

NPS Form 10-900  
(Rev. 8/86)  
NPS/CHS Word Processor Format  
(Approved 03/88)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM**

4-11-88  
H.C. 5700

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. Use letter quality printers in 12 pitch. Use only 25% or greater cotton content bond paper.

**1. Name of Property**

historic name: North School (North La Junta School)  
other names/site number: North La Junta Elementary School

**2. Location**

street & number: Highways 109 & 194 (Main & Trail) (NA) not for publication  
city, town: La Junta (NA) vicinity  
state: Colorado code: CO county: Otero code: 089 zip code: 81050

**3. Classification**

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	No. of Resources within Property	
		contributing	noncontributing
(x) private	(x) building(s)	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
( ) public-local	( ) district	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u> sites
( ) public-State	( ) site	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u> structures
( ) public-Federal	( ) structure	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u> objects
	( ) object	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total
Name of related multiple property listing: <u>N/A</u>		No. of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register <u>0</u>	

**4. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this (x) 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 (x) meets ( ) does not meet the National Register criteria.  
( ) See continuation sheet.



Signature of certifying official

5/14/92  
Date

State Historic Preservation Officer, Colorado Historical Society  
State or Federal agency and bureau

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.  
( ) See continuation sheet

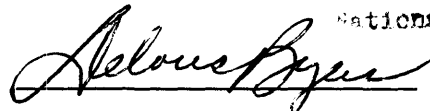
( ) determined eligible for the National Register. ( ) See continuation sheet

( ) determined not eligible for the National Register.


( ) removed from the National Register.

( ) other, (explain:)

Entered in the National Register



6/25/92

 Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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**6. Functions or Use**

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**Historic Functions****(enter categories from instructions)**Education - SchoolSocial - Meeting HallRecreation and Culture - Theater &  
Auditorium**Current Functions****(enter categories from instructions)**Vacant (not in use)

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**7. Description**

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**Architectural Classification****(enter categories from instructions)**Late 19th and Early 20th CenturyAmerican Movements

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**Materials****(enter categories from instructions)**foundations Concretewalls Brick

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roof Asphaltother Wood

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**Describe present and historic physical appearance.**

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The North La Junta School is located in the small rural community of North La Junta across the Arkansas River from the larger town of La Junta in southeastern Colorado. It is a two-story, rectangular (64' x 68'), brick structure designed by Walter Dubree and built by J. A. Dahlgreen in 1914. It served as the sole educational and social center of the unincorporated rural community of North La Junta.

The building has a full high basement, a low pitched hip roof with relatively wide overhanging eaves with exposed rafters. There is an inscription stone on the front face of the building which reads "North La Junta" above a covered porch which leads to the main entrance between the basement level and first floor. The entrance has two sets of double doors with a transom above. At ground level on either side of the porch, there are stairs leading down to two basement entrances, one for girls and one for boys. A metal fire escape is on the rear wall of the building. There have been very few alterations since the building's completion in 1914 and it is currently in basically the same condition and appearance as when it was closed in 1985.

As was common for schoolhouses of the period, much of the building was segregated by sex, including interior stairways and the exterior basement entrances on either side of the front porch. The west basement entry was for the boys and the east basement entry was for the girls. This east/west segregation pattern held true for much of the ancillary areas of the school, including a partition in the basement hallway leading to separate exit doors at the rear of the building. This basement hall partition has since been removed (date unknown), but the separate basement entrances, exits, dayrooms and stairways lend testimony to a once common practice.

(x) See continuation sheet

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The weight bearing basement walls are concrete, covered with stucco on the exterior and plaster on the interior. The exterior walls of the building are of masonry loadbearing construction, clad in red brick in a stretcher bond pattern with white brick trim. The sills appear to be sandstone. The corners of the building have brick pilasters. The two side wall chimneys are built inside the walls.

Windows in the school are rectangular, 1 x 1 double hung wood sash and all appear to be original. Each floor contains two sets of four windows divided by a pilaster on each side wall and two sets of three windows on both the front and rear walls. There are two windows on the front above the front porch roof and below the inscription stone which are between the top two floors and serve the second floor stair landing.

There are six basement level entrances--two in front of the building, alongside the raised main floor entry; the corresponding two entrances/exits in the rear of the building; one on the west side, originally the entrance to the janitor's living quarters; and one on the east side, an enclosed ramp entrance to the boiler room.

The basic interior plan of the school is symmetrical for all three levels, two large rooms on either side of a wide hall. In the basement, the boy's and girl's playrooms with accompanying restrooms occupy the southwest and southeast rooms respectively, with the boiler room in the northeast corner and what was originally the janitor's quarters in the northwest. The janitor's apartment was converted into an additional classroom at some time in the past, but the date is unknown.

The basement contains evidence of water damage from a flood which occurred when the school was closed in 1985. Most of the plaster and paint on the lower foot or two of the basement walls has been loosened and removed by the water, exposing the concrete foundation walls beneath. There is little or no evidence of any structural damage as a result of this or other floods which have occurred over the years.

From the basement, two short interior stairways ascend to the entrance level landing, from which a central staircase ascends to the first floor. This floor contains four classrooms and the wide central hallway. This hallway originally had a small office at the north (rear) end of the building. In 1957 the hallway

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and its office room were remodelled to add a second office room and to allow access to the fire escape at the north end of the hall.

From the first floor, two narrow staircases (boys on the west, girls on the east) lead up to a landing between the top two floors, from which another wide, open-stringer central staircase leads up to the second floor. This second floor contains the same pattern of classrooms and hallway as the first, with the exception of the assembly room where most of the northern end of the hall was incorporated into the northeast classroom to form the single largest room in the building.

The assembly room is approximately 30' x 40' and has an elevated stage platform at its east end. This room was used for student assemblies as well as a theater, meeting room and social hall for the residents of the community of North La Junta.

All of the rooms of the two main floors have hardwood floors, plastered walls and ceilings (ceiling height of thirteen feet), and most rooms still contain the original slate blackboard as installed in 1914. Only two blackboards have been removed, date unknown. Each classroom has a built-in set of shelves and drawers which were used for storage of books, lunches, coats, etc.

There are no other buildings on this 2.32 acre site and landscaping consists of an approximately 50' x 150' concrete slab and walk in front of the building, a gravel drive and parking area and a tree lined lawn on the west side of the school. The perimeter of the property is enclosed with wire fencing.

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**8. Statement of Significance**

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Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:      ( ) nationally      ( ) statewide      (x) locally

Applicable National Register Criteria      (X) A      ( ) B      (X) C      ( ) D  
Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)      ( ) A      ( ) B      ( ) C      ( ) D      ( ) E      ( ) F      ( ) G

**Areas of Significance**

(enter categories from instructions)

Social History

Architecture

**Period of Significance**

1914-1941

1914

**Significant Dates**

1914

1914

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Significant Person**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Dubree, Walter (Architect)

Dahlgreen, J. A. (Builder)

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

North La Junta School, located in a small settlement on the plains of Southeastern Colorado, is important to the many residents of North La Junta for the role it has played in that community's history. North La Junta School is representative of the dual function of rural schools across the length and breadth and history of our nation. They not only offered the necessary education, but also provided the social center important in the development of a sense of community. The rural school was often the first public building erected in many new settlements. The North La Junta School is historically significant under Criterion A for its social significance in the rural settlement of North La Junta, Otero County Colorado. It was completed in 1914 for the purposes of educating the growing number of students in North La Junta and for providing a social meeting place for the residents of that unincorporated community. The design of the North La Junta School is representative of school buildings constructed in the area during the first part of the 20th century and meets criterion C because it embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period and method of construction.

The historical record does not give the date when the community of North La Junta was established probably because it is unincorporated. In 1881, the city of La Junta was established on the south side of the Arkansas River. As North La Junta grew several small commercial buildings were constructed, but there were no

(x) See continuation sheet

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churches, meeting halls, theaters or other public buildings. The 1890 United States census did not list North La Junta separately from La Junta, but in 1910, the census gives a population of 597 residents in North La Junta. In 1920 the population had jumped to 1,204. The La Junta Daily Democrat reported on November 22, 1898, that a Sunday school was organized and met at the school building with 54 persons present. Regular meetings of local groups such as the Suburban Association were also held at the school.

By 1898, according to an article in the July 9, 1898 article in the Daily Democrat, it was decided that "the board of school directors will place a school building at some point in North La Junta before the opening of the fall term, for the accommodation of the numerous children in that part of the district."

The first school building was completed a few weeks following the decision of the school board. It was of wood frame construction and had one room. At the turn of the century, there was considerable growth in North La Junta's population and by 1907 the original school required the addition of two more rooms. In 1913, the school board felt it necessary to replace that building with the present eight-room brick school and the school board acquired an additional six and one-half acres from the Riverside Land and Cattle Company.

Upon completion of the new school, the original wooden building was divided up, and the original room was moved elsewhere. The two room addition was moved to the southeast corner of the new school grounds and served as a lunch room, band room and meeting room. That portion of the land was eventually sold and is not part of the current nomination.

The large, red brick building stands on its original site and was used as a school from the time of its construction until 1985, when it was closed by the school district. All North La Junta students then went into the school system of the city of La Junta, across the river. North School (as it is called by locals) was an integral part of the community of North La Junta for over 70 years, and even though it now stands vacant, is still looked upon with pride and affection by the former students and residents of a proud and independent community who consider it one of the most important buildings in the community.

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North La Junta School

The North La Junta School was very important for its social significance in providing a focus for community social activities and establishing for North La Junta residents an identity of place apart from the city of La Junta. Probably the single most statement of the importance of the "North School" to the residents of North La Junta comes from the 1914 school's first principal, Mr. J. S. Kellog. In 1915, one year after the completion of the school, Mr. Kellog stated: "To the people of North La Junta this new building represents something more than a schoolhouse. By reason of our comparative isolation from the center of activity we feel toward it a peculiar sense of relationship, which does not exist in such a measure in a community where the church, theater, lecture hall and clubroom are easily accessible. In fact the absence of these instrumentalities to meet the demands of a people augments [sic] the importance of a school building and is essentially the largest contributing factor in making the building the mouthpiece of the social unit."<sup>1</sup>

As Mr. Kellog states so clearly, North School was in fact more than the educational center for the youth of North La Junta. The use of the school as a community center was well established from 1898 when the first school building was constructed. "From the time that North La Junta School was built in 1914, it has been a hub of activities in the community."<sup>2</sup> Especially in the early years of unpaved roads and poor transportation, North School provided a social center for the holding of community picnics, plays and programs, as well as a meeting room in which members of this rural community could hold elections or discuss issues of importance, such as water and sewer board matters, street and road conditions and stop sign locations. North School was also the location of the first soft water well in the area. This water was also available to the local residents at no charge.<sup>3</sup>

In 1922 North School added an extra dimension to the entertainment available to the residents of North La Junta by the purchase of a "moving picture machine." As described in a newspaper article at that time: "The North La Junta school has purchased a moving picture machine and they are going to give the first entertainments Friday and Saturday evening, for the purpose of raising money to assist in paying for it. The people from the north side have organized a community club and this organization is working in conjunction with the school for the convenience and upbuilding of that suburb. Those in charge of the first entertainment have a most excellent program of pictures, and they invite all to attend. The admission fee for these first entertainments will be 25 cents."<sup>4</sup>



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Student participation in activities outside of class included Boy Scout and Girl Scout meetings, Bible Study classes and other extra-curricular activities which all met at the school. Classroom attendance was taken seriously by the students as well. In the first period (of six weeks) ending October 14, 1921, of the 225 students at North School, only 14 cases of tardiness were recorded. The average percent of attendance for the period was 97.154 and the average percent of punctuality for the period was 98.2.<sup>5</sup>

Also of social significance, is the evidence found throughout the building of the onetime educational practice of segregation of the sexes as demonstrated in the entrances, exits, day rooms and stairways, but the classrooms and playgrounds were used by both boys and girls.

Over its 70 plus years of service, many generations of North La Junta residents have attended North School and, in at least one known instance, three generations of the same family attended the school.<sup>6</sup> One female student identified only as "Shannon" left a simple chalk message still visible on one of the blackboards, which reflects the attitudes of most of the residents of North La Junta. Her message reads: "This school was the best thing that ever happened to me."

Upon its closing in the spring of 1985, the North La Junta School was referred to in a newspaper article as "the one last bastion of 'rural' schools."<sup>7</sup> Many residents of North La Junta tried to prevent the closing of the school, but were unsuccessful.<sup>8</sup>

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Appino, John. A self-published history of La Junta Schools, 1990.

Collier, Ruth. Personal interviews, school nurse.

Daily Democrat, La Junta, Colorado.

(x) 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
- (x) Other

**Specify Repository:**

Bob DuBois, personal file.

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreeage of property:** 2.32 acres

**UTM References**

A 1|3 6|2|9|0|4|0| 4|2|0|6|7|0|0|  
Zone Easting Northing

B | | | | | | | | | | | |  
Zone Easting Northing

C | | | | | | | | | | | |  
Zone Easting Northing

D | | | | | | | | | | | |  
Zone Easting Northing

( ) See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The nominated property consists of the west 285 feet of Lot 6 and all of Lot 50, Riverside Place, as shown by the recorded plat thereof, County of Otero, State of Colorado. It is 400.6' on the west, 285' on the north, 308' on the east and 300' on the south.

( ) See continuation sheet

**Boundary Justification** The nominated property constitutes a portion of those lots originally deeded to the School District for the purpose of constructing the North La Junta School. Lot 5 to the north and eastern portion of lot 6 have been excluded because they have been subdivided and are being developed for other uses.

( ) See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

Name/Title: Bob DuBois  
 Organization: N/A Date: January 6, 1992  
 Street & Number: 215 Bellevue Avenue Telephone: (719) 384-8685  
 City or Town: La Junta State: CO Zip Code: 81050

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FOOTNOTES

1. La Junta Tribune, (Special Industrial Edition), 1915. Exact date and page unknown.
2. Elliot, Frances, Notes on North La Junta School, Unpublished, 1991, p.1. Francis Elliot attended North La Junta School grades 1 - 8 and later taught at the school for many years.
3. Freidenberger, Fred. Personal interview on November 20, 1991. Mr. Freidenberger is a life-long resident of North La Junta and a previous owner of the North La Junta School.
4. Daily Democrat, March 2, 1922, p.1.
5. Daily Democrat, October 26, 1921, p.8.
6. DuBois, Georgia. Personal interview on November 12, 1991. Mrs. DuBois was a resident of North La Junta for many years. She attended North La Junta School, as did her mother and her two children.
7. La Junta Tribune Democrat, April 9, 1985, p.1.
8. Gearhart, Vincent and Cindy. Personal interviews. Mr. and Mrs. Gearhart are both life-long residents of North La Junta. Both they and their children attended North La Junta School and were among those who tried to prevent its closure.

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- DuBois, Georgia, personal interviews. Former student and resident of North La Junta.
- East Otero School District No. R-1, general records.
- Elliot, Frances, Notes on North La Junta School, unpublished.
- Freidenberger, Fred. Personal interviews, resident of North La Junta and former owner of North La Junta School.
- Gearhart, Vincent and Cindy. Personal interviews, residents of North La Junta.
- Hanzas, Barbara. Personal interviews, librarian.
- Herrell, Jim. Personal interviews, West School principal.
- Hoig, Stan, The Sand Creek Massacre, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman OK, 1961.
- La Junta Tribune, Industrial Edition.
- Lowman, Don. Personal interviews, President, La Junta Museum Association.
- Otero County Clerk & Recorder's Office, General Records.
- Otero County Engineer's Office, General Records.
- Saylor, Henry H., Dictionary of Architecture, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 1952.
- Schooley, Jane. Personal interviews, La Junta City Clerk.
- Schulze, Suzanne, A century of the Colorado Census, Michener Library, University of Northern Colorado, Greeley, CO 1976.
- Whiffen, Marcus, American Architecture Since 1780 - A Guide to the Styles, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA, 1969.
- Young, Lou. Personal interviews, resident of North La Junta.

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North La Junta School

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The information in items 1 through 5 is the same for all photographs.

North La Junta School  
North La Junta, Otero County, Colorado  
Photographer: Bob DuBois  
Date: December 10, 1991  
Location of negatives: Bob DuBois, personal file

PHOTO 1 Front (south) facade, view N

PHOTO 2 Inscription stone on south facade, view N

PHOTO 3 Fire escape at rear of building, view S

PHOTO 4 Split level entry porch with boys and girls basement entries on either side, view N

PHOTO 5 Plaster damage in basement from 1985 flood

PHOTO 6 Office room added to first floor hall

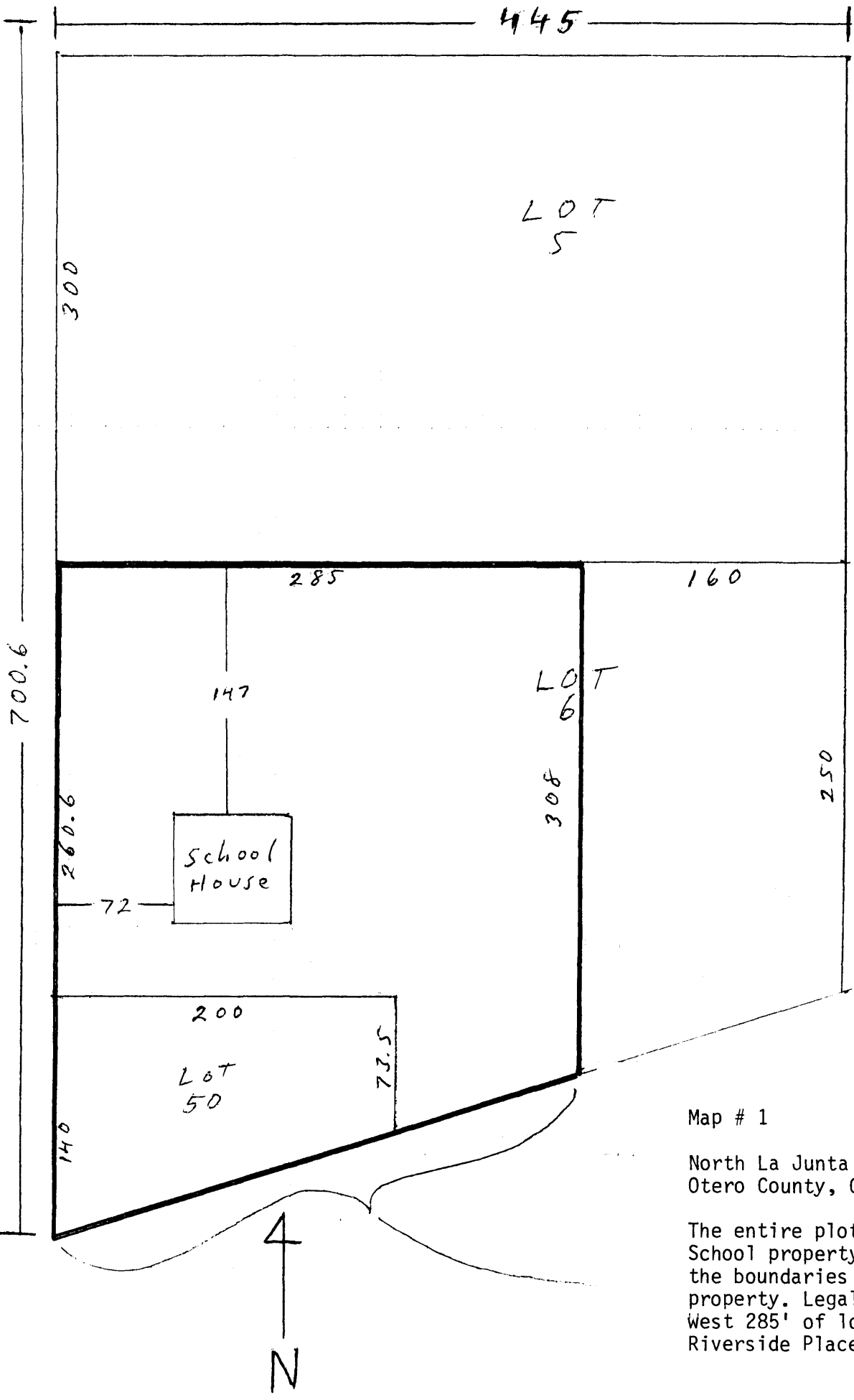
PHOTO 7 Boys and girls staircases leading to second floor

PHOTO 8 Stage in assembly room

PHOTO 9 Slate blackboards and built-in shelves

PHOTO 10 East facade with covered ramp to boiler room, view W

PHOTO 11 Detail of stair banisters



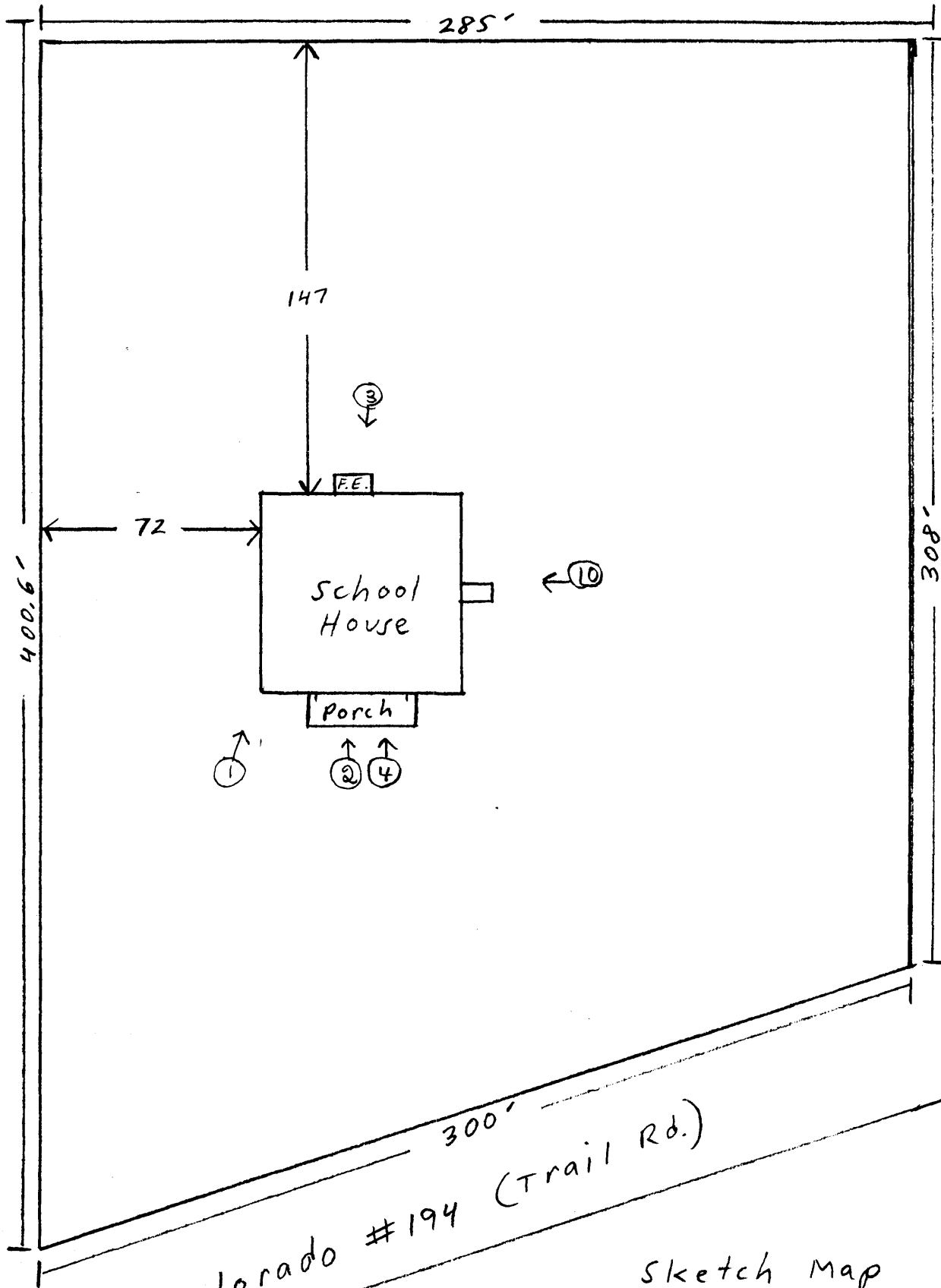
Map # 1 Boundary Map

North La Junta School  
Otero County, CO

The entire plot was the original School property. The dark lines are the boundaries of the nominated property. Legal description is: West 285' of lot 6 and all of lot 50, Riverside Place.

Gilpin St.

Colorado #109 (Main St.)



Colorado #194 (Trail Rd.)

Sketch Map

Map # 2 Photo Map  
 North La Junta School  
 Otero County, CO  
 Scale: 1/8" = 6'

