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NATIONAL
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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Pisek School
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number East end of Main Street at Lovick Ave. N/A not for publication.
city or town Pisek N/A vicinity
state North Dakota code ND county Walsh code 099 zip code 58273

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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.)

James E. Sperry 2/8/94
Signature of certifying official/Title Date
James E. Sperry, State Historic Preservation Officer
State of 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 certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

- I hereby certify that the property is:
- entered in the National Register. 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): _____

for
Signature of the Keeper Edson H. Ball Entered in the Date of Action
National Register 3/17/94

Pisek School
Name of Property

Walsh County, ND
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	Total

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

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)

Classical Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete
walls brick
limestone
roof asphalt
other _____

Narrative Description

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

See 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.
[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.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C a birthplace or 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)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1913

Significant Dates

1913

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

John W. Ross, architect

Melby & Standahl, builder

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(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:

State Historical Society of North Dakota

Pisek School
Name of Property

Walsh County, ND
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.84 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1 4	5 9 5 9 6 0	5 3 5 1 3 8 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2			

3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
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 Dr. Norene Roberts, President

organization Historical Research, Inc. date July 12, 1992

street & number 7800 Tessman Drive telephone (612) 560-4348

city or town Minneapolis state MN zip code 55445-2734

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

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)

Property Owner

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

name School District #71

street & number N/A telephone _____

city or town Pisek state ND zip code 58273

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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DESCRIPTION:

The Pisek School is a four story building consisting of a raised basement, two full floors, and a high attic under a deck roof. It is located at the east end of Main Street in Pisek and faces west toward Main. This is a single building nomination.

The Pisek School, built in 1913, is a Classical Revival style building designed by John W. Ross, well-known Grand Forks architect. The building is red pressed brick with a poured concrete foundation and Bedford limestone trim. The front facade facing west is designed symmetrically with three bays. Two flanking bays three windows wide are separated by a projecting central entrance bay with a fully pedimented gable at the roof. The front entrance has double doors with side lights. Windows in the flanking west bays are grouped together with a continuous sill course of limestone. Horizontal limestone banding separates the raised basement from the first story and the first from the second story. At the second story, the triple windows are slightly recessed from the sill to the frieze with corbelled brickwork. The building has a wide wooden frieze and wooden eaves with prominent consoles. The deck roof is slightly bell-cast and covered in asphalt shingles. The roof has two hipped battered-walled dormers with double windows flanking the central pediment on the west. The north and south facades each have a single dormer similar to those on the west facade. These lateral dormers are placed centrally on the north and south sides of the roof. The rear roof facing east has one dormer on the south side of the chimney.

North and south lateral walls consist of a single bay with three large windows and a small half window at the east end which give light to an interior closet at the back of the classrooms. The east facade has a one and a half story rear exit with a flat roof and corniced wooden parapet. This exit has doors both north and south with wooden stairs leading to the ground.

The over-all design of the Pisek School is Classical Revival, seen both in its formal symmetrical arrangement of parts and in its architectural detailing. The central bay has a fully pedimented gable with deeply recessed bracketted eaves and a small semi-circular fan light in the center of the pediment. Red brick walls terminate in a wide plain wooden frieze under the bracketted gables. The decorative brackets are large and take the form of consoles at the eave line. Dormers are unadorned save for the bell-cast hipped roofs and battered walls of weatherboard. Over the front bay is a large open bell tower with a

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DESCRIPTION, CONT.

wooden balustrade and four large round-arched openings under a tall pyramidal roof. It contains the original bell. In the lintel area over the front entrance is the original signage "Public School" in block letters. In the window spandrel area at the third floor is a date block "1913." The grey raised foundation is poured concrete incised to imitate stone blocks. Basement windows have limestone sills.

Historic photographs indicate that the building originally had one over one double hung sash. These were infilled with glass block in the late 1950s. The new windows are the most egregious alteration to the building. The majority of these glass block windows have a small square transparent operable awning light placed low in the window openings. However, all masonry openings are original except for a small square window on the east end of the south facade at the basement level.

Other minor alterations to the exterior are apparent from examining old photographs. The wood shingled base of the bell tower was originally sloped up in a concave configuration to the platform for the open bell tower. This has been squared off and covered in newer wood siding. The original flag pole is missing from the top of the bell tower. The original wood shingled roof and bell tower roof has been replaced by asphalt shingles. The rear of the building has a rebuilt concrete block chimney which is not visible from the front of the building or the surrounding town. Because the building is still an operating school, there are two metal fire escapes on the exterior. One is on the rear or east facade and runs south from the third floor. The other fire escape runs east from the third floor on the north side of the building. They are located on the two least visible facades of the building. The south and west sides of the school are devoid of fire escapes.

The interior of the Pisek School is virtually intact. Although there have been some alterations and new uses put to some original spaces, these changes leave the original layout of the interior intact. In 1951, the school was repainted on the interior and the building was repaired (Pisek: The First Century, 118). The school presently accommodates kindergarten through sixth grade. Walls are plaster and are original as are the maple floors. The front entrance of the building is dominated with an elaborate oak stairway which runs up the middle of the building from the raised basement level to the top of the

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DESCRIPTION, CONT.

third floor. Classrooms are arranged one to a side on the north and south of this stairway. The top floor was originally used for a gymnasium and later for grades 7-12 until the high school students were moved to a new district high school in 1990. The attic or fourth floor is now unheated and unused. It was originally a gymnasium and basketball court. When it was converted to class use around 1985, the original single open space with tongue and groove panelling was subdivided with temporary partitions to make several classrooms from the space. A ladder on the fourth floor leads up to the bell tower.

All interior woodwork, window and door casings, operable door transoms, panelled doors and mop boards are intact. Original hardware is intact. The exceptions are some mop boards which were cut to put in minor alterations like a special education room and also some newer fluorescent ceiling lighting. Alterations to the classrooms consist of some small partitions on the west side of classrooms to comply with the 1963 requirements for special education. The north and south side classrooms on the third floor were divided into two classrooms by partitions in 1977. Others minor changes to classrooms were made in the early 1980s. On the whole, the Pisek School is remarkably intact on the interior for a school in continuous operation since 1913. The interior reflects its period of significance: the 1913 construction date.

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SIGNIFICANCE:

The Pisek School is significant in Walsh County history under Criterion C for its Classical Revival style design, high level of integrity, and its association with John W. Ross of Grand Forks, a regionally accomplished architect in the Red River Valley during the school's construction in 1913.

Built in 1913, the Pisek School is the best example of Classical Revival design in public school construction in Walsh County. The other extant examples of public schools in Walsh County are the Minto School, now on the National Register and built in 1895, the only remaining first generation graded school in the county, that is, with multiple classrooms (NRHP nom. Minto School, 8: 1); the Fordville school, built 1908 and altered; and the Hoople school, built 1920 and altered. Of the remaining early twentieth century schools in the county, Pisek is the one with the best architectural integrity and the most elaborate architectural design, despite glass block infill to windows at the Pisek School which were installed in the late 1950s. The Fordville School is a two story brick structure with a hipped roof. It has large one story additions to the west and east and originally dates from 1908. Its integrity has been seriously compromised. The Hoople School is a two story building with a flat roof, soldier coursing as its major wall treatment, and has a large single story addition to the south with extensions at the southwest rear of the building. It was built in 1920 to replace a 1915 structure similar to that at Pisek.

Because of its architectural integrity, the Pisek School is the best example in Walsh County of school architecture in the opening decades of the 20th century. It was designed by John W. Ross of Grand Forks who was also the architect of the Minto School in 1895. Taken together, the Minto and Pisek school buildings are valuable in showing the evolution of public school design and architecture in Walsh County between 1895-1913 at the outset and the closing of the Second Dakota Boom. The Pisek school is one of the earliest extant brick buildings and the tallest and finest in downtown Pisek. It dominates the skyline on the east end of Main Street and contributes a visible terminus for that main thoroughfare. The Pisek school is also one of oldest brick buildings in the central business district and the most unaltered. Pisek had a disastrous fire in 1933 which destroyed over \$30,000 in buildings in the downtown area. Main Street today is largely modest one or two story buildings which are dwarfed by the school at the east end of Main Street.

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SIGNIFICANCE, CONT.

When the Pisek School was under construction, the County Superintendent of Public Instruction issued his annual report covering the year July 1, 1912 to July 1, 1913. At that time, there were 125 school districts in Walsh County with only 16 graded and 129 ungraded schools. Overwhelmingly the schools of the county were conducted in one room school houses. Of the 145 school houses in the county, only 10 were built of brick and stone. The Pisek School became the eleventh of this group ("Annual School Report Completed" in Grafton News and Times, October 10, 1913).

The Pisek School was designed by John W. Ross of Grand Forks. Ross was known as the first full-time architect in Grand Forks, beginning his practice in 1880 and continuing it until his death in 1914. During his working career, he designed many public buildings, including schools, as noted by Clement Lounsberry in his history of North Dakota. An August, 1895, issue of Lounsberry's journal The Record noted that Ross designed schools in Minto, Minot, Williston, Hamilton, and Hallock. He also designed the Roosevelt School in Grand Forks in 1910, a few years before his death. It is unusual that the two oldest surviving schools in the county with the best integrity should have been the work of the same architect and together, the Minto and Pisek schools represented not only the genesis of Ross' school designs during the closing years of the 19th and opening years of the 20th century, but both schools provided similar functions internally. They were both organized around a central hall with four classrooms, two on each floor, at the ends of the building. The Pisek school originally had a gymnasium on the top floor which is still largely intact except for some partial wall partitions put in when grades 7-12 needed more space. The top floor of the Pisek school is now unheated and unused since the high school students were moved to new facilities in 1990.

Pisek is located southeast of Park River in Walsh County. It was established by Czech and Moravian families in 1882 and named after Pisek, Czechoslovakia. The name means "sand" in Czech and the North Dakota settlement was built near a sand ridge in the Red River Valley. The Great Northern Railroad built a line from Grand Forks to Pisek in 1885 and established a loading platform there. A year or two later, the railroad built a stockyard in Pisek which functioned as a depot for the shipment of cattle. The first school building was built in 1882 and doubled as a church for several years. In 1886 the church was built and was replaced by a larger church building in 1892. At that time, the first church building built in 1886 was converted to use as the school. Several rooms were added on and this second school building, a

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SIGNIFICANCE, CONT.

rambling one story wood frame structure, was used until the present 1913 Pisek School was constructed (History of Pisek, pp. 17, 117.)

Recognizing how woefully out of date the school facilities were in Pisek, the citizens began agitation for a new school by signing a petition in early 1913. The Park River Gazette-News reported on January 31, 1913 (p. 5):

The residents of Pisek have come to recognize that the school facilities are inadequate and that an updated commodious building, providing for four departments [classrooms], is sorely needed. A petition signed by a great number of patrons was recently presented to the school board, and, as a result, notices have been posted, calling for an election to be held February 8, for the purpose of deciding the matter of erecting a new school. The question of bonding the district will be submitted on the same day.

On February 8th, the election counted 91 in favor of bonding for a new school out of 112 votes cast. Wasting no time, the School Board had already notified John W. Ross, Grand Forks architect, who arrived within a few days to submit plans and specifications to the school board for the new building. The board made arrangements for the immediate advertizing of bids (Park River Gazette-News, Feb. 14, 1913, p. 5). The contractor who won the bid was the Grand Forks firm of Melby and Standahl who had experience with school construction in the region. Contractor Standahl was on site by mid-April with the heating contractor, Dakota Heating and Plumbing Company, also of Grand Forks. Standahl began the work by overseeing the felling of trees on the new school property (PRG-N, March 28 and April 18, 1913).

By the second of May, Standahl, who took personal charge of the construction, had a concrete mixer on site and the excavation of the basement, only three feet deep, had been completed. Two carloads of pressed brick had arrived by rail, suggesting that the brick was probably from Grand Forks. By the end of the first week in May, the concrete basement walls of the new school were nearly completed and a carload of lime and one of Bedford stone had arrived at the site (PRG-N, April 25, May 2, May 9, May 16, 1913, p. 5).

Construction of the building was rapid. Cribbing around the poured concrete basement was removed toward the end of May and the lumber for the first floor was on site. By June 20th, the bricklayers had arrived and went to work immediately. The heating plant arrived and was installed in mid- July and the carpenters were busy putting on the new

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SIGNIFICANCE, CONT.

roof by July 11th (PRG-N, May 23, June 6, July 11, July 14, p. 5).

At the same time the school was under construction, downtown Pisek was getting a facelift. The city was laying 16 blocks of new sidewalk during the summer of 1913 and the paper noted that the project would "add greatly to the appearance of our town." (PRG-N, July 18, 1913, p. 5). By early September, the new school grounds were connected to the new city sidewalk project by its own new sidewalk (PRG-N, Sept. 5, 1913, p. 5).

Interior finish work began on the school in August. Lathers and tanners arrived early that month and the plasterers soon followed (PRG-N, Aug 8, Aug 15, 1913, p. 5). By August 29th, the new desks had arrived and were stored in the old school. In mid-September, the painters arrived and started work and the plumbers put in the new radiators later in the month (PRG-N, Aug. 29, Sept. 12, Sept. 26, 1913, p. 5).

On October 3, 1913, the Park River Gazette-News noted that the staircases and other millwork had finally arrived and the contractors, Melby and Standahl, had sent two extra carpenters to hurry the work. John W. Ross arrived from Grand Forks to inspect the new building shortly thereafter, while the carpenters were installing and adjusting the new seats in the class rooms (PRG-N, Oct. 3, Oct 10, 1913, p. 5).

The Park River Gazette News carried a final article in its October 17, 1913 issue. The new school had opened the previous Monday with an enrollment of 103 pupils. The primary room had 39 youngsters. A mass meeting was held for patrons of School District 71 in the new school building and was well-attended. Patrons viewed the interior and gathered in the principal classroom to listen to "a very interesting speech by Professor Fingelstad." (PRG-N, Oct. 17, 1913, p. 5).

Since its opening in 1913, the Pisek School has been used variously for kindergarten classes, grade school, junior and senior high school classes. A separate kindergarten class was established in 1966 where there had been none before. The grades 7-12, which eventually were housed on the third floor in what was originally the gym, were moved to new facilities in 1990. Although the Walsh County history noted that the school was closed for two years during World War 2, Pisek: The First Century gives a complete list of teachers who served the school from its opening in 1913 right through the war and up to 1982. This

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SIGNIFICANCE, CONT.

source indicates that between 1932-1941 St. Francis Sisters served as teachers in the Pisek Public School and that at least some of them came from either the St. Francis convent at Hankinson or another convent in Fargo (Pisek: The First Century, pp. 128-129). The cause of this unusual arrangement is unknown, but may have been related to lack of funds for regular teacher salaries during the Great Depression and the fact that the families who sent their children to the Pisek School were almost entirely Roman Catholic.

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BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES:

"Annual School Report Completed." Grafton News and Times [GNT],
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Interview with Wes Siggete, Principal, and Eddie Greicar, Custodian.
Pisek School, February 18, 1992.

Park River Gazette-News [PRG-N], January 31, February 14, March 28,
April 18, April 25, May 2, May 9, May 16, May 23, June 6, June 20,
July 11, July 14, July 18, August 8, August 15, August 29,
September 5, September 12, September 26, October 3, October 10,
October 17, 1913, p. 5.

Pisek : The First Century. A History of Pisek, North Dakota.
Associated Printers, Grafton, North Dakota, 1982, pp. 16-24,
116-130.

Roberts, Norene. Minto School National Register nomination form, 1991.

On file: Division of Archeology and Historic Preservation, State
Historical Society of North Dakota, North Dakota Heritage Center,
Bismarck, North Dakota.

"Sudden Death of J. W. Ross." Obituary. Grand Forks Daily Herald,
December 12, 1914.

Walsh County Historical Society. Walsh Heritage: A Story of Walsh
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"William H. Ross." Clement A. Lounsberry, North Dakota: A History
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1917, 3: 834, 835.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

According to the Walsh County Auditor, the legal description of the Pisek School, School District #71, is: 165 x 487 feet in the NWNW Section 27 T156N R55W.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:

The boundary includes the inclusive legal description which has been associated historically with the Pisek School property.