

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name: Corlett School

other names/site number: Corlett Elementary School; West End School/48LA1418/48LA745

2. Location

street & number: 600 West 22nd Street

city or town: Cheyenne

state: Wyoming

code: 56

county: Laramie

code: 021

not for publication: N/A

vicinity: N/A

zip code: 82001

3. 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant ___ nationally ___ statewide locally. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Claudia Nisif _____ 5/1/05
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

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Education Sub: school

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Education Sub: school

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Modern Movement

Sub: Art Moderne

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: concrete

roof : tar and gravel

walls: brick

other: terra cotta

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

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 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)

Cat. Education

Cat. Architecture

Period of Significance: 1940-1954

Significant Dates: 1940 (building date)

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above): N/A

Architect/Builder: William Dubois, architect/George McCann, builder

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

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: City of Cheyenne Planning Office, Cheyenne, WY.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property: ca. 2.0 acres

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u>13</u>	<u>514802</u>	<u>4553736</u>

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

All of Block 208, Original City of Cheyenne

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

The boundary is the lots which the property occupies in Block 208, Original City of Cheyenne, and includes the main structure, a modern outbuilding, landscaping, playing fields/playgrounds, and any parking areas.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Robert G. Rosenberg, Historian
organization: Rosenberg Historical Consultants date: 8/31/2004; revised 12/31/2004
street & number: 739 Crow Creek Road telephone: (307)-632-1144
city or town: Cheyenne state: WY zip code: 82009

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name: Laramie County School District No. 1
street & number: 2801 House Avenue
city or town: Cheyenne
state: WY zip code: 82001
telephone: (307)771-2100

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CORLETT SCHOOL
LARAMIE COUNTY, WYOMING

7. Description

Corlett Elementary School (formerly West End School) is located at 600 West 22nd Street in a residential area in the western portion of the City of Cheyenne, Wyoming. It is a one-story, flat-roofed tan brick school that occupies the entire block. The facade or south side fronts on West 22nd Street with a secondary entrance on the west side fronting on Bent Avenue. A detached one-story gable-roofed metal building constructed in 1987 is located north of the original building. The remainder of the block consists of open space and playground facilities. The building was constructed in 1940 as an elementary school and continues to perform that function, housing grades K-3, while its sister school, Churchill Elementary, houses 4-6.

The structure has an ell-shaped configuration (E-W component, 200' x 58'; N-S component, 180' x 58') paralleling West 22nd Street and Bent Avenue and rests on a poured concrete foundation with a basement. The elements of the Art Moderne style reflected in the building are terra cotta details, soft or rounded corners, fluted entrances, and terra cotta parapet, and horizontal courses extending above and below the windows. The front play yard is enclosed by a brick parapet wall that features rounded corners. The main entrance and facade face south on West 22nd Street, and the name of the school in metal letters is set above the entrance. The extended entrance has a concrete stoop with steel railings and multi-light twin-leaf metal doors with narrow sidelights set in the brick columns. Most of the elements of the main entrance are repeated in a secondary east entrance that accesses the playground. A secondary fluted entrance with twin-leaf doors is located in the north end of the building, and a less ornate entrance is found in the west side. The windows in the school generally consist of a series of triple, metal sashed units which have been replaced, and the transoms have been filled with panels. A recent detached one-story, gable-roofed metal building (1987) that serves as a gymnasium has been added off the north end of the main building along West 23rd Street. It does not share any elements of the original building and detracts from it.

Inside the main entrance on the south side, there are flanking staircases leading down to the finished basement. The ell-shaped main hallway is covered with dark beige tile walls and has classrooms on both sides. The ceilings appear to be early or original and consist of acoustic tile with original or old fluorescent light fixtures. The hallways also contain twin porcelain water fountains located in shallow rectangular-shaped alcoves. The largest room on the first floor (Room 117 in floor plan) once contained the cafeteria/auditorium, but it has been turned into a library. It retains the hardwood-floored stage at the east end. The basement contains numerous classrooms as well as a former auditorium that also contained a stage but has been partitioned off.

The main building retains good physical integrity with the principal exterior changes being window replacement. The detached metal building, which houses the gym and cafeteria, was constructed in 1987 and

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is considered a minor noncontributing element. In general, the main building retains good integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. Since it occupies the entire block, it also has good integrity of setting except for the addition of the metal building.

Outside the main entrance is a tribute to the original West End (Corlett) School, which was built in 1884 and razed when then current school was constructed in 1940. The original bell was saved, and in 2001 was cleaned and installed on a new foundation with a historical plaque.

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8. Significance

Corlett Elementary School, built in 1940, is eligible to the National Register of Historic Places Under Criteria A and C. It is eligible under Criterion A, because it represents the primary importance the Cheyenne community attached to the education of its youth from its inception as a railroad town in 1867. Education was one of the first critical issues dealt with by Cheyenne's first citizens and by the first Wyoming territorial legislature. The formation of school districts and the building of schools reflected how Cheyenne's citizens felt about the permanency of their community and their faith in its future. The Corlett School is a substantial brick masonry structure built with community pride and permanency in mind, and which incorporates the standard designs advocated by the early twentieth century educational reformers. This school is also used for public assemblies and civic celebrations, a place for the community to come together. The building is also eligible under Criterion C in the area of architecture as the only historic school in Cheyenne that reflects strong elements of the Art (Streamline) Moderne style and retains good physical integrity. It also represents the work of a master architect, William R. Dubois, who was responsible for many of the important public and commercial buildings constructed in Cheyenne during the early twentieth century.

Historic Background

Public education was a primary concern of Cheyenne's citizens from its beginnings in 1867-68 as a "track town" along the first transcontinental railroad, the Union Pacific. The Territory of Wyoming was created in 1868, and Cheyenne was designated the temporary territorial capital. Cheyenne had the largest population of any city in the territory, and once designated as the seat of government, this position was vehemently defended by its residents. From about 1875 to 1887, Cheyenne enjoyed a boom period based largely on cattle ranching. Spectacular profits were made during the 1880s, and by 1884, the population of Cheyenne had soared to 7,000. It had evolved from a rough-hewn railroad town to a modern city. Cheyenne became the state capital when Wyoming won statehood in 1890.

As early as October 1867, the local paper encouraged the development of a school for the 120 to 125 school-age children residing in Cheyenne. The City Council appointed a committee to arrange for a school building, and the first public school in Wyoming was constructed in late 1867. School District No. 1 was organized in November 1868, and covered an area of 270 square miles and included six rural schools. By 1874, the Cheyenne school had an enrollment of 131. Teachers were paid about \$50 per month, and school terms lasted four to five months a year.

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The post-World War I years saw the construction of some of Cheyenne's finest remaining schools. Architect William Dubois designed several schools at this time, including the new Cheyenne High School and Gibson Clark School in about 1921, and Frederick Hutchinson Porter designed the Park Addition School, also in 1921. Dubois designed the Johnson Public School on the South Side in 1923 and, in collaboration with Porter, the elegant Lulu McCormick Junior High School in 1929.

Cheyenne, like the rest of America, sank into the Great Depression in the late 1920s. A series of droughts in the 1930s affected the livestock industry and resulted in crop failures. The oil and coal industries also suffered, and the Union Pacific laid off workers. Many of Cheyenne's banks also failed. Only two schools were constructed during this era, the Mabel Fincher School, designed by F.H. Porter, and the Corlett School, designed by William Dubois, both built in 1940.

The Corlett School was built in the same block as the site of the West End School constructed in 1884. Originally, a 1.63-acre parcel was purchased by the city from Mary J. Madison at a cost of \$650.00. The 1886 Sanborn Fire Insurance map depicts a two-story brick building occupying the northeast quarter of the block. By 1894, the Sanborn map designates this building as Corlett School. It was named after William Wellington Corlett, a prominent Cheyenne attorney, postmaster and delegate to Congress. He also served as a Board of Trustees member in the early days of Cheyenne. Eventually the entire block was acquired by the city. Between 1907 and 1912, a two-story brick addition on the west side doubled the size of the school.

In 1940, the current school building was constructed and completed in time for the start of the new school year on September third. The new 21,070 square-foot school building was designed by prominent Cheyenne architect William Dubois and constructed by George McCann at a cost of \$221,139.00. The original portion of the 1940 building component consisted of six regular classrooms and a kindergarten room on the first floor, and the basement consisted of an auditorium, lunchroom, and three temporary classrooms. The old Corlett School was razed in September 1940 shortly after the new school had been completed.

Former Corlett student, teacher, and state senator Harriet Elizabeth Byrd recalled that the neighborhood in which the school was located was ethnically diverse and included African Americans, Native Americans, Italian Americans, Polish Americans, Greek Americans, and Mexican Americans. She stated that "There were so many minorities and immigrants that you never noticed racism; we respected each other; we were a neighborhood that worked together. We had different (backgrounds and) religions, but the same school and playground."

World War II and the resulting war buildup rescued the American economy from the Great Depression. Fort D.A. Russell (renamed Fort Francis E. Warren) was chosen as the location of a Quartermaster

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Replacement Center, which had a tremendous positive impact on Cheyenne's economy. Although school construction was suspended during the war years, building resumed in the mid-1940s.

As Corellett's school population grew, a north addition was built in 1948 at a cost of \$119,203.00. It was designed by Sam Hutchings and constructed by Ryer Realty. The addition followed the same design, scale and materials of the original building component, and consisted of six additional classrooms and auxiliary rooms. A detached one-story, gable-roofed steel building was added to the property in 1987, which is considered to be a noncontributing element.

The architect, William R. Dubois, was born in Chicago, Illinois, in 1879. He studied at the Chicago School of Architecture in the late 1800s and received his architectural training at a firm in Albuquerque, New Mexico. In about 1900, his firm sent him to Cheyenne as the supervising architect for the construction of the Carnegie Library. Dubois soon established his own practice in Cheyenne.

During a career in Cheyenne that spanned forty years, Dubois designed a wide range of residential, commercial, industrial, and public buildings in Cheyenne and across Wyoming. His buildings exhibited varied architectural styles and influences, such as Beaux Arts Classicism and Romanesque Revival. He proved his ability to master evolving styles through the decades; by the early 1940s, his buildings reflected the very latest in styles, such as Streamline or Art Moderne. It is impossible to understate the impact of this architect on Cheyenne and Wyoming. His massive commercial buildings in the Cheyenne downtown historic district lent the young town its character of permanence and reliability, and as the decades passed, his ability to adapt to changes in architectural styles gave Cheyenne the appearance of modernity.

Almost every Cheyenne student in the early and middle years of the twentieth century passed through one of the many Dubois-designed public schools. His schools, as well as his other public and commercial buildings, reflect the evolving range of Dubois' architectural styles. The oldest remaining public school in Cheyenne is the Churchill School, designed by Dubois in 1911. In 1921, Dubois designed the Cheyenne High School (later called Central High School), using the more detailed and elegant Collegiate Gothic style. Dubois also designed the nearby Gibson Clark School, using a simple and clean version of Collegiate Gothic. He used a similar style in 1923 for Johnson Junior High School on the South Side. The premier example of the Collegiate Gothic style in Cheyenne is Lulu McCormick Junior High School (now the Emerson State Office Building), for which Dubois teamed up with Frederick Hutchinson Porter.

Towards the end of his career, Dubois proved his ability to evolve with the times. In 1940, he designed his last public school, Corlett Elementary, in which he utilized the Art (Streamline) Moderne style. This style is also evident in the Greyhound Bus Depot (razed) and the Eagles Building, also built in about 1940.

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In conclusion, Corlett School represents the history of education in Cheyenne and especially that of the West side, where a school was first built in the same block in 1884. The current school has operated continuously for over sixty years in a neighborhood with a rich ethnic heritage. Throughout that time, it has remained the focal point of community pride and social activity revolving around the education of its youth. The building retains good integrity of design, workmanship, materials, feeling, association, setting, and location and additions are over fifty years of age and retain the same design, scale and materials. The new Freedom Elementary School, currently being constructed on the F.E. Warren Air Force Base, will replace both the Corlett and Churchill Schools. Therefore, the current 2004-2005 school year will be the last year that Corlett will function as a public school.

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Section 9. Major Bibliographical References

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- Centennial Historical Committee. *The Magic City of the Plains: Cheyenne 1867-1967*. Published by the Centennial Historical Committee, 1967.
- Cheyenne City Directories, 1920-1950.
- Gulliford, Andrew. *America's Country Schools*. The Preservation Press, Washington, D.C., 1984.
- Haley, John Paul Jr. *A History of Laramie County School District No. 1, Cheyenne, Wyoming*. Master's Thesis for the Department of Education, University of South Dakota, 1956.
- Ittelson, Ellen. *Historic Building Inventory Record*. Westside Survey, Cheyenne, Wyoming, 1986.
- Laramie County School District No. 1. Planning and Construction Office Files. Laramie County School District No. 1 Administration Building, 2810 House Avenue, Cheyenne.
- Miller, Megan and Sheila Summerlin. "Corlett's Past Reflects Rich Heritage." Unidentified newspaper article in Corlett Elementary School Files.
- No Author. "4000 Pupils Return to Books Tuesday." *Cheyenne Tribune-Eagle*, 2 September 1940.
- Sanborn Map Company. *Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps for the City of Cheyenne*, 1883, 1886, 1890, 1894, 1907, 1912, 1923, 1931, 1959. New York, New York: Sanborn Map Company.
- Starr, Eileen. *Architecture in the Cowboy State, 1849-1940*. Glendo, Wyoming: High Plains Press, 1992.