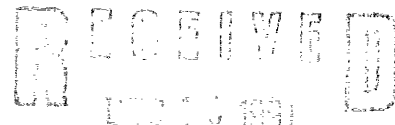


United States Department of the Interior National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

NATIONAL REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Minto School
other names/site number Walsh County Historical Society Museum

2. Location

street & number corner of Major Avenue and Third Street
city, town Minto
state North Dakota code ND county Walsh code 099 zip code 58261

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: public-local (checked)
Category of Property: building(s) (checked)
Number of Resources within Property: Contributing 1, Noncontributing 5 buildings, 1 structures, 6 Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: none

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 meets the National Register criteria.
Signature of certifying official: James E. Sperry, State Historic Preservation Officer (North Dakota)
Date: 12-10-91

In my opinion, the property meets the National Register criteria.
Signature of commenting or other official
Date

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:
[checked] entered in the National Register.
[] determined eligible for the National Register.
[] determined not eligible for the National Register.
[] removed from the National Register.
[] other, (explain):

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)
school

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)
museum

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Queen Anne

Romanesque

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick

walls brick

roof asphalt shingle

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

See continuation sheets.

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 7: 1

Description:

This nomination consists of one contributing building, the Minto School, with attached rear additions and six non-contributing elements moved on the site in the past 20 years, associated with the present Minto Museum, currently housed in the Minto School building. The Minto School is located in the northeastern portion of the town of Minto, northwest quarter of Section 31, Harrison Township, Walsh County, T156N R52W. The school building faces east on lots 1-12 (north half) of Block 11, Original Townsite at 323 Third Street.

The Minto School is a two and a half story brick structure of roughly rectangular proportions, measuring 62 feet by 70 feet. It was built in 1895 and is today the earliest remaining urban public school in Walsh County. The buff-colored brick was manufactured locally at the Minto brick yard.

The design includes a raised basement with face brick matching the exterior walls. The brick is laid in American bond. The asphalt-shingled roof is hipped and there are shed-roofed dormers facing in the four cardinal directions. The building retains original four-over-four wooden windows, but some of the openings are boarded up with plywood over the intact frames and sashes in order to provide wall space within for historical exhibits. Dormer windows are similarly boarded up over intact windows, except for the front (east) facade where two sets of dormers have exposed original windows. Dormer windows are one-over-one. Dormer walls and bell tower are wooden weatherboard.

The exterior of the building has wall surfaces which are both projecting and recessed on each of the four facades. Brick walls are decorated with horizontal brick belt courses running along the sills of the first and second story windows. Window lintels on all three floors are brick jack-arched. The main floors have a stylized drip molding of brick which is formed, in part, by the jack-arched window lintels. The upper walls under the eaves have a decorative corbelled brick frieze and a molded wooden cornice. At the corners of the building are slightly projecting brick piers, making the bulk of the wall surfaces slightly recessed. The front entrance is recessed within a tall round-arched opening decorated by four row lock brick courses. It has a Queen Anne style glass transom above the entrance and wooden storm doors. Original signage under the

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National Park Service

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Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 7: 2

tower windows and above the arched front entrance read, "Minto School 1895."

The building has excellent exterior integrity, save for the bell tower and the temporary boarding of the original windows. The top of the bell tower was severely deteriorated necessitating the removal of the upper open belfry and tall hipped roof with cresting and flagpole. This was done sometime before 1970 when the building was still used as a school. The tower is intact only to the original balustrade around the belfry. Another minor alteration is the lack of the original Queen Anne cap on the chimney.

Subsequent additions are on the rear and do not mar the over-all integrity of the school. To the rear of the building was added in 1925 a wood frame hipped-roofed lavatory building. This and the corridor to the Quonset are sheathed in asbestos siding. The corridor and Quonset, both 1950 additions, were attached at the rear of the 1925 lavatory building.

The interior originally had six "light and airy" classrooms, a library, a "neat recitation room," a full basement, "with large halls, convenient cloak rooms and large stairways."¹

Today the school layout has changed little. There is a flight of seven steps from the main entrance to the first floor. The hallway has an intact stairway leading to the second story. This hall leads to one classroom on the south side and two classrooms on the north side. Doors lead to the lavatories, rear Quonset addition, basement and exit. The classroom arrangement and layout on the second floor is similar, but contains the old library and administrative office. The third floor, which was completed around 1915, was built for three more classrooms, bringing the total to nine, and two storage rooms. Each of the first and second story classrooms had two coat closets, one for boys and one for girls.

The basement is brick and well-lighted from the raised basement windows. It contains a cement floor, lunch room, several storage rooms and the old coal room and furnace room. There is a small frame enclosure on the front of the building which shelters the exterior stairway to the basement.

Notable are the largely original materials which remain in the building. The original wide pine floors in the classrooms are intact as are the picture rails, plaster walls with lower beadboard wainscot, and all door and window molding. This molding is ribbed with rounded corner blocks and

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is painted white enamel. It is in excellent condition. The oak balustrade and newel-post post on the main stairway to the second floor is intact and in excellent condition as well. Because of water damage during the years it stood vacant, wood panels with wood strips have been applied to the damaged plaster ceilings and the upper half of hall walls. These applied materials mask the deteriorated condition of the plaster in these areas. Interior classroom doors are original and in excellent condition. They have an upper half with Queen Anne glass windows with small panes surrounding a large center pane, and with a three panelled lower half. The surrounding small panes in the upper half of the doors have been painted, but are otherwise undamaged.

Changes and updates of new materials to the Minto School have been well-documented. The building was renovated in 1925, but largely involved electrical and plumbing, moving the lavatories into an attached separate hipped-roofed building at the rear, adding a lunch room in the basement, and installing heavy brown linoleum to the entrance, stairs and hallways. The top floor was completed around 1915, but the earliest photos show the shed-roofed dormers. On the north side of the building, a round, patented tubular fire escape connected at the second and third stories replaced the original metal fire escape, possibly around 1925. A second story metal balcony from the original fire escape on the south side of the building remains.

In 1950, as a result of population pressures and new education demands, the connecting passage and Quonset hut was added to the rear. The Quonset measures 60 feet by 100 feet and was used as a gymnasium and auditorium for sporting and social events. It has a shed roofed addition on the south wall. When the school was connected to the city sewer and water systems in 1950, the lavatories were relocated and modernized and the fluorescent lighting was added.

The building ceased to operate as a school when it was replaced by a new school, built in 1969. Abandoned in 1970, the Minto School stood empty until 1973 when the Walsh County Historical Society obtained the building for a historical museum and began needed repairs. Despite temporary repairs to the roof in 1973, the building was completely re-roofed in 1976. When the building was empty, vandalism resulted in broken windows which let in rain and moisture loosening the plaster on ceilings and in the hallways. As a result, the ceilings and upper walls around both first and second floor hallways and staircase were panelled in wood panelling. In 1973, the lavatories were moved into the main building. Broken windows were reglazed. In 1975, the original pine floors were sanded and

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refinished. Electrical wiring has been updated. The present chain link fence was partially installed in 1970 and completed around the entire property in 1982.

Since 1973, the school property has been used for the Walsh County Historical Museum. Various structures have been moved in, but are arranged unobtrusively to the south and west (rear) of the school grounds. The accompanying sketch map indicates the current layout of the museum property, which, according to Stephanie Prepiora, is as follows:

- 1a. 1895 Minto School
- 1b. 1925 lavatory addition, now wild life exhibit
- 1c. 1950 corridor/ connector to Quonset
- 1d. 1950 Quonset addition (gym and auditorium)
- and 1e. south shed addition
2. work shop, moved in to site in 1990
3. Kilichowski cook car (once used to feed threshing crews)
4. 1990 "cosmos" or anti-gravity building in former granary
5. Forest River Township school, moved in May, 1976
6. Slominski log cabin, moved in May, 1976
7. Conway jail, moved in 1971.

Despite the presence of these later structures on the site, the Minto School retains integrity of design, materials, and setting. The later museum structures have minimal impact on the school property because they are placed to the side or rear and do not "read" as part of the original school property.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Education

Period of Significance

1895-1941

Significant Dates

1895

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

(a) John W. Ross, Grand Forks

(b) Anderson and Hunter, Grand Forks

asst. architect: Ole A. Braseth, Grand Forks

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

See continuation sheets.

See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior
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Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 8: 1Significance:

The Minto School is significant for Architecture under Criterion C as a regional example of an early school design of pioneer Grand Forks architect John W. Ross. Under Criterion A, it is the only remaining first-generation graded school left in Walsh County. Of the 125 schools in Walsh County in 1896, only seven were "graded;" that is, housed multiple grades divided into "departments," and had separate classrooms and teachers for each. The seven original graded schools were in the towns of Grafton, Park River, Minto, Ardock, Forest River, Oakwood, and Edinburg. Of these larger urban pre-1896 Walsh County schools, only the Minto school remains.

The period of significance for the Minto School extends from 1895 to 1941 the 50-year cut-off for the National Register program. The Minto School served as Minto's only public school for 75 years from 1895 until 1970 when it was replaced by a new school building. The original school district comprised twelve sections. When the Minto School closed in 1970, it served over 105 sections in the district. In this circumstance, it was unique within a large geographical area and the only graded school in the region. For most of its history as the only Minto School, it served as a place for social meetings and events as well as for school functions. Groups like the boy and girl scouts and numerous meetings and activities were held in the building.

John W. Ross is known as the first permanent full-time professional architect in Grand Forks. Taking up his practice in that city in 1880, he had an illustrious career throughout North Dakota until his death in 1914. During his years in practice, Ross designed many public buildings, including schools as noted by Clement Lounsberry in his history of North Dakota. An August, 1895, issue of The Record mentions specifically the schools at Minto, Minot, Williston, Hamilton, and Hallock which Ross designed.³ Unfortunately, Ross's obituary in the Grand Forks Herald does not mention his many commissions and no study has been done of the corpus of his architectural work.⁴ The 1910 Roosevelt School in Grand Forks was recently determined to have been a Ross design from the end of his career,⁵ and others will undoubtedly come to light when his work is studied.

Walsh County was formally organized in 1881 and its first permanent settlers were part of the First Dakota Boom. This was also the year that the Great Northern Railroad was built between Grand Forks and Grafton with Minto, a railroad town, established on that line. Newcomers took up homes

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first on the Red River, the Park and the Forest rivers. In 1881, there were an estimated 800 people in the county. The first Minto School was a small 15 x 30 foot frame building with a belfry built in 1882. School districts were organized as settlement proceeded. Most of the schools in Walsh County were rural one-room schoolhouses. In 1889, Walsh County had 103 school buildings and 37 organized towns and villages. In 1885, the county seat, Grafton, had its first graded school, a two story brick building with six large classrooms and two recitation rooms. By early 1896, The Record reported that Walsh County had 150 school houses and almost 6200 students enrolled between the ages of 6 and 20.⁶ The Minto School was a city school and one of only seven graded schools in Walsh County in 1896 along with those in: Grafton, Park River, Ardock, Forest River, Oakwood, and Edinburg. These graded schools were divided into four departments: Primary, Intermediate, Grammar, and High School. The Primary Department included grades one through three; the Intermediate, grades four through six; the Grammar, grades seven and eight; and High School, grades⁷ nine through eleven until the twelfth grade was added in the late 1890s.

Of the architecture of the Minto School, there are several interesting facts. It was noted in the description section that each facade of the Minto School has a recessed and a projecting portion to the walls. This arrangement, which was said to have met with the approval of all, was a way to fit three large and light classrooms on each floor. From the front hall, two classrooms opened off the north side of the hall. The projecting exterior wall on the north side of the building accommodated two cloak rooms. One large classroom opened on the south side of the hall and the cloak closet was at the rear in the projection on the west side of the building. The arrangement of rooms maximized the efficiency of the heating system because the cloak rooms were located on exterior walls, and the floor plan meant the classrooms had light from two directions on the north side and three directions on the south side. The plans for both first and second floors were the same. Also, the five roof dormers were an essential part of the architect's initial design as indicated by the addition of three additional classrooms and two storage rooms during the 1915 expansion. These elements would appear to indicate the practical approach of John W. Ross, a man who for the first seven years of his practice in North Dakota made his living as a contractor as well as an architect.

John W. Ross worked in concert with Ole A. Braseth, who was his building superintendent. The business association between Braseth and Ross is a newly discovered one. According to the Grafton News and Times, O. A. Braseth was the "assistant architect and building superintendent" on the Minto School. He is known to have been working still with Ross in 1910

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when the Roosevelt School was built on S. Chestnut Street in Grand Forks. Braseth has heretofore been known as the Grand Forks owner of a brick block on South Third Street in that city, and as owner ca. 1906 of the Red River Valley Brick Company of that city.

The building contractors of the Minto School were Anderson and Hunter of Grand Forks. The school was built for \$10,500, and had a \$1,500 steam heating system installed by Pond and Hassy Company of Minneapolis.¹⁰

The Minto school is built of Minto brick, but we could find nothing on this operation. It must have been a small operation. At least one source of information on brick in 1903 does not mention the Minto Brick Company, perhaps because the brick companies in Grand Forks overshadowed the Minto operation in fame and volume.¹¹ It is known, however, that the St. Stanislaus Church in Warsaw, Walsh County, also designed by John W. Ross, was also built of Minto brick in 1900. This National Register building is the only other building in the area known to have been built of the Minto brick. However, Minto had a fire in 1898 and at least the Minto Journal building at that time was rebuilt from Minto brick "obtained at the brickyard which was at the time flourishing."¹²

The Minto School has an apparently patented cylindrical metal fire escape on the north side of the building. It has no name and we have not seen a similar escape system in the upper midwest. This system may have been added in 1925, but we could find no mention of it in the local newspapers.

In preparing for this nomination, the author examined records and county histories to determine whether there were similar and comparable public school buildings in Walsh County. Clearly, rural wood-frame one room school houses do not fall into the same category as the multi-classroom brick urban schools. The next three oldest surviving school buildings in Walsh County cities and towns are at Pisek, Fordville, and Hoople. The Pisek School was built in 1913 and is a square two story brick building with fairly good integrity, except for window energy retrofitting. The Hoople School is a brick two story building with a flat room, soldier coursing as its major wall treatment, and a flat roof. It was built to replace the earlier 1915 school with belfry, brick walls, and deck roof in 1920 when the former burned down. It has a large single story addition to the south with extensions at the southwest rear. All windows are infilled with glass block and its style is typical of the late teens and twenties. The Fordville School is a two story brick structure with a hipped roof. It, too, has large additions to the west and east and originally dates from 1908. The Minto School is clearly the earliest of this group and the only one which represents the nineteenth century period in Walsh County public school design.¹³

United States Department of the Interior
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Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 8: 4Endnotes: for Sections 7 and 8:

- 1 "Completed." Walsh County Record, December 4, 1895.
- 2 "Walsh County," The Record, p. 10.
- 3 The Record (August, 1895) 1 (4): 35; " J. W. Ross " In:
Lounsberry, 3: 834, 835.
- 4 "Sudden Death of J. W. Ross." Grand Forks Daily Herald, December
12, 1914, p. 10.
- 5 Grand Forks School Board Minutes, 1900-1913, Series #1,
3: 368-374. Grand Forks public schools ca. 1900-1913 are
discussed in the 1991 Washington School, Grand Forks, nomination
by Norene Roberts.
- 6 "Walsh County." The Record (February-March, 1896) 1 (9): 9, 10,
16.
- 7 Ibid., p. 17; Walsh Heritage, 1: 281.
- 8 Grafton News and Times, August 15, 1895, p. 1.
- 9 Roberts, Norene. Multiple Resource Nomination, Grand Forks,
1981; Grafton News and Times, August 15, 1895, p. 1.
- 10 "Minto Public School, 1900, pp. 27, 28; "Completed," Walsh
County Record, December 4, 1895, p. 1.
- 11 "Mineral Resources of North Dakota," The Gateway Magazine.
(November 1908)2 (8): 8-12.
- 12 Walsh Heritage 3: 280, 658.
- 13 Walsh Heritage 1: 346; 4: 946, 947.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheets

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 # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

State Historical Society of North Dakota

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of property less than one acre

UTM References

A

1	4
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5	3	4	9	9	4	5
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 Zone Easting Northing

C

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B

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 Zone Easting Northing

D

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The north half of block 11, Original Townsite, Minto, ND, comprising lots 1-12.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the north half of block 11 (lots 1-12) which have been historically associated with the property.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Dr. Norene Roberts and Stephanie Prepiora	date	March 15, 1991
organization	Historical Research, Inc.	telephone	(612) 560-4348
street & number	7800 Tessman Drive	state	MN
city or town	Minneapolis	zip code	55445

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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 9: 1

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- "City of Hoople." Walsh Heritage. Vol. 3. Grafton: Morgan Publishing Co. , 1976, pp. 437-438.
- Grand Forks School Board Minutes, 1900-1913. Series 1. Vol. 3, pp. 368-374, July 25, 1910-October 4, 1910, Special Collections, Chester Fritz Library, UND, Grand Forks, North Dakota.
- Grafton News and Times, August 15, 1895, p. 1; October 3, 1895, p. 1; September 5, 1895, p. 1.
- "History of Fordville School." Walsh Heritage. Vol. 4. Grafton: Morgan Publishing Co., 1976, pp. 946-947.
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- "A Manual of the Minto Public School. Minto, N.D. 1900." Minto: Journal Printers, 1900.
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- Prepiora, Stephanie. "Minto School or Walsh County Historical Museum." Typescript, 5 pp. On file with the author, Minto, N.D.
- Prepiora, Stephanie. "Museum Curator Tells of Growth of Historical Complex at Minto." Walsh County Historical Society Newsletter (December, 1976) 3 (1): 4,5.
- Prepiora, Stephanie. "Walsh County Historical Museum." Walsh Heritage. Vol. 4. Grafton: Morgan Publishing Co., 1976, pp. 1540-1542.
- Roberts, Norene. Multiple Resource Nomination of Grand Forks, North Dakota, 1981. On file: Special Collections, Chester Fritz Library, UND, Grand Forks, North Dakota.
- "J. W. Ross, Architect." The Record. (August 1895) Fargo, N.D. 1 (4):25.

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National Park Service

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Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 9: 2

"William H. Ross." In Clement A. Lounsberry, North Dakota: A History and People. 3 Vols. Chicago: S. J. Clark Publishing Company, 1917.
3: 834, 835.

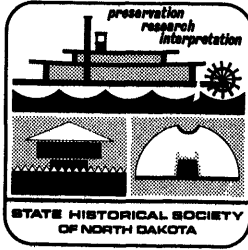
"Rushford Township [Pisek]." Walsh Heritage. Vol. 2. Grafton: Morgan Publishing Co., 1976, p. 644.

Schanilec, Joan. "County Museum Report." Walsh County Historical Society Newsletter. (January 1990), p. 4.

"Sudden Death of J. W. Ross." Obituary. Grand Forks Daily Herald,
December 12, 1914.

"Walsh County." The Record. Fargo, N.D. (February-March, 1896)
1 (9): 9, 10, 16, 17.

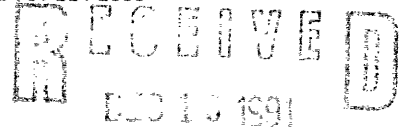
Walsh Heritage. 4 Vols. Grafton: Morgan Publishing Co., 1976.



State Historical Society

of north dakota (STATE HISTORICAL BOARD)

NORTH DAKOTA HERITAGE CENTER, BISMARCK, N.D. 58505
TELEPHONE 701-224-2666



December 11, 1991

Ms. Carol Shull
Keeper of the National Register
National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service
United States Department of the Interior
P. O. Box 37127
W434
Washington, DC 20243

NATIONAL
REGISTER

Dear Ms. Shull:

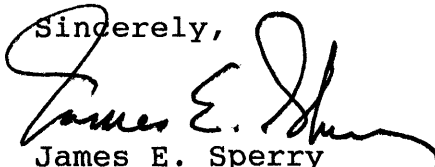
Enclosed please find one completed and documented nomination form for the Minto School, Minto, Walsh County, North Dakota.

The property has been reviewed by the North Dakota State Historic Preservation Review Board, who after reviewing the historical, architectural, and archeological facts pertaining to the property and after apply the criteria for eligibility to it agreed that the criteria were met and recommended that the property be nominated.

The property owners have been notified by letter of the proposed nomination action and invited to comment.

If you have any questions about the nomination please feel free to contact Lauren McCroskey of our staff at (701)224-2672.

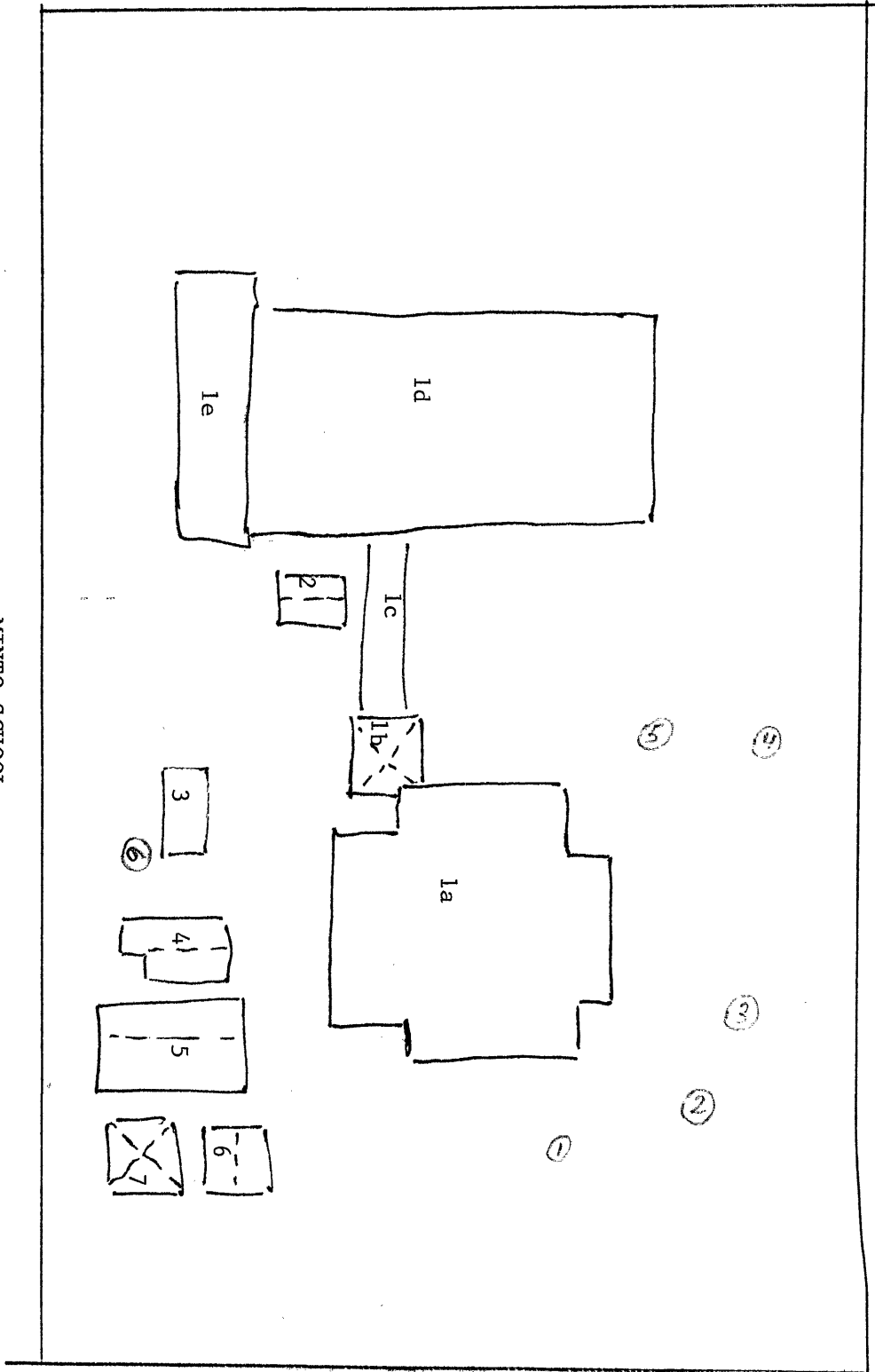
Sincerely,



James E. Sperry
State Historic Preservation Officer
(North Dakota)

LM/je
Enclosures

Major Avenue



MINTO SCHOOL

Third Street



1" = approx. 40'

- 1a. Minto School (1895)
- 1b. 1925 lavatory addition
- 1c. 1950 corridor
- 1d. 1950 Quonset hut
- 1e. shed addition
- 2. 1990 workshop
- 3. Kilichowski cook cae
- 4. 1990 "cosmos" anti-gravity building
- 5. Forest River township school
- 6. Slominski log cabin
- 7. Conway jail