

FEB - 5 2016

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Nat Register of Historic Places
National Park Service

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Cortez High School
Other names/site number: Cortez School, Calkins School, Calkins Building/5MT.12697
Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

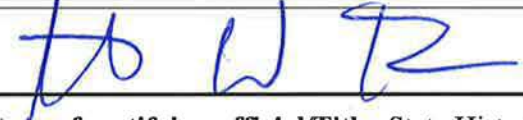
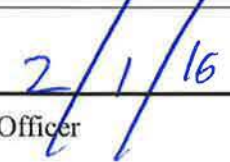
Street & number: 121 E. First Street
City or town: Cortez State: CO County: Montezuma
Not For Publication: n/a Vicinity: n/a

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this x 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 x meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide ___ x local
Applicable National Register Criteria:
x A ___ B x C ___ D

		
Signature of certifying official/Title: <u>State Historic Preservation Officer</u>		Date
<u>History Colorado</u>		
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government		
In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.		
Signature of commenting official:		Date
Title :		State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:)

Don Elson H. Beall
Signature of the Keeper

3-22-16
Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	buildings
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register none

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION/school

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE VICTORIAN/Romanesque Revival

OTHER/WPA Rustic

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: sandstone

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Narrative Description

SUMMARY

Cortez High School stands at the northeast corner of a large lot adjacent to the historic commercial downtown of Cortez, Colorado. The two-story rectangular building has a flat roof and stepped parapets. Local sandstone comprises the exterior walls of the building, which was built in three phases in 1909, 1924 and 1935. The interior features classrooms organized around two stair halls and a double-loaded corridor. Historic finishes include flat plaster walls and ceilings and hardwood tongue-and-groove floors. The remainder of the lot contains a contributing athletic field with non-contributing bleachers and a locker room on the northern edge and a non-contributing metal shed building to the west of the athletic field.

ELABORATION

Setting

Cortez High School anchors the northeast corner of an approximately six-acre lot bordered by East First Street to the north, Ash Street to the east, and alleys to the west and south [Figure 1]. Sidewalks line the north and east borders of the property. Most of the lot is open space. Mature spruce, maple, aspen and other coniferous and deciduous trees are scattered across the property with clusters concentrated on the east and west sides of the building.

The large six-acre site was platted when the original block of the school was constructed in 1909. Concrete sidewalks lead south from First Street to each of the front (north) entrances. Sidewalks abut the north, east, and west building sides. An open gravel parking lot behind the school building is accessed by driveways from Ash Street and Second Street. The school playground originally occupied much of this area. An open field occupies the northwest corner of the lot. Historically, a gymnasium/auditorium building stood in part of this open field southwest of the school building. A sidewalk leads from the northwest corner of the school to the former location of the gymnasium building. The Johnson Memorial Football Field [Photo 9] occupies the south half of the lot. The sunken field is surrounded by grass berms on all sides. Metal bleachers and a concrete-block locker room are centered on the north side of the football field. The non-historic bleachers stand on the location of the original wood bleachers. A chain-link fence surrounds the field. A large non-historic metal shed stands at the western border of the football field in the southwest corner of the lot.

Cortez High School 1909, 1924, 1935

Contributing Building

Exterior

The school has a rectangular footprint measuring roughly 134' x 50' and a flat roof with a stepped parapet. Rough-hewn sandstone ashlar masonry clads the two-story building. Metal coping tops the widely-stepped parapet. The building sides are mostly symmetrical. At first glance, the three building campaigns are not evident from the exterior [Photo 1]. The additions were designed to blend with the original block. Close inspection reveals stitched masonry seams on the north building side west of the east entrance, identifying the 1924 addition, and east of the west entrance, identifying the 1935 addition.

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Plywood covers most window openings on the east, west, and south building sides, but the windows are exposed on the interior. Most first and second story windows are historic two-over-two double-hung wood windows with two-light transoms. Basement windows are a combination of historic two-over-two double-hung wood windows, historic four-light wood hopper windows, historic four-light fixed wood windows and non-historic three-light steel windows.

North-facing Side

The primary façade of Cortez High School [Photo 1] faces north toward a small lawn and has five bays defined by two entrances with three walls of windows: one between the entrance bays and one on either side. The two bays of windows on the east and west ends (bays 1 and 5, from left to right) have regularly spaced rows of four historic two-over-two double-hung wood windows with two-light transoms at the first and second stories. Four historic windows fill basement window openings. Bays 2 and 4 contain the arched entries on the first floor and two smaller historic two-light wood hopper windows with two-light wood transoms at the second story. The central bay (between the entrances) repeats the fenestration pattern of the two end bays. Wide concrete stairs with metal pipe handrails lead up to the entrances. Paired, partially-glazed wood doors with flanking glass-block sidelights and wood fanlight transoms fill the doorways. Sandstone voussoirs surround the arched entrances. Concrete stairs parallel to the building descend to a basement entrance beneath the east entrance. Plywood fills the doorway. A concrete ramp parallel to the building descends to a basement entrance beneath the west entrance. A non-historic corrugated metal shed roof with metal columns spans Bay 5 at the basement level, covering the ramp.

East-facing Side

The symmetrical east building side [Photo 3] has two bays topped by a stepped parapet. Three columns of openings pierce each bay. On the first and second stories, two historic two-over-two double-hung wood windows with two-light transoms pierce the outer two columns of each bay. A historic door opening fills the inner column of each bay of each story. The historic wood paneled doors have three recessed panels in the lower half and four-light windows topped by two-light transoms. All doors open to historic metal fire escape balconies. A historic straight stair rises to the first-story balcony, which is centered on the building side. A spiral stair at the south end rises to the second story balcony. At the basement level, two bays of four-light wood windows flank two historic doorways that are partially below grade. Concrete stairs with concrete cheek walls, perpendicular to the building, descend to the doorways. Slab doors fill the openings.

South-facing Side

The rear (south) building side [Photo 5] is mostly symmetrical with five bays and a stepped parapet that is lower in the center and steps up toward the east and west ends. Bays 1, 3 and 5 contain four historic two-over-two double-hung wood windows on the first and second stories and a four-light wood window at the basement level. Bay 2 has historic door openings on the west side of the first and second stories. The partially-glazed wood doors and two-part transoms in the openings appear to be non-historic. Steep metal fire escape stairs project from the second story doorway. An S-shaped metal ramp ascends to the first story west of the entrance and L-shaped metal stairs project straight from the entrance. Both have metal pipe rails. The second-story stairs are visible in historic photographs from 1941 and may be original to the 1935 addition. The east side of Bay 2 has a historic two-over-two wood window with a two-part

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transom that is narrower than other historic windows on the second story and a short historic two-light window with a two-part transom in the first story. A non-original brick chimney projects from the south building side between Bays 2 and 3. The first story window opening on the west end of Bay 3 has been partially infilled with stone to make a small, square window. Bay 4 has two historic two-over-two double-hung wood windows on the first and second stories and a four-light wood window at the basement level

West-facing Side

The west building side [*Photo 7*] is symmetrical with two bays and a stepped parapet. Three columns of historic blind window openings fill each bay at each story. A historic photo from 1909 shows that the blind window openings on the west building side are original to the 1909 block. Sandstone that matches the walls infills the openings and is slightly inset from the building wall. Sandstone has been removed from the center opening on the first story of Bay 1 and the south opening on the first story of Bay 2. Non-historic wood windows that are compatible with the building's historic windows presently fill these openings. The basement has historic windows in Bay 1 and the north two openings in Bay 2. An undersized below-grade doorway, filled with a slab door fills the south opening in Bay 2.

Interior

On the interior, eighteen classrooms are organized around two north-south stair halls and one east-west corridor [*Figures 3-5*]. Six classrooms, two on each floor, are stacked in the west (1909) block. These rooms open to the west stair hall. Six classrooms and one office suite (second floor) are stacked in the east (1935) block. These rooms open to the east stair hall. An east-west corridor spans the central (1924) block, connecting the two stair halls. Two classrooms flank the corridor at each floor, but are not accessible from the corridors.

Finishes throughout the building include plaster walls; tongue-and-groove wood floors on the first and second floors and concrete floors at the basement level; and wood base trim, chair rails, window and door casings, and built-in cabinetry. The historic plaster finish is missing from most ceilings, exposing the wood joists. Millwork details vary by date of construction (1909, 1924, or 1935). In the 1935 block (east), plaster walls have curved window returns. Historic administrative offices with curved walls occupy the north end of the east (1935) stair. Non-historic stud walls were erected when the school became administrative offices for the school district in 1968. Some of these partitions remain but are easily removable. Many have been partially demolished.

The two main entrances open into shallow vestibules. Openings with eighteen-light sidelights and an eighteen-light transom divide the vestibules and stair halls. Pairs of doors that filled the openings are no longer extant. Two straight stairs [*Photos 10-11*] rise from the basement to the first floor and from the first floor to the second floor. The west stair dates from 1909 and the east stair dates from 1935. The identical stairs have wood treads, simple square wood newel posts, and rounded wood handrails. At the basement level, closets are located beneath the stairs. At the first floor, a doorway at the rear of the stairs, beyond plaster-clad pillars and an arched opening, leads to the basement stairs. Between the basement and first floors, turned balusters line the stairs. Between the first and second floors, solid wood paneling lines the railings. A low wall with the same wood paneling surrounds the stair at the second floor. Stair halls

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have high plaster ceilings. The stair halls are the primary circulation cores of the school. The classrooms, the 1935 offices in the east block, and the 1924 corridors open directly into the stair halls. A corridor [Photo 12] with arched doorways at each end runs east-west, spanning the center of the 1924 block, connecting the 1909 and 1935 stair halls on each floor.

Athletic Field
1935

Contributing Site

An athletic field spans the south end of the property. The grassy field measures approximately 441' x 225'. Two 10' x 20' canopies with metal shed roofs and metal columns dot the north end of the field. The extant metal bleachers replaced the original wood bleachers ca. 2000 (see below).

Shed
ca.1970

Non-Contributing Building

The large rectangular 52' x 159' metal shed runs along the west border of the football field [Photo 16]. This utilitarian storage building has a shallow gable roof. It was likely added around 1970 after the school was converted to administrative offices.

Locker Room
ca. 2000

Non-Contributing Building

A small roughly 33' by 35' locker room building is centered on the north end of the football field [Photo 15]. The concrete block building has a standing seam metal front-gable roof. The exact construction date of this basic building is unknown, but it is not present in photographs from the 1950s.

Bleachers
ca.2000

Non-Contributing Structure

Two 15' x 9' and one 30' x 18' sets of metal bleachers are centered at the north end of the athletic field [Photo 15]. The larger bleachers sit on a concrete pad and have a chain-link railing along the upper edges. The two smaller bleachers sit directly on the ground.

Alterations

Cortez High School has been altered since its initial construction in 1909. Many of the alterations occurred during the period of significance and have become historic in their own right. An addition constructed in 1924 mimicked the form and massing of the original building. A second addition constructed in 1935 used the same materials and massing, but altered the building form to reflect the tenets of Works Progress Administration (WPA) Rustic architecture that was popular at the time. These changes replaced the hipped roof and bell tower on the 1909 block with a flat roof and stepped parapets to create a unified, cohesive building form. The building interior was also updated periodically. New classroom doors and restroom facilities were installed in in the 1950s.¹ When the building was converted to administrative offices, partitions were added to subdivide classrooms into smaller offices; the partitions were removed and the historic volume of classroom spaces was restored after 2000.

¹ V. S. Lester, "Cortez Has Modern Schools," *Cortez Journal*, 1953.

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A football field was created on the south portion of the property in 1935. Historic photographs show a small section of wood bleachers on the north end of the athletic field, near the present metal bleachers. These were removed at an unknown date and the existing bleachers were installed ca. 2000. The locker room building was constructed around this same time. A playground area with metal slides and swings was located south of the building where the gravel parking area is now. It was demolished sometime after 1940, possibly ca. 1968 when the school was converted to administrative offices. A separate gymnasium building was constructed in 1922, west of the present school building. It was demolished between 1984 and 1993. A large utilitarian metal shed was constructed around 1970, along the west end of the athletic field.

Integrity

Cortez High School retains integrity sufficient to convey its areas and period of significance. Remaining in its original location, the school retains integrity of location and setting. Although the historic gymnasium was demolished between 1984 and 1993, the presence of the school building, open fields, and old-growth trees convey the original setting. The gymnasium was a secondary building behind the school building and its demolition minimally affects integrity. Cortez High School retains excellent integrity of design and materials. Its three historic construction phases are legible from the exterior and the interior, while the overall design is cohesive. Character-defining sandstone is in good condition on the exterior. On the interior, the historic configuration and many of the historic finishes, including plaster walls, tongue-and-groove wood floors, and wood millwork are extant. The few remnants of non-historic partitions that remain do not diminish the building's ability to convey its historic configuration and materials. The school retains integrity of workmanship, its hewn local stone and interior carpentry a testament to the Baxstroms, a locally prominent family of masons, and to the WPA laborers who built the 1935 addition and modifications. The school's physical characteristics support its integrity of feeling and association as the principal school in Cortez for several decades.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1909-1968

Significant Dates

1909; 1924; 1935

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Peter & Harry Baxstrom

Works Progress Administration

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SUMMARY

Cortez High School is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of Education as the only public school (kindergarten – 12th grade²) serving the city of Cortez from 1909 to 1949. It continued to function as an elementary and middle school until 1968. Over this sixty-year period (1909-1968) every public school student in Cortez attended the school. The construction of the school in three phases (1909, 1924, 1935) reflects the growing population of the community, as well as targeted periods of public investment in education in Montezuma County.

In addition, the School is locally significant under Criterion C for Architecture from 1909-1935, as the 1935 expansion and restyling of the building reflects the WPA Rustic style and the widespread use of WPA funds and labor for school construction in Colorado during the Great Depression. Cortez High School is the work of locally prominent masons Peter Baxstrom and his son Harry, who trained WPA workers in the use of indigenous masonry construction techniques.

The period of significance for Cortez High School is 1909 to 1968 spanning from the original construction of the building to the year when the building ceased to function as a school.

ELABORATION

Criterion A - Education

The physical evolution of Cortez High School from its initial construction in 1909 through two expansions in 1924 and 1935 demonstrates the state of education in Colorado as the building evolved from a ward school to a Progressive Era school. The Cortez High School replaced an overcrowded facility and accommodated students from around Montezuma County as a national trend toward school consolidation encouraged the construction of larger, graded schools to educate pupils from a bigger region. Cortez High School's initial iteration in 1909 took the form of a ward school. Ward schools were a Late Victorian form typified by masonry construction, hipped roofs with bell towers, and tall narrow windows. They generally housed several classrooms on multiple floors, allowing pupils to be divided by grade. Classrooms had windows on two walls to provide ample light and ventilation.³ As the Progressive Movement took hold nationally and as enrollment increased locally, two additions modernized Cortez High School. A wide corridor organized the larger Progressive Era school. Additional graded classrooms housed a variety of specialized subjects (sciences, manual arts, home economics, etc.). The school also offered athletic facilities (gymnasium and football field) and performing arts facilities.⁴ In context with the history of public education in Colorado, Cortez High School demonstrates the growth of the state and changes in educational theory and policy during this time period.

² The school was interchangeably referred to as "Cortez High School" and "Cortez School" in newspapers. The high school designation likely differentiated the facility from other schools in the area that did not offer high school education.

³ Elizabeth Rosin and Rachel Nugent, National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, "Historic Resources of the Kansas City Missouri School District Pre-1970," 2012, 47.

⁴ Ibid., 48.

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Criterion C – Architecture

Cortez High School is a significant example of WPA Rustic style architecture in Colorado. The 1935 addition and alterations clearly embody the architectural trends that characterized buildings constructed by the Works Progress Administration during this period, which focused on local materials, craftsmanship, and simple functional designs. Buildings and structures constructed by the WPA followed a standard design that gave their work uniformity and consistency. WPA architecture drew strongly from the Rustic style that characterized National Park Service (NPS) and U.S. Forest Service (USFS) buildings, particularly tourist lodges and dude ranches. The style was based on the principles of native materials, local forms, traditional construction methods, and straight-forward functional designs. Most used log or stone construction. NPS publications in the 1930s and their collaboration with the Civilian Conservation Corps, another New Deal program, promoted the style. Herbert Maier, an architect and landscape architect for the NPS district in Colorado, was instrumental in promoting the basic principles of park architecture during the 1920s and 1930s using department publications to popularize standardized designs for buildings, shelters and structures. Like other pattern books and builder's manuals, Maier intended for builders to modify the published designs to address issues specific to local sites and topography. Maier's designs also emphasized low silhouettes and horizon lines, avoided right angles, and attempted to blend the built environment with nature.⁵

Like the buildings erected by the NPS, buildings erected by the WPA eschewed architectural ornament in favor of simple design elements and typically incorporated locally-quarried stone or materials from recently-demolished buildings. Concrete might be used if natural materials were not readily available. WPA Rustic designs sometimes incorporated arched window or door openings, such as the segmental arch openings featured on the school buildings in Kim, Colorado (1931-1944, 5LA.1815, National Register listed 24 April 2007, NRIS.20070424). Because many WPA workers were unskilled, the buildings were easy to build. Simple construction methods avoided the necessity for complex construction machinery, which in turn meant that laborers received extensive training in masonry and carpentry skills. The emphasis on hand tools and manual construction inherent in the Rustic style made it a natural fit for WPA, whose primary objective was to put the unemployed back to work.⁶ In addition to new construction projects, it was common for the WPA to erect additions to existing buildings, such as the Union High School in Westminster, Colorado (1939, 1949, 5AM.895, National Register listed 14 January 2000, NRIS.20000114). In Colorado, the WPA constructed or enlarged 113 schools and "reconstructed or improved" 381 schools.⁷ To create a unified façade, this sometimes resulted in the complete redesign of the existing structure in the WPA Rustic style.

The 1935 addition and alterations to Cortez High School reflect the tenets of the WPA Rustic style. Not only did the expansion use locally-quarried stone that matched the previous building campaigns, but Harry Baxstrom, son of the mason who built the first two phases of the school, trained the WPA workers,

⁵ History Colorado, "Colorado's Historic Architecture and Engineering –Web Guide- WPA Rustic. Online resource: <http://www.historycolorado.org/oahp/wpa-rustic>, (accessed 2 November 2015).

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Deon Wolfenbarger, National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, "New Deal Resources on Colorado's Eastern Plains," 2003, E-65.

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ensuring that the 1935 addition matched the workmanship of the existing building. Replacement of the hipped roof and bell tower with a flat roof also reflects the more-utilitarian and functional approach to design promulgated by the WPA Rustic style. Coupled with the prominent use of native stone, the many trees that dotted the property reinforced the naturalistic qualities and WPA Rustic design tenets incorporated at Cortez High School.⁸ Cortez High School is architecturally significant for its illustration of WPA Rustic architecture and the design trends that characterized this period.

Cortez High School Property History

Cortez High School was the sole high school in Cortez from 1909 to 1949 and also served as Cortez's elementary and middle school until 1968. Beginning in 1887, a small frame building housed the first school classes in one room in Cortez until the Montezuma County School opened in 1890.⁹ This school served all children in Montezuma County and was overcrowded even in its earliest years, forcing students to attend classes in various buildings, including private homes and businesses, dispersed around the county. By 1903, an irrigation ditch system in Montezuma County was complete, and a reliable water source resulted in population growth for Cortez.¹⁰ In 1906, the Colorado state legislature passed a compulsory school attendance law.¹¹ Newspaper articles from 1906 and 1907 described the "crowded condition" of existing school facilities that were "wholly inadequate even for present needs" notwithstanding anticipated future population growth.¹² As the population of Cortez rose from 125 in 1900 to 565 by 1910, the need for a new school was readily apparent.¹³ The school board began to accept bids for construction of the new school in the summer of 1909.¹⁴ In 1909 [*Historic Photo 1*], Cortez High School opened for the new school year on September 7th with enrollment of 150 pupils of all ages.¹⁵ Built for \$14,000, the school included six classrooms (two per floor), the existing west entrance and stair hall, and such modern amenities as a call bell system, fire alarms, telephones, and electric lamps. The original school had a pyramidal roof with a bell tower projecting above the entrance [*Historic Photo 1*]. Contemporary newspapers boasted that the new Cortez High School was the "finest school building in the entire southwest, with all conveniences, appliances, and comforts."¹⁶ Already at opening, the school was crowded. Newspaper accounts from the first school year note that already "all rooms are crowded" and that "another room may have to be added" to the brand new facility.¹⁷

Cortez High School was not the only new educational building in Montezuma County at the time. The end of the first decade of the twentieth century marked a period of significant investment in education in Montezuma County. Because the compulsory attendance law of 1906 was only applicable for students

⁸ History Colorado, "Colorado's Historic Architecture and Engineering –Web Guide- WPA Rustic. Online resource: <http://www.historycolorado.org/oahp/wpa-rustic>, (accessed 2 November 2015).

⁹ Ira S. Freeman, *A History of Montezuma County Colorado: Land of Promise and Fulfillment* (Victoria, BC: Trafford Publishing, 1958), 68. The Montezuma County School was located several blocks north of Cortez High School on Montezuma Avenue. The school was demolished at an unknown date.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 253.

¹¹ "Notice: Compulsory Education," *Montezuma Journal*, 2 February 1906.

¹² "School Notes," *Montezuma Journal*, 14 February 1914; "Schools," *Montezuma Journal*, 23 September 1909.

¹³ Freeman, 68-69.

¹⁴ "School Notes," *Montezuma Journal*, 25 July 1907.

¹⁵ Danielle Milenski, " 'History of Cortez' Compiled by a Cortez Student," *Cortez Journal*, 11 September 1954.

¹⁶ "School Report," *Montezuma Journal*, 5 February 1909.

¹⁷ "Schools," *Montezuma Journal*, 23 September 1909.

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living within one mile of a school, multiple schools were required to educate all of the students in the county.¹⁸ Also in 1909, a high school opened in the town of Mancos (Mancos High School, 5MT.11432, NRIS.91001740, National Register listed 23 December 1991)¹⁹ just eighteen miles from Cortez, and the previous year, a school serving grades one through eight opened in the town of Lebanon (presently an unincorporated part of Dolores) (Lebanon School, 5MT.12133, NRIS.96000543, National Register listed 29 May 1996), eight miles north of Cortez.²⁰ Mancos High School is very similar in appearance to the 1924 iteration of Cortez High School. The two-story hipped-roof sandstone school has a central bell tower and entrance. Mancos High School may also be the work of the Baxstroms, who built Cortez High School. As in Cortez, until the construction of Mancos High School, students were educated in a small frame building. When Mancos High School opened, students from nearby one-room schools consolidated in the new facility. Mancos, though presently smaller than Cortez, was comparable in size during this time.²¹ Lebanon School, on the other hand, is very different from both Cortez High School and Mancos High School. The wood-sided building is Classical Revival in style with a pediment over the entry portico and prominent bell tower. Lebanon was a smaller community than Cortez or Mancos. The new school only taught grades one through eight.²²

The modern Cortez High School functioned well from the beginning; however, as the population continued to grow and the state developed new educational requirements, the need for expansion was soon apparent. Fundraising for a gymnasium began in 1919, and the gymnasium/auditorium building opened in 1922 southwest of the school building.²³ This large, rectangular frame building housed a basketball court and a stage [*Historic Photo 3*]. Soon thereafter, in 1924, the first addition to Cortez High School opened [*Historic Photo 2*]. The \$8,000 addition included five classrooms and one assembly room, which connected to the 1909 block using a central corridor.²⁴ The addition made the school symmetrical with a centered primary entrance and bell tower [*Historic Photo 2*]. The first Cortez High School yearbook, entitled *Sleeping Ute* after the nearby landmark mountain, was published in 1926. It bragged that “[d]uring the last few years, the Cortez High School has been improved and built up greatly in many ways. The building has been enlarged and improved, the equipment increased, a gymnasium built, and more teachers added.”²⁵

The population of Cortez nearly doubled between 1910 and 1930, reaching 921 residents.²⁶ Enrollment at Cortez High School was up and more space was needed to accommodate the new students. Following the onset of the Great Depression, New Deal funding became available to support school building. The Works Progress Administration financed the second and final addition to Cortez High School in 1935, which added a second entrance, a second stair, six more classrooms, an administration office, and a

¹⁸ “Notice: Compulsory Education,” *Montezuma Journal*, 2 February 1906.

¹⁹ Jean Bader, National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, “Mancos High School,” 1991, 1.

²⁰ Penny Richardson, National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, “Lebanon School,” 1997.

²¹ Bader.

²² Richardson, 5.

²³ Milenski.

Freeman, 278.

²⁴ Freeman, 281.

²⁵ *Sleeping Ute*, 1926.

²⁶ Freeman, 68.

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football field [*Historic Photo 4*]. On the exterior, the roof was made flat with stepped parapets and the bell tower was removed. The expansion of Cortez High School is consistent with WPA buildings across the state of Colorado in its use of local materials, flat roof, and Moderne Style-inspired curved interior walls in the offices. These features are typical of schools built by the WPA.²⁷ Construction of the Norman Johnson Memorial Football Field on the south half of the lot was also completed in 1935 [*Historic Photo 5*].²⁸ It was considered “one of the finest athletic fields in Southwestern Colorado” and was the only sod field in the region.²⁹ Numerous athletic fields were built by the WPA during the Great Depression.³⁰ Norman Johnson Memorial Field is consistent with other WPA-built athletic fields. Both the nearby Mancos High School and the Lebanon School also experienced multiple phases of expansion during this time, reflecting the booming population of Montezuma County during the first half of the twentieth century.³¹

The expanded school served the community well, but the population continued to surge in Cortez, reaching 1,778 residents in 1940 on a rapid upward trend following the discovery of uranium nearby.³² Begun in 1947 and completed for the 1949 school year, a new high school opened on the west side of town, near the intersection of Main Street (Highway 160) and North Broadway (Highway 491). The new Montezuma County High School assumed the role of the local high school. Cortez High School was renamed Calkins School and continued to function as an elementary and middle school. Dr. Royal William Calkins was a physician for the Ute Indian Agency and is credited with saving hundreds of lives during a flu epidemic in 1918. He later served in the state House of Representatives from 1926 to 1932.³³ It is unclear what changes may have been made to the school to fulfill its new function. Although the high school students attended classes in the new building, sporting events continued to be held on the grounds of Cortez High School. The Cortez High School was modernized in 1953 with updated finishes and modern restroom facilities.³⁴ In 1968, after years of continued growth in Cortez following the discovery of a nearby oil field in 1954, the school district converted the Cortez High School into administrative offices, adding partitions on the interior to create offices.³⁵ At this time, elementary and middle school students moved into the former Montezuma County High School, which became Cortez Middle School, and high school students moved into a new facility, Montezuma-Cortez High School at West 7th and South Chestnut streets. The school district vacated the Cortez High School building in 2008. Rehabilitation efforts in recent years have removed many non-historic alterations and have stabilized the structure.

Cortez High School is synonymous with education in Cortez. As the only school in the city from 1909 through 1949 and then continuing as an elementary and middle school through 1968, every public school

²⁷ Wolfenbarger, 97.

²⁸ Milenski.

²⁹ Sleeping Ute, 1941.

³⁰ Wolfenbarger, 109.

³¹ Bader, 2.

Richardson 5-6.

³² Freeman 68, 71.

³³ Vila Schwindt Janet Weeth, and Dale Davidson, *Images of America: Cortez* (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2011).

³⁴ V. S. Lester, “Cortez Has Modern Schools,” *Cortez Journal*, 1953.

³⁵ Freeman, 72.

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student in Cortez during those years was educated at this facility. This intact school building reflects the booming population of Cortez, the value placed on education by the citizens of Montezuma County, and evolving education standards in Colorado.

Public Education in Colorado

In addition to claiming and settling land, education remained an important priority for proponents of westward expansion. Western territories established after the Land Ordinance of 1785 were required to set aside a section of land for educational purposes. That amount doubled in 1848.³⁶ Euro-American settlement in Colorado began in earnest in the mid-nineteenth century, after establishment of the Territory of Colorado in 1861. Most early settlers were men, but, as their families followed or new units were established, the need for an educational system became apparent. Denver's first school, a one-room private institution, opened in 1859. Additional schools opened in the Front Range shortly thereafter. Most early schools were private, but public institutions soon followed, the first opening in Boulder in 1860.³⁷ As the population spread westward, so did schools.

The Territorial Legislative Assembly passed the first comprehensive school law in 1861, which created the position of Territorial Superintendent of Common Schools, to be appointed by the governor. The law also established the biannual election of County Superintendents in each county. An 1862 law established a funding mechanism for the territorial schools that was tied to precious metal extraction.³⁸ This funding proved insufficient and debates about school funding continued well after Colorado statehood in 1876.³⁹

The first Colorado state legislature provided for an elected State Superintendent of Schools and county school superintendents in 1876. The new state maintained the territorial mandate that land be set aside in all settlements for schools. Additionally, any group of parents with ten school-age children (ages 6 to 21) could petition their county superintendent to establish a local school.⁴⁰ Consequently, the number of local school districts, like that which oversaw Cortez High School, increased markedly in the years leading up to and around the turn of the century. In 1901, there were 1,657 local school districts in Colorado. By 1932 there were 2,041.⁴¹

The local school district system, in which a local school board has authority over the school district while beholden to the oversight of county and state school officials, began in Massachusetts in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The school district system at its inception arose as an authority distinct from local government. The local level of the school district allowed any community to form a local education system. The flexibility and simplicity of this structure led to its widespread adoption across the United States.⁴² In this system, county superintendents were tasked with overseeing the schools within his/her

³⁶ Suzanne Doggett and Holly Wilson, National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, "Rural School Buildings in Colorado," 1999, 7. Note that this MPDF does not directly apply to the Cortez High School, a large, multi-room and -function school located within a relatively urban setting.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Colorado Department of Education, A Report on Colorado School District Organization, 2002, 1.

⁴¹ Doggett and Wilson, 2.

⁴² Ibid.

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district and developing local academic and teacher qualification standards. The Montezuma County Superintendent of Schools frequently wrote newspaper editorials to publicize his or her educational standards. J.W. Denney was the Montezuma County Superintendent of Schools in the years before the construction of Cortez High School. His newspaper editorials are long and detailed treatises that espoused Progressive Era values. Hannah Durward served as the county superintendent of schools for several years beginning in 1909 and frequently visited and inspected Cortez High School along with the other educational facilities in Montezuma County to assure that they met her standards in addition to state and national benchmarks. Local public school districts, rather than exclusive private institutions, were perceived as the best structure for educating local children in pioneer settlements, resulting in a rapid westward expansion of local school districts near the turn of the twentieth century.⁴³

In 1889, the Colorado legislature approved the Compulsory Education Law that required children between eight and fourteen to attend at least twelve weeks of school annually.⁴⁴ This law was further refined in 1906, including language that required that all students be “instructed in reading, writing, spelling, English grammar, geography and arithmetic”.⁴⁵ The law mandated that all parents or guardians of children aged eight to sixteen send their children to public, private, or parochial school for the duration of the school year or else be subject to fines for each school day missed. School administrators published attendance records in the local newspaper.⁴⁶ As a result, the decades bracketing the turn of the twentieth century exhibit a substantial increase in the number of children enrolled in public schools.⁴⁷ In Cortez, the newspaper announcement of this new act lamented the small, overcrowded educational facilities in the town.⁴⁸

Table 1: Colorado Statewide Public School Enrollment, 1891-1910⁴⁹

Year	Enrollment
1891	73,391
1895	90,562
1900	117,555
1910	168,798

In Colorado, as new settlements were founded, the typical progression of educational infrastructure began with a one-room, one-teacher building. As the settlement’s population increased, so too did the size of the school. New school buildings with multiple classrooms, divided by grades, including the Cortez High School, were built across Colorado during the first half of the twentieth century, especially during the Great Depression.⁵⁰ A census of school buildings in the United States demonstrates this trend:⁵¹

⁴³ Doggett and Wilson, 1.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 20.

⁴⁵ “Notice,” *The Montezuma Journal*, 2 February 1906.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Dogget and Wilson, 1.

⁴⁸ “Notice,” *The Montezuma Journal*, 2 February 1906.

⁴⁹ Doggett and Wilson, 1- 2.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 3

⁵¹ Information in the following table taken from: Doggett and Wilson, 3.

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Table 2: School Buildings in the United States, 1909-1940

School Year	Total # of school buildings	% of total that are one-room, one-teacher
1909-10	265,474	80
1919-20	271,319	69
1929-30	248,117	59
1939-40	226,762	50

Beginning in the 1900s-1910s, leaders across the United States and in Colorado began to advocate for the consolidation of schools for increased efficiency and better educational services and facilities. The era of these reforms is commonly referred to as the Progressive Era. Educators argued for better schools, better teachers, and the inclusion of libraries, science rooms, and playgrounds at all facilities.⁵² Additionally, the Great Depression, the Dust Bowl, and the subsequent halt of incoming homesteaders forced community leaders in Colorado to consider consolidating school districts in order to keep educational facilities available to students.⁵³ A 1906 editorial in the *Montezuma Journal* advocated for the consolidation of Montezuma County schools for the following reasons:

1. They are cheaper than the old way after first cost of building.
2. One central school building will cost less than six or eight one room buildings.
3. There is a great saving in fuel and contingent expenses.
4. It gives people the opportunity to educate their sons and daughters at home.
5. Fewer teachers and better teachers.
6. The children will have the educational influence of a modern, sanitary, well-ventilated, lighted, and well-heated building instead of present conditions.
7. The attendance will be more regular and tardiness will be a thing of the past.
8. It will lengthen the term. City and most town children now get an average of 170 days each year; country children, only 95.
9. The smallest pupils can attend every day during the term, for wagons are prepared for all kinds of weather.
10. It will equalize the school tax.
11. The boy or girl who grows up a member of the society of a quite extensive territory instead of having an acquaintance of only a few families of the immediate neighborhood; hence the broadening influence so much needed in grown ups.
12. Children receive a high school education without being removed from home influences during the tender and critical age.⁵⁴

From 1909 to 1940, the decreasing number of school buildings in Colorado paralleled the decreasing number of one-room, one-teacher schools. At the same time, the school-age population in Colorado grew.

⁵² Doggett and Wilson, 9.

⁵³ Ibid, 9.

⁵⁴ "Consolidated Schools," *The Montezuma Journal*, 2 February 1906.

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These figures demonstrate that during this time new, multi-classroom school buildings with specialized facilities replaced numerous one-room schools. The construction and growth of Cortez High School over this time period demonstrates this trend. Cortez High School relieved overcrowding at the combined elementary and high school building and was enlarged twice to accommodate growing enrollment. As smaller area schools consolidated, a larger facility was needed to educate them.

The rise of the Progressive Era in the first few decades of the twentieth century meant major changes to education. Progressive Era school theory advocated the need for more specialized educational facilities, such as a gymnasium, an auditorium, an athletic field, and/or one or more industrial arts classrooms, in order to craft a well-rounded education. A 1907 newspaper editorial by J.W. Denney, the Montezuma County Superintendent of Schools, advocated for “the education and training of the entire individual” suggesting that there was a “demand for education that will meet the practical needs of life.”⁵⁵ Denney went on to state that:

[...] the problem of education is industrial as well as academic. It must exalt the dignity of labor; it must teach habits of industry; it must give ability to apply one’s self to the problems in hand; it must meet the demand for accurate, skillful work. Education has been too academic—that is, it has held too closely to the text book, and has shut the doors to nature and to life. [...] there has been too much head and not enough hand and heart training. [...] it is not proposed to do any less head work—that is, not any less thinking—but it is proposed to do more hand work to supplement the head.⁵⁶

Denney suggested that new facilities be added to existing schools and that specialized equipment, such as sewing machines and kitchen equipment, be added to the facilities. He also acknowledged that many schools lacked the necessary equipment but that creative teachers could still ensure training in “hand work.” A 1913 state law mandated instruction in agriculture, mechanics, and domestic science in all public schools.⁵⁷ Newspaper accounts list the specialized courses of study available to Cortez High School students. In addition to the basic subjects, such as English, mathematics, and geography, Cortez High School boasted courses in German, Latin, piano, botany, psychology, and chemistry.⁵⁸ Following Superintendent Denny’s lead, the 1922 gymnasium and the 1924 and 1935 additions to Cortez High School exhibit Progressive Era theory. The gymnasium/auditorium building, added to the Cortez High School campus in 1922, fulfilled the need for specialized facilities for athletics and performing arts, allowing for more “hand work” at the school. Yearbooks from the 1920s include images of the basketball teams (girls and boys), school band, thespian society, several literary societies, and other new specialized organizations and programs at the school utilizing the new building. The 1924 addition not only added more classrooms but also an assembly room and library (no extant materials reflect these historic functions), key components of Progressive Era design. The 1935 addition expanded athletic facilities with the addition of the football field as well as expanding the educational facilities of the school. In keeping

⁵⁵ “Our Schools,” *The Montezuma Journal*, 14 March 1907.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *The Montezuma Journal*, 3 April 1913. The exact name of the law is unknown.

⁵⁸ “School Notes,” *The Montezuma Journal*, 11 September 1913.

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with Progressive Era ideals, both additions had a configuration intended to maximize natural light and fresh air.

The State of Colorado began to set teacher qualification standards in the first two decades of the twentieth century. An act passed in 1909 established a system whereby state teaching diplomas would be granted to teachers who had successfully taught in Colorado public schools for forty-five months. This diploma would act as a license for the teacher that indicated that he or she was qualified to teach in any public school in the state without the necessity of passing any examinations.⁵⁹ This law anticipated 1920s legislation that required that teachers be at least sixteen years old and have passed the eighth grade comprehensive exams.⁶⁰ It was not uncommon for Colorado teachers during the first half of the twentieth century to not have a college education. Better-educated teachers often sought higher-paid positions at schools in towns such as Cortez, rather than in rural, one-room schools.⁶¹ Still, Cortez High School struggled with retaining enough qualified high school teachers on staff, often relying on local citizens, such as the county judge or local clergy, to teach specialized subjects.⁶² In general, however, Cortez High School retained one teacher for each two grades in primary schooling (up to ninth grade), with specialized teachers leading courses in high school.⁶³

During this time, uneven funding resulted in highly inequitable schools across the state. Districts were funded from the municipalities and through local levies and bonds. In 1932, for example, the per-student expenditure in public schools ranged from \$41.41 in Costilla County to \$165.34 in Summit County as funding discrepancies arose from widely varying property values across the expansive state.⁶⁴ In Cortez, the local school district called for bonds to support specific endeavors, such as the construction of a new gymnasium, or to add to the general fund. Financial statements published in the newspaper indicate that the Cortez school district incurred a great deal of debt to fund its schools and relied heavily on income from the local irrigation district.⁶⁵

In 1936, Colorado citizens voted to establish the first state income tax to fund public schools statewide. This enabled the state to explore ways to equalize funding across school systems, establishing a legal framework and formula to do so in 1943.⁶⁶ By midcentury, continued population growth in Colorado led to a larger share of the budget going toward education than ever before. The School District Reorganization Act of 1949 promoted school consolidation at a systemic level. Larger school districts soon replaced small districts and one-room schoolhouses throughout the state.⁶⁷ The latter half of the twentieth century saw further school consolidation and widespread construction of newer, larger educational facilities with specialized classrooms and athletic facilities.⁶⁸ In Cortez, this meant the

⁵⁹ "Notice to High School Teachers," *The Montezuma Journal*, 29 July 1909.

⁶⁰ Doggett and Wilson, 4.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² "Prof. Holch Receives Encouraging Words," *The Montezuma Journal*, 1 January 1914.

⁶³ "School Notes," *The Montezuma Journal*, 10 September 1914.

⁶⁴ Doggett and Wilson, 8.

⁶⁵ "School Bond Election Next Week Saturday," *The Montezuma Journal*, 27 November 1913.

⁶⁶ Doggett and Wilson, 8.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 10.

⁶⁸ Colorado Department of Education, 2.

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construction of the new high school which led to the conversion of Cortez High School into the Calkins School in 1949, which educated elementary and middle school students exclusively.

In its physical evolution over decades of use, Cortez High School demonstrates trends in national and Colorado educational practice. Begun as a ward school as the City of Cortez grew, the school needed to enlarge as school consolidation spread across the state. Enlargement coincided with the rise of Progressive Era school theory, resulting in the expanded school possessing many of that movement's markers including a wide variety of course offerings, athletic facilities, and performing arts facilities. The continued use and adaptation of the school, even as the high school students moved to a new building, demonstrates the consistent growth of communities in Montezuma County.

The Works Progress Administration in Colorado

Works Progress Administration (WPA) labor built the 1935 addition to Cortez High School, removed the hipped roof and bell tower, and constructed the football field. The addition and alterations to the existing building and field, therefore, are representative of this important period of construction in Colorado and the nation. Typical of WPA projects in Colorado, the Cortez High School addition utilized local materials and labor on a simple design. The school was one of many that was expanded or improved under New Deal programs in Colorado.

After the stock market crash of 1929, unemployment in America skyrocketed during the Great Depression.⁶⁹ In Colorado, after a drought began in 1931, the economy truly began to suffer.⁷⁰ Coloradans lost their jobs and, after drought bankrupted numerous farms, farmers moved to larger cities and towns seeking work.⁷¹ Fifteen major pieces of legislation passed during the first year of the Roosevelt administration (1933) established numerous federal work relief programs to stimulate economic recovery.⁷² Colorado, like the rest of the nation, took advantage of New Deal public relief and economic stimulation programs in order to fund and staff projects around the state. New Deal programs funded or staffed the construction of hundreds of buildings and structures in Colorado.

The need for quality jobs persisted even after the depths of the Great Depression subsided. The Roosevelt administration established the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in 1935. The WPA became the largest source of public jobs during the Great Depression until the program ended in 1942. WPA construction projects, like those that built so many schools in Colorado, were nearly completely federally-funded. The projects were intended to employ large numbers of unskilled and semi-skilled workers. These workers also received job training to help ensure their future employability.⁷³ From 1935 to 1942, the WPA spent \$120,102,731 in Colorado alone, with roughly 89 percent of that figure going directly to wages. Coloradans were the most highly paid WPA employees in the country, with unskilled workers receiving \$40 each month and skilled workers receiving \$94 each month.⁷⁴

⁶⁹ Wolfenbarger, 2.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 3.

⁷¹ Ibid., 4.

⁷² Ibid., 4.

⁷³ Ibid., 57.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 63.

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Nine thousand Coloradans were employed by the WPA in November of 1936, a number which increased to 40,000 by the end of the year and reached its peak of 43,200 in March 1937,⁷⁵ as WPA projects dramatically altered the built environment of Colorado. Citizens and local governments could suggest any project to the WPA that would fill a need in their local community. A local project sponsor, often the municipality, would draft a proposal to the WPA and complete the planning with or without WPA input.⁷⁶ The breakdown of WPA projects in Colorado is as follows:⁷⁷

Table 3: WPA Projects in Colorado by Project Type

% of Total WPA Projects in CO	Project Type
35	Highways, roads, streets
12	Buildings
8	Water, sewer systems, other utilities
6	Conservation
4	Recreational facilities (excluding buildings)
1.3	Sanitation
1	Engineering surveys
2.1	All other projects

A large share of WPA building projects were education-related, such as the expansion of Cortez High School. WPA-built school projects were needed as the Great Depression deferred school maintenance across the state. Furthermore, increased enrollment in newly consolidated schools required new or enlarged facilities. For most education-related projects, WPA programs built special-purpose facilities, in keeping with Progressive Era ideals, such as gymnasias and special-purpose rooms.⁷⁸ These programs also funded the expansion of several existing schools and the construction of new schools to accommodate increasing enrollment after the closure of numerous one-room schoolhouses across the state. All told, the WPA built or expanded 113 schools and “reconstructed and improved” 381 schools in the state of Colorado.⁷⁹

Builders: Peter & Harry Baxstrom

Cortez High School is an intact example of the work of the Baxstrom family, a prominent family of masons in Montezuma County who quarried stone from their family quarry. Peter Baxstrom built the 1909 block of Cortez High School and his son Harry Baxstrom completed the 1924 addition and trained WPA workers in masonry construction for the 1935 addition.⁸⁰ Peter Baxstrom immigrated to the United

⁷⁵ Ibid., 62.

⁷⁶ Wolfenbarger, 58.

⁷⁷ Information in the following table taken from: Colorado Historical Society: Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, *The New Deal in Colorado 1933-1942*. 2008, 23.

⁷⁸ Colorado Historical Society: Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, *School Buildings Listed in the Colorado State Register of Historic Properties* (Denver: Colorado Historical Society, 2007), 4.

⁷⁹ Wolfenbarger, E-65.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

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States from Sweden before 1870 and worked as a stonemason in Kansas before settling in southwestern Colorado. He arrived to the area in 1884, and opened a quarry just west of Cortez on Hartman Draw.⁸¹ In addition to Cortez High School, Peter Baxstrom constructed several Cortez landmarks, including the original Montezuma Avenue School (1890, extensively altered, 5MT.19949) and the Montezuma Valley National Bank and Store Building (1908, 5MT.19093, National Register listed 5 December 2008, NRIS.08001317) in downtown Cortez. Several more Baxstrom-built buildings are listed in the National Register of Historic Places or the Colorado State Register of Historic places, including the Baxstrom Upper Place Homestead House (5MT.12937, State Register listed 31 August 2006). Baxstrom-built buildings are distinguished by their skillfully cut Baxstrom quarry sandstone and refined masonry ornament. They are a monument to local masonry, honoring the sandstone's inherent texture and beauty. The Baxstroms transformed basic architectural forms (e.g. rural schoolhouse; two-part commercial block; homestead) with artfully arranged and cut sandstone. During the expansion of Cortez High School in 1935, Harry Baxstrom passed these skills and the principles of hand-craftsmanship on to the WPA workers he trained.

⁸¹ Jill Seyfarth, Colorado State Register of Historic Properties Nomination Form, "Baxstrom Upper Place Homestead House," 2006, 5.

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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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: History Colorado, Montezuma County Public Library

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): 5MT.12697

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 6

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

Latitude: 37.347481	Longitude: -108.584431
Latitude: 37.347481	Longitude: -108.582619
Latitude: 37.346033	Longitude: -108.582619
Latitude: 37.346033	Longitude: -108.584431

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
Zone:	Easting :	Northing:

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The Cortez High School site is bordered by East First Street to the north, South Ash Street to the East, an unpaved alley to the west, and the southern edge of the Norman Johnson Memorial Field to the south.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

These boundaries match the historic boundaries of the school property as platted in 1908.

Form Prepared By

name/title: Kristen Ottesen/ Tax Credit Coordinator (for property owner)

organization: Rosin Preservation

street & number: 1712 Holmes St

city or town: Kansas City state: MO zip code: 64108

e-mail: kristen@rosinpreservation.com

telephone: 816 472-4950

date: January 2016

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Cortez High School

City or Vicinity: Cortez

County: Montezuma State: CO

Photographer: Brad Finch, f-stop Photography

Date Photographed: July 2015

Digital TIF files on file with History Colorado Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation

- | | |
|----------|--|
| 1 of 16 | Primary (north) building side, view S |
| 2 of 16 | North & east building sides, view SW |
| 3 of 16 | East building side, view W |
| 4 of 16 | East & south building sides, view NW |
| 5 of 16 | Rear (south) building side, view N |
| 6 of 16 | South & west building sides, view NE |
| 7 of 16 | West building side, view E |
| 8 of 16 | West & north building sides, view SE |
| 9 of 16 | Norman Johnson Memorial Field and south building side of Cortez High School, view NW |
| 10 of 16 | West stair at 1st floor, 1909 block, view SW |
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Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Figure 1: Cortez High School site photo map. Google Maps.

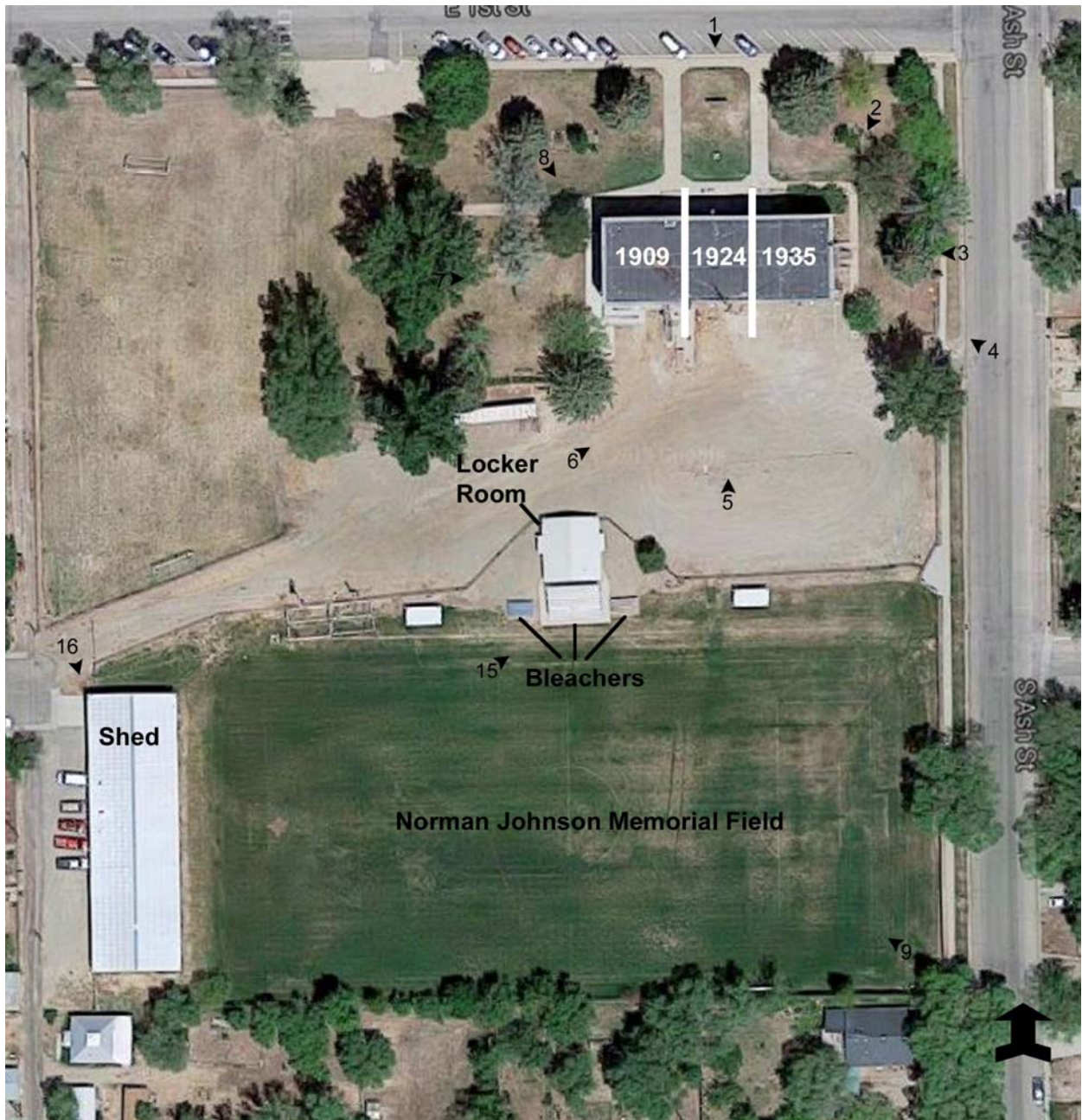


Figure 2: Cortez High School interior photo map. R. Michael Bell & Associates Inc.

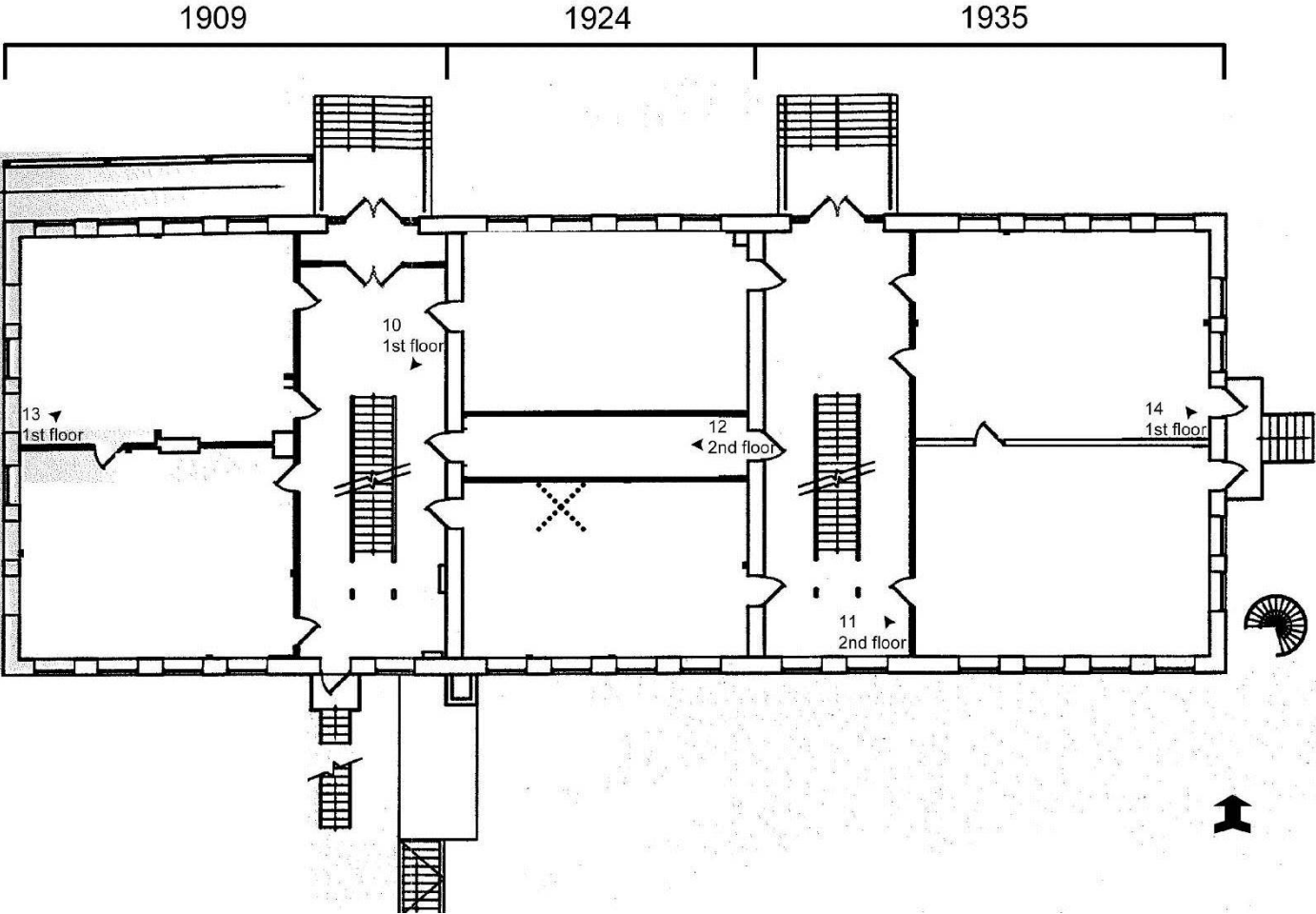


Figure 3: Cortez High School. First floor plan. Michael Bell & Associates Inc. Not to scale.

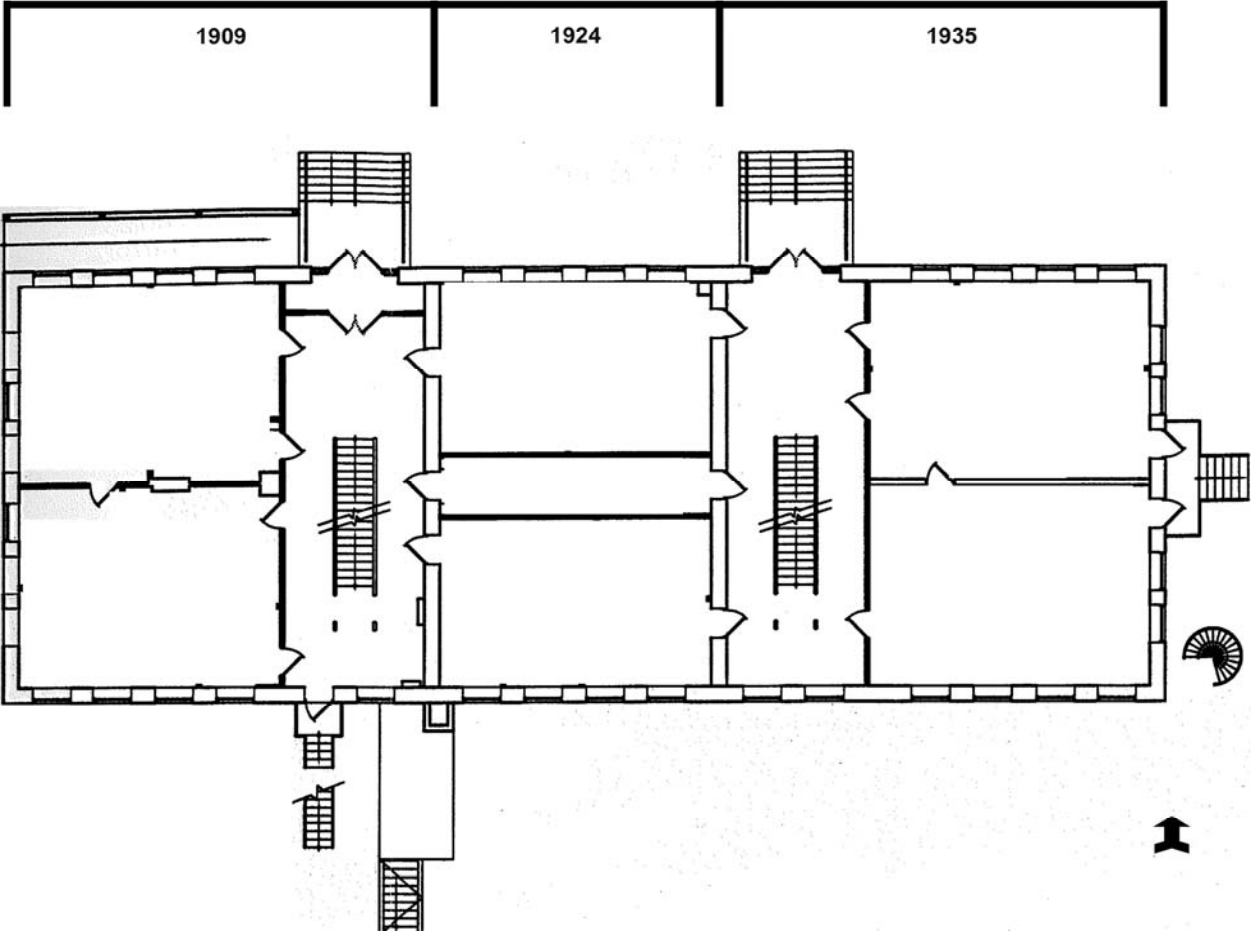


Figure 4: Cortez High School. Second floor plan. Michael Bell & Associates Inc. Not to scale.

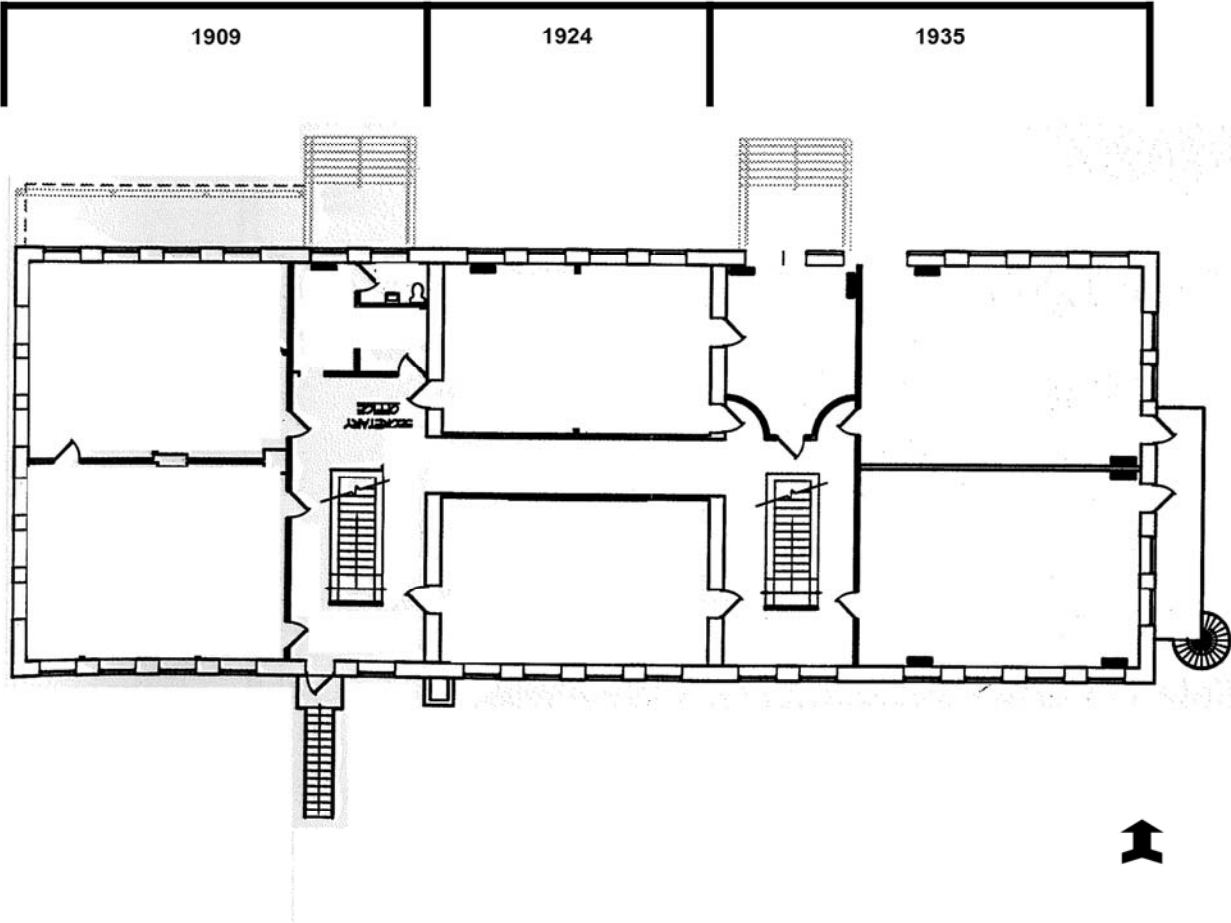
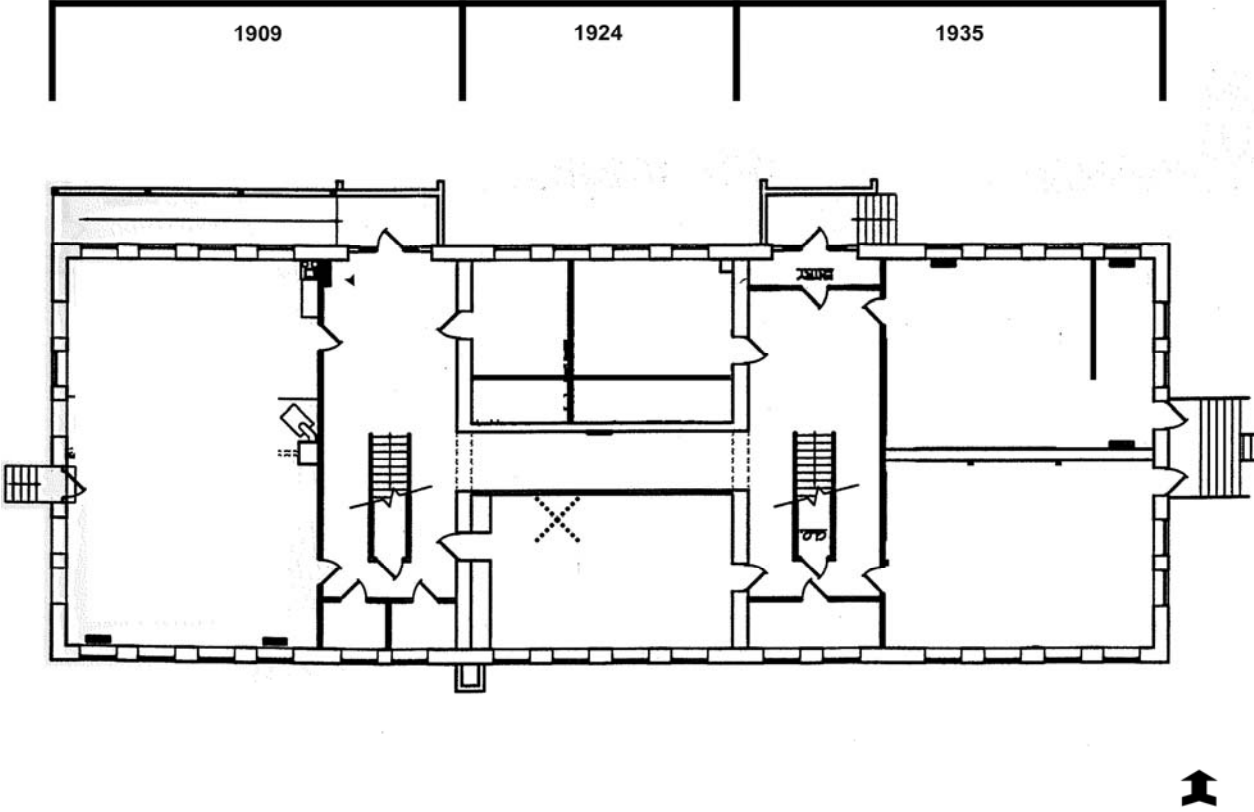
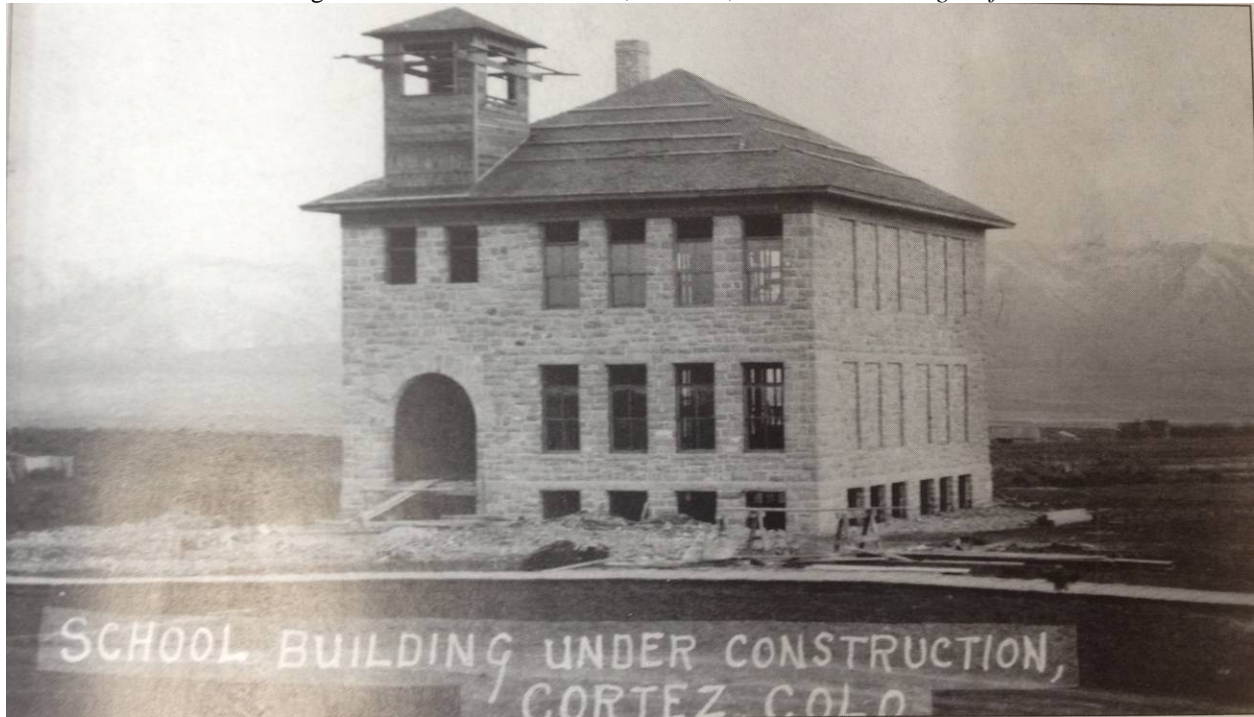


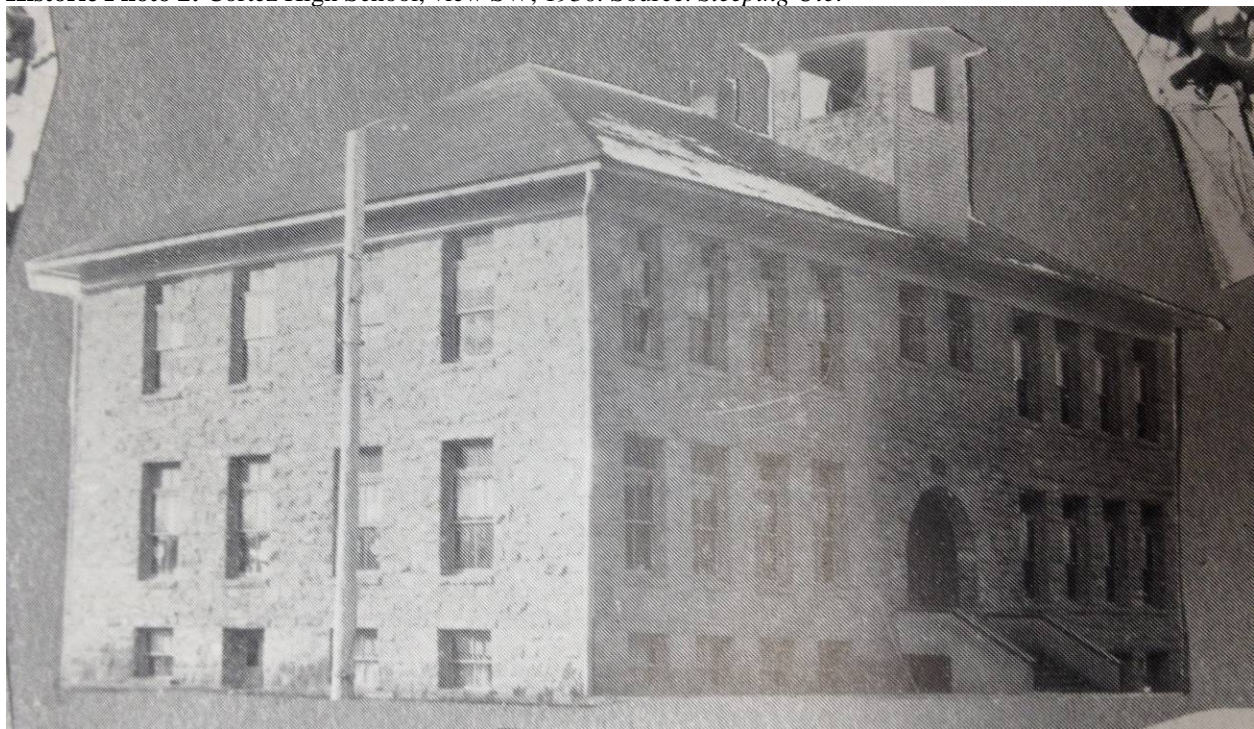
Figure 5: Cortez High School. Basement floor plan. Michael Bell & Associates Inc. Not to scale.



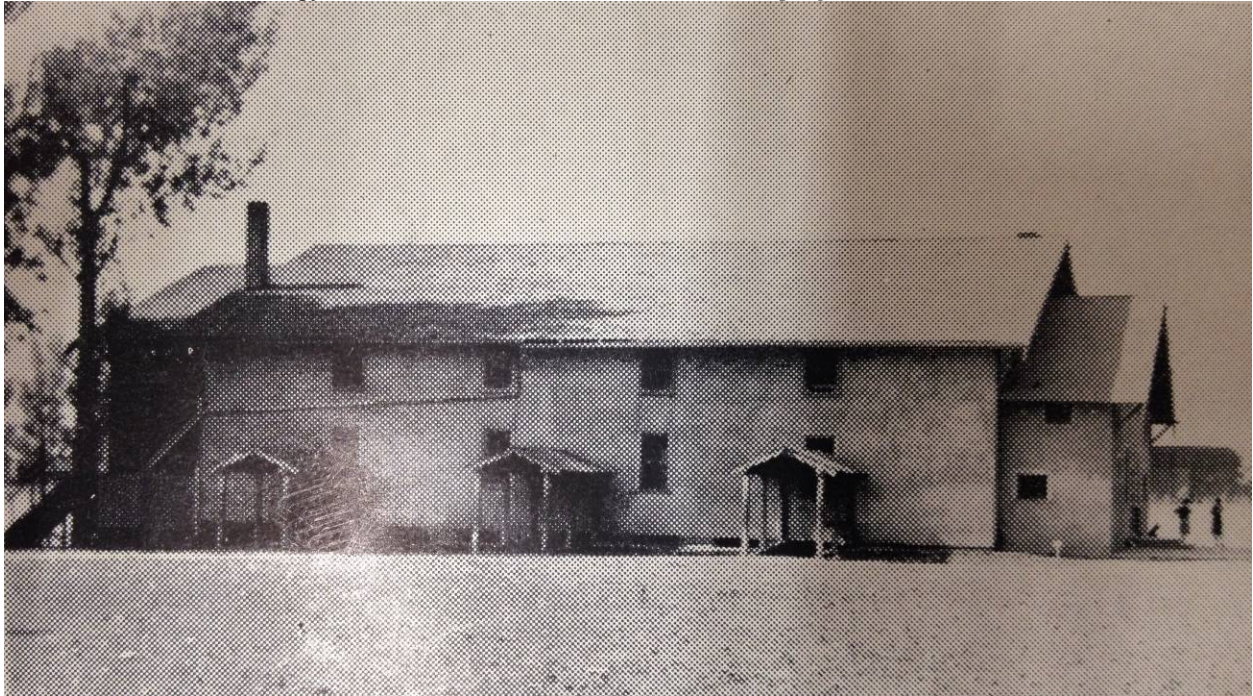
Historic Photo 1: Cortez High School under construction, view SE, 1909. Source: *Images of America: Cortez.*



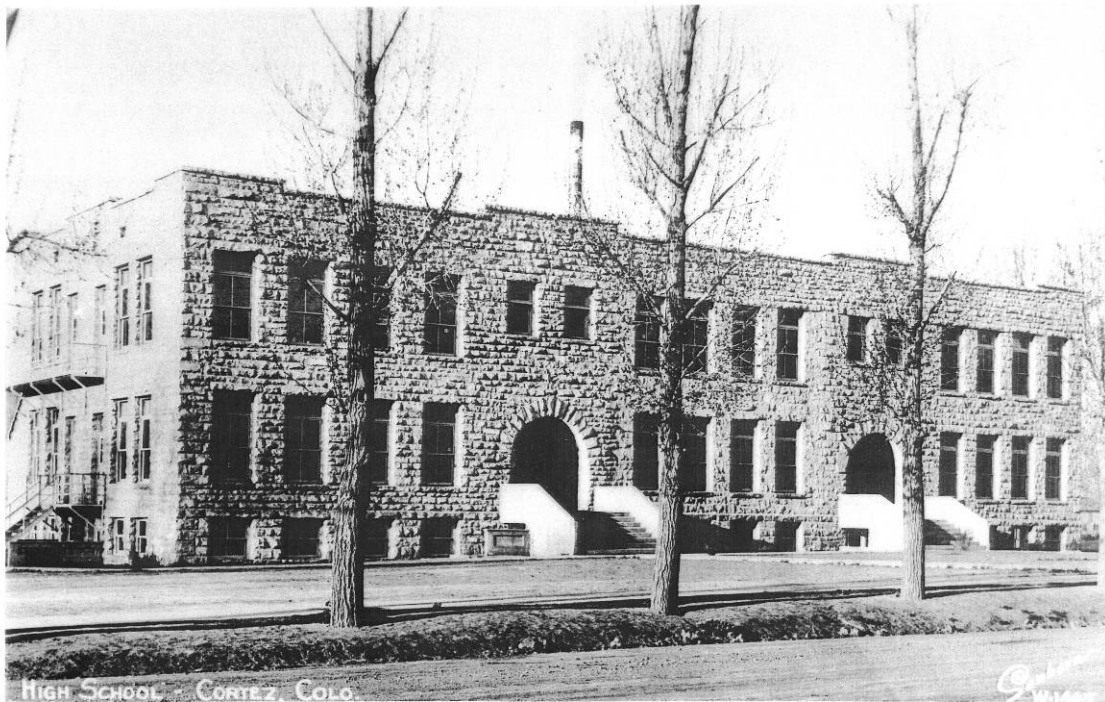
Historic Photo 2: Cortez High School, view SW, 1930. Source: *Sleeping Ute.*



Historic Photo 3: Historic gymnasium, 1940 (demolished). Source: *Sleeping Ute*.

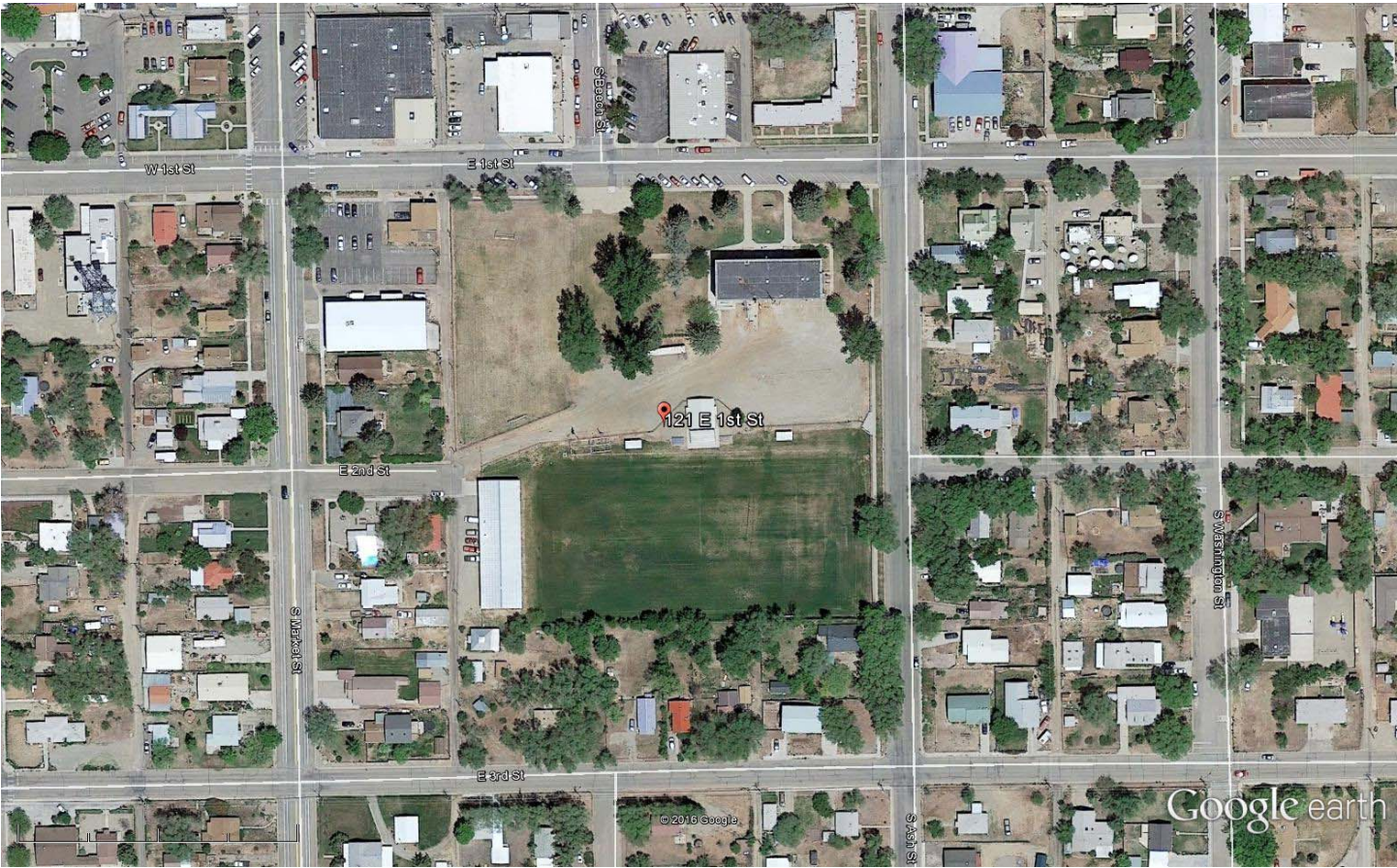


Historic Photo 4: Cortez High School, view SW, 1940. Source: Montezuma County Historical Society



Historic Photo 5: Norman Johnson Memorial Field, playground in location of present parking lot, and rear (south) building side of Cortez High School, view NE, 1941. Source: *Sleeping Ute*.





Google earth

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GOOD LUCK



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Cortez High School

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: COLORADO, Montezuma

DATE RECEIVED: 2/05/16 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 3/15/16
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 3/30/16 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 3/22/16
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 16000098

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 3-22-16 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in
The National Register
of
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.

**COLORADO CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT
NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATION
REVIEW REPORT FORM**

RECEIVED
DEC 27 2015
HCR

Property Name: Cortez High School

Address: 121 E. 1st Street, Cortez, CO 81321

Certified Local Government: City of Cortez

Date of public meeting at which nomination was reviewed: December 2, 2015

Eligibility Criteria: (Check applicable boxes)

- Criterion A
- Criterion B
- Criterion C
- Criterion D

Please check the boxes below appropriate to the nomination review:

Commission/Board

- The commission/board recommends that the nomination meets the criteria checked above.
- The commission/board recommends that the nomination fails to meet any of the above criteria.
- The commission/board chooses not to make a recommendation on the nomination. Attach an additional sheet explaining the lack of a recommendation.

Chief Elected Official

- The chief elected official recommends that the nomination meets the criteria checked above.
- The chief elected official recommends that the nomination fails to meet any of the above criteria.
- The chief elected official chooses not to make a recommendation on the nomination. Attach an additional sheet explaining the lack of a recommendation.

Attach an additional sheet to make any further comments.

Certify this report with both signatures below

CLG Commission/Board Chair or Representative

Print name: Linda A. Towle, Chairman, Cortez Historic Preservation Board

Signature: *Linda A. Towle* 12/16/15
(Date)

Chief Elected Official or Designee

Print name: Karen S. Sheek, Mayor, City of Cortez

Signature: *Karen S. Sheek* 12.16.15
(Date)

Comments on Cortez High School National Register Nomination:

The City of Cortez and the Historic Preservation Board are very pleased that this historic and significant building is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places. This is an important step forward in the buyer's plans to restore and develop the building using Federal Tax Credits.

The Historic Preservation Board members did have a few comments during our review of the nomination. Our primary concern is the name of the building being used in the nomination.

This building is not known locally as the "Cortez High School." Anyone seeing that name would be confused: Is this the new high school that was just built? Or the old one that is being demolished?

Locally, this building is known as the Calkins School or the Calkins Building. The nomination does explain that the name Cortez School and Cortez High School were used interchangeably in newspaper articles between 1909 and 1949. It was renamed the Calkins School in 1949, more than 50 years ago, in recognition of local resident, Dr. Royal Calkins.

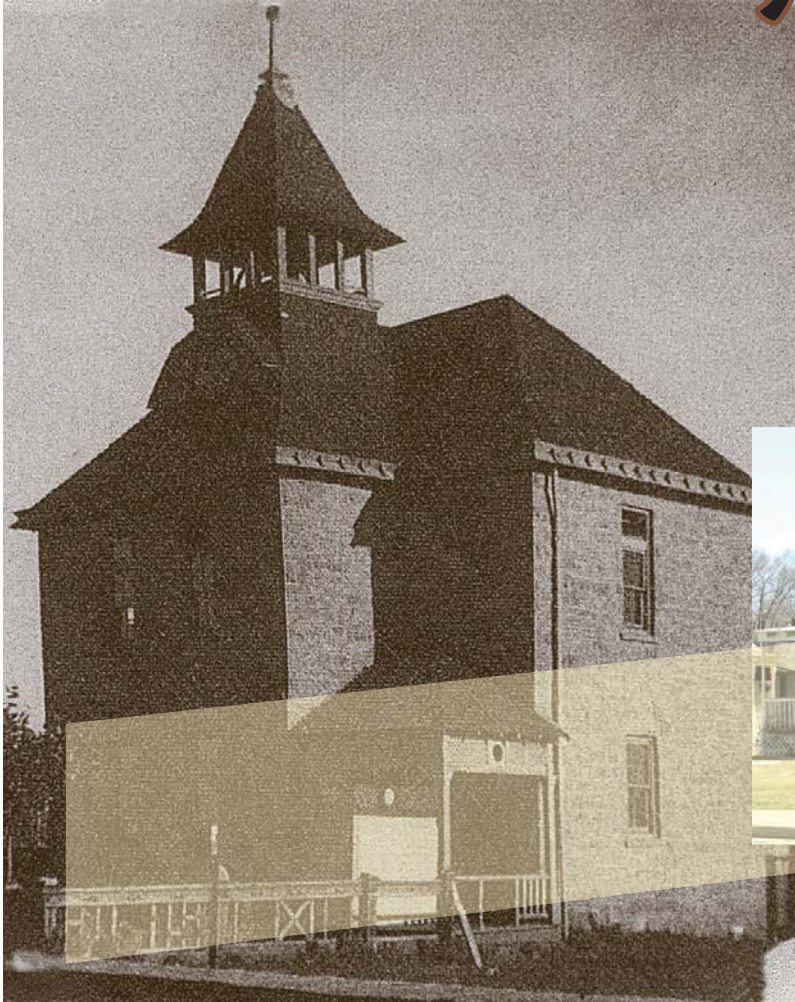
Therefore, the Board requests that the Name of the Property (Item 1) be changed to Calkins School, with other names listed as Cortez High School, Cortez School, and Calkins Building/5MT12697. This name includes the locally recognized name and also the building's primary function for more than 60 years.

We would also like to correct one error. The nomination mentions the earlier Cortez school, built on Montezuma Ave. in 1890. The nomination states that this building was demolished, but that is not correct. It was sold in 1923 to Robert J. Bryce, who removed the bell tower and second story, and remodeled it into a house. This house still stands at 23 E. Montezuma Ave. (see attached poster).

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this nomination. Please contact me at 970-565-3987 if you have any further questions.

Linda A. Towle
Chairman, Cortez Historic Preservation Board

Cortez HISTORIC PRESERVATION DAY May 19, 2012



Cortez Public School at 23 E. Montezuma Ave in 1890 at left. Below, residence with first floor of school building at same site today.



PHOTO COURTESY OF LINDA TOWLE

PHOTO COURTESY OF JUNE HEAD

FREE guided walking tours of Historic Montezuma Avenue

Tours meet at the Cortez Cultural Center at 10 am on the half hour until 1:30 pm

Reservations can be made at the Cortez Cultural Center at 25 N. Market St.

or by calling **970-565-1151**

For more information: www.cortezculturalcenter.org

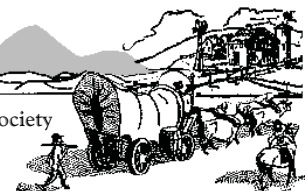


125



Montezuma County Historical Society

P.O. Box 218
Cortez, Colorado 81321





HISTORY *Colorado*

RECEIVED 2280

FEB - 5 2016

Nat. Register of Historic Places
National Park Service

February 1, 2016

Mr. J. Paul Loether
Deputy Keeper and Chief, NR and NHL Programs
National Register of Historic Places
1201 Eye Street, NW, 8th Floor (MS 2280)
Washington, D.C. 20005-5905

Dear Mr. Loether:

We are pleased to submit for your review the enclosed National Register of Historic Places nomination for the Cortez High School (5MT.12697) in Montezuma County, Colorado.

The Colorado Historic Preservation Review Board reviewed the nomination at its meeting on January 15, 2016. The board voted unanimously to recommend to the State Historic Preservation Officer that the property met the criteria for listing in the National Register.

The enclosed disk contains the true and correct copy of the nomination for the Cortez High School to the National Register of Historic Places.

We look forward to the formal listing of this property. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me by phone at 303-866-4683 or by email at erika.warzel@state.co.us.

Sincerely,

Erika Warzel
National and State Register Historian
(303) 866-4683
erika.warzel@state.co.us

Enclosures

CDs (2)
Signature Page

WWW.HISTORYCOLORADO.ORG

HISTORY COLORADO CENTER 1200 BROADWAY DENVER CO 80203