Duluth Central High School

Lake Avenue and Second Street

Duluth

Minnesota

1. NAME

COMMON:

Duluth Central High School

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:

Lake Avenue and Second Street

CITY OR TOWN:

Duluth

STATE:

Minnesota

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

(District) Building

Site Structure

Object

OWNERSHIP

Public Private Both

Public Acquisition:

In Progress

Being Considered

STATUS

Occupied

Unoccupied

Preservation work in progress

ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC

Yes

Restricted

Unrestricted

No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

Agricultural

Government

Park

Private Residence

Transportation

 Comments

Commercial

Industrial

Military

Religious

Other (Specify)

Educational

Entertainment

Museum

Scientific

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:

Independent School District No. 709

STREET AND NUMBER:

226 North First Avenue East

CITY OR TOWN:

Duluth

STATE:

Minnesota

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:

St. Louis County Courthouse Register of Deeds

STREET AND NUMBER:

Fifth Avenue West and First Street

CITY OR TOWN:

Duluth

STATE:

Minnesota

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

DATE OF SURVEY:

Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:

STATE:

CODE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

NOV 9 1972

27

St. Louis

137

FOR NPS USE ONLY

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

NOV 9 1972

27
### CONDITION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>(Check One)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deteriorated</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruins</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unexposed</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Altered</td>
<td>☑</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unaltered</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moved</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>Original Site</td>
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**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

The old Central High School was designed in 1892 by Palmer, Ball, and Hunt, Architects, and is one of the state's finest examples of Richardsonian Romanesque architecture. This massive, three-story structure of Lake Superior brown-stone is distinguished by a large and elaborately carved Syrian arch entrance at the base of its central tower which is set between two smaller turrets and rises to a height of nearly 210 feet. The rounded arches of the entrance are repeated in the many rows of windows, in the large stone wall dormers, and on the clock tower, with its huge illuminated glass dials. The building occupies an entire city block, about twenty feet above the street with irregular and oblique stairways leading up to the front entrance. The ground plan of the structure is that of an inverted "T".

The interior of Central High School was very progressive for its time. The basement housed the motive power and utility rooms, mechanical arts room and the ventilating and heating systems.

The first floor consisted of eleven 30'x33' classrooms; the offices of the Board of Education; and the library, a handsome room with a large brownstone fireplace. Large double stairways constructed of slate and iron led to the upper floors.

On the second floor were ten large classrooms. The 72'x104', two story auditorium retains its wood paneling of the wainscot, the balcony and the window frames. The decorative bands of carved wood, the bracketed cornice, and the cross-beamed ceiling also remain intact.

The laboratories, drafting room, gymnasium, music room, and manual training departments, including iron and woodworking; were located on the third floor. A museum containing collections of birds, mammals, reptiles, minerals and curios was located in the west wing.

Except for the auditorium and a few classrooms on the third floor which remain in near original condition, the interior of Central School has been greatly altered. The slate stairways were moved and enclosed within the ends of the main longitudinal hall was in order to add more classrooms and comply with fire regulations.

The second street facade remains as designed, except for the closing of the three arched doorways which were used as the
7. Description

main entrance. Modern chemistry and gymnasium additions to the rear are the only other exterior alterations. The building retains its slate roof.
### SIGNIFICANCE

<table>
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<tr>
<th>PERIOD</th>
<th>Pre-Columbian</th>
<th>16th Century</th>
<th>18th Century</th>
<th>20th Century</th>
<th>19th Century</th>
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**SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)**
- 1892

**AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE**
- [ ] Aboriginal
- [X] Prehistoric
- [ ] Historic
- [ ] Agriculture
- [X] Architecture
- [ ] Art
- [ ] Commerce
- [ ] Communications
- [ ] Conservation
- [ ] Education
- [X] Engineering
- [ ] Industry
- [ ] Invention
- [ ] Landscape Architecture
- [ ] Literature
- [ ] Military
- [ ] Music
- [ ] Political
- [ ] Religion/Philosophy
- [ ] Science
- [ ] Sculpture
- [ ] Social/Humanitarian
- [ ] Theater
- [ ] Transportation
- [ ] Urban Planning
- [ ] Other (Specify)

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

Central High was designed by Emmet S. Palmer, Lucien Hall, and Richard M. Hunt, very able eastern architects, the latter being the first American trained at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris. The local architects were Oliver Traphagen and Francis Fitzpatrick.

Old Central is a very fine example of that traditionally rich architectural style known as Romanesque, and is certainly the most outstanding structure of its kind to be found in northern Minnesota. The facade and tower present a totally pleasing design with exceptionally beautiful proportion and line. The vertical fenestration and tower are exceptionally well studied wherein particular consideration was taken due to the fact that the viewer would at all times be standing considerably below the building, resulting in a foreshortening of the verticals. Expert attention was also paid to the scale of the building. This was perfected in part through belt coursing and rustication of the beautiful stonework. The building, too, is skilfully sited on a full city block of hillside property of considerable slope.

Old Central with its imposing clock tower has long been a Duluth landmark. Its architectural merit and sound structural condition make it a worthy candidate for preservation and inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.
### 10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

**LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CORNER</th>
<th>LATITUDE (Degrees Minutes Seconds)</th>
<th>LONGITUDE (Degrees Minutes Seconds)</th>
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<tr>
<td>NW</td>
<td>46° 47' 21&quot;</td>
<td>92° 06' 00&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>NE</td>
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<tr>
<td>SE</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>SW</td>
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**APPARENT ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:** 2.754 acres

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATE</th>
<th>CODE</th>
<th>COUNTY</th>
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### 11. FORM PREPARED BY

**NAME AND TITLE:** Brooks Cavin, A.I.A.

**ORGANIZATION:** Brooks Cavin, Architects

**STREET AND NUMBER:** 117 Main Street Southeast

**CITY OR TOWN:** Minneapolis

**DATE:** June 20, 1972

### 12. STATE LIASON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

- National [ ]
- State [x]
- Local [ ]

**Name:** Russell W. Findley

**Title:** Director, Minn. Historical Society

**Date:** June 27, 1972

**CHIEF OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION CERTIFICATION:**

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

**Name:** Robert Van Steele

**Title:** Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

**Date:** 11/9/72

**KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER CERTIFICATION:**

**Name:** A. B. Jr.

**Title:** Keeper of The National Register

**Date:** 12/8/72
U.S.G.S. 7.5 Quadrangle
Duluth, Minnesota
1:24000 1953
Duluth Central High School

Latitude
46°47'21"

Longitude
92°06'00"

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS, USC&GS, and U.S. Lake Survey
Topography from aerial photographs by multiplex methods
Aerial photographs taken 1952. Field check 1953
Hydrography from U.S. Lake Survey Charts 96 and 966 (1:15 000) and 966 (1:15 000)
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Minnesota coordinate system, north zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 15, shown in blue
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown
Revisions shown in purple compiled in cooperation with
State of Minnesota from aerial photographs taken 1969
This information not field checked
Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas
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<th><strong>4. REQUIREMENTS</strong></th>
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<td>2. North arrow.</td>
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Duluth Central High School

Latitude
Degrees Minutes Seconds
46° 47' 21"

Longitude
Degrees Minutes Seconds
92° 06' 00"

Engineering Department - Duluth
Scale: 1" - 200'
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