



SOUTH DAKOTA STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Department of Tourism and State Development

900 Governors Drive | Pierre, SD 57501-2217
Phone 605-773-3458 | Fax 605-773-6041 | www.history.sd.gov

9 July 2010

Rapid City Historic Preservation Commission
300 6th Street
Rapid City SD 57701

Dear Commission

The State Historic Preservation Office is pleased to inform you that the National Park Service, U. S. Department of the Interior, listed the following properties on the National Register of Historic Places.

Rapid City High School (aka Dakota Middle School), Rapid City, Pennington County

The National Register of Historic Places was created by the United States government to recognize properties which contribute to the prehistoric and historic development of our localities, states, and nation. Through the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, each state participates in the identification and recognition of these important sites. In this way, we preserve the visible remnants of our country's heritage for future generations.

Thank you for your contribution to the preservation of the history of South Dakota and our nation.

Sincerely,

Jay D. Vogt
State Historic Preservation Officer

RECEIVED

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**Rapid City Growth
Management Department**



Department of
Tourism & State
Development

Office of Tourism TravelSD.com
Governor's Office of Economic Development SDreadytowork.com
Tribal Government Relations SDtribalrelations.com
Arts Council artscouncil.sd.gov
State Historical Society history.sd.gov
Housing Development Authority SDHDA.org

2010
initiative

2010initiative.com

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

1. Name of Property

historic name Rapid City High School

other names/site number Rapid City Central High School, Dakota Middle School

2. Location

street & number 615 Columbus Street not for publication

city or town Rapid City vicinity

state South Dakota code SD county Pennington code 103 zip code 57701

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 at the following level(s) of significance:

 national statewide x local

Signature of certifying official/Title _____

Date _____

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government _____

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

Signature of commenting official _____

Date _____

Title _____

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

 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 _____

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

Rapid City High School, now known as Dakota Middle School, is located at 615 Columbus Street at the intersection of Sixth and Columbus Streets. The school building is being nominated to the National Register under Criterion A and Criterion C. It is the last in a series of schools built on this site and the only public high school in the city until a second public high school was completed in 1969. The nominated property includes only the Rapid City High School building. The other buildings on this site including a newer gymnasium, three annexes, a garage, a shop building and a power plant, are being excluded from the nominated area due to their age and/or lack of historic integrity.

Narrative Description

Setting

Rapid City High School is located three blocks from Rapid City's downtown historic commercial district, and is surrounded by a mix of commercial and residential development as well as churches. The building sits slightly above the street level and it is built into the hillside behind it. It is surrounded on three sides by mostly flat terrain. Sitting back approximately 15 feet from the street, it is separated from the street by a sidewalk and small lawn. This setting gives it a place of prominence in the area.

The school is located in the center of a site that encompasses an area equivalent to two-city blocks. The main elevation faces north towards the downtown district and because the school is built into the hillside, the first and second floors of the south elevation, are below ground making the ground level on the south elevation at the third floor of the building. On this level and adjacent to the building was once an athletic field. The garage and the annex buildings now occupy this area south of the school. The shop building, also located at this same level, sits slightly behind and to the west of the school. The power plant sits west of the school. There is access to the rear of the building for maintenance and delivery along with parking for school personnel. The newer gymnasium is located to the east of the school.

General Characteristics

Rapid City High School is an impressive four-story building that is an excellent example of Beaux-Arts Classicism/American Renaissance architecture. The building is essentially rectangular in overall shape and essentially symmetrical in design. The presence of light wells and a portion of the east wing provide for a slightly irregular footprint. It is constructed of reinforced concrete with a foundation of concrete. The building was constructed in two phases, the east wing in 1923, and the central and west sections in 1936-37.

Exterior description

The building is of concrete and steel construction with a veneer of Kasota stone, a form of limestone, from Kasota, Minnesota and red brick both laid in the running bond pattern. The foundation is stepped out allowing for a slight slope away from the first floor windowsills. Kasota stone veneer wraps around the building from the ground level to the sills of the second story windows on three sides of the building. As the rear of the building sits into the hillside, only the third and fourth floors appear on the south elevation. All other windows have sills of Kasota stone. The remainder of the building is red brick veneer with the exception of the light wells where yellow brick has been used. There is a belt course of Kasota stone above the fourth floor windows on three sides of the building. Kasota stone caps the parapet on all four elevations. The large metal cornice sits above dentil molding of Kasota stone on three sides of the building. With the exception of nine windows on the south elevation that have been replaced with glass block, all of the buildings original six-over-one double hung windows have been replaced by aluminum exterior/interior frame and sash storefront windows consisting of a mapes panel on the top, a glass panel in the middle, and an out-swing awning on the bottom. The roof is flat with a slight slope allowing for drainage through a built-in gutter system with openings that appear in the dentil molding under the large metal cornice. Modern security lights have been installed above all exterior access doors.

Interior description

A high degree of historic fabric remains throughout the entire interior of the building. The most public areas of the building are the vestibule, lobby and auditorium. Completed by a crew of Italian artists, ornamental plastering is used in the creation of the mascarons found in the auditorium. Decorative molding, including egg and dart, acanthus leaf and dentil, appear in various combinations with classical molding bring the characteristics of Beaux-Arts to the interior of the building.

Rapid City High School encompasses at total 1,314,384 square feet. Much thought was given to its design and construction. At the time it was built, it was one of the finest educational buildings in South Dakota and modern in every aspect. Even though the building was considered fireproof, fire doors were installed on both sides of the central stair tower as well as the southeast and southwest stair towers on all four floors and it was equipped with the latest fire alarm system. It was built to last, but it was also built with the productivity of its students in mind. The best commercial grade terrazzo linoleum was used throughout. The building was designed to benefit from natural light and shades were ordered to be placed in 242 of its windows for control of that light. The largest air washer in the state, at that time, washed and heated the air before being sent to rooms, each of which had a separate control. Separate connections and controls were also extended to the auditorium and gymnasium. Valve controls were installed in the coach's office to prevent accidental scalding in the shower rooms.

The building's east and west wings flank a central section where the two-story auditorium and two-story gymnasium are located. The hallways on all four floors in the east wing are double-loaded corridors. The hallway of the first floor of the west wing is a double-loaded corridor. The hallways on the remaining floors of the west wing have classrooms that face out. Opposite the classrooms, light is provided to the hallways on these floors from windows in the light well. With the exception of a portion of the first floor, where the administration offices and the cafeteria are located, all floors of the east and west wings of the building are comprised of classrooms, storage rooms, bathrooms and lockers. Bathrooms are in the same location on all four floors with the girl's bathrooms located in the east wing and the boy's in the west. The building was once connected by a corridor to the Coolidge Building. The Coolidge Building was damaged by fire in 1970 and subsequently torn down. Access to the corridor leading to the Coolidge building was at the north end of the west wing on the first floor.

Dropped ceilings with fluorescent lights have been installed throughout the hallways, classrooms, offices and bathrooms of the building. Most of the classrooms and offices have the original wood flooring and baseboards. A few of the classrooms have had either carpet or linoleum installed over the wood. Walls are of painted plaster and the original hallway trim molding, either chair rail height or higher, is intact throughout the building. The 700 original lockers have been replaced with modern lockers. Most all of the original doors have been replaced with modern doors and their transoms enclosed with sheetrock and painted. The original door jams and interior window frames remain. Classrooms retain their original blackboards although some have been covered with whiteboard.

Stair towers, located in the lobby and at the southeast and southwest corners, provide access to all of the upper levels. The design of the central stair tower is intact with the exception of the second floor where the half wall of the stairwell has been enclosed to create a storage room. The remainder of the stair tower is in original condition with wooden banisters and trim. All other stair towers remain in original condition. Most have their original metal handrails. Located at the south end of the hallway on the west wing is the ADA elevator that services all four floors. A master clock links the clock systems together and operates the class bell system.

The outside doors open to a central vestibule containing the original five identical two-wide, two-high authentic uneven divided light inside doors that open to the lobby. Above the doors are the original four-wide, two-high authentic uneven divided light transoms with wood exterior/interior frame. The walls of the vestibule are tall recessed wood wainscot panels with wood trim and decorative wood brackets. Cornice, crown, cove and ceiling molding in various combinations and designs, including egg and dart and acanthus, decorate the ceiling. New fluorescent lights have been installed in the vestibule.

The central vestibule opens to the lobby where the staircases of the main stair tower to the upper levels immediately flank on both sides. Large acanthus leaf decorated brackets appear above the stairway openings. Wainscot, in the same pattern found in the vestibule, lines the lobby. The walls of the stairwell are also lined with wainscot but only as far as the immediate landing. On one side of the lobby are two original ticket windows that remain in use today. Original brass bars cover the openings. Directly across the lobby from the ticket windows, wainscot and brass panels house a furnace room giving the lobby a sense of symmetry. The elaborate ceiling decoration of the vestibule is carried through to the lobby.

Through the lobby, past the ticket windows, are hallways that extend to the east and west wings. Large double doors designed as fire doors separate the hallways from the lobby. The wainscot lined walls of the lobby end at the double doors. The east wing of the first floor is and always has been home to the cafeteria. The rest of the wing is made up of

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The Rapid City High School building is being nominated to the National Register under Criterion A in the areas of Education and Social History. It is being nominated under Criterion C in the area of Architecture. The period of significance is from 1923 to 1960. The level of significance is local.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

CRITERION A

The Rapid City High School is significant in the area of Education for its role in the Rapid City public school system. When construction began on the building in 1922, it was originally intended for use as the new high school, but when it was ready for occupancy in January 1923, the school board opted to move the junior high students out of the existing high school building and into the new building. It was the first time that Rapid City had a school building dedicated only to junior high students. After the remainder of the building was constructed in 1936-1937, the building's use switched with the high school students occupying the new building and the junior high students moving back to the older building. From 1937 until December 1969, this building served as Rapid City's only public high school. Due to the increased population in the city, a second public high school (Steven's High School) was built and following Thanksgiving in 1969, nearly half of the student population began attending classes at the new high school.

Rapid City's first school, in 1877, was a small private school held in a log building near the center of town. The first public school in town was established in 1878; classes were held in rented building and were taught by Edward A. Brown. By 1880, the census records show that there were over 100 school-aged children in Rapid City.ⁱ At that time, a church located on Columbus Street between 6th and 7th Streets was rented for use as the public school. Rapid City was incorporated in 1882 and work began on a new high school building, located behind the rented church building. This high school, a Second Empire style building, cost \$12,000 and was touted as "one of the best school buildings in the Hills and an honor to the people of Rapid City." As the city's population grew, so did the need for additional schools. Grade schools included the first, second and third ward schools, as well as Lincoln School (1908) and Garfield School (1910).ⁱⁱ In 1913, work began on a new high school building, located in front of the 1883 building on the site of the old church rented for classes in the 1880s. This building, originally known as the Rapid City High School and renamed the Coolidge High School, was a large modern building, which included several of the principles advanced by the Progressive reformers hoping to improve schools and educational experiences.ⁱⁱⁱ

As the population continued to grow, the need for additional classroom space continued to grow as well. By about 1920, the city began to plan for the construction of another new high school, this one intended to be constructed in three phases, and to allow for the division of secondary students into high school and junior high school divisions. The city contracted the firm of Perkins & McWayne to design the new school and the first phases was completed in 1922. The design embraced many of the notions of the "high school movement," which saw the mission of the public high school to "insure for all citizens a place in the economy" with a specialized academic and vocational curricula. Spaces within the high schools included science laboratories, home economic facilities, industrial education shops, and lecture halls; often these spaces were organized around a central auditorium.^{iv} By the time the first phase, the east wing, was complete in 1923, the school board had decided to use it as the junior high school. Nonetheless, with its completion in 1936-1937, the building, designed as a modern high school, began its long service as the Rapid City High School.

ⁱ Jeffrey V. Beuchler, *City of Rapid City Historic Context Planning Document* (Rapid City Historic Preservation Commission, 1989), 15.

ⁱⁱ David B. Miller. *Gateway to the Hills: An Illustrated History of Rapid City* (Northridge, CA: Windsor Publications, Inc., 1985), 22, 53.

ⁱⁱⁱ For information about the Progressive reformers, refer to Mark Elliot and Melissa Dirr, *Schools in South Dakota: An Educational Experience* (Pierre, SD: South Dakota State Historic Preservation Office, n.d.), 10-12.

^{iv} Mark Elliot and Melissa Dirr, *Schools in South Dakota: An Educational Experience* (Pierre, SD: South Dakota State Historic Preservation Office, n.d.), 24.

detailed cornice with dentils, masonry (brick) walls, windows (on the first story) topped with flat (also called jack or straight) arches, and the use of a light-colored stone veneer on the first floor, giving the appearance of a rusticated base.

The use of Beaux Arts design in Rapid City was limited. In addition to this school, there are only three other buildings that exemplify the style. The Pennington County Courthouse and the old Federal Building both illustrate examples of the "high" version of the style. The old Rapid City Public Library illustrates the use of the American Renaissance version of the style. Only one other school in Rapid City, the building that was known as the Coolidge High School, was of Beaux-Arts design. With its demolition, the building being nominated is the only example of the style used in school architecture in Rapid City.

Although the building is not being nominated in association with the architects who designed it, it is noteworthy to mention that the Rapid City High School is one of only two buildings in Rapid City designed by the noted South Dakota architectural firm of Perkins and McWayne. Robert Perkins and Albert McWayne formed their firm in 1918 with Perkins serving as the principal architect and McWayne as the principal engineer. For 36 years the firm designed hundreds of buildings throughout South Dakota, southwestern Minnesota and northwestern Iowa. Although they designed private residences, a large portion of their work was public buildings – schools, courthouses, city halls, armories and auditoriums. They were strongly influenced by the Beaux Arts movement, which is reflected in the design of many of their public buildings. In addition to the Rapid City High School building, they also designed the Wilson School (elementary) in Rapid City. Perkins retired from the firm in 1954, at which time Earl McLaughlin became the principal architect. The firm of McWayne and McLaughlin continued until 1976.^{ix}

The building's engineering is also of note (although it is not being nominated under this area of significance). The building's functional design brought new technology to South Dakota in the construction of the gymnasium. Situated in the center of the building, this two-story gymnasium is located on the third floor of the building directly above the two-story auditorium on the first floor. To prevent noise and vibrations from being transmitted through the gym floor into the auditorium, the space between the two was engineered as a "flexible floor" system. The central portion of the building is supported by five 16-ton steel beams measuring 100 feet in length. Above these spans is a three-quarter inch layer of felt-padded board over which is poured a two-inch layer of concrete. Embedded in the concrete are metal clips, or springs, on which the sub-flooring for the gym rests. These springs are flexible and designed to "absorb" noise and vibrations so that events could occur in the gym at the same time that events were held in the auditorium.^x

In addition to the significance of this design, the installation of the large steel beams resulted in the largest derrick ever erected (at that time) in South Dakota. The derrick, from Omaha Steel & Iron Works, had a 110-foot boom and weighed 33,000 pounds. It had a 35-horse power gas engine to lift the 12-ton steel girders and a 40-horse power engine to lift the 16-ton steel girders. The girders, the largest used in the state (at that time) were 100 feet in length and five feet high. The larger girders run north-and-south to support the gym floor; the smaller girders support the rest of the upper floors of the building. In addition to using this derrick to set the girders, it was used to place the roof trusses, which are 99 feet in length and weigh 7½ tons each.^{xi}

The building is also associated with Morris Adelstein and the Northwestern Engineering Company of Rapid City. Adelstein was a prominent businessman whose enterprises included the Harney Lumber Company and the Auto Bankers (a consumer loan business), in addition to Northwestern Engineering. He employed a large workforce and had a reputation for success. He was active in several civic organizations, including the Elks, the Masons, the Shriners, and the American Legion. Morris and his wife, Bertha, were active in the Jewish community in Rapid City and respected for their contributions in observing Jewish traditions.^{xii} Northwestern Engineering Company served as the builder and general contractor of the 1936-37 portion of the Rapid City High School. According to Northwestern Engineering Company, this is one of only two buildings constructed by the company (the other was the Administration Building at the SD School of Mines), which was primarily a road building company.

^{ix} www.SiouxlandMuseums.com accessed October 5, 2009; David Erpstad & David Wood, Building South Dakota (Pierre, SD: South Dakota State Historical Society Press, 1997).

^x Rapid City Journal, May 10, 1937, 7-10.

^{xi} Rapid City Journal, April 11, 1936, 4.

^{xii} Howard Shaff & Audrey K. Shaff, Paving the Way: The Life of Morris E. Adelstein (Keystone, SD: Permelia Publishing, no date), 143-145.

pounds of cement for the project), T. G. Scholl (linoleum floors and window shades), Sweeney Hardware (paint and window and door hardware), and Kasota Stone of Kasota, Minnesota (the limestone facing on the building. The cost of the entire project was about \$365,000.^{xviii}

Although the building was complete in May 1937, classes were not held there until the start of fall semester. At that time, the high school students were moved into the new building and the junior high students returned to classes in the Coolidge building.

When constructed, only the first three floors were finished. It was not until 1948 that the fourth floor was finished and used for classroom space. In 1953, the shop building was constructed near the southwest corner of the building, tucked between the old Washington elementary school (on its west) and the old Coolidge school (on its north). This building has been repeatedly remodeled and adapted for various uses over time. In 1967, a new boys gymnasium was constructed as a separate building located to the east of the high school.^{xix}

In 1969, a second public high school was opened in Rapid City. Located on the west side of town, Stevens High School was constructed to accommodate the growing student population. The new school was occupied following Thanksgiving in 1969 and at that time, the Rapid City High School officially became known as Rapid City Central High School.

The old Washington and Coolidge school buildings were victim to fire and demolition in 1970. By the early 1970s, Central High School was deemed inadequate for continued use as a high school. The population was still growing and classes were spread out to several buildings near the school and downtown. In 1974, the city passed a bond measure to build a new Central High School at a site north of downtown on the north side of Rapid Creek. The Class of 1976 was the last to graduate from the Rapid City High School building; classes in the new Central High School began in the fall of 1976.

In 1977, the old Rapid City High School building was remodeled for use as a junior high school. At that time, the windows were replaced, the skylights were removed and the building was "modernized" and renamed Dakota Junior High School. Today it continues to serve as a school, housing the Dakota Middle School.

^{xviii} Rapid City Journal, May 10, 1937, 7-10.

^{xix} Rapid City Public School records and blueprints.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary is the footprint of the historic school.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title J. Kessloff and M. Dennis
organization _____ date October 2009
street & number 300 6th Street telephone 605-394-4120
city or town Rapid City state SD zip code 57701
e-mail _____

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Rapid City High School

Rapid City High School
Name of Property

Pennington, South Dakota
County and State

- 15 of 17: **RapidCityHighSchool_PenningtonCounty_SouthDakota_015.TIF**
Classroom converted to overflow cafeteria space; original blackboard and bulletin board, original window and baseboard trim intact; linoleum tile and drop ceiling modifications
- 16 of 17: **RapidCityHighSchool_PenningtonCounty_SouthDakota_016.TIF**
Cafeteria; rectangular posts are part of original east wing exterior west wall which was opened up when the 1936 construction began
- 17 of 17: **RapidCityHighSchool_PenningtonCounty_SouthDakota_017.TIF**
Central stairwell, original terrazzo flooring, wooden banisters and metal handrails

Property Owner:

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Rapid City Public Schools

street & number 300 6th Street telephone 605-394-4031

city or town Rapid City state SD zip code 57701

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.











