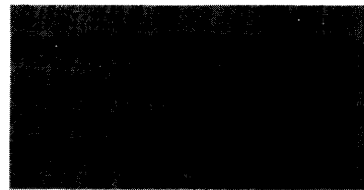


United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form



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

1. Name

historic Custer State Park Museum

and/or common Visitor's Center

2. Location

W of Hermosa on US 16A

street & number ~~U. S. Hwy 16A, Custer State Park~~ NA not for publication

city, town Hermosa vicinity vicinity of congressional district Second

state South Dakota code 46 county Custer code 033

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input checked="" 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	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	NA in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Department of Game, Fish & Parks, State of South Dakota

street & number Division of Custer State Park

city, town Hermosa vicinity of state South Dakota

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Custer County Courthouse

street & number 420 Mt. Rushmore Road

city, town Custer state South Dakota

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title NA has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered slightly

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Museum-Visitor's Center is a long narrow rectangle with a short wing projecting from the main facade comprised of the entry porch and a massive stone chimney. Cyclopean stone walls form the foundation and lower walls and support wood walls which begin at the sill line of the casement windows. The jerkin-head roof has a shallow pitch and spreads wide eaves out over the single-story walls. Exposed round timber rafters jutted out from the walls and projected beyond the eaves; these had hand hewn ends, but have now been recut so that they have flat ends even with the eave line. Inside, the beams are exposed, carrying out the rustic theme of the design. The most prominent feature of the building is the massive stone pier and chimney which supports the entrance porch. The stonework flares broadly near the foundation, giving the appearance that the walls grow out of the ground. The site is completed with a series of low stone walls which spread outward from the building to help integrate it into the landscape.

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/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1934-1936 **Builder/Architect** Harold Spitznagel, Sioux Falls
Civilian Conservation Corps

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Significant in the areas of architecture and governmental programs, the Visitor's Center was designed by Harold Spitznagel, a leading South Dakota architect.

The Custer State Park Board was one of nine state agencies which received federal money for construction projects during the Depression. Spitznagel was hired to design a park building to complement the Custer State Game Lodge across the road. Drawing upon the rustic Western Stick Style of the Lodge, Spitznagel designed an organic and fanciful building with tapering crown ends, overhanging roof and pylon like masonry walls. This structure and the WPA Indian Museum in Sioux Falls are some of the most imaginative architecture of the 1930s.

Harold Spitznagel, a native South Dakotan, was educated at the University of Pennsylvania and trained in a firm in Chicago. He returned to Sioux Falls in 1930 to open an office. Among his other federally assisted designs were the Sioux Falls City Hall, 1936, and Sylvan Lake Lodge, 1937, also located in Custer State Park. Both these designs are art deco and the latter is sensitively and dramatically sited above Sylvan Lake. The Visitor's Center is among Spitznagel's most interesting designs. Although Spitznagel died in 1975, his firm remains active under the title The Spitznagel Partners, TSP.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Stuart, Joseph. The Architecture of Harold Spitznagel. South Dakota Memorial Art Center: Brookings. 1975.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 1/2 acre

Quadrangle name Iron Mountain

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	3	6	3	0	0	8	0	4	8	4	6	9	0	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C

Zone			Easting				Northing							

D

Zone			Easting				Northing							

E

Zone			Easting				Northing							

F

Zone			Easting				Northing							

G

Zone			Easting				Northing							

H

Zone			Easting				Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification The boundary is marked by a road to the north, the top edge of the sloping lawn on the south, the parking lot on the west. On the east the boundary is an imaginary line lying parallel to the east facade and 30 feet east of the wall.

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

state NA code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Carolyn Torma

organization Historic Preservation Center

date 1 Dec. 82

street & number 216 E. Clark

telephone 605-677-5313

city or town Vermillion

state South Dakota

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

James R. Fishburn

title Director, Office of Cultural Preservation

date 12/17/82

For HCRS use only

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

Linda McClelland
Keeper of the National Register

date 3/30/83

Attest: *Patrick Andrus*
Chief of Registration

date 3/28/83

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Continuation sheet Custer State Park Museum

Item number #8

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Public Works projects of the 1930s constitute a major period of building in South Dakota. Not only was the federal government extremely active in the state during the Depression due to the severity of conditions, but construction had slowed by the mid 1920s and these projects boosted the building trade. The three major agencies involved in construction were the Works Progress Administration, the Public Works Administration and the U.S. Dept. of Treasury. The first two made funds available to local governments and to nine state agencies including the State Park Board and the Custer State Park Board. Federal money was also administered through the Departments of Interior and Agriculture for work on federal land. These four agencies created the major body of 20th century resort architecture in South Dakota.

Several stylistic similarities can be observed in these projects. First, the structures employ materials which blend with the natural setting of the building. Howard Baker at Wind Cave National Park used sand colored plaster and rough hewn timber trim to blend with the open rolling hills of the Southern Black Hills. The Sioux Museum in Rapid used over-sized yellow stone and dark stained wood to create a "rustic" look in the city. Harney Peak Lookout Tower also used stone, but in a blue-gray color. The Custer Park Museum and Sylvan Lake Lodge employ yellowish stone cut in rough, irregular shapes which blended the structure into its bare rock perch.

Other characteristics include the size, siting and overall horizontal emphasis of the buildings. All are unobtrusive and are sited, with the exception of the Rapid City Museum, within a naturalistic landscaped terrain. Baker's original design at Wind Cave allowed for a skillful use of mass and void to create a sensitively sited design. Both Sylvan Lake Lodge and the Custer State Park Museum have a low, sprawling profile, which merge with their hilly and wooded surroundings. The structures all have overscaled details which suggest a certain playfulness or whimsy appropriate for a holiday atmosphere. The Custer State Park Museum/Visitor's Center is the most playful and exaggerated of these buildings. It appears to seep into the ground like a piece of decaying, organic matter.

Not only is the building a unique and skillful 1930s South Dakota park structure, it represents a unique design within the career of Harold Spitznagel. The architect's other park structure was Sylvan Lake Resort which employs the precision and crispness of an Indian Art Deco motif to define the large, sprawling building. The museum is the most informal and relaxed of Spitznagel's designs.

The Civilian Conservation Corps was an employment program and received no funds for construction, but rather for jobs. CCC workers were often employed on federally-assisted projects, as at Wind Cave National Park.

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Finally, although the federally assisted parks and forests projects of the 1930s expanded the rustic vocabulary, they did not invent it. The early examples in the state were the Custer State Game Lodge and the residential log structures such as the Lewis Byron House (listed on National Register) of the 1920s. However, the 1930s buildings expanded the range and in some ways the boldness of individual details.

In summary, the Visitor's Center/Museum represents an important period of construction. This phase of building had a larger impact in South Dakota than in many states because of the small population and the disproportionately large amount of federal money. Secondly, of the fairly large body of work (estimated at 200 projects), only a small number employed the rustic, resort-inspired architectural style. Within this context, this building is a well-designed imaginative work, which is unique in the career of the architect.

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Continuation sheet Custer State Park Museum Item number #9 Major References Page 1

South Dakota Planning Board. Public Works, A Preliminary Report of South Dakota Works Projects. Central Office: Brookings, 1936.

Short, C.W. Public Buildings, A Survey of Architecture of Projects Constructed by Federal and Other Governmental Bodies, Between the Years 1933 and 1939 with the Assistance of the Public Works Administration. PWA: Washington D.C., 1939.

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Continuation sheet Custer State Park Museum Item number #10 VBD Page 1

The boundary is marked by a service road to the north which is flush with the building. The outer or north edge of the paving forms the boundary. This road is approximately 10 feet wide. The parking lot on west, has a retaining wall on the east edge. This wall, which lies approximately 50 feet from the west wall of the building forms the west boundary. A lawn slopes to the south. The brow of the slope, approximately 60 feet from the south wall forms the southern boundary. The eastern boundary, formed by an imaginary line, lies approximately 30 feet from the east wall of the building and is parallel to it. The boundary forms a trapezoid and all sides connect.