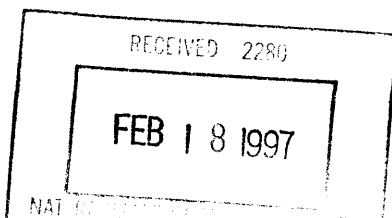


11253

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name: Superior School

other name/site number: Lower Elementary Grade School

2. Location

street & number: River Street

not for publication: n/a
vicinity: n/a

city/town: Superior

state: Montana code: MT county: Mineral code: 061 zip code: 59872

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally X statewide X locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

Montana State Historic Preservation Office

State or Federal agency or bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. 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

 see continuation sheet

 removed from the National Register

 see continuation sheet

 other (explain):

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Edson H. Beall 3/21/97

5. Classification

Ownership of Property: Public-local	Number of Resources within Property	
	Contributing	Noncontributing
Category of Property: Buildings		
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: n/a	<u> 2 </u>	___ building(s)
	___	___ sites
	___	___ structures
	___	___ objects
Name of related multiple property listing: n/a	<u> 2 </u>	___ TOTAL

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions:	Current Functions:
EDUCATION/School	INDUSTRY/Manufacturing facility
	VACANT

7. Description

Architectural Classification:	Materials:
LATE 19TH & 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/Colonial Revival	foundation: CONCRETE walls: BRICK roof: ASPHALT other: STONE

Narrative Description

The Superior School in Superior, Montana is a raised 2½-story brick building displaying a modified rectangular plan. It displays a combination of vernacular school building traditions with Colonial Revival influences. A central entry/bell tower with frame belfry dominates the front facade, which features symmetrical fenestration with 1/1 double hung sash windows, segmental arches, shaped stone lintels and brick sills. Windows and doors in this building are original, although most window units on the main level have been boarded closed, concealing the original units. There is a concrete foundation with a daylight basement. Asphalt shingles cover the low-pitched, hipped roof, and symmetrically-placed hipped dormers appear on all elevations. One interior and one exterior corbeled brick chimney also appear.

The front facade features a central, 3-staged bell tower that houses the main entrance to the building. This tower projects frontally from the west facade, and the upper stages of the tower tie, dormer-like, into the roof. The upper stages of this tower are frame, and the lower stage is composed of brick. A central pair of original 2-panel, 1-light wood double doors are placed mid-level between the basement and first story. This entrance features a large transom light and is accented by narrow, fixed 8-light vertical windows on either side. Above the entrance is a rectangular fixed window flanked by original square fixed windows. The frame second stage of the bell tower houses a series of three round-arched windows. The central window unit is larger than the two flanking windows and is composed of a fixed 8-light window with a fanlight transom. The flanking window units are paired 3-light casement windows. A keystone is set above the central round-arched window. The square frame belfry of the tower features a steep pyramidal roof accented by a metal ball and finial. The belfry is clad in horizontal and vertical wood paneling. Round-arched vents with wooden louvers open on each side of the belfry. A hipped dormer housing a pair of 3-over-2 double hung windows projects on each side of the tower. The second story of the school houses six 1-over-1 double hung windows with four-light transoms on each side of the central pavilion. These windows have been boarded closed. The daylight basement level of the building is illuminated by six 1-over-1 double hung windows on each side of the tower.

The north and south elevations of this building have been partially concealed by large, historic additions. Both of these elevations, however, originally featured a similar fenestration, involving two central double hung windows in the upper story and four central double hung windows in the daylight basement level. Each also features a large hipped dormer housing five 3-over-2 double hung

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windows. The north elevation features a 1-story, hipped addition constructed in 1925 that houses a large multi-purpose room, a kitchen and the gymnasium. This Craftsman-styled brick annex-addition features a hipped roof with exposed rafter tails. There is a central recessed entrance with a transom light. Two sets of three double hung sash windows with stone lintels and brick sills flank either side of the entrance. This addition features a modified T-shaped plan with the rear 2-story wing housing the school gymnasium. Paired sash windows appear on all elevations of the rear wing.

The south elevation displays a modern, 1947 classroom addition with a modified ell-shaped plan. This 1-story addition is composed of frame and reinforced concrete. Sets of modern metal multi-light fixed and hopper windows appear in an asymmetrical fashion, and a recessed entrance featuring a set of modern wood doors with a four-light transom appear on the south elevation. This addition was originally constructed to house the kindergarten, first and second grade classes, in addition to an administration and sick room.

The rear elevation of the Superior School building echoes the front facade, although it lacks the central tower and entrance. It instead features a central exterior corbeled brick chimney. Seven 1-over-1 double hung windows with 4-light transoms flank either side of the chimney in the second story while seven 1-over-1 double hung windows appear on each side on the daylight basement level.

Behind the school, a small utilitarian boiler building is located. Constructed of brick to match the school, it is historic and appears to be contemporaneous with the school. It is a single story high, with a gable roof. Six-pane fixed windows in wood frames illuminate the interior; each opening has a simple brick sill. The roof is covered with ribbed metal roofing, and the gable ends are finished with vertical tongue-in-groove boards. A tall metal chimney projects above the building.

Integrity

The Superior School retains tremendous integrity, extending to all original portions of the building, fenestration (windows are currently covered but intact), fabrics, design elements, and detailing. The interior as well, is beautifully preserved, original layout, interior finish details, gymnasium fixtures are all present. Upon entering the building, the school character is still very strong and clearly conveyed down to such details as wall mural decorations and signage.

While the addition in 1947 is not wholly compatible with the original design of the school, it is offset to the side and does not block the 1915 facade. In addition, the scale and design of the original 1915 school building and 1925 gymnasium are so strong and clear that the impact of the smaller addition is minimized. Minor alterations elsewhere -- connection between the school and the gym,

Lying adjacent to the Clark Fork River and the bridge that spans it, the Superior School is one of the most substantial buildings in Superior. It dominates the streetscape in Superior along with the Mineral County Courthouse, which is of similar age, scale and style. These two civic buildings mark the heart of Superior, establishing a strong architectural pattern and rhythm in the community, along with focusing community toward the town center.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria: A, C

Areas of Significance: Education, Architecture

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): n/a

Period(s) of Significance: 1915-1946

Significant Person(s): n/a

Significant Dates: 1915, 1925

Cultural Affiliation: n/a

Architect/Builder: Augustine, Charles

Narrative Statement of Significance

The Superior School is a historic property of much local significance. A 2½-story brick building, it was constructed in 1915 and 1916 by local builder Charles Augustine. The building was the first substantial public building constructed in the small mining/lumber town of Superior, Montana. At the time it was built, the school signified confidence in the permanence of the community, preceding the construction of the local county courthouse nearby. It housed Superior's elementary and secondary school students from its dedication in January, 1916 until its closure in 1995. As the first large school construction project in Superior, the building qualifies for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its associations with the development of education in Superior. The building gains statewide significance under Criterion C as an example of Colonial Revival style architecture. Built with functionality, rather than style, in mind, the Superior School illustrates a relatively simple variation of this style which achieved popularity in the 1910s and 1920s.

Background History

The town of Superior, Montana was established in approximately 1870 along the Mullan Road. Named for Captain John Mullan, who led a governmental expedition into the Rocky Mountain West in 1859 and 1860, the Mullan Road was constructed as a military wagon trail for northern settlers between Fort Benton, Montana and Walla Walla, Washington. With the completion of the road in 1860, travel became easier and more families began moving westward in search of fertile agricultural lands.¹ In addition, the road facilitated the gold rush in Montana, allowing prospectors to transport heavy equipment into the gold fields.

"Superior City" originally began as a rural post office for settlers along Cedar Creek in the Clark Fork River drainage. Located on the ranch of A.P. Johnston, the postal station consisted of Johnson's log house and barn. Although the Mullan Road brought settlers such as Johnston into the Clark Fork drainage, Mineral County was not largely settled until the discovery of gold in Cedar Creek in 1869.

French-Canadian prospectors Louis Barrette and B. Lanthier discovered the Louisville Bar in Cayuse Creek, a tributary in the Cedar Creek Canyon near the present site of Superior during the Fall of 1869. The strike sparked the gold rush that gave Mineral County its name and placed "Superior City" on the map.

Word reached Frenchtown within a few weeks of the find, and by early 1870 an estimated 3,000 men were wintering in Cedar Creek Canyon. Numerous small mining camps were established along Cedar Creek, including Louisville, Forest City and Mayville.² Superior appeared at the mouth of the creek. Because of its good location on the north side of the river along the Mullan Road, it survived the boom and bust of the gold rush in the Cedar Creek Canyon. With the demise of gold mining in the Superior area in the early 1880s, settlers turned to other industries such as timber and agriculture for sustenance. In 1892, a bridge was built across the Clark Fork River at Superior, and in 1906 the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railway was constructed through Superior, ensuring the town's survival.

A year before Superior's first bridge was completed, townspeople organized the area's first school district. The Superior School District #60 was created in 1891, and classes were purportedly held in a small log cabin on the north side of the Clark Fork River.

¹ Although the Mullan Road was not fully completed until 1863, it was usable by 1860.

² Louisville was the closest of these early mining camps to the present site of Superior. All three mining camps had been abandoned by the late 1880s.

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In 1893, a small frame school building was built to house the growing number of school-aged children who were moving into area homesteads. An 1892 city census indicated that there were almost ninety school-aged children in the Superior vicinity.

By 1903, the Superior School District had been reorganized and renamed School District #17 (now known as school district #03) and planning began for a larger school that would accommodate Superior's children, the numbers of which had continued to grow despite the relative demise of the mining industry in the area. Although several rural grade schools, including the one in Superior that was established in the early 1890s, existed throughout the area, none offered a high school curriculum for older students. In 1903, District #17 Trustees William McBride and Frank Gareau purchased a two-acre portion of the Niels P. Nielsen homestead on the south side of the Clark Fork River, sixty feet from its banks. In 1914, many sections of the original Nielsen homestead, including the acreage acquired by the school district, were annexed as the Eidell's Addition to the original townsite of Superior. Bonds to fund the construction of a large county high school building, complete with a "four-year accredited high school course of instruction..." were not passed until 1915.³

Local contractor Charles Augustine was hired in July, 1915 to build the new school house, which was completed at an estimated cost of \$10,000 in December. The high school curriculum was adopted during the fall of 1915, and school officials rented the basement of the local Methodist Church in Superior until the end of December, 1915 for their high school students. The school was dedicated on January 28, 1916, and the building housed a number of classrooms, a resource room, a teachers' work room, and guidance, speech and music rooms.

The Superior School was the only high school in Mineral County, and as such, it experienced growth and expansion problems as the county continued to grow. Two substantial construction projects were undertaken to enlarge the school in 1925 and 1947. The north-side 1925 addition added a multi-purpose room, kitchen and gymnasium to the facility. The south-side 1947 addition added six more classrooms, an administrative office and a sick room to the complex. Superior School was the first high school in Mineral County, and it remained in use as an educational facility for nearly eighty years, closing its doors in June, 1995.

The building retains a high level of architectural integrity, displaying one of the few examples of Colonial Revival school architecture in the state. Architectural detailing that defines the Colonial Revival style includes the symmetrical fenestration of double-hung sash windows, a central entrance with transom and sidelights, shallow moldings around the entrance that give it a simple, frontal appearance, a boxed roof-wall junction with little overhang, dormers, and masonry walls. The round-arched, multi-light windows in the second stage of the central pavilion are revived from the Adams style, popular in Eastern states during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

The Superior School is an excellent example of school building architecture. Its strong presence in the community expresses its importance to the educational development of Mineral County and reflects eighty years of service to the county and its children.

³ "High School at Superior." *The Mineral Independent*. 9/07/15, 1:1.

9. Major Bibliographic References

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
- Other -- Specify Repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: 2 acres

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	12	659840	5228820
B	12	659930	5228800
C	12	659840	5228730
D	12	659930	5228730

Legal Location (Township, Range & Section(s)): SW ¼ NW ¼ NE ¼ Sec. 34, T17N, R26W

Verbal Boundary Description

The Superior School is located in Block 3, Lots 2 & 3 of the Eidell's Addition of Superior, Montana.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries encompass the block occupied by the Superior School in the town of Superior, Montana.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Kim Morrison, Historian & Liz Gupton, Forest Service

organization: MT SHPO date: April, 1996

street & number: P.O. Box 201202 telephone: 406/444-7715

city or town: Helena state: MT zip code: 59620-1202

Property Owner

name/title: Superior School District #03

street & number: 410 Arizona Avenue telephone: (406)822-4851

city or town: Superior state: MT zip code: 59872

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The Mineral Independent. 7/22/15; 7/27/15; 8/31/15; 9/7/15; 10/22/15; 1/6/16; 2/3/16; 4/6/16; 6/1/16.

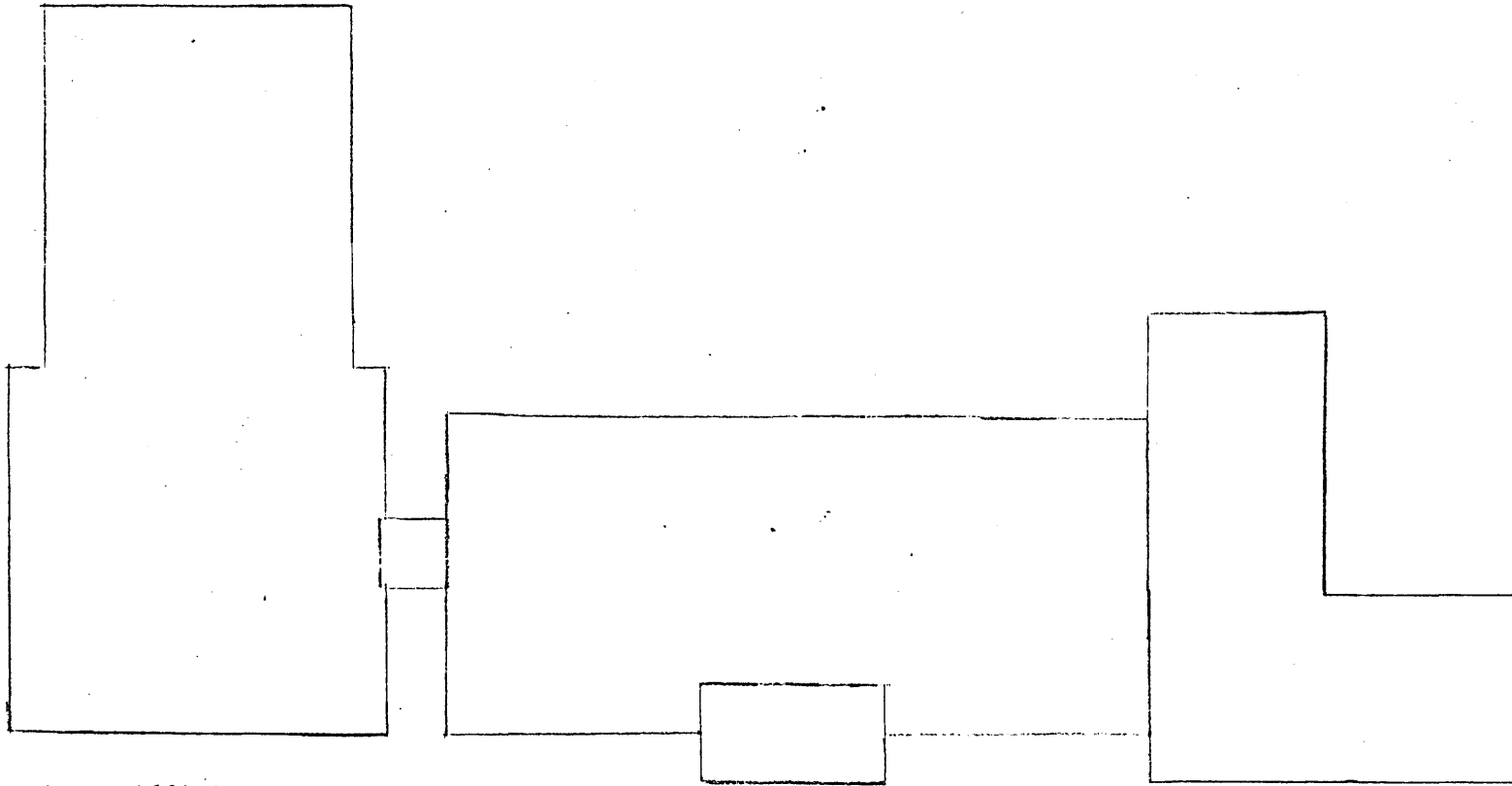
The Montana Historical Society of Mineral County: 118 Years of History. Superior, MT: Montana Historical Society of Mineral County, 1988.

Oakley, Verna. Untitled Memories. Unpublished. Vertical Files. Helena, MT: Montana Historical Society Library, n.d.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1918.

Teacher-Trustee-Parent Meeting. Program and Dedication of School Building at Superior, Montana. 1916.

Warranty Deed. Niels P. Nielsen to William McBride and Frank Gareau, 3/25/03. Missoula County Deeds. Deed Book Volume 31, Page 155.



Annex Addition
1925

Original School Building
1915

Classroom Addition
1947

**Superior School
Superior, Montana**