

INVENTORY SHEET FOR GROUP NOMINATIONS: IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY, BOISE, IDAHO

NOMINATION: Historic Resources of Paris (Partial Inventory: Architecture)
 SITE NAME: Paris Public School (Paris, N. 2. 11) SITE # 75
 LOCATION: Main and First Street North, Paris, Idaho
 OWNER'S NAME AND ADDRESS: Independent School District #2, Paris, Idaho 83261
 QUADRANGLE AND SCALE: Paris, 7.5 minute ACREAGE: less than one
 VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION: Nomination includes Paris Elementary School and property on
which it stands: lots 6 and 7, block 13, Paris Townsite.
 UTM(S): 12/4, 67, 30/46, 75, 30
 DATE OR PERIOD: 1918 EVALUATED LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: Local
 AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: architecture, education
 DESCRIPTION: Good condition unaltered original site

The Paris Public School is a provincial prairie-style structure of red brick trimmed with concrete and metal. It is one long story tall with a centered main entrance and classrooms arranged around a central gymnasium. The ceiling of the gymnasium has been lowered, but it was designed to be lit by an inset clerestory section centered lengthwise in the lateral block. The clerestory, too, is crossed by a slightly lower blind attic section which runs forward to the front of the building and gives additional height to the central bay.

The rooflines of both the upper and lower sections are extended in broad, flat, boxed eaves, underfaced with pressed tin. A band of stucco runs under the eaves. Under this band, the fabric down to the pebbly-stuccoed foundation is smooth brick, the bulk of it outset in concrete-capped pilasters which separate the banks of windows. The whole of the front elevation is five bays wide, on either side of the tall, slightly outset entrance bay. Flanking bays are framed by broad pilasters and trisected by narrow ones, resulting in a wide central section containing three tall windows and narrow side sections containing one each. Upper sections of the windows are divided into six tall lights, lower sections into two square ones. Concrete sills and lintels run between the pilasters. The building is four bays deep, with the two inner side bays filled with banks of windows and the outer, un-fenestrated ones articulated by outset bricks and squares of concrete in a simple rectangular design.

Applied, non-structural decorative material, in the form of small metal panels in geometric shapes, is an important secondary feature of the surface treatment of the building. A square panel with a diamond-shaped overlay is set against the stucco over each of the large pilasters in the subsidiary bays. On the central bay, where the stucco band is elevated above the main roofline, a diamond-in-square device is centered over the door, with crest-like devices on either side and along the lateral side of the "attic". These panels are elaborated with lattice-like ornament. Below the attic level, which has further and rather odd enrichment in the form of a row of dentils just under the eaveline, the pair of double doors, multi-light transom, and chain-supported marquee of the entry bay are framed by pairs of pilasters enclosing tall, narrow sidelights.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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Paris Public School

SIGNIFICANCE:

The Paris Public School is architecturally significant as Paris' best example of the prairie style and for its connection with Salt Lake City architect Richard C. Watkins, a prolific designer of provincial schools in Utah. The school was built to replace the old Emerson School, a two-story plant of the 'nineties. The Bear Lake County school board expressed an adamant preference in 1917 for a one-story school, a form which "spares anxiety, preserves health, secures better school works, saves money and life.... It has a 'homey feeling,' it is less stiff and conventional and allows greater latitude in design as exemplified in the bungalow home."¹

Watkins' low design with its characteristic wide eaves and simple decoration was repeated in several variations elsewhere in the Valley. Of that group, the Paris Public School is by far the most elegant and the most "prairie". Its style corresponded well with the "modern" horizontally-oriented commercial development further up Main Street, the Browning Block and Hotel Paris (sites #74 and #76). In addition, the school is located close to Paris' other noticeably prairie-style structure, the Les Shepherd bungalow of 1910. H.R. Shepherd, a local builder, designed that house and was the general contractor eight years later on this \$35,000 grade school. It joined secondary-level Fielding Academy (site #48) in providing up-to-date and close-to-home education for Paris' children. Its future as an institution in the town is increasingly uncertain.

1

Paris Post, 18 March 1918.



Historic Resources of Paris (Partial Inventory:
Architecture)

Paris Public School, site #75

Main Street at East First Street North,
Paris, Bear Lake County, Idaho

Photographer: Patricia Wright
May, 1979

Negative on file at:
Idaho State Historical Society
Boise, Idaho

View from southwest

Photograph 1 of 1