
7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

This nomination is primarily recognizing the educational contribution of Chadron State College to the state of Nebraska. Chadron State, which was organized as the Northwest Nebraska Normal school, was and is the state's primary educational institution in the western half of the state. It was established as the teacher-training normal school for that portion of the state in 1911, after consideration of several other towns in Nebraska's Panhandle. No private colleges exist in Nebraska's Panhandle to rival it in importance. Architectural significance is a secondary area of importance.

The five buildings (Women's Dormitory, Gymnasium, Library, Women's Hall, and Crites Hall) nominated as the historic buildings of Chadron State College are those structures from the first twenty-seven years of the school's existence which have survived without serious exterior alteration. The college was established in 1911, and the buildings are from the founding years of the 1910's, '20's, and '30's. The college has experienced two building construction periods. These structures reflect the eligible properties from the first period, 1911-1938. No buildings were erected from 1938 until 1953, then eighteen buildings were constructed in the second phase, 1953-1972.

These five buildings are similar in height (two or three stories), form (rectangular), workmanship, and material (brick), but vary in architectural style and use (dormitories, library, and gymnasium). The architectural styles of the buildings reflect the influence of the popular styles of the time: Prairie style, classicism, and Art Deco. Although the buildings are related in history and time, their location on the campus does not constitute a district, so they are nominated as a thematic group. Their integrity is excellent; few, if any, exterior changes have been made. Two extant structures of this period are not included because of alterations: the Administration Building and Hildreth Hall.

Chadron State College is located on the southern boundary of the city of Chadron (1980 population 5972), Dawes County, in the northern part of Nebraska's Panhandle. The location in the Panhandle is important to its history as the only state-supported college in the western half of Nebraska. The southern boundary of the campus borders the scenic Pine Ridge, which is part of the Nebraska National Forest.

The physical description of each building is addressed below in the form of the Historic American Building Survey (HABS); a brief discussion follows each description. The location of each building is best explained on the accompanying four maps; the buildings do not have separate addresses. The property owner is the same as listed in number four.

1. WOMEN'S DORMITORY (now SPARKS HALL).

VBD: Beginning at the intersection of the north-south half section line of section 20, Township 33 N, Range 48 W, with the corporation line of the City of Chadron, proceed south 500 feet to this building.

UTM: E663500 N4742510.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

2/2/83

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET Description ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

Acreage: less than one.

Wood frame with red brick veneer; rectangular form; two stories with raised basement; hipped roof with three hipped dormers each on front and rear and one hipped dormer on each end; symmetrical arrangement of front (north) facade with projecting central bay, emphasized by a one-story covered porch; prominent overhanging eaves with large brackets; white stone watertable and stringcourse at the base of the second-story windows; 1914; removal of porch roof railing is the only alteration; Alfred W. Woods, Lincoln, architect.

Built as a women's dormitory, Sparks Hall was the second building erected on the campus. It served this purpose until 1932 or 1933 when Edna Work Hall was completed as the new women's dormitory. At that time this building became the men's dormitory, and received its new name of Sparks Hall, named in honor of the college's first president, Joseph Sparks. In 1938 it was remodeled into apartments for faculty and married students, the purpose it still serves. Sparks Hall is a simplified, vernacular product of a Georgian Revival form with Prairie School details. The rectangular plan, minimum of projections, strictly symmetrical facade, hipped roof, projecting central portion of the facade, and rectangular, double-hung windows reflect the Georgian Revival from the building. The main decorative element of the structure is the broad eaves and ornate brackets on the roof, dormers, and porch, which considerably lighten the plain walls and provide a Prairie School feeling. Other Prairie School elements are the horizontal emphasis in the prominent stone water-table and stringcourse and the large porch. A striking feature of the building is the use of color - with red brick walls and white stone trim.

Joseph Sparks, for whom Sparks Hall is named, was the first president of the college. He was appointed on June 15, 1910, the same day that the State Board of Education met in Chadron and selected the site of the first building. Sparks graduated from Nebraska Central College at Central City (a private institution, now defunct) in 1890. He served as city superintendent of schools in Greeley, Orleans, Fairmont, and Aurora, before his appointment as deputy in the office of State Superintendent of Public Instruction in 1905. While in that office, he sat on the committee of examiners for teachers' life certificates and had charge of the examinations for county teachers' certificates. This experience made him well qualified for the task of initiating a program of teacher education.