

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received MAY 28 1986

date entered JUN 26 1986

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

1. Name

historic Fergus Falls State Hospital Complex

and/or common Fergus Falls State Hospital

2. Location

street & number Minnesota Highway 297 N/A not for publication

city, town Fergus Falls N/A vicinity of

state Minnesota code 22 county Otter Tail code 111

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Hospital

4. Owner of Property

(See also Continuation Sheet Item 4 page 1)

name Minnesota Dept. of Human Services - Leonard Levine, Commissioner

street & number 4th Floor, Centennial Office Building

city, town St. Paul N/A vicinity of state Minnesota 55155

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Otter Tail County Courthouse

street & number South Court Street and West Junius Avenue

city, town Fergus Falls state Minnesota 56537

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title State-owned Building Survey has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1977-1978  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office, Minnesota Historical Society, Fort Snelling History Center

city, town St. Paul state Minnesota

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	N/A
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Situated on a hill overlooking to the south the City of Fergus Falls, the nineteenth century main building complex dominates the campus of Fergus Falls State Hospital. Built from 1888 through 1907 after the widely-used "linear" or "Kirkbride" plan, the three-story (with finished dormered attics and raised basements) brick complex extends in a U-shaped plan configuration for approximately 1,600 feet. It is comprised of a central administration building, featuring an eight-story tower, flanked by interconnected buildings which house the patients. These east and west dormitory wings are mirror image. Service buildings, such as the kitchen and powerhouse, are located on center to the rear. All of the buildings were designed by Minneapolis architect Warren B. Dunnell in a style combining Chateausque, Beaux Arts classical and Romanesque Revival elements and are of fire-resistant construction: exterior walls are load-bearing masonry; floors are "fireproof construction" (shallow clay tile arches spanning between I-beams) supported on cast-iron columns; and roof decks are concrete. Wholesale replacement of the original roofing slates with composition shingling is in progress and is nearly complete.

The three-story Administration Building (Building No. 1) dates from 1897 and serves as the focal point of the complex. It features cream-colored brick (manufactured in Pelican Rapids, Minnesota) and sandstone trim; single and paired windows with flat, segmental and round-arched heads within hood mouldings and Gibbs surrounds; a dentil cornice and hipped roof with fully pedimented gables at southwest and northeast pavilions; and at the principal, or southeast, facade, a centered, eight-story, square Romanesque tower flanked by four-story, octagonal corner towers. The upper floors of the central tower (completed in 1907) have slit windows within arched lesenes and a corbel cornice capped by a steeply-pitched, sprocketed pyramidal roof. Pendant cornices, mock balustrades and octagonal pyramids cap the corner towers. All three towers retain their original roofing: Spanish clay tile at the center and roofing slates at the corners. In 1964, an intrusive, two-story, flat-roofed modern brick Administration Wing (Building No. 2, NON-CONTRIBUTING) was added to the northeast. At the same time, the large round-arched entry at the base of the central tower was closed and its port-cochere demolished, and the first floor interior was remodeled extensively. The unoccupied upper floor levels, however, remain intact, including an ornate cast-iron stair extending from the first to the fourth (attic) floor level. The second floor level had served as the hospital superintendent's residence. The third and fourth housed additional lodging for staff and guests. A cast-iron spiral stair provides access to the tower's unfinished upper reaches.

The symmetrical, three-story east and west wings step back from and are connected to the Administration Building at each level by flat-roofed, quarter-circular links whose parapet balustrades have been removed. Three major building blocks comprise each wing: to the east are East Center Wing (Building No. 22) and Northeast Wing (Building No. 24), which date from 1897, and East Detached (Building No. 23) which was completed in 1899 and terminates the wing; to the west are West Center Wing (Building No. 26) and Southwest Wing (Building No. 28), which date from 1893, and,

(continued on Continuation Sheet 1)

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Fergus Falls State Hospital Complex, Fergus Falls, Otter Tail

County, Minnesota

Continuation sheet

Owner of Property

Item number 4

Page 1

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Ms. Elaine Timmer  
Chief Executive Officer  
Fergus Falls State Hospital  
Fergus Falls, Minnesota 56537

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

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

FERGUS FALLS STATE HOSPITAL COMPLEX

Continuation sheet

1

Item number

7

Page

1

at the end, West Detached\* the initial building of the complex begun in 1888 and completed in 1890. Unlike other buildings in the complex, the interior of West Detached employs "mill construction." Three-story (originally two-), flat-roofed, quarter-circular corridors link the "detached" buildings to adjacent blocks. The buildings comprising the wings feature semi-circular and square pavilions; three-story barred verandas; single and paired windows with flat and round-arched heads; string courses within two-story, corbel-capped brick panels; and dormered hipped roofs. Except at the Romanesque crossing towers over East and West Detached, all of the exterior cream-colored brick (also from Pelican Rapids) has been painted white. Typically, glass block has replaced wood hung windows. The interior of each building is arranged along a central corridor with sleeping rooms (both single and congregate), day rooms and dining rooms placed on either side. Except at East Detached, all interiors have been extensively remodeled. \*(Building No. 27)

Rear service buildings include the Kitchen Building (Building No. 25), which was constructed in 1894 adjoining the Administration Building, and the freestanding 1890-1894 Powerhouse, Carpenter Shop and Laundry (Building No. 32). Both are constructed of brick on irregular plans with full basements. The two-story hip-roofed Kitchen Building was remodeled extensively in 1962. At the same time, an intrusive, one-story, flat-roofed, modern brick Auditorium (Building No. 3, NON-CONTRIBUTING) was added to the southwest. The one-story Powerhouse, Carpentry Shop and Laundry features corbelled gable-end parapets; gable, hip and pyramidal roofs; and a prominent chimney. In 1962, a New Powerhouse (Building No. 30, NON-CONTRIBUTING) was erected in steel-frame to the northwest.

An additional freestanding service building, the two-story hip-roofed Industrial Building (Building No. 19), was built in 1904 immediately south of the Powerhouse and west of the Kitchen to the design of State Architect Clarence H. Johnston, Sr. He also served as architect for a sympathetic extension of West Detached which was added in the same year.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1888-1907

**Builder/Architect**

Warren B. Dunnell, Architect

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

Horace W. S. Cleveland, Landscape Architect

O. R. Mather, Contractor

John Lauritzen, Contractor

The nineteenth century main building complex at Fergus Falls State Hospital is architecturally significant as the only remaining, essentially intact example of "Kirkbride-inspired" architecture in the State of Minnesota. Constructed from 1888 through 1907 according to plans prepared by Minneapolis architect Warren B. Dunnell, the complex embodied the hospital design theories of Dr. Thomas Kirkbride, pioneering superintendent of the Pennsylvania State Hospital for the Insane in Philadelphia from 1840 until the 1880s. The widely-followed "linear" plan espoused in Kirkbride's On the Construction, Organization and General Arrangements of Hospitals for the Insane (1854, expanded edition 1880) calls for, in part, an architecturally predominant central administration area and superintendent's residence flanked by extended patient dormitory wings, arranged in setbacks to allow maximum light and ventilation. Each of Minnesota's first three state hospitals - St. Peter, Rochester and Fergus Falls - followed Kirkbride's formula; however, the Fergus Falls facility is the sole intact survivor. Nothing remains of the original Kirkbride-based plan at Rochester and only St. Peter's central section (Center Building, 1867-1878) survives.

Authorized by the Minnesota Legislature in 1885, Fergus Falls State Hospital was intended to alleviate overcrowding at the earlier two southern institutions, as well as to provide a convenient location for the state's population north of the Twin Cities. The Board of Trustees selected Warren B. Dunnell, an architect with considerable public building experience, as designer for the thousand-patient complex. Dunnell had worked for the Supervising Architect's office in Washington, D.C., and after establishing a private practice in Minneapolis in 1881, received major commissions for numerous public projects throughout the state, including the 1887 Owatonna State School Administration Building in Owatonna and the 1889 Minnesota Training School for Boys in Red Wing. For the Fergus Falls complex, the nationally renowned landscape architect Horace W. S. Cleveland prepared plans for the grounds. The specific nature of his executed designs, however, is unknown, and as a result of a severe drought in the 1930s, all of the original plantings were destroyed.

In 1888, contractor O. R. Mather commenced work on the 1,600-foot-long complex, beginning with the westernmost ward, "West Detached." It was completed in 1890, and in July of that year received the hospital's first 83 patients, including a contingent of 80 men transferred from St. Peter State Hospital. Subsequent construction proceeded from west to east throughout the decade of the 1890s under the direction of John Lauritzen, Mather's previous foreman. Upon completion of "East Detached" in 1899 (and when funds were made available, the upper floors of the Administration Building's central tower eight years later), Dunnell's monumental, comprehensive plan was fully realized. This main building complex at Fergus Falls State Hospital survives in toto with remarkably few major alterations. It is Minnesota's only extant "Kirkbride" plan.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet 2

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property Approximately 11

Quadrangle name Fergus Falls

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UTM References

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

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

C	1 4	7 2 4 8 0 0	5 1 3 1 1 2 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing

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

E			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

F			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

G			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

H			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

### Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation Sheet 3 and Location Map

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	N/A	code	N/A	county	N/A	code	N/A
-------	-----	------	-----	--------	-----	------	-----

state	N/A	code	N/A	county	N/A	code	N/A
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# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Stuart MacDonald, Partner

organization MacDonald and Mack Partnership

date 30 September 1985

street & number 305 Grain Exchange Building

telephone (612) 341-4051

city or town Minneapolis

state Minnesota 55415

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

*Russell W. Fridley*

title Russell W. Fridley  
State Historic Preservation Officer

date 5/19/86

### For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

*J. Alvares Byers*  
Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the  
National Register

date 6-26-86

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
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Fergus Falls State Hospital Complex, Fergus Falls, Otter Tail

County, Minnesota

Continuation sheet

Resource Count

Item number

8

Page 1

For NPS use only

received

date entered

The Fergus Falls State Hospital Complex Nomination contains

10 contributing buildings:

Adminstration Building	(No. 1)
East Center Wing	(No. 22)
Northeast Wing	(No. 24)
East Detached	(No. 23)
West Center Wing	(No. 26)
Southwest Wing	(No. 28)
West Detached	(No. 27)
Kitchen Building	(No. 25)
Power House, Carpentry	
Shop & Laundry	(No. 32)
Industrial Building	(No. 19)

The Fergus Falls State Hospital Complex Nomination contains

3 non-contributing buildings:

Administration Wing	(No. 2)
Auditorium	(No. 3)
Powerhouse (1962)	(No. 30)

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National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

FERGUS FALLS STATE HOSPITAL COMPLEX

Continuation sheet 2

Item number 9

Page 1

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Hurd, Henry M., and others. The Institutional Care of the Insane in the United States and Canada. Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins Press, 1916.

Johnson, Emery Jr. "A Short History of the Fergus Falls State Hospital." Fergus Falls, Minnesota: Fergus Falls State Hospital Print Shop, June 1972.

Murphy, Patricia. The Public Buildings of the State of Minnesota: An Architectural Heritage. St. Paul, Minnesota: State Historic Preservation Office of the Minnesota Historical Society, July 1985.

"The Hospital." Fergus Falls Journal, November 1895.

"The Kirkbride Plan." Hospital and Community Psychiatry, XXVII (7 July 1976), 473-477.



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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

FERGUS FALLS STATE HOSPITAL COMPLEX

Continuation sheet 3

Item number 10

Page 1

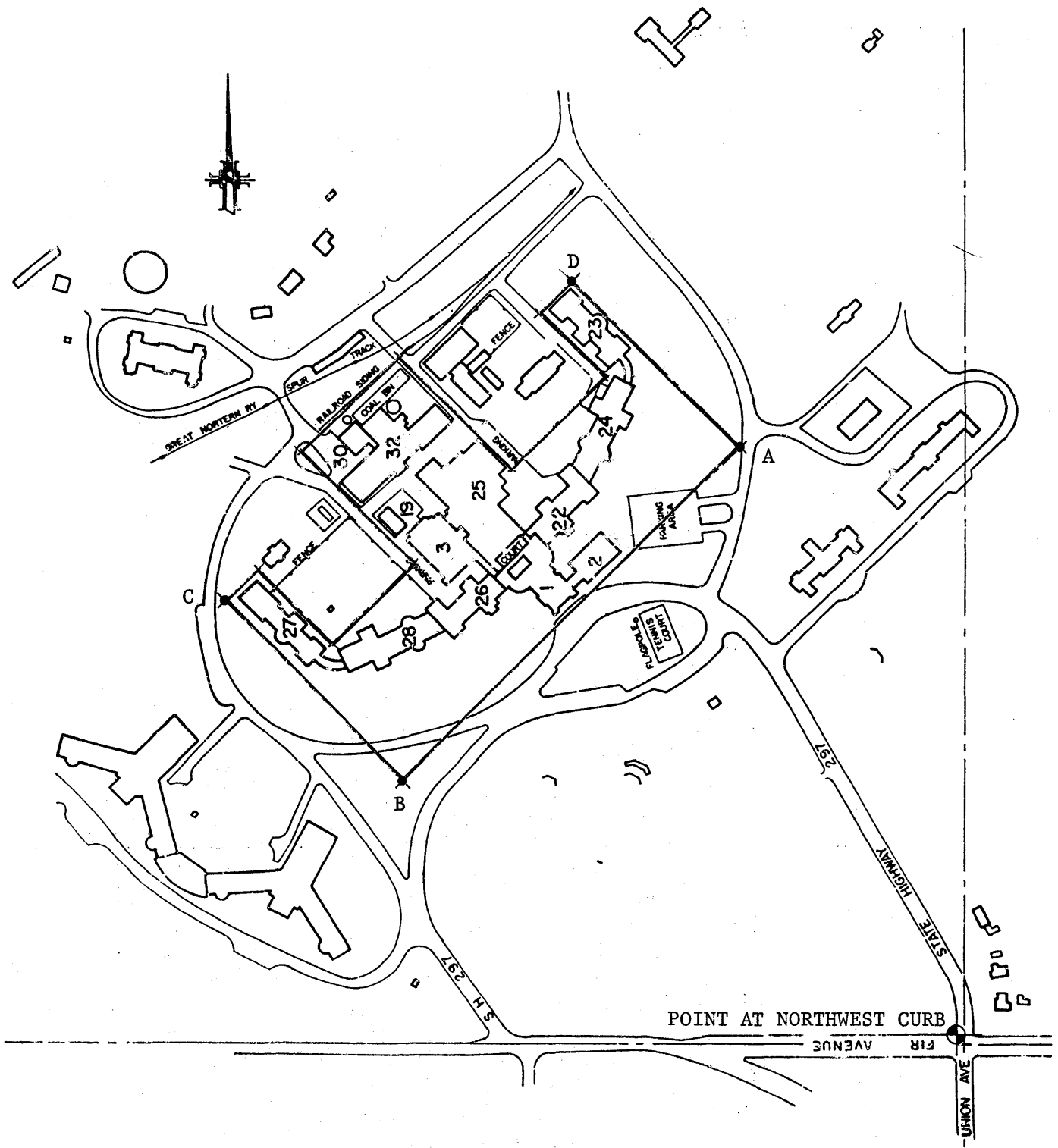
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GEOGRAPHICAL DATA  
BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at a point 1,290 feet north and 470 feet west of the northwest curb at the intersection of Union Street North and Fir Avenue West, proceed 1,040 feet southwest; then 550 feet northwest; then 100 feet northeast; then 230 feet southeast; then 250 feet northeast; then 350 feet northwest; then 300 feet northeast; then 350 feet southeast; then 290 feet northeast; then 190 feet northwest; then 100 feet northeast; and then proceed 510 feet southeast to the point of origin.



LOCATION MAP

FERGUS FALLS STATE HOSPITAL COMPLEX  
 FERGUS FALLS, MINNESOTA