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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Blind Department Building and Dow Hall, State School for the Blind
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 400 6th Avenue S.E. N/A not for publication
city, town Faribault N/A vicinity
state Minnesota code MN county Rice code 131 zip code 55104

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ objects
		<u>2</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

[Signature] Signature of certifying official 6/7/90 Date

State or Federal agency and bureau Minnesota Historical Society

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

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register. Both Boland 7/25/90
 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 the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Education/school

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Education/school

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Second Empire (Blind Dept. Bldg)

Classical Revival (Dow Hall)

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation limestone

walls brick

roof wood shingle, asphalt

other stone

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

See continuation sheet

g. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)
Education

Period of Significance
1874- 1939

Significant Dates
1874, 1883,
1895

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Significant Person
N/A

Architect/Builder

Waite & Kingsley, architects 1874
Monroe Shiere & Bros., arch. 1883

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

See continuation sheet

See continuation sheet

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Dow Hall and Blind Department Building

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Blind Department Building

The present configuration of the historic Blind Department Building consists of a 40' x 60' wood frame and red-pressed brick veneer structure on a low concrete foundation that is banked into the edge of the bluff. A wood shingled Mansard roof with boxed eaves and metal coping, ridges and gutters, completes the structure. Windows and door fenestration is vertically symmetrical on all facades and appears to be unchanged except for the removal of the transom above the central east facade door. All windows are wood double hung with two-over-two lights and are set into brick voussoirs and stone lintels. A single story shed roof frame addition spans the south elevation. The addition is finished with cedar panelling and asphalt roof shingles and has four shuttered windows. Double wood doors give access to the addition from the east elevation.

Historic photographs indicate that, when originally constructed, the Blind Department building was surrounded at the first floor level with a single story frame porch with fluted pillars and classical balustrades that engaged the east facade of the older attached Faribault residence. The porch was supported on brick columns. Stairways with matched classical balusters and classical newel posts led to the yard on all three elevations. These porches were reattached at the new site, but were removed sometime after 1940 as were the Empire style dormers in the Mansard roof.

Other alterations that are recorded in historic photographs include: the removal of two brick corbelled chimneys where the 1883 addition was built onto its south elevation, and the replacement of the decorative wood shingles on the Mansard roof prior to its move to the new site in 1914. The greatest visual alteration to the Blind Department Building, the removal of the ground level porch does not seriously compromise the material and stylistic integrity of the building.

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Truncated hip roofs, shingled in asphalt, span all three portions of the building and metal eyebrow dormers punctuate all but the inside slopes of the north and south wings. The space captured by the U configuration on the rear elevation is occupied by a basement level maintenance wing.

Alterations to Dow Hall, not described in the significance statement include the removal of exterior porches ca. 1940. Three porches were removed at that time; the porch on the east and north elevations of the north wing, the entry porch on the south side of the central bay where it intersects with the south wing, and the central entry porch on the front facade. Porch platforms were bricked-in and are still extant. The wooden classical entry of engaged Tuscan pillars and plain entablature was probably added at this time and frames a plate glass door with sidelights and transom (door pre-dates the 1914 renovation). Some time ca. 1940-45, the metal balustrade on the central roof was removed. Until at least 1936, the roof was finished with slate. It is now sheathed in asphalt shingles.

More recent changes to Dow Hall include the addition of a single story conference room built above the 1914 basement level refrigerator/freezer room on the rear (west) elevation of the north bay. It is sheathed in vertical wood panels and appears to date from ca. 1960. A brick enclosed entrance at the southeast corner of the intersection of the central and south wing also appears to date from ca. 1960. Three story brick stairwells were added to the north and south elevations ca. 1970 and enveloped the 1914 north elevation entrance. These alterations do not substantially change the final 1916 style and configuration of Dow Hall. The greatest visual change, the removal of the porches, is not irreversible.

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Dow Hall and the original Blind Department building stand on the northwestern edge of the historic State Academy for the Blind campus located on the eastern bluffs of the Straight River in Faribault. This campus is one of six historic campuses, three private and three public, that dominate the eastern bluffs of the city. Although the two buildings share this campus with other more modern facilities, their location is isolated on the edge of a campus that has steadily evolved southward since World War II. Dow Hall still visually dominates the site with its expansive lawn and circular drive.

Dow Hall

The present Dow Hall structure is a U-shaped configuration made up of a central rectangular five-bay brick mass flanked by two four-bay pavilions. The building is a simple symmetrical design, institutional in feeling, with minimal classical and Italianate detailing. This structure rests on a raised stone foundation. A central three-story projecting bay on the east facade contains the classically inspired main entrance at the first floor level, a pair of windows at the second level, and an entablature that reads "Dow Hall" at the third level. The bay is crowned by a gabled parapet with metal coping.

Window fenestration is regular and retains original pairs of double hung windows with a variety of lights, one-over-one, two-over-two and four-over-four. A contrasting smooth limestone band (part of an earlier Second Empire Design), emphasizes the continuity of the fenestration and provides decorative lintels to the first and second story windows.

Each bay of the first two stories is further defined by engaged brick pilasters spanned by brick corbelling at the third story line. The third story, a 1916 addition, is marked by a plain stone belt course and a metal modillioned cornice at the roofline. This level supports paired double hung wood windows with one-over-one lights.

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Dow Hall and Blind Department Building

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Dow Hall and the Blind Department building are significant as a component of a larger system of four state-funded schools for the mentally and physically handicapped established before 1885: the State School for the Deaf; the State School for the Blind; the State School for Dependent and Neglected Children; and the State School for the Feeble-Minded. All of these institutions, (three of which are located in Faribault), are, with the exception of the Blind School, represented on the National Register of Historic Places. Together, these institutions provided for the care and education of Minnesotans who could not benefit from traditional educational settings. This system of schools also represents turn-of-the-century ideas about the importance of education for all the state's citizens.

Within that context, Dow Hall (1883-1916) and the earlier (1874) Blind Department Building are significant as the embodiment of the State's earliest endeavors to educate its blind and vision-impaired. (This context spans both Minnesota Historical Society contexts: *Early Agriculture and River Settlement*, and *Agricultural Development and Railroad Construction*.) The history of the State Schools is also outlined in the 1986 Minnesota Historical Society publication, *The Public Buildings of the State of Minnesota: An Architectural Heritage*.) The original Blind Department Building is more specifically representative of Minnesota's initial efforts to not only recognize the need for special education facilities, but to tailor education to the specific needs of handicapped groups. The numerous physical changes to these structures are "natural" to the development of the institution and represent an extended period of educational achievement and growth in state-funded education for the blind that took place before the second World War.

Because of the common legislative and administrative history of the facilities for the Deaf and for the Blind, the early development of the School for the Blind parallels that of the Deaf School. The evolution of the system of state-funded education for the deaf and blind began with the State Legislature's 1858 Act that established the Deaf and Dumb Asylum in Faribault. (This also marks the beginning of the State

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system.) Not until 1863, however, were funds actually appropriated and a facility rented in Faribault.

The following year, the need to assist the blind was recognized when the facility was renamed the Minnesota Institute for the Deaf, Dumb, and Blind. Actual appropriations for the education of the blind were not procured until 1866 when Harriet N. Tucker, a Faribault teacher who had a blind nephew, encouraged Rodney A. Mott of the Deaf and Blind Commission to lobby for funding. Within the year, the Blind Department of the Minnesota Institute for the Deaf, Dumb, and Blind took up residence in the Fitzgerald house (not identified) in southeast Faribault under the tutelage of Harriet Tucker. In 1867, the Blind Department moved into the Tanner residence (not identified) on the north side of Faribault near the Gas Works on 9th Street. In 1868, a single facility for the blind and deaf was constructed on what was to become the permanent Deaf School campus.

Six years later, in 1874, educators and legislators alike realized that the different needs of the deaf and blind necessitated separate facilities for each group. Thus, they appropriated funds to buy the 97 acre estate of Alexander Faribault on the east side bluffs of the Straight River and build a 40 by 60 foot frame and brick veneer addition to the smaller Faribault house. The building was built by Faribault contractors Waite and Kingsley for a cost of \$14,000.00 and is the first building erected by the State of Minnesota expressly for the education of the blind. This site, about three-quarters of a mile south of the Deaf School campus, became the permanent home of the Blind Department.

The new facility offered a five year program (with two additional years upon recommendation) in reading, spelling, arithmetic, and music. Classes were held from 9 a.m. to 12 noon and from 2 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. with one additional hour of study in the evening. The school had an enrollment of 23 students and housed classrooms, faculty and students. By 1879, the first industries were added to the

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curriculum: broom and mattress-making. (This industry was taught in a separate building, no longer extant.)

In 1883-84, the central 86 by 45 foot central portion of the existing Dow Hall was built to accommodate the growing needs of the school. The visually rich Second Empire design was drawn by Monroe Shiere and Brothers of St. Paul and built by L. Ruggles and E. S. Palmer for a cost of \$28,500.00. It was connected to the 1874 structure on the south elevation. Built with solid brick interior partition walls, it reflected the improved safety standards of the time. The new facility housed kitchen and dining space in the basement, classrooms on the first floor, dormitories and music rooms on the third floor and dormitories in the fourth floor mansard level. By 1886, the school's curriculum had been expanded to include a three year high school course and enrollment had increased to 50 students.

The existing facility was again found inadequate by 1895. Under a special appropriation, a new wing was added to the south elevation of the Second Empire structure. Owing to the sharp competition among contractors at the time, the building was let to M. L. Emery for about \$8,000. The space was used for additional student and faculty residences, a play room, lavatories and a third floor gym and an orchestra room. The enlarged physical space of the school coincided with expanded curriculum, educational innovations and opportunities for its students and Minnesota's blind population. By 1900, the school offered a full 12 year curricula and had added the industries of piano tuning, sewing and fancywork. In 1904, a free-franking law enabled the school's Braille library to extend its services to the blind throughout the state. In 1907, under the guidance of Superintendent James J. Dow, (for whom the central building was named) the first summer school in the nation was begun for the vocational rehabilitation of men blinded later in life. The program was expanded to include women in 1913.

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The seventeenth biennial report (1910-12) outlined the need for further fireproofing that precipitated a final series of additions and renovations drawn by State Architect C.H. Johnston and Engineer Charles Pillsbury and resulted in the present-day configuration of Dow Hall and the relocation of the original Blind Department building. (By 1908, the old frame Alexander Faribault house had been moved to a new location in back of Dow Hall where it was refitted as a laundry. It is no longer extant). In 1914, a fire-proof north wing addition necessitated the removal of the old frame and brick veneer Blind Department headquarters to a location just south of Dow Hall, where it now stands. It also included the removal of the ornate "plumbing tower" on the west side elevation of Dow Hall. The new north wing afforded more spacious living space to the school's female students, and provided sick rooms and basement dining/kitchen facilities. A 20 foot west end addition to the 1895 south wing expanded the school's library and music rooms. To complete the fire-proofing process, in 1916 the frame and slate Mansard roof was removed and replaced with a brick third floor and frame and slate hip roof.

The period between the final expansion of Dow Hall and the end of World War II (1916-1945) was marked by more important changes in the focus, method, and curricula of the school. Enrollment during this time increased from about 90 to 135 students. In 1917, the school changed from the New York Point system to the more widely used European Braille system. During the 1920s, an increased awareness of public health issues identified a larger number of Minnesotans with vision problems. Larger population areas began to set up facilities for the blind while the State School began to serve more students from rural areas where special programs were not available.

In 1925, the school made the important distinction between blind and vision-impaired and began to use Clear Type (enlarged print) in its new Sight Conservation Department. It was one of the first State institutions in the country to do so. Accompanying the new department for Sight-Conservation, experiments were

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made with lighting. In 1935, a 20,000 watt totally indirect lighting system was installed, increasing the available light for the vision-impaired by two to four thousand percent. This enabled the wider use of Clear Type. In 1940, in cooperation with the Westinghouse Corporation, the school installed the innovative mercury vapor lighting. In 1933, the Braille library in Dow Hall was designated the Library of Congress distributing center for Minnesota and the Dakotas. In 1935, the Talking Books department was added. In 1941 came two more changes: the school was renamed the Minnesota Braille and Sight Saving School and became the first in the nation to offer courses in peripatology (physical orientation and cane travel).

The Blind Department Building and Dow Hall are the two oldest standing structures on the original Blind School campus. They represent the earliest period of establishment of state funded education for the Blind. The alterations to these buildings tell the story of a later period of growth and the efforts of the State to adapt existing facilities to the growing needs of the School.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation Sheet

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

Fort Snelling History Center
Saint Paul, Minnesota

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Less than an acre

UTM References

A

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

C

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B

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Zone Easting Northing

D

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See continuation sheet

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the entire lot that has historically been associated with the property.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Thomas R. Zahn and Jacqueline Sluss date July 31, 1989
organization Thomas R. Zahn and Associates, Inc. telephone (612) 221-9765
street & number 420 Summit Avenue state Minnesota zip code 55102
city or town St. Paul, Minnesota

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An irregular shaped parcel of land within the SW1/4 of section 32, T110N, R20W including the following description: Beginning at a point 40 feet east of the northeast corner of Dow Hall, thence at right angles with said line, south 190 feet, thence at right angles with this eastern line, west 120 feet, thence at right angles with said south line, south 115 feet, thence at right angles with said east line, west 55 feet, thence at right angles with said south line, north 115, thence at right angles with said west line, 55 feet east, thence at right angles with said said north line, north 205 feet, thence at right angles with said west line, east 120 feet, thence at right angles with said north line, south 15 feet to point of beginning.