NPS Form 10-900

OMB No. 1024-0018

(Rev. 10-90)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name Pine Bluffs High School

other names/site number Pine Bluffs Junior/Senior High School

2. Location

street & number 7th and Elm Streets not for publication N/A
city or town Pine Bluffs vicinity N/A
state Wyoming code WY county Laramie code 021 zip code 82082

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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 ___ nationally ___ statewide X locally. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

John J Keck — 2/1/96
Signature of certifying official — Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register criteria. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

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:

__√__ entered in the National Register — Linda McClelland 3/21/96
___ See continuation sheet.
____ determined eligible for the National Register
___ See continuation sheet.
____ determined not eligible for the National Register
____ removed from the National Register
____ other (explain): _____

	Signature of Keeper	Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

___ private
_X_ public-local
___ public-State
___ public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

_X_ building(s)
___ district
___ site
___ structure
___ object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
1	_____	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)
Cat: Education Sub: Junior/Senior High School

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)
Cat: Education Sub: Senior High School

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)
Classical Revival

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete
roof Monolith concrete
walls Brick/Concrete

other Concrete and Glass dome

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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8. Statement of Significance

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

__X__ 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.

__X__ 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 a grave.

____ D a cemetery.

____ E a reconstructed building, object,or structure.

____ F a commemorative property.

____ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)
Education

Period of Significance 1929-1945

Significant Dates 1929 - 30

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

_____

Cultural Affiliation _____
_____
_____

Architect/Builder Architect: Eugene G. Groves
Contractor: C. H. Young & Sons
Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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
_X_ State Historic Preservation Office
___ Other State agency
___ Federal agency
___ Local government
___ University
___ Other
Name of repository: _____

See Continuation Sheets for continued bibliography

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	13	578370	4558725	3	__	_____	_____
2	__	_____	_____	4	__	_____	_____

___ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jeannie Hockersmith

organization Save Our School date August 30, 1995

street & number 1009 Road 162 telephone (307) 245-3554

city or town Pine Bluffs state WY zip code 82082

Additional Documentation

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs
Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

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Property Owner

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(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)
name Laramie County School District #2

street & number 311 East 8th Street telephone (307) 245-3738

city or town Pine Bluffs state WY zip code 82082

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7. Description

Exterior: Pine Bluffs High School is a fine example of progressive 1920s school architecture, with interior structural and finishing detailing that is unique. The style of the school in its symmetry, proportion, and decorative detail is of the classical tradition. The building is exemplary of 1920s masonry design and construction; the multi-colored brickwork and absence of cornicework is also typical of construction of the period. The large steel-glazed window panels were state-of-the-art technology in providing good natural lighting and ventilation for an optimum learning environment.

The domed gymnasium-auditorium is the distinctive element of the complex. The architect, Eugene Groves of Denver, was regionally prominent as an inventive designer of concrete structures. The dome is a fine exhibit of the structural engineer's ability to span great spaces with minimal material. The richness of the tension of the dome punctuated with overhead skylights is visually arresting.

In other ways the school is also special. The subtle barrel vaulting of the classrooms, achieved with a common Celotex material, lifts the spirit of the classroom, and, with the batten cover patterning of the joints, provides detail of a human dimension that is memorable.

The front section of the 1929 building is two stories, nominally flat-roofed with parapet surround, and symmetrical in form, plan, and decoration about a western axis. The rear section of the building is an oval-domed auditorium flanked on either side with balconies over single story classrooms. The stage-house of the auditorium terminates the building entry axis. The building is constructed low to the ground with two risers to the first floor from entry walks.

The exterior of the building is multicolored brick with cast-stone trim. The front-west facade is divided into three bays by slightly projecting the central bay, which includes the entry portal which is framed in cast-stone with lintel incised with the letters HIGH SCHOOL. The central bay is slightly higher than the side bays, and is now capped with wood shingles that replaced the original red tile. All facades are dominated by large window panels subdivided with steel mullions and muntins. Brickwork and stonework, in comparison with available original drawings, are unchanged from original construction.

The original north and south side elevations are identical. Exit doors within slightly projected bays mark the transition from the two-story classroom front to the single-story classrooms flanking the auditorium. The higher state loft at the east end of the auditorium completes the original composition. The rise of the auditorium is visible beyond and above the flanking classrooms.

The 1947 and 1949 single-story additions carry beyond and around the stage loft. The order and articulation of the original construction is lost in these additions. Though the brickwork is similar, stone trim is deleted. Windows are residential in scale and most have been replaced with contemporary units. Parapets are also deleted. A bay left open on the south side for coal deliveries back to the boiler room under the stage has been filled in recently, with outside wall framing covered with wood siding.

All roofs, including that of the auditorium, appear to have been covered with a urethane foam application for both insulation and weatherproofing purposes.

Plan: The entry axis which penetrates visually straight through to the stage is the organizing force of the original plan. A crossing hallway to side

stairs and side exits joins four classrooms and library on the second floor to the six classrooms and entry offices on the ground floor. The auditorium entry is just across the crossing hallway from the front door.

The two open stairs to south and north of the main entry rise to landings which extend to service mens and womens restrooms, and extend further to the balcony level of the auditorium. The balconies at their far ends are served by stairs dropping to stage level, then down to west exits. The 1947 and 1949 classrooms are reached through hallway extensions of the auditorium.

Structure: Foundations are concrete footings and stem walls. A concrete boxed pipe tunnel is formed around the perimeter and down the center axis of the original building. The first floor is otherwise slab on grade.

Masonry walls with steel lintels over openings carry the second floor structure and the roof. The second floor and the roof are steel bar-joist construction with concrete topping slabs.

The oval dome of the auditorium is an inventive combination of single curvature concrete vaulting supported by bar joists, all contained by concrete compression and tension rings. The high compression ring supports the radial sets of bar-joists. The base ring is arched over the stage proscenium. The bar-joists support a wire-and-cardboard formwork sheet for the concrete. The bar-joist, formwork, and concrete structure is common throughout, but is exposed to view only in the auditorium. Auditorium lighting is original and equally inventive, with lights regularly spaced around the high and mid rings.

Floors are concrete, either carpeted or painted. The auditorium floor is maple wood, a legacy of the earlier combined use of the space as a gymnasium. The stage is wood on wood structure above a lower concrete floor, the space between forming a below-stage storage area. Stairs are concrete and painted. Wall bases are painted concrete which wrap up against the masonry partitions and bearing walls of the 1929 construction.

Interior walls and partitions are probably masonry tile, fully plastered and painted. The original construction provided deep walls between classrooms to accommodate closets, bookshelves, and other storage.

Ceilings are most unusual in the original classrooms. Celotex panels, a material still marketed by the same name, are suspended below the bar-joist structure on wood furring strips to form a slight barrel vault, with a pattern of celotex battens covering the joints. Other ceilings of the 1929 construction are traditional plasterwork.

Much of the foregoing architectural description is derived from the original drawings with some field confirmation. The 1947 - 1949 construction is known only by surface observation. These additions appear to be more lightweight frame construction with exterior masonry bearing walls. Dropped ceilings conceal original ceiling surfaces.

Architect Eugene Groves (1882 - 1967) is regionally recognized for his "experimental and, in some cases, futuristic use of poured, cast, and reinforced concrete" in the construction of single-family residences, public, and commercial buildings. During the period 1922 - 1950, Groves designed eighteen of the buildings on the Colorado State University campus, including the Field House/College Avenue Gym and Ammons Hall. In the late 1930s, Groves was briefly affiliated with a concrete products promotional venture and received a patent for his "concrete lumber" construction system. A graduate of Harvard's architecture school, he practised in New York before relocating to Denver in 1914. He continued as a professional architect until his death in 1967.

8. Significance

Pine Bluffs High School, built in 1929, is eligible under Criteria A for its association with the development and rapid growth of the secondary educational system in the United States during the first two decades of the 20th century. It is also significant as a symbol of the high esteem in which education was held at a time when a high school degree was a stepping stone to a productive, prosperous life. A new school building, often centrally located and one of the largest structures in the town, engendered deep pride in large and small communities and became a symbol of the town.

Pine Bluffs High School is also eligible under Criteria C as the work of a master architect. The unique architectural design of the concrete and glass-domed gymnasium is a lasting legacy to Eugene G. Groves, a regionally prominent architect from Denver, Colorado. Groves (1882 - 1967), a native of Indiana, won a scholarhsip to study architecture at Harvard University and practised in New York before his health required him to relocate to Colorado in 1914. Groves became well known for his innovative work with poured, cast, and reinforced concrete which is so well demonstrated in the Pine Bluffs High School building. Groves designed many residential, public and commercial buildings, including 18 prominent structures on the Colorado State University Campus. Groves continued to practise architecture until his death in 1967.

The architectural style of the building, Classical Revival, became popular for educational buildings in the 1920's. The building features a prominent, slightly projecting entrance, a symmetrical facade, and is highlighted by such details as patterned brick, concrete simulated to resemble terra cotta, and brick dentils.

Pine Bluffs, named after the pine-covered bluffs that border the town, is located 20 miles north of the Colorado state line and one mile west of the Nebraska state line. The town was originally known as Rock Ranch until Union Pacific officials gave it a new name. Because it was the first stop in Wyoming for westbound trains and travelers, Pine Bluffs acquired the nickname "The Gateway City". Prior to the introduction of statelines, fences, and homesteaders, these grassy plains were home to the Plains Indians and the large herds of buffalo they hunted. A view from the bluffs afforded a perfect lookout point. An abundance of food and water made this a prime campsite for migrating tribes.

The earliest recorded accounts of Pine Bluffs were made by people in search of a wagon route to California and Oregon. Due to the abundance of good water, wood, and food along Lodgepole Creek, Pine Bluffs became a prime stop on the Overland Trail, laid out in 1850 by United States Army scout, Jim Bridger. It was recorded in an 1852 pamphlet, "Wagon Roads West", by W. T. Jackson as a possible route for emigrant travelers, who eventually used the route from 1855 to 1868, when the Union Pacific Railroad was completed (Bastian, 1987; Thompson, 1993).

The birth of the community of Pine Bluffs was closely associated with the Texas Trail cattle drives. It was an important watering place for the herds of longhorn cattle driven north to Montana from Texas. It became the largest cattle shipping center on the Union Pacific Railroad during the early 1880s (Thompson, 1967). A monument in Pine Bluffs marks the path of the old trail and bears the inscription "Old Texas Trail. Over this trail from distant Texas passed the NPS

greatest migration of men and cattle in the history of America. 1866 - 1897".

The Union Pacific Railroad played the most significant role in the settlement of the town of Pine Bluffs. The tracks crossed the Nebraska/Wyoming border on October 29, 1867 and the town flourished as a work and supply station, furnishing wood for ties from the pine trees covering the bluffs. The railroad continued to influence the growth and economic development of the town, providing transportation of cattle and a variety of farm produce, and also as a permanent residence for many Union Pacific employees.

In 1875, the first homestead in Laramie County, Wyoming, was granted to a local railroad employee, William Dolan, by President Ullyses S. Grant. Soon ranches sprang up all over the area as settlers discovered that grazing cattle on the open range could be profitable. On July 24, 1886, the town of Pine Bluffs was officially created by the Bay State Cattle Company and a dedication plat was filed (Thompson, 1967).

During this period, three years prior to statehood, people saw the need for educating their children and formed School District #3 in 1887, at the same time approving the construction of a $1,000 school house according to an account by Edna Dolan, the school's first teacher. Dolan wrote of a land boom that ensued as settlers moved into the area and laid claim to land under several legislative acts, including the Homestead Act of 1862. Pine Bluffs grew from a city of tents in 1867 to a bustling agricultural center by 1910.

A promotional pamphlet described the progressive spirit of Pine Bluffs, demonstrated by the fact that it was the best lighted city of its size in the United States (Bastian, 1987;Jewell, 1968). The old cattle town was now transformed into a prosperous farming and ranching community by the enterprising pioneers who established homes, churches, businesses, and schools. In 1910, a new brick school was built near the site of the present high school to accommodate the town's growing population, which numbered 300 people. One hundred and twenty rural schools were established in Laramie County during this period, six of those in the Pine Bluffs area by 1915.

Construction of the Lincoln Highway, the first transcontinental highway, began in 1915. The route paralleled the Union Pacific railroad tracks and passed through downtown Pine Bluffs. The automobile and truck traffic from the Lincoln Highway contributed to the economy of Pine Bluffs both directly and indirectly as people passing through town patronized local establishments and families connected with the trucking industry made Pine Bluffs their home, thus impacting the population of the community as well as the schools. U.S. Route 30 and eventually Interstate-80 replaced the Lincoln Highway but the town continued to derive revenue from those who traveled the busy east-west corridor.

Educational reform was a big issue in the United States in the first decades of the twentieth century. Propelled by Progressive Party thought, which emphasized institutional and individual reform in the pursuit of a more efficient society, a new, professional class of university-trained educators formulated a philosophy in which schools became the primary vehicle for the development of a well-rounded individual able to function in the complex modern world of the new century. The high school, heretofore a small component of the American education system, received special attention as enrollment increased dramatically across the country, from 200,000 in 1890 to nearly 2 million by 1920. The basic high school curriculum expanded to include vocational training, home economics,

physical education, civics, and science. Extracurricular activities such as athletic games, school clubs, and student government were also promoted in the belief they fostered cooperation and taught students to be successful team players in the larger social order beyond the school environment.

A revolution in school design accompanied the school reform movement. Architects created a new schoolhouse type: a large, urban-looking, centralized, efficient building that reflected the specialization of the modern curriculum and often included a gymnasium, library, auditorium, home economics room, and science lab. Constructed of brick, with concrete floors and wide banks of windows, the two or three story modern buildings were steam-heated, well-ventilated, and fireproof. Inherent in the design of the new school buildings was the belief a good building produced a better student.

This national trend was reflected in Pine Bluffs. Just seven years after its construction, the 1910 school had become overcrowded and a second, larger brick school was built. In 1918 the first senior class of five pupils graduated from Pine Bluffs High School. By 1925, the senior class had grown to include 18 members; a year later, there were 26 graduates.

The curriculum also expanded to include vocational training, social clubs, and athletic teams. This was one factor which influenced the community in its decision to build a modern high school which would include a gymnasium-auditorium, library, music room, athletic field, and even a little theater. A second factor was the rapidly growing community had outgrown its two schools by the late 1920s. A September 26, 1928, issue of the Pine Bluffs Post stressed the overcrowded conditions of classes being held in the 1917 building. It was so crowded that 3 elementary grades had classrooms in the downtown area, while graduations and other events were held in the Pastime Theater. A committee of citizens met that year with the school board to study resources and needs of the district, with the goal of passing a bond issue that would allow them to build a new junior-senior high school.

With passage of a bond issue, Eugene Groves, noted Denver architect, was hired to design a new school and the cornerstone was laid on July 30, 1929. The people of Pine Bluffs were especially proud of their new high school which was finished in 1930 for the opening of the school year. A September 4th edition of the Pine Bluffs Post described the architecture and uses for the building.

> " The new high school building is one of the most modern in Wyoming. It excels in workmanship, in arrangement of school departments, in quality of materials used, and in attractiveness of interior. The construction is entirely of fireproof materials. All floors are of concrete, supported by concrete bases and metal joists. Roofs are of monolith concrete. Door frames and moldings are of steel. A concrete dome roof covers the gymnasium-auditorium. This is supported by concrete beams encircling the ceiling. The proscenium arch, which weighs twenty-seven tons, is of solid concrete and steel".

Large banks of windows provided natural light to the spacious classrooms. Other features were a projection room, built-in bleachers for the gymnasium-auditorium, plus details such as hand painted flowers on the lights in the auditorium.

The town of Pine Bluffs continued to grow throughout the next two decades. New businesses increased the population. With the introduction of electricity to rural areas, the Rural Electric Association, based in Pine Bluffs, brought employment opportunities to the area. In 1937 the Pine Bluffs School system

experienced an increase in student enrollment with the closing of the country schools.

In 1947, Eugene Groves, the original architect, designed a cafeteria addition to the east end of the high school. Another room was added to the south side of the building in 1949 to provide more room for lockers. Additional improvements included a new football field east of the school building which replaced the old field, now converted to a parking lot.

Since that time changes have been made as needed. The science area was completely updated. The cafeteria was converted to a modern home economics classroom. Computer technology has been installed and asbestos removed in the 1980's. It has been well maintained for 66 years and still retains excellent integrity of design, workmanship, materials, feeling, association, setting, and location. Former and present custodians say this building is the most energy efficient and the easiest to maintain of all the buildings the school district operates, including the newer structures.

According to experts such as Historic Architect Gary Long, the school is without a doubt the most significant structure in the community. Both Long and other historic architects have noted that the concrete-glass dome construction of the auditorium-gymnasium is very special and a one-of-a-kind item. Although the building has received two additions on the rear, the original Pine Bluffs High School has retained excellent integrity of design, workmanship, materials, feeling, association, setting, and location.

Bibliography

Bastian, Jean. Laramie County History. Dallas, Texas: Curtis Media Corporation, 1987.

Jewell, Loretta. Homesteading the Prairie. Cheyenne, WY: The Little 'Ole Printshop, 1968.

Larson, T. A. History of Wyoming. Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1965.

Noel, Thomas J. and Barbara S. Nogren. Denver:The City Beautiful And Its Architects, 1893-1941. Denver, Colorado: Historic Denver, Inc. 1987.

Thompson, Martha. Pioneer Parade. Cheyenne, Wyoming: Logan Printing Company, 1967.
Pioneer Parade, Vol. II. Pine Bluffs, Wyoming: Deercreek Publishers, 1993.

"Historic Denver News", September, 1995.

Pine Bluffs High School Annuals (1918 - present)

"Enrollment Increased in Pine Bluffs Schools", Pine Bluffs Post, Sept. 15, 1927.

"School News", Pine Bluffs Post, Sept. 6, 1928.

"Pine Bluffs Needs High School Building", Pine Bluffs Post, October 18, 1928.

"School Notes", Pine Bluffs Post, Dec. 13, 1928.

"School District #7 Will Open Monday", Pine Bluffs Post, Sept. 4, 1930.

"Pine Bluffs...Feature School", Wyoming Education News, January 1950.

Original blueprints

Personal interview with Elizabeth Razor, grandaughter of William Dolan. August 17, 1995.

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Verbal Boundary Description:

The property is located at 7th and Elm Streets. The property is centered on Lot 20 and encompasses an area roughly defined by the parking lots that form the north and south boundaries; Elm Street which defines the western boundary; and an alley as the eastern boundary.

Boundary Justification:

The boundary is justified by the original lot on which the building is located and includes the attached 1947 addition, designed by the original architect, and the 1949 addition.

NPS Form 10-900-a
(8-86)

OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 96000228 Date Listed: 3/21/96

Property Name: Pine Bluffs High School

County: Laramie State: Wyoming

none
Multiple Name

This property 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 — March 21, 1996
Date of Action

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Amended Items in Nomination:

Section 8. Significance

"Architecture" is, hereby, added to the areas of significance to correspond to the significance of the property as a work of a master under criterion C.

Sheila Bricker-Wade, National Register coordinator, Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office was notified of this amendment on March 21, 1996.

DISTRIBUTION:
National Register property file
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)