornice. Within the older building, window

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<sup>3</sup> This entire section quotes substantially from the Summary Building Description, Condition Assessment, Historic Libby High School, A&E Architects, 2004, p.12-18.

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conditions vary from 6/9 double-hung with a 6-lite transom to 8/12 double-hung with an 8-lite transom. At the extended entry pavilion, windows are generally 4/6 double-hung. Other than window screen on the east elevation of the gym/auditorium, there are no other window screens or storm windows on the building.

The original interior was designed on a central corridor plan with exit stairs at each end and a central entrance at the front. Classrooms open to each side of the corridor and are generously sized, with high ceilings and tall windows. The original finishes included maple flooring, plaster walls, wood trim and large blackboards.

**Integrity**

The Libby High School retains an excellent level of integrity, having functioned as an educational facility throughout its 80-year life with little building alteration beyond the historic wing added during the late 1920s. Original doors, windows, masonry, materials and design are all readily apparent. On the interior some alteration has occurred over time, but changes are minor and reversible. These include non-bearing walls to partition office space, dropped ceilings, modern door hardware and newer carpeting and floor finishes.

Highly visible within this historic community, the Libby High School is a tremendous anchor in the town center. Standing in its original location, surrounded by period landscaping and nearby educational buildings, the high school exhibits all aspects of integrity. It is truly a building that conveys a strong sense of its historical associations and is character-defining element of this rural town.

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Later that year, a small party returning with supplies from Spokane Bridge, in Washington Territory, was ambushed by a Kootenai hunting party near the confluence of Libby Creek and the Kootenai River. One of the miners survived, and three Kootenai were later tried and executed for the attack.<sup>4</sup> However, the incident and the isolation of the region stemmed the flow of prospectors to the area, and within a year, the population declined to about a hundred miners. By 1876 the bust left just one remaining miner, Jack Fisher, on the creek.<sup>5</sup>

Interest in the prospects of the Kootenai River revived when Thomas Shearer recruited B.F. Howard, Oliver Woodcoe and others to stake claims in a second gold rush that targeted Libby, Poorman and Bear Creeks beginning in 1885. Gold strikes on the Vermillion River and Libby Creek sparked renewed interest and hundreds of miners again descended upon Libby Creek. A mining camp sprang up alternatively known as "Lake City" or "Oldtown" and grew rapidly to encompass 14 saloons, a number of stores and two brickyards. This second rush was supported by the introduction of heavier machinery designed to work the hard pan, cement-like creek bed that had defied initial efforts at placer mining. The second rush also attracted a Chinese population that remained until 1890 when a Chinese miner was accused of robbing sluice boxes and all Chinese in the vicinity were driven out of the district.<sup>6</sup>

Among the early miners were Alfred (A.V.) and Benjamin (B.F.) Howard, namesakes of Howard Creek and Howard Lake. B.F. Howard and son Harry were among the first permanent settlers of the area, homesteading on the Kootenai River and building a home that became the first house built on the location that was to become the town of Libby.<sup>7</sup> Both A.V. and B.K. Howard remained in the area for decades, mining their claims until late in life.<sup>8</sup>

In 1890, the Great Northern Railway launched a survey for a line through the area and the following year, the Howards sold their forested property to a group of investors who quickly set about surveying that 40 acres for townsite lots. The land was cleared and town lots sold. Tracks were laid to Libby and completed in 1892, and the first train arrived in May ushering the age of railroading into the town. Libby became a major rail stop between Kalispell and Idaho, and rapid expansion of the community ensued that lasted into the 1920s.

Mineral Avenue became Libby's main street, connecting the railway depot at the river's edge with Hwy 2, the main thoroughfare through the region. Soon buildings were constructed, and owners of property in what was called "Old Town," removed their buildings into the new townsite in anticipation of the building boom that would arrive with the railroad.

These land claims were all filed prior to government survey of the area, and when that was conducted in 1894, the Libby townsite proved to be located on a section of land reserved for the Northern Pacific Railway. Contested ownership led local shop owner A.B. Johnston to plat a second townsite on homestead land he held adjacent to the Libby townsite. Named "South Libby," that settlement also grew. Graded streets demarked the town while a ditching system delivered fresh water to residents and businessmen. Separated by a half-mile swath of forest, the towns grew and at the time of incorporation in 1909 were joined together to form the present town of Libby. That same year Lincoln County was created and Libby was designated the temporary county seat.<sup>9</sup>

Libby sparked a flurry of development as locals and investors strove to attain status as the permanent county seat. The Libby Hotel, the Richards Hotel and the First National Bank were completed that year, and electricity, water systems and

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<sup>4</sup> USFS, Kootenai National Forest Informational brochure "Libby Creek Recreational Gold Panning Area" 1998; Libby Dam Interpretive Plan, Chapter IV.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Nuggets to Timber.

<sup>8</sup> USFS Libby Creek Recreational Gold Panning Area." As the brochure notes, B.K. Howard mined his claims until his death at age 80 in 1915; A.V. pursued the industry into the 1920s.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.



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cement sidewalks were installed throughout the town. In 1910, the city prevailed as the permanent county seat and the following year incorporated as a city.<sup>10</sup> County offices were lodged in the town's Masonic Building until a county courthouse was completed in 1913.

The timber industry has long been a mainstay in the region, and in the mid-1940s Harold F. and Lois C. Kaufman conducted a county-wide economic study on Lincoln County and its Forest Community sponsored by the University of Montana and the U.S. Forest Service. At that time, they measured the county at approximately 3,750 square miles with 97% forest cover. In terms of Montana, this placed Lincoln County as the foremost forest county with the highest timber volume and three quarters of that timber growing on National Forest land.<sup>11</sup>

Historically, the 1920s saw the heaviest logging, supporting three sawmills in the county, at Libby, Warland and Troy. The logging boom passed rapidly, and by 1930, Warland and Troy declined. Meanwhile, the Libby Mill emerged as the single mill for processing local timber and Libby remained an important hub for the forestry industry. In the Kaufman's study, Libby-Troy and Eureka were the two trade-centers in the county, but only Libby had enjoyed an increasing population through the 1930s and 1940s. This was attributable in large measure to the Libby Mill, which for decades employed hundreds of workers, and also to the growing vermiculite mine.<sup>12</sup>

It is interesting to note that the Libby vermiculite deposit was discovered by E.N. Alley in 1916, the year that the Libby High School was completed. The Libby vermiculite formation is located 7 miles northeast of town, in what is called Vermiculite Mountain. Alley began commercial production from his mines in 1921, marketed under the name "Zonolite." Alley's discovery and ensuing experiments with the mineral drew other investors, including the Vermiculite & Asbestos Company in 1927. As Alley and others in the industry developed commercial uses and expanded the mine and processing facilities, markets for the mineral expanded and in the Zonolite Company built a new shipping facility that could transfer large volumes of vermiculite to a railroad loading facility.<sup>13</sup>

Through the 1950s, Libby reigned as the world's largest producer of vermiculite, and in 1963 the company sold to W.R. Grace. In 1973, the company built a new mill, for concentrating the vermiculite ore. In a tragic turn of history, health issues relating to the mining of vermiculite began to mount, due to the carcinogenic nature of the tremolite asbestos which naturally occurred in conjunction with the vermiculite deposits. Effects of dust exposure on workers at Zonolite and later W.R. Grace were noted by health professionals beginning in the 1940s, and by the 1970s, Libby's Dr. Irons noted widespread lung damage in the community and its workers. In 1980, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health initiated a study of asbestos-related health problems at Libby and along with the company's own data led W.R. Grace to close its mine in 1990 and begin a reclamation process.

Over the years, vermiculite and mine tailings were extensively used throughout Libby for everything from a garden supplement in people's back yards, to fill at baseball diamond and school tracks. As a consequence this ubiquitous presence of asbestos in town led to community-wide environmental contamination and widespread asbestos-related disease such as asbestosis and mesothelioma, a terminal form of lung cancer caused by exposure to asbestos. This led to the community being designated a Superfund Site with the Environmental Protection Program. For the past several years, remediation has been underway and a Clinic for Asbestos-Related Disease now operates in the town treating the many member of the community who are sick and dying of asbestos-related illnesses.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Harold F & Lois C. Kaufman, *Toward the Stabilization and Enrichment of a Forest Community*, p. 5-6

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 43.

<sup>13</sup> Frederic L. Quivik, *Background on the Vermiculite Mine for the Oral History Project in Libby, Montana*, 2002.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

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### Community Schools

The first school in the settlement of Libby was established in 1892 on the property where the Libby Hotel was later built. Some 15 students were the first enrolled for the three month school year taught by Mrs. E. L. Geddes. Homemade desks, and a large wood stove were the furnishings in the building that has been described as a "board shack." By the third year, with double the enrollment, the school was joined into the Flathead County School system, and the school year was extended to nine months.

In 1898, a spacious new building was constructed. The first year enrollment totaled 35 students, with two teachers. The following year a principal was hired. The building was a 2½- story frame structure, with large well-lit classrooms. With more than ample space at its opening, in addition to school classes, one room in the building accommodated church services and religious classes for Presbyterians and occasionally Catholics in the community.<sup>15</sup>

Growth of local industries led the population to swell into the early 1900s, and soon school attendance outgrew the 1898 school building. The Libby community opted again for a new school, this time a large 2½- story brick grade school located on Lincoln Blvd. and Louisiana Ave. The Central Grade School opened in January 1909, and students returned to school following Christmas vacation that year, to a new building staffed by a principal and 7 teachers. The old school building, meanwhile, became the Masonic Lodge.

As the school population grew up and expanded, a need for a local high school led the community (with support from the Great Northern Railway, the Forest Service association and the local sawmill) to finance and construct a large brick building. The \$50,000 building was the county's second high school, and was sited next door to Central School facing Lincoln Boulevard. While the building was under construction, the former grade school (now Masonic Temple) was pressed back into service and high school students attended classes in the building through 1914 – 1915. When completed, the boys later recalled helping to move in by carrying their desks over to the new building.<sup>16</sup>

Despite misgivings by some in the community that the new facility was larger and more elaborate than needed, the school quickly filled. State of the art facilities included science laboratories, two assembly rooms, a large gymnasium with lockers and showers for both boys and girls, and academics were broad enough to include vocational, commercial and domestic sciences. Enrollment jumped from an initial 63 students to 86 in 1918.<sup>17</sup> By the mid-1920s, continued growth in the community warranted a large addition, used for an auditorium and expanded gymnasium.

The Libby High School served the community for well over half a century. Through that time, the population of Libby schools grew along with the town, and by the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, the district boasted a total enrollment of almost 1,900 students, the number recorded during the 1961-62 school year, when a decision was made to construct a new high school.<sup>18</sup>

After being vacated by the school district, historic Libby High School was used by the Flathead Valley Community College [FVCC], housing educational courses serving Libby-area students. FVCC conducted courses there for a number of years, and in 1992 studied the feasibility of renovating the school for a long-term Lincoln County Campus.<sup>19</sup> While this was being considered, the U.S. Forest Service moved out of their existing location and into new facilities, and the FVCC decided to move into their old building.

Following this move, the school has remained vacant. In recent years, the school district and the community considered

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid. The first high school was located in Troy, the third, in Eureka followed in 1920.

<sup>16</sup> J. Bryan Rouse, Western News, July 20, 1967, "Libby Residents Opposed New School Because Town Would Never Grow."

<sup>17</sup> Nuggets to Timber, no page #s.

<sup>18</sup> "Howdy Friend! Let's Get Acquainted," Libby Chamber of Commerce, promotional brochure, ca. 1962.

<sup>19</sup> Architects Design Group, Facilities Master Plan, Lincoln County Campus, Libby, Montana. 1992.

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demolishing the historic school, however, local residents signaled to the school district their interest in seeing the school retained. A friends group working with preservationists and private developers brought forward alternative ideas for reuse of the building and in early 2006, agreements were reached that would enable the development of the school in cooperation with the school district and other community groups.

In 2005, a Downtown Revitalization Plan developed by Libby Revitalization Inc and adopted by the city created a strategy for reviving the local economy and commercial district. Libby High School and its potential for reuse was cited along with an excellent plan to bring business back to the heart of town.<sup>20</sup> This nomination helps to recognize the historic significance of the Libby High School and listing of the school in the National Register of Historic Places will support the adaptive reuse of the building.

### Architectural Significance

The Libby High School is an example of the fine, permanent masonry structures designed by trained architects and built by craftsmen with the skills to erect buildings to last for more than a century. Although the design is at this time unattributed, the school is an excellent example of the artistic qualities and high levels of craftsmanship exhibited in large educational buildings of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Built in 1916, the functional brick building is accented with a few elements to give the school a distinctive, Collegiate Neo-Gothic flavor. Although simple, these elements do help to visually define the building and include sandstone banding and signage, the banded, multi-lit fenestration and the front façade with pedimented, tower-like entry pavilion, quoining and crowning cornice. Furthermore, the school featured many aspects of design that were in vogue at the time, with specialized classrooms for programs reflecting the educational emphasis within this community -- domestic sciences, vocational training labs, and a fully-equipped gymnasium that included locker areas for both boys and girls.

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<sup>20</sup> CTA Land Works, Hingston Roach Group, Welch Comer Assoc. *Libby, Montana Downtown Revitalization Plan*, June 2005.

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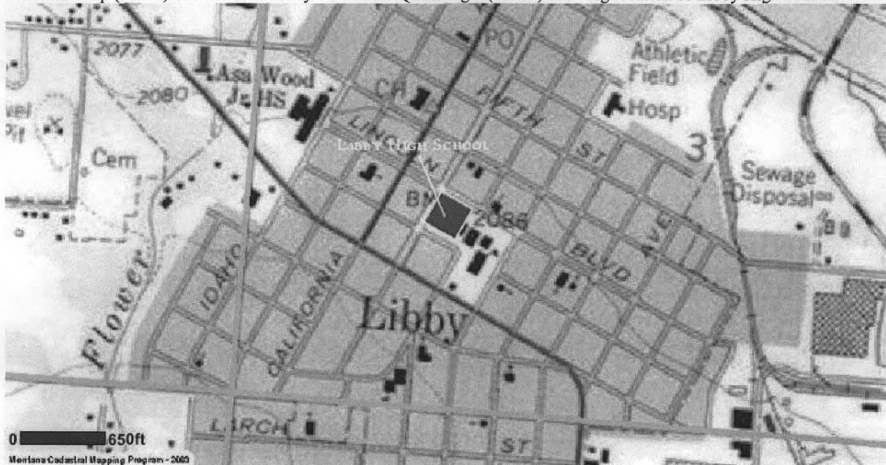
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Cadastral map (above) and detail of Libby 7.5 minute Quadrangle (below) showing location of Libby High School.



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Aerial view of Libby, MT, showing location of Libby High School.

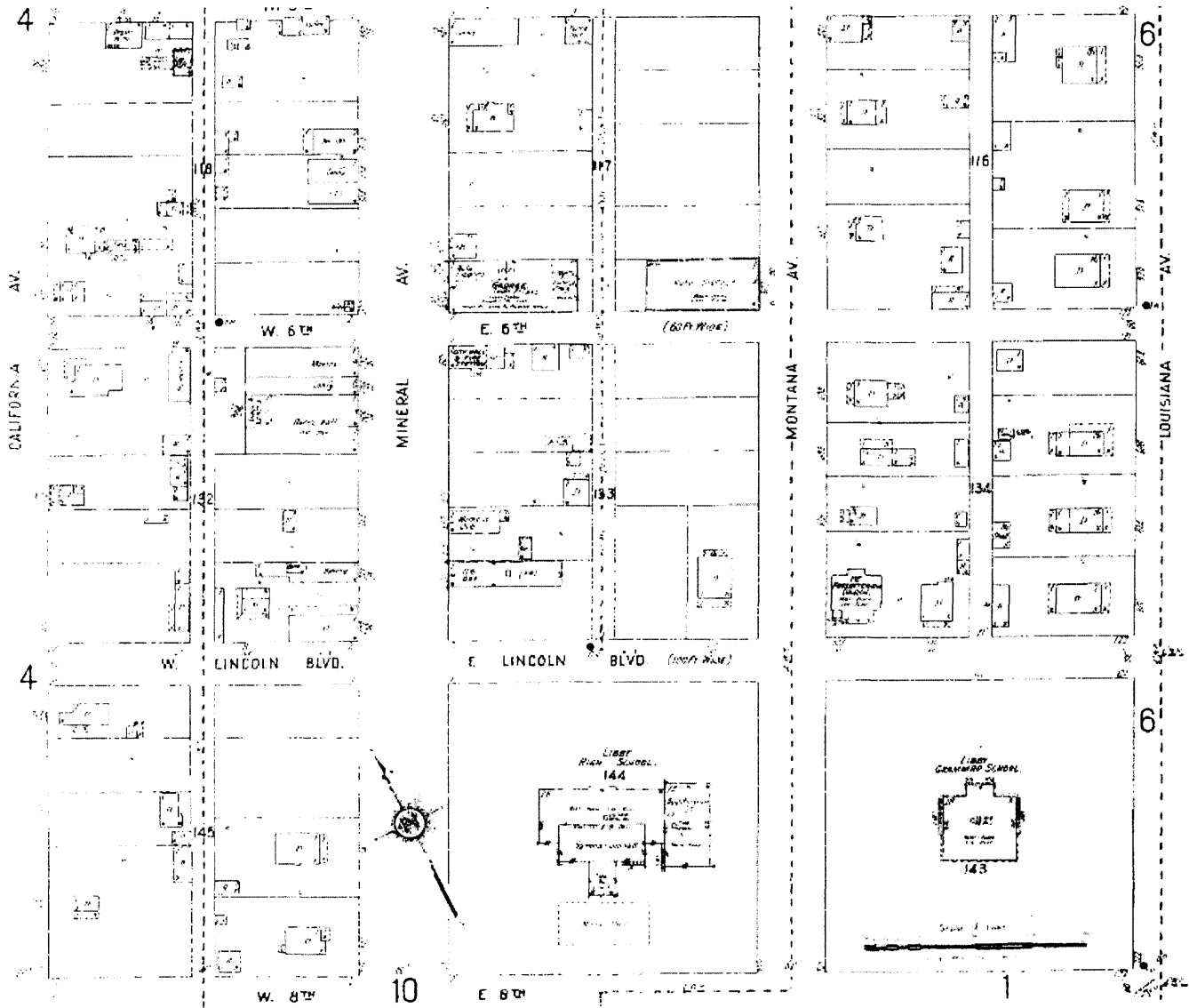
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Detail of Sanborn Company Map of Libby, MT, 1927, sheet 5.

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Libby High School under construction in 1916. View to south.



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Libby High School (right) and grade school prior to the construction on the auditorium wing of the high school, c. 1917.  
View to southeast.

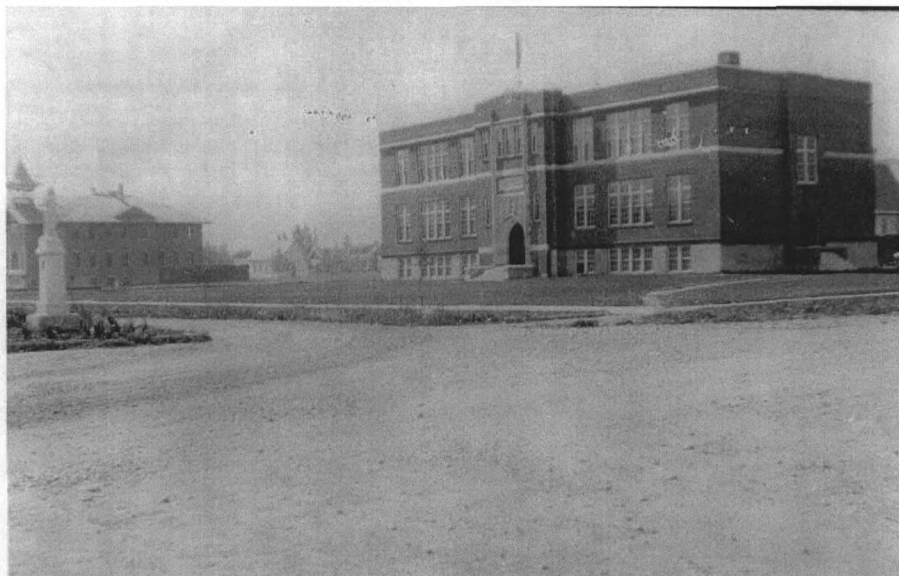
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c. 1917 photograph of Libby High School. View to southeast.

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North and west elevations of Libby High School, view to southeast. Photo by Chere Justo, 2006.

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South elevation of Libby High School, view to northeast. Photo by Chere Jiusto, 2006.

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West side of south elevation, view to northwest. Photo by Chere Justo, 2006.

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The printed photographs that accompany this nomination were taken by Becky Timmons in March 2008, using a high-resolution digital camera. In accordance with the March 2005 Photo Policy expansion, the photos are printed on HP Premium Plus Photo Paper, using a Hewlett Packard 100 gray photo cartridge. This combination of paper and inks is included on the NR's list of "Acceptable Ink and Paper Combinations for Digital Images." The images are also recorded as .tiff files on a CD with a resolution at least 1200x1800 pixels, 300 dpi in "true color" 24-bit format.

Photo #1: East half of north (front) elevation, view to southeast.

Photo #2: Detail of north (front) entrance bay. View to south.

Photo #3: West side of north elevation, view to southwest.

Photo #4: Detail of entrance to auditorium at the east side of the north elevation, view to southeast.

Photo #5: North side of east elevation, view to southwest.

Photo #6: South side of east elevation, view to northwest.

Photo #7: East side of south elevation, view to north.

Photo #8: Central section of south elevation, view to north.

Photo #9: West side of south elevation, view to north.

Photo #10: North side of west elevation, view to northeast.

Photo #11: South west corner of building, view to northeast.