

2083

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received SEP 30 1988  
date entered

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

1. Name

historic District School No. 132

and/or common Debs Consolidated School

2. Location

street & number County Road 500

N/A not for publication

city, town Roosevelt Township X vicinity of Pinewood

zip code: 56664

state Minnesota

code 22 (MN)

county Beltrami

code 007

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Grisha George Hovsepian

street & number 230 Nurmi Drive

city, town Fort Lauderdale N/A vicinity of

state Florida 33301

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Beltrami County Courthouse, County Records Office

street & number Beltrami Avenue and Sixth Street

city, town Bemidji

state Minnesota 56601

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Beltrami County Historic Sites Survey

has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date August 1986

federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records State Historic Preservation Office - Minnesota Historical Society

city, town St. Paul

state Minnesota 55111

## 7. Description

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

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Situated in an open field in the rural, cross-roads community of Debs, Debs Consolidated School is a rectangular-plan, wood-framed, hip-roofed, two-story structure with concrete foundation, clapboard siding, corner boards, and composition-shingle roofing. The building's architectural detailing is restricted to its principal (west) facade, which is designed in a classical revival style. Displaying a frieze board below the cornice, this facade is dominated by monumental, paired porticos containing an oculus in the tympanum above panelled pilasters and twin, attenuated, Tuscan columns in antis. Perched on a stepped, concrete podium, each portico shelters a single-leaf wood door on the first-floor level and a tall, narrow window of 55 lights on the second-floor level. This window is capped by a bracketed, flat pediment. Flanked by a single window bay at each end, the porticos are separated by a three-window-bay central section featuring a bracketed, slightly projecting, false balcony that divides the first story from the second. The second-story windows are unified by a continuous, flat pediment, while those on the first story have single, flat pediments, as do the windows in the facade's end bays. All of these windows are shuttered, concealing the configuration of their sash. The window-head panels, false balcony, and door-head trim display vertical, beaded boards. Set forward on the roof, immediately above the central bay section, is a square bell tower resting on a flared base and capped by a pyramidal roof with a flag pole.

The building's north elevation contains a group of three, unadorned, shuttered windows on the first floor. The south elevation has a two-story, wood-framed "gallery" addition with a new patio door on the upper level and single-leaf wood door flanked by unadorned, shuttered windows on the lower level. The rear (east) facade has, on both stories, extended banks of plain, shuttered windows, which are partially obscured by a one-story, flat-roofed, wood-framed garage addition. Other modifications to the building's original condition include sheet-metal ventilators on the roof, new doors on the front facade, and a monochrome white paint scheme which at an unknown period replaced the building's original dark-color paint with light trim. None of these alterations significantly affects the building's architectural integrity.

This property consists of one contributing building.

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

**Specific dates** Ca. 1915

**Builder/Architect** Contractors: "The Lundmarks" (first names unknown)

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

Debs Consolidated School is architecturally significant as a rare, "carpentered" example of early-twentieth-century, classical revival, public architecture in rural, north-central Minnesota. (Criterion C)

Beltrami, Clearwater, and Hubbard Counties form a block of approximately 90 townships, covering roughly 3,000 square miles of predominantly rural territory in north-central Minnesota. Following the extinction of Indian title, this region was settled during the period 1890-1920, when lumber companies harvested the timber and farmers moved onto the cutover lands. Sparsely settled with few urban areas, the three counties, after the decline of lumbering about 1910, have traditionally relied on small-scale agriculture and tourism for their livelihoods. In the rural areas, the economies have never been robust, and local tax monies have always been in short supply for public improvements.

The two major types of public buildings in these rural townships are town halls and school buildings, which were often used interchangeably. Approximately 50 of these structures still survive from the initial period of settlement. Virtually all are simple, wood-framed, gable- or hip-roofed structures, which, except for an occasional bell tower, are entirely lacking in architectural ornament. The most striking exception is Debs Consolidated School, located in the rural, cross-roads community of Debs in Roosevelt Township in southwestern Beltrami County. Completed about 1915, only 13 years after Roosevelt Township was officially organized, the structure is an elaborate example of "carpentered" classical revival architecture. Local contractors, whom surviving sources identify only as "the Lundmarks," were apparently responsible for the design.

Since a number of local residents, fearful of tax increases, voiced "much opposition" to the building project, the construction budget was probably fairly modest, and it is, therefore, not surprising that ornamentation is restricted to the principal (west) facade. The degree and quality of the ornamentation, however, is truly remarkable, especially in contrast to the starkly utilitarian nature of the other, remaining, early-twentieth-century, rural, public buildings in the three-county area. The front facade features monumental, paired porticos containing an oculus in the tympanum above panelled pilasters and twin, attenuated, Tuscan columns in antis. Other classical revival detailing includes a frieze board below the cornice and bracketed, flat pediments above the windows. The "vernacular" nature of the design is evidenced by the incorporation of a somewhat peculiar, false balcony and the idiosyncratic use of vertical beaded boards in the balcony, window-head panels, and door-head trim. Although the circumstances surrounding the design's selection are no longer known, area residents and visitors alike seem to have been aware that Debs Consolidated School was an unusual building. A new teacher at the school in 1921, for example, clearly remembers that she was "very impressed when [she] saw . . . the colonial pillars in front." Serving both Roosevelt Township and the eastern part of neighboring Alaska Township, the school handled both upper and lower grades until the 1940s, when older students were bussed to high school in Bemidji.

(See continuation sheet.)

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Continuation sheet

Item number 8

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SIGNIFICANCE con't.

Debs Consolidated School remained in classroom use until 1970, when it was purchased by a private party and subsequently remodeled as a summer residence.<sup>4</sup> Apart from the alteration of the original paint scheme and the replacement of the original doors, the front facade appears to survive intact. Minor alterations to the south and east elevations have not significantly affected the building's integrity.

NOTES

1. For a concise, historical overview of Clearwater, Beltrami, and Hubbard Counties, see Harold T. Hagg, The Mississippi Headwaters Region (Bemidji, MN: Beltrami County Historical Society, 1986).
2. The data on surviving, public architecture in the three counties is derived from unpublished, field survey files compiled for the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office as a result of an historic properties survey of the region by Barbara Hightower and Jeffrey A. Hess in 1986. A published photograph, dated 1914, shows Debs School under construction; the building was opened to students in 1916. A completion date of "about 1915" therefore seems appropriate; see Roosevelt Township: Past and Present (Gonvick, MN: Richards Publishing Co., 1982), p. 19.
3. Roosevelt Township, pp. 19-20.
4. Roosevelt Township, pp. 25, 120. The same source (p. 19) contains a photograph of Debs School "shortly after it was finished," which is the basis for the original description of the building.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Historic Properties Survey Files of Beltrami, Clearwater, and Hubbard Counties, compiled for Minnesota Historic Preservation Office, Minnesota Historical Society by Barbara Hightower and Jeffrey A. Hess, unpublished, 1986.

Roosevelt Township: Past and Present. Convick, MN: Richards Publishing Co., 1982.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 2½ acres

Quadrangle name Debs Quadrangle

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

### UTM References

A 

1	5	3	4	0	4	2	0	5	2	8	8	3	9	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 nominated property occupies the northwest quarter of the northwest quarter of the northwest quarter of the northwest quarter of Section Fifteen (15), Township 149, Range 135. The boundary includes that area that has been historically associated with the property.

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

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jeffrey A. Hess

organization Jeffrey A. Hess, Historical Consultant date February 2, 1987

street & number 305 Grain Exchange Building telephone (612) 338-1987

city or town Minneapolis state MN 55415

## 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 National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Nina M. Archabal

Nina M. Archabal

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 9/21/88

### For NPS use only

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

John M. ...  
Keeper of the National Register

date 10/27/88

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration