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DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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RECEIVED
AUG 2 1976
DATE ENTERED SEP 1 1976

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC Great Falls Central High School

AND/OR COMMON Paris Gibson Junior High School

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 1400 1st Avenue North
CITY, TOWN Great Falls VICINITY OF #2
STATE Montana CODE 30 COUNTY Cascade CODE 013

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY OWNERSHIP STATUS PRESENT USE
-DISTRICT X-PUBLIC -OCCUPIED -AGRICULTURE -MUSEUM
X-BUILDING(S) -PRIVATE X-UNOCCUPIED -COMMERCIAL -PARK
-STRUCTURE -BOTH -WORK IN PROGRESS X-EDUCATIONAL -PRIVATE RESIDENCE
-SITE PUBLIC ACQUISITION ACCESSIBLE -ENTERTAINMENT -RELIGIOUS
-OBJECT -IN PROCESS X-YES: RESTRICTED -GOVERNMENT -SCIENTIFIC
-BEING CONSIDERED -YES: UNRESTRICTED -INDUSTRIAL -TRANSPORTATION
-NO -MILITARY -OTHER:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Great Falls Public Schools

STREET & NUMBER 1100 Fourth Street South P. O. Box 2428

CITY, TOWN Great Falls VICINITY OF STATE Montana

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Cascade County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER 415 Second Avenue North

CITY, TOWN Great Falls STATE Montana

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Montana State Historic Sites Survey

DATE April 30, 1975 -FEDERAL X-STATE -COUNTY -LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Recreation and Parks Division, Dept. of Fish & Game, 1420 E. 6th Av.

CITY, TOWN Helena STATE Montana

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The massive two and one half story building on elevated basement was designed in what has been referred to as a modified Norman style. It is built of native gray sandstone. It has both square-headed windows and the typical Norman semi-circular window heads. The entry doorways of the front or north facade are recessed behind semi-circular arches. Finished stone is employed for the string courses above the basement and second floor windows and the remainder of the dressed walls are relatively rough-faced.

A central feature of the front facade is the large semi-circular turret-like projection. Originally the building had a tall square clock tower above the projection, which was topped by a pyramidal roof. Today, the steep cone-like roof of the turret abuts a gable roof instead of the tower, which was removed in 1916.

The thick loadbearing walls are slightly tapered to transmit the heavy load of the walls to the extremely thick foundation walls and footings. Reports indicate that the foundation walls vary in thickness from four feet to five feet, two inches. The loadbearing walls, both exterior and interior, extend sixteen feet down to shale rock. The steep roof features a corbelled cornice and gable ends which extend above the roof with small windows to light the attic area. Single dormers on the east and west sides have similar gable ends.

All woodwork on the main and top floors is solid oak and, with few exception the rooms show the original golden oak finish on the woodwork in excellent condition. All rooms are surrounded by a wainscot three feet high made of vertical cove moulding. Wide door casings with elaborate moulded caps surround the thick oak doors (approximately 2½ inches thick). The steps on the stairways are of full logs squared and finished with oak treads and risers.

All walls and ceilings are finished with plaster. The classrooms are fitted with continuous genuine slate blackboards on the partition walls. The windows are double-hung, usually one over one and occasionally two over one, and several of the original transome sash are still intact. The building was heated by steam and the ornate cast iron radiators are still in place. All rooms were also ventilated through the thick walls with chimney-like vents. These are covered with cast iron filigree grills, most with their original black finish, which compliments the oak woodwork. The hardware on the two principal floors is of heavy ornate cast brass; the door knobs are especially elegant.

At one time, a thirty foot square swimming pool was installed in the basement. It has since been drained, closed off and recently used for storage. In 1913, an addition (known informally as the New Building) was constructed to handle the increased number of students and in 1930, a new high school was built and Great Falls Central High School became the Paris Gibson Junior High.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1896

BUILDER/ARCHITECT McKay Bros./ William White

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Paris Gibson Junior High School is one of the best-preserved school structures of this era left in Montana and is named in honor of a towering figure in the development of the state.

Paris Gibson arrived in Montana from Minnesota in the 1870's and perceived the agricultural and industrial possibilities of the state. He was one of the first to introduce sheep ranching on a large scale to the region and was a founder of the Montana Woolgrowers Association. Impressed with the potential of the Great Falls of the Missouri as a power and industrial site, he founded the city of that name in 1883; much of his subsequent energy was directed towards its growth. Imbued with a profound faith in the value of education, he pushed for the early establishment of a city school system and served as Chairman of the School Board from 1885 to 1887. Gibson's enthusiasm for Great Falls influenced James J. Hill to route his St. Paul, Minnesota and Manitoba Railroad (subsequently the Great Northern and now part of the Burlington Northern system) through that city.

Gibson figured prominently in the Montana Constitutional Convention of 1889 and served as a State Senator. As U. S. Senator (1901-1905) he drafted the Reclamation Act of 1902, which established the U. S. Bureau of Reclamation.

In 1893, the city of Great Falls authorized the construction of a central high school. The devastating effects of the Silver Panic of that year, along with construction difficulties, prevented completion until 1896 and inflated costs from an estimated \$60,000 to an actual cost of \$98,881.

Originally designated Central High School, it became a junior high school in 1930 as the school system expanded, and was renamed for Paris Gibson who died in the late 1920's. The school was closed in 1975.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Minutes of the School Board, Great Falls, 1892-1899
 Great Falls Tribune, November 3, 1896
 Great Falls Tribune, October 24, 1971
 Great Falls Tribune, November 21, 1971

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY four acres
 UTM REFERENCES

A	1, 2	4 7 8 7, 7, 0	5, 2, 6, 1, 2, 1, 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE	John N. DeHaas, Jr, Architect; Susan W. Curtis, Historian; Fredric L. Quie, Architectural Historian	
ORGANIZATION	Recreation and Parks Division Department of Fish and Game	DATE February 27, 1976
STREET & NUMBER	1420 E. 6th Avenue	TELEPHONE (406) 449-3750
CITY OR TOWN	Helena	STATE Montana

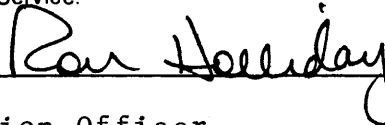
12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

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



TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE July 23, 1976

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
 ATTEST: 
 Keeper of the National Register


DATE 9/1/76

DATE 8-27-76