

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

KT 3052

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. 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 entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

### 1. Name of Property

Historic name Thorp Grade School  
Other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Location

street & number 10831 N. Thorp HWY not for publication  
city or town Thorp vicinity  
State Washington code WA county Kittitas code 037 zip code 98946

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. (  See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] 6-3-09  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

WASHINGTON STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. (  See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

<input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> other (explain:)	_____	_____

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- Private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not incl. previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Non-Contributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		Total

**Name of related multiple property listing:**

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

N/A

Rural Public Schools in Washington from Early Settlement to 1945.

**6. Functions or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION: School

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION: School

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS:

Colonial Revival

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls BRICK

roof ASPHALT

other WOOD, GLASS

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property.)

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

**8. Statement of Significance****Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property.) SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

**9. Major Bibliographical References****Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.) SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

**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 Engineering
- Record# \_\_\_\_\_

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

EDUCATION

**Period of Significance**

1936

**Significant Dates**

1936

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

**Cultural Affiliation****Architect/Builder**

Maloney, John W. (Architect)

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

**Name of repository:**

Ellensburg Public Library

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreege of Property** Less than one acre

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM References on a continuation sheet.)

1	<input type="text" value="10"/> Zone	<input type="text" value="6"/> <input type="text" value="76"/> <input type="text" value="547"/> Easting	<input type="text" value="52"/> <input type="text" value="15"/> <input type="text" value="454"/> Northing	3	<input type="text"/> Zone	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> Easting	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> Northing
2	<input type="text"/> Zone	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> Easting	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> Northing	4	<input type="text"/> Zone	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> Easting	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> Northing

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property.)

See continuation sheet.

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

See continuation sheet.

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Tanner Dotzauer/ VP, TMTHPS Board  
 organization Thorp Mill Town Historic Preservation Society date 3 October 2008  
 street & number 11640 North Thorp Highway telephone (509) 944-6140  
 city or town Thorp state WA zip code 98946

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets****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.

A **Assessors map** for Thorp School District #400 9parcel (#165933).

**Photographs**

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

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

name Thorp School District 400 CO: Jim Hainer, Superintendent  
 street & number 10831 N Thorp HWY telephone (509) 964-2107  
 city or town Thorp state WA zip code 98946

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### **NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION**

Built in 1936, the Thorp Grade School is located on the west side of North Thorp Highway in the north end of the un-incorporated town of Thorp, in Kittitas County, Washington. With little alteration the grade school retains excellent integrity in its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association as an historic rural schoolhouse built in upper Kittitas County.

### **CURRENT APPEARANCE & CONDITION**

#### Site

Identified in Kittitas County as parcel number 165933, the Thorp Grade School is located near the center of the northeastern quarter of Section 11, Township 18, Range 17 and is owned by Thorp School District # 400. The parcel of land on which the grade school is located forms a south facing elongated triangle consisting of just over six acres. The grade school sits on less than one acre near the southern tip of the Thorp School property, and to the west of North Thorp Highway, which borders the east side of the property. The west side of the property is lined by farm fields, while the northern and southern edges of the property are hemmed in by residences. The grade school is sited on the northern edge of the traditional commercial and residential core of the rural town of Thorp. To the north of the grade school on the Thorp School District property is the Thorp High School (not part of this nomination). A grass lawn surrounds the grade school, with two 50-year old blue spruce trees framing the entrance to the school.

A small gravel parking lot to the South of the grade school provides parking for district busses. Just to the west of the small bus parking lot is a wood shiplap building that acts as a bus maintenance and storage facility (not part of this nomination). A cement path extends from the entrance of the grade school to the sidewalk, which runs along the eastern edge of the property and connects both schools. To the rear of the grade school are with a number of play structures and a concrete slab tennis/play court.

#### Exterior

The grade school forms a nearly perfect rectangular footprint. The front and rear of the of the grade school measuring 159 feet while the northern and southern end measure 121 feet. A small lower gable front forms an entrance. The north and south ends of the façade are set off by symmetrical east facing gables integrated into the

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north-south-running roofline. The west-facing rear of the grade school is dominated by the brick exterior wall of the gymnasium, the fuel storage house for the boiler, and the back portions of the two east-west wings. A prominent feature of the grade school is the multi-colored red brickwork, which is made up of variegated orange, red and brown hued bricks. Laid in a common bond, each seventh row boasts a header course. The grade school has three interlacing gabled rooflines, one north-south running and two east-west running roofline on each end of the building. Each of the gabled rooflines are covered with composition shingles and are accented with shallow boxed-in eaves and simple cornice returns. The central portion of the roof, covering the gymnasium, is distinguished by a barrel-arched asphalt roof that has been painted silver. Symmetrical fenestration patterns help create formality and identify the building as a schoolhouse. Features that contribute to the façade symmetry include a center front entrance, two matching gabled ends and a series of multi-paned double-hung, 6-over-9 wood-sash windows.

### Main Façade

Facing east, the main façade of the grade school is distinguished by a symmetrical design, with a center-projecting lower gable and two larger projecting gables on both the north and the south ends of the building. The central front-facing gable forms the entrance to the building, while the two larger front-facing gables delineate the outlines of the east-west running classrooms. Four columns of striated decorative brickwork outline the two larger front gables on the north and south ends of the building. In the central gable are the full-light modern doors of the entrance encased in classic woodwork that has been painted white. Above the entrance is a semicircular fanlight window. The entire doorway and window are inset in an arch of decorative brickwork with a large sandstone keystone. Flanking the front entrance on each side is a row of four 6-over-9 multi-paned, double-hung wood-sash windows. Another set of four 6-over-9 multi-paned, double-hung wood-sash windows is located in each of the front-facing cross gables on the north and south ends of the building. At the base of each window sill a series of bricks form an extended ledge. A six-inch ribbon of concrete forms the foundation with a raised six-by eight-foot concrete pad in front of the entrance with two steps leading up to it.

### North, South, and West Elevations

The north elevation of the grade school is adjacent to the high school building (not included in this National Register application), and features the building's

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symmetrical patterning and multi-colored face bricks seen on the East side. In the center of the north elevation is a set of four 6-over-9 multi-paned, double-hung, wood-sash windows. Flanking this set of 6-over-9 windows on each side is an additional 6-over-6 multi-paned, double-hung, wood-sash window.

Like the north elevation, the south elevation is dominated by the building's symmetrical fenestration patterns and brickwork. Unlike the north elevation though, the south elevation has a row of eight 6-over-9 multi-paned, double-hung, wood-sash windows and no smaller 6-over-6 windows.

The west elevation is a more complex mix of rooflines; doors and windows, yet symmetrical patterning and multi-colored brickwork still dominate the rear of the building. The most prominent feature of the west elevation is the back wall of the gymnasium with its arched silver roof. The two story gym structure is divided into five bays separated by full height brick pilasters. A row of six 4-over-2 multi-paned, double-hung wood-sash windows on the lower portion provides light to the boys and girls locker rooms. The upper windows have been infilled with plywood. On the north and south ends of the west elevation are the gabled rooflines of the classroom wings that wrap around the gymnasium. A door in each of the north and south gables leads into the main hallway of the grade school. A concrete handicap ramp connects to the rear hallway entrance of the north gable. Each gabled section also contains a set of two 6-over-6 multi-paned, double-hung wood-sash window providing light for the bathrooms. Next to the south gable is a flat roofed section of building that protrudes out and provides for fuel storage area according to the original blue prints.

### Interior

The main floor of the grade school features six classrooms, teachers lounge, kitchen, separate boys and girls restrooms, gymnasium and a stage. The entire main floor is connected by a large "U" shaped hallway that wraps around the central gymnasium. The classrooms, kitchen, lounge and bathrooms line the outer edges of the north, south and west faces of the building. Each classroom is flooded by natural light that shines through rows of tall windows. The walls of the classrooms and central hallway are constructed of lathe and sand-textured plaster. The ceilings in the classrooms and main hallway are twelve feet high. The main entrance vestibule has a ceiling height of just over fourteen feet extending into the front facing hipped roofline. The

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floors are made of vertical-grained fir, and the woodwork is varnished fir. The classrooms retain original chalkboards with chalk-rails. Original cloak closets with coat hooks are located in each classroom. Vertical sliding pocket doors are used to cover the cloak closets. Classic schoolhouse light fixtures are located in the hallway in front of pivoted transom windows above half light wooden classroom doors. The gymnasium and stage fill the center of the "U" shaped hallway and classrooms on the main floor. The ceiling in the gymnasium is eighteen feet high with an exposed rafter barrel-vaulted roof above. In the south wall of the gymnasium are the stage and chair bins. On the west wall of the gymnasium are permanent bleachers made of varnished planks of fir. Flanking the bleaches on each side is a set of stairs that lead to the basement level. Under the bleachers in the northwest corner of the basement is the girls locker room containing a sports equipment storage area, showers, restroom facilities and changing bench. Under the bleachers in the central portion of the basement is the boys locker room containing showers, restroom facilities and a changing bench. Both the boys and girls locker forms are now used for storage. The southwest corner of the basement contains the boiler room, maintenance office and fuel storage area.

### **ORIGINAL APPEARANCE & MODIFICATIONS**

Per the original plans, alterations to Thorp Grade School building can be determined are minimal. They include the addition of a concrete handicap ramp to the preexisting concrete steps in the northwest corner of the building, and a replacement of the original wooden entrance doors with modern full-light, metal, weatherproof doors. In the 1960s or 1970s, the cedar shingles covering the roof were replaced with composite shingles. In the interior minor cosmetic changes have been to surfaces such as installing carpet over many of the floors in the classrooms and wood paneling over some of the plaster walls of the hallway. In summary, Thorp Grade School is in excellent condition and has had only minor exterior and interior changes, which have not affected the architectural integrity or architectural significance of the building.



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### SUMMARY STATEMENT

Located in the middle of Kittitas County, the community of Thorp sits at the head of a narrowing valley with the Yakima River flowing past to the east. The Thorp Grade School built in 1936 was strategically placed to serve the educational needs of the children of the central Kittitas Valley. The grade school building is one of the oldest and best preserved "rural brick schoolhouses" in Kittitas County. Over the grade school's seventy-two year history it has not only provided a location for the education of thousands of children living in the central Kittitas Valley, but also has been a place for social gatherings including dances, sporting events, community meetings, and the all-school Thorp class reunions. The ability of the Thorp community to preserve and maintain in working order the Thorp Grade School is evidence of the citizens' long-standing commitment to education and community development. Associated with the evolution of public education in Kittitas County and Washington State, the Thorp Grade School reflects early 20<sup>th</sup> Century construction practices advocated for statewide public schools, including fire resistant building materials and preferred school design for classrooms.

The Thorp Grade School's Colonial Revival architectural styling reflects the conservative end of eclectic spectrum approach taken by its architect John W. Maloney in his career during the 1930s. Maloney, who four years earlier had designed in the city of Yakima the A.E. Larson's building, an eleven-story Art-Deco masterpiece and the city's first skyscraper, went on to become one of Washington State's most accomplished Modernist architects. In Kittitas County, the Thorp Grade School is one of the best and last surviving examples of the historic building types, "rural brick schoolhouse" and meets the registration requirements described in the National Register Multiple Property Documentation (MPD), for *Rural Public schools in Washington from Early Settlement in 1945*. Historically and architecturally significant in the areas of "education" and "architecture" during its period of significance, which is the date of its construction 1936, the Thorp Grade School is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C.

### HISTORICAL CONTEXT

#### ***Rural Public Schools in Washington State***

Permanent American settlement began in Washington State as early as the 1830s and stretched east to the Kittitas County area by 1868. Schools in the early years, throughout the 1870s and into the 1880s, were often held first in someone's cabin,

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and later in one-room wooden buildings built specifically as schools. During the 1880s, the first multi-class schools were built in Ellensburg. After railroads were built through the region in the 1880s, settlement further increased, and educational opportunities improved for the children of rural Kittitas County.

The *Rural Public Schools in Washington from Early Settlement to 1945 MPD*, chronicles the progression of early schoolhouses and public education in Washington State, and reports that "more than any other historic rural building type, the historic schoolhouse represents the cultural heritage of the surrounding community" (p. F-3). The MPD explains that:

"Often the first, sometimes the only, and probably the most important public building on the rural landscape, the schoolhouse served at once as a local reflection of the evolving common school system and a center of community life. [School] districts were established shortly after initial settlement, and construction of the first and succeeding schools were important milestones in community history. In addition to its role as a center of education, the schoolhouse was frequently the site of public assemblies, civic celebrations, church services, and other important events. But most importantly, the schoolhouse reflected the widespread belief in the value of universal education (p.F-1)."

According to the MPD, in 1877 and 1878 a territorial Board of Education was established along with a format for the first graded schools. A recommended course of study was outlined, with division of grades into primary (grades 1 and 2), intermediate (grades 3, 4, 5) grammar (6 and 7), and high school (grades 8 and 9). The system established the graded progression of academic studies which characterizes public education today (p. E-40).

The MPD states that even with legislation and the systemic organization of school districts and graded school formats, most rural schools remained un-graded in the 1870s and 1880s. However, by the time Washington was granted statehood in 1889, the condition and organization of rural schools had improved dramatically. Graded school formats with established curricula were widely implemented, and early, primitively constructed schools were gradually replaced by frame construction and, increasingly in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, by brick construction to meet demands for fire retardant building materials (p. E-4).

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"Consolidation" and "union schools" were two mechanisms that were created and provided by the State for the development of schools in less populated districts. The colloquial term "union schools" was used collectively to define graded schools (usually at the high school level) which were built to accommodate students from a cluster of small rural communities that served two or more districts.

Consolidation was used, especially in the 1930s, on a wider scale where many districts combined resources and became one large school district. The MPD explains that:

"As the State imposed more sophisticated educational requirements, and as transportation improved, consolidation accelerated. Many small district schools were usurped by larger facilities that accommodated more students and offered more diverse programs. But, during the Great Depression, as some school districts curtailed construction of consolidated facilities, the Works Progress Administration (WPA) assisted on building a last group of distinctive rural public schools. (p.F-4).<sup>17</sup>

### ***The Rural Community of Thorp***

The town of Thorp, Washington, is located in the Kittitas Valley on the Eastern slopes of the Cascade Mountains. Thorp sits at the head of the lower Kittitas Valley where the hills crowd in and cause the wind to whistle through town. Being at the head of the lower valley means it sits on the edge of an ecological transition zone where the bunch grass of the Great Columbia Plain gives way to the pines of the Cascade Mountains. Thorp traditionally had a relatively diverse agricultural economy including Timothy hay, alfalfa, orchards, cattle, sheep, dairy and lumber. Fifteen miles to the West of Thorp are the mining towns of Cle Elum and Roslyn, where residents of Thorp would bring their extra goods to sell. Eight miles to the East of Thorp is the county seat of Ellensburg where residents of Thorp would travel to pick up what they couldn't find in their little town.

In the 1870s the area that would become Thorp was known as Pleasant Grove and was part of Yakima County, Washington territory.<sup>18</sup> Pleasant Grove established a post office and a small school district on the west-side of the Yakima River. Despite being one of the earliest locations in Kittitas County to be settled, Pleasant Grove would remain sparsely populated for the next decade, with cattle ranching as the primary occupation.

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By the early 1880s farming was beginning to take hold in the central Kittitas Valley and the open range area began to shrink. In 1880 the Pleasant Grove post office was moved close to where a small commercial center was beginning to form with the establishment of a sawmill and, three years later, a gristmill.<sup>iii</sup> This new settlement soon changed its name to Oren and hoped for the eventual establishment of a depot as the Northern Pacific had made its intentions clear that it would soon come through the Kittitas valley close to where Oren was located.

By the spring of 1887 the Northern Pacific Railroad had completed its Cascade Branch through the Kittitas Valley, connecting the agricultural region of the Columbia Basin with Tacoma and Pacific markets. After the Northern Pacific passed through the valley, a spur track was added to drop mail near the Oren gristmill. But like the establishment of so many rural towns across the American West, Oren's development ultimately depended on the railroad's establishment of a depot, which finally occurred in 1890 a half-mile east of the old post office of Oren. The Northern Pacific's red depot was named Thorp after one of the region's most accomplished pioneers, Fielden Mortimor Thorp who first settled the Yakima Valley before becoming one of the first families in the Kittitas in the late 1869.

With the establishment of the Thorp depot, the seed of the rural town of Thorp was sewn. Soon the Oren Post Office moved close to the depot and its name changed to Thorp, the town was officially platted and residential and commercial districts were formed.<sup>iv</sup> By 1901 an Ellensburg newspaper wrote about Thorp:

"The little village of Thorp, nine miles up the road, is one of the nicest little places in Central Washington. It is quiet, no saloons to mar the pleasure of the inhabitants, has a good church, a good public school building, a sawmill and a good flouring mill, both of which are operated by waterpower, a manufacturing establishment- land roller and box factory, and in fact you can get about all the accommodations in Thorp you can get in many towns of much larger population. We are glad thorp is in Kittitas County."<sup>v</sup>

During Thorp's first thirty to forty years, its population would not reach much more than 400 residents. Though its small population never forced it to become an incorporated town, Thorp's economy continued to remain steady. To this day it is still largely dependent on its agricultural products including potatoes, apples, Timothy hay and lumber.

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In the late 1920s and 1930's, Thorp's economy and population would receive a boost despite the nation's slide in to the Great Depression. Starting in 1928, Thorp became one of the headquarters for the Bureau of Reclamation's Kittitas Division of the Yakima Project.<sup>vi</sup> Locally known as the Highline Canal, the Bureau's irrigation project would increase the total land under irrigation in Kittitas County from 30,000 acres to 102,000 acres.<sup>vii</sup> By 1932 hundreds of acres of newly irrigated land became available around the rural community of Thorp. A federally assisted settlement plan hoped to bring in some 500 new families to settle on Kittitas County agricultural land. As a result from 1928 to 1937 Thorp's total student enrollment almost doubled to nearly 220 students.

With the close of the Northern Pacific Railroad depot in the 1950's and the introduction of the interstate highway in the 1960s, the downtown core of Thorp dwindled. While Thorp still continues to have a strong sense of identity, most of this is now derived by its ability to maintain an independent school district, a new post office, and the county's first fire department.

### ***Thorp School District #9***

When District 9 of Yakima County in Washington Territory was formed, those who petitioned for its creation would have had no way of knowing that they were part of creating the first government school district in what was to become Kittitas County in 1883. With the sending of a letter to the Yakima Superintendent of Schools some fifty miles to the East, the Thorp school district got its start:

"April the 5. 1874.

Mr. F. P. Marks sir I have not received the order  
for July appoiton of 1873. due the district number 9  
and we aske your assistance in geting it. [sic]

W. H. Crockett<sup>viii</sup>"

This letter, from W. H. Crockett, is the earliest known letter to mention School District #9. From its content, it seems that W. H. Crockett is inquiring if the formation of District #9 had been approved. In letters that would follow it appears that the new district was approved, but that almost immediately a group of residents were petitioning to split off the southern portion of the district. It is this southern portion of District 9 that would form the foundation of the future Thorp School

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District.

On January 11<sup>th</sup> of 1875 a petition to divide District #9 was received by the Yakima County superintendent of schools.<sup>ix</sup> Twelve members of a small livestock and farming community of Pleasant Grove prayed that the superintendent would allow them to separate from what they referred to as the "Thorpe District." Included in this list was Fielding Mortimer Thorp, a stern pioneer character whose restless nature made him a founding pioneer of both Yakima and Kittitas County. Perhaps more importantly to this story he is also the man who the future town of Thorp was named after.<sup>x</sup>

The boundaries that would separate the southern section of District #9 from its northern neighbor were a point of some contention for the next five years. The confusion was settled in January of 1880 when George W. Parrish, Supt. of Yakima Schools, granted the formation of District #10 which encompassed the area surrounding the Splawn School on Taneum Creek. The formerly southern section of District #9 at that time became District #9 entirely.

Where school was held in the new District #9 during the years 1875-1885 is not entirely clear. But in 1885, then seven year old Glen Mason arrived in the upper Kittitas Valley and recalls that school for District #9 was held in a one-room log school on the ranch of Jim McCollough's in the upper valley.

On November 7, 1887 District #9 bought a roughly one-acre piece of property from William Andrew Forgey. This new piece of property located today near the intersection of Thorp Cemetery and Sister's Road is where District #9's next schoolhouse would be built. Between 1887 and 1891, a new school was built for District #9 on this property. The schoolhouse was known in the surrounding community as the "Mills School".<sup>xi</sup>

The construction of the Mills Schoolhouse for District #9 would have made it stand apart from any of the old log schools that were still common in other rural district. Its exterior was not logs or even rough-cut boards, but finely fitted and painted shiplap siding. The building was constructed as one large room 24 feet wide by 36 feet long, with fourteen-foot high ceilings. It would have been a schoolhouse that the district and the surrounding community could be proud of.

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During the 1890's the population of school age children in Kittitas County was growing rapidly. According to the Kittitas County Superintendent's Annual Report for 1891, there were 1,770 children enrolled in county schools. By 1895 the number of enrolled students had increased to 2,408. This represented a total increase of 638 students with 200 arriving just in the last year before 1895. In response to these population pressures, districts were expanding and converging; and new ones were being formed. By the late 1890's Kittitas had fifty-one separate school districts.<sup>xii</sup>

After the town of Thorp was officially platted in July of 1895 residents of the Thorp School District voted to move the Mill's Schoolhouse a half mile closer to the newly formed town. The idea of moving the schoolhouse was rejected by those who lived closer to the Mill's schoolhouse and a dispute followed. In order to prevent the school from being moved District #46 was formed, cutting Thorp off from a schoolhouse. The new town of Thorp and District # 9 would go three years without a proper school building.

### ***Thorp Schools Built in 1900 and 1910***

In the Spring of 1900 just months before the fresh enrolment of 99 students were to arrive at its door step, the first Thorp Schoolhouse was finished. Located a block west of town, it had room to grow.<sup>xiii</sup> The school itself was a white one-story, two-room schoolhouse; with its dimensions being 46x50 feet.

In 1904, District #46 (which had split eight years previously from District #9) reunified with District #9, becoming the first consolidated school district in Kittitas County. The newly formed District #27 also became a "Union School" with a fully graded high school.<sup>xiv</sup> In 1910 the original two-room schoolhouse was moved back and a new two-story schoolhouse was added on to the front of it. The new school had a seating capacity for 200 students.

### ***Thorp School District Continues to Consolidate***

Over the next twenty-six years, the Thorp School District would continue to absorb the smaller rural school districts that surrounded it. In 1917 the Thorp School District consolidated with the Splawn District and become District #45. In 1929 the Thorp School District would grow again, adding almost sixty students and becoming District #102.

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### ***The Thorp Grade School Built in 1936***

By 1932 the districts student enrollment had bypassed the total seating capacity of the twenty-five year old Schoolhouse in Thorp. With the town still benefiting from the influx of settlers and money brought in by the Bureau of Reclamation's Kittitas irrigation project, plans were drawn up for a new brick grade school in 1935. The new grade school would be the first brick structure to be built in the agricultural town of Thorp. According to a 1973 interview of Victor Karlson, who was the superintendent of the Thorp School District during the 1930s, the new grade school cost \$41,000 dollars. The County Superintendent's Annual Report for 1936 recorded that School District #102 received \$22,500 dollars in the sale of bonds and an additional \$10,250 dollars from miscellaneous sources in that school year.<sup>xv</sup>

In the fall of 1936 the first classes were held in the new Thorp Grade School. The building accommodated the first through the eighth grades. The new gymnasium became the primary location for all indoor sports and social engagements for the students of the Thorp School District. One of the earliest celebrations to be held in the new gymnasium was the annual Armistice Day program on November 11<sup>th</sup> 1936.<sup>xvi</sup>

In the 1950s, the two-story wooden high school was torn down and replaced by a one-story, modern high school building. The high school building was again remodeled and expanded in the 1980s and 1990s, including construction of a larger modern gymnasium. While the high school building continued to expand and change, the grade school building remained almost entirely untouched and unaltered.

Today the Thorp Grade School building is still used as the primary elementary school for the Thorp School District #400. It is also used annually for the all-years Thorp School reunion which brings hundreds of alumni back to Thorp. The alumni of the Thorp Grade School and high school have been essential in keeping the history and pride of "being from a little rural town" alive and strong. Today the community regards the Thorp Grade School as one of their strongest assets, a symbol and testament of their history, heritage, and commitment to public education in the rural community of Thorp.

The Thorp Grade School has served as a tangible demonstration of determination and widespread belief in the value of public education that was prized by the citizens



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of the community of Thorp. In addition to its role as a center of public education and athletic education, the grade school and gymnasium are significant as a community hub for assemblies, civic celebrations, recreational and instructive classes, and other important events. The grade school building reflects the evolution of public education and school system formats that were adopted by the Thorp School District #400 during the school's period of significance.

As an example of the historic building types, "rural brick schoolhouse" the Thorp Grade School depicts early 20<sup>th</sup> century architectural design philosophy and recommendations made by educators throughout the State. These recommendations are represented by its brick masonry construction, six classrooms, indoor plumbing, kitchen, library and its incorporated gymnasium and stage. It was designed by noted architect John W. Maloney.

### ***John W Maloney, Architect***

Maloney, then residing in the city of Yakima made the final revisions to the schools designs in November of 1935. His plans provide detailed illustrations of the main floor, basement and exterior cross sections. With a career spanning more than fifty years, John Maloney made a significant impact on the built environment across Washington State. His early work reflects the architectural eclecticism of the 1920s and 30s, while his later work shows his mastery of modern materials.

Maloney was born in Sacramento, California in 1896. His family moved to the Puget Sound area in the early 1900s. He attended Auburn High School and went on to the University of Washington and Stanford University. After serving in World War I, Maloney established an architectural practice in Yakima in 1922. His most notable building in Yakima is the A.E. Larson building (1931), an eleven-story Art Deco masterpiece and the city's first skyscraper.

In 1943, Maloney opened an architectural office in Seattle, where he went on to design a number of high profile schools, hospitals, and office buildings. Notable buildings [using innovative structural technologies and modern design elements] include the Northwestern Life Insurance Co. Office (1952), the Kittitas County Courthouse (1955), the Seattle First National Bank/Denny Way Branch (1957), and the Blue Cross Insurance Building on Seattle's First Hill (1958).

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In 1963, Maloney partnered with other architects to form a new architect firm- Maloney, Herrington, Freesz & Lund. Among Maloney's notable buildings during this time was the Lemieux Library at Seattle University (1966). Maloney retired from the firm in 1970. He died in Seattle on January 23, 1978 after a long and productive career.<sup>xvii</sup>

The Thorp Grade School is an excellent example of the early designs of John W. Maloney in which he was experimenting with different architectural jeaneries, Art Deco, Classical Revival, Colonial Revival and even Late Romanesque Revival. Despite the wide range of designs, Maloney projects throughout his career remain traditional in their plan and massing; perhaps reflecting his traditional Beaux Arts training.

Maloney's experimentation with style is evident at Grandview High School. Completed in 1937, just a year after Thorp School, the Grandview School presents a drastically different approach to the exterior detailing of the building, but retains the same basic layout as Thorp School, the U-shape form with a gymnasium inserted in the middle. His earlier design for Benjamin Franklin Jr. High School (1928) in Yakima also retained the basic U-shape form, but was highly detailed with Romanesque style arches, multi-colored brick work and red tile roofs.

Maloney continued designing many schools throughout Washington State over the course of his career, twelve known to date. Other educational projects included a variety of buildings for several university campuses from Washington State University in Pullman, Central Washington University in Ellensburg, to the private Seattle University in Seattle.

With no significant alterations since it's construction in 1936, Thorp Grade School has retained nearly all of the elements of Maloney's original design.

### ***MPD Registration Requirements***

The *Rural Public Schools in Washington from Early Settlement to 1945 MPD* states that " a rural schoolhouse must strongly convey its historic character in both physical and associative ways, and must have documented historical significance when evaluated within the context of rural community history" (p. F:1):

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"Given the simple yet distinctive form of the schoolhouse type, eligible schools must retain integrity of scale, massing, roof shape, exterior cladding and trim, and fenestration in order to convey their historic character... Additions or alterations the schoolhouse completed during the period of significance may reflect the evolution of local education and should be evaluated within the context... Ideally eligible schoolhouses retain interior integrity, too. character-defining features include original floor plan, flooring and wall material, trim, and blackboards... (p. F:1)."

The Thorp Grade School meets the MPD registration requirements for the property types "rural brick schoolhouse". Built in 1936, the schoolhouse was erected during the time period designated by the MPD (1870s to 1945). The grade school is well-preserved and retains a high degree of integrity of massing, roof shape, exterior cladding and trim, and fenestration that convey the building's historic character. The grade school also possesses interior integrity found in character defining features stated in the MPD:

"The interiors of rural schools were simple in both plan and finish. Plaster-and-lathe walls were trimmed with wood baseboards, wainscoting, chair rails, picture rails, and window and door surrounds. Blackboards were mounted to the classroom walls. Indoor facilities sometimes include a cloakroom, storage space, and indoor plumbing (p.F:3)."

The interior of the Thorp Grade School retains character defining features that include the original floor plan, lathe-and-plaster walls, fir floors, finished-fir woodwork, wall mounted blackboards, main-floor classrooms with cloak closets, kitchen, teachers room, indoor lavatories, and an incorporated gymnasium with a stage.

### ENDNOTES

- i *Rural Public Schools in Washington from Early Settlement to 1945.*
- ii Richard Fields, "History of Thorp Kittitas County State of Washington to 1901" (master's thesis, Central Washington University), 47.
- iii Central Regional Archives, "Olmstead Smith Collection" (Ellensburg).
- iv "Historical and Descriptive History of the City of Ellensburg and Kittitas County: Souvenir Edition," Ellensburg *Dawn*, December 28, 1900.
- v "Thorp" Ellensburg *Dawn*, May 10, 1901.
- vi "Write Interesting Story of Building the High Line." *Ellensburg Record*, 6, July 1953, p. 2.
- vii Ibid. p. 8.

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- viii Kittitas County School District Formation Documents 1870-1890," Located at the Washington State Archives, Ellensburg, Washington.
- ix Ibid.
- x Kittitas County History, located in the History Collection of the Ellensburg Public Library, 1989.(62)
- xi Court Case, "School District 46 Vs. Pardee and Mason," Located in the Washington State Archives, Ellensburg, Washington. (October 12, 1895).
- xii "Kittitas County Superintendent's Annual Report 1899" Located in the Washington State Archives, Ellensburg, Washington.
- xiii "Souvenir Edition" Ellensburg Dawn, December 28, 1900.
- xiv "School Consolidation" Ellensburg Dawn, July 28, 1904. p.11.
- xv "Kittitas County Superintendent's Annual Report 1936" Located in the Washington State Archives, Ellensburg, Washington.
- xvi "Thorp News," *Ellensburg Capital*, Nov. 13, 1936.
- xvii "Maloney, John W" [www.docomomo-wewa.org](http://www.docomomo-wewa.org), 2008.

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Garfield, Leonard and Greg Griffith. *Rural Public Schools in Washington from Early Settlement to 1945*. National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation & Listing, Washington State Office of Archaeology & Historic Preservation, May 1987.

*Grandview High School*, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, 1987.

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"Maloney, John W" [www.docomomo-wewa.org](http://www.docomomo-wewa.org), 2008.

" Mary L. Goodrich Library" [www.yvri.org/libraries/Toppenish/library\\_history](http://www.yvri.org/libraries/Toppenish/library_history), 2008.

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*Proposed Historic District: Central Washington University. Special Collections, Ellensburg Public Library. Ellensburg, Washington 1999.*

Thorp School District # 400 Records, 2008.

"Vic Karlson Interview" *Thorp Mill Collection*, Central Washington State University Archives, 1973.

Washington State Central Regional Archives, "Olmstead Smith Collection" (Ellensburg).

### ***Newspaper Articles***

"Historical and Descriptive History of the City of Ellensburg and Kittitas County: Souvenir Edition,"

*Ellensburg Dawn*, December 28, 1900.

"School Consolidation," *Ellensburg Dawn*, July 28, 1904.

"Thorp," *Ellensburg Dawn*, May 10, 1901.

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### Verbal Boundary Description

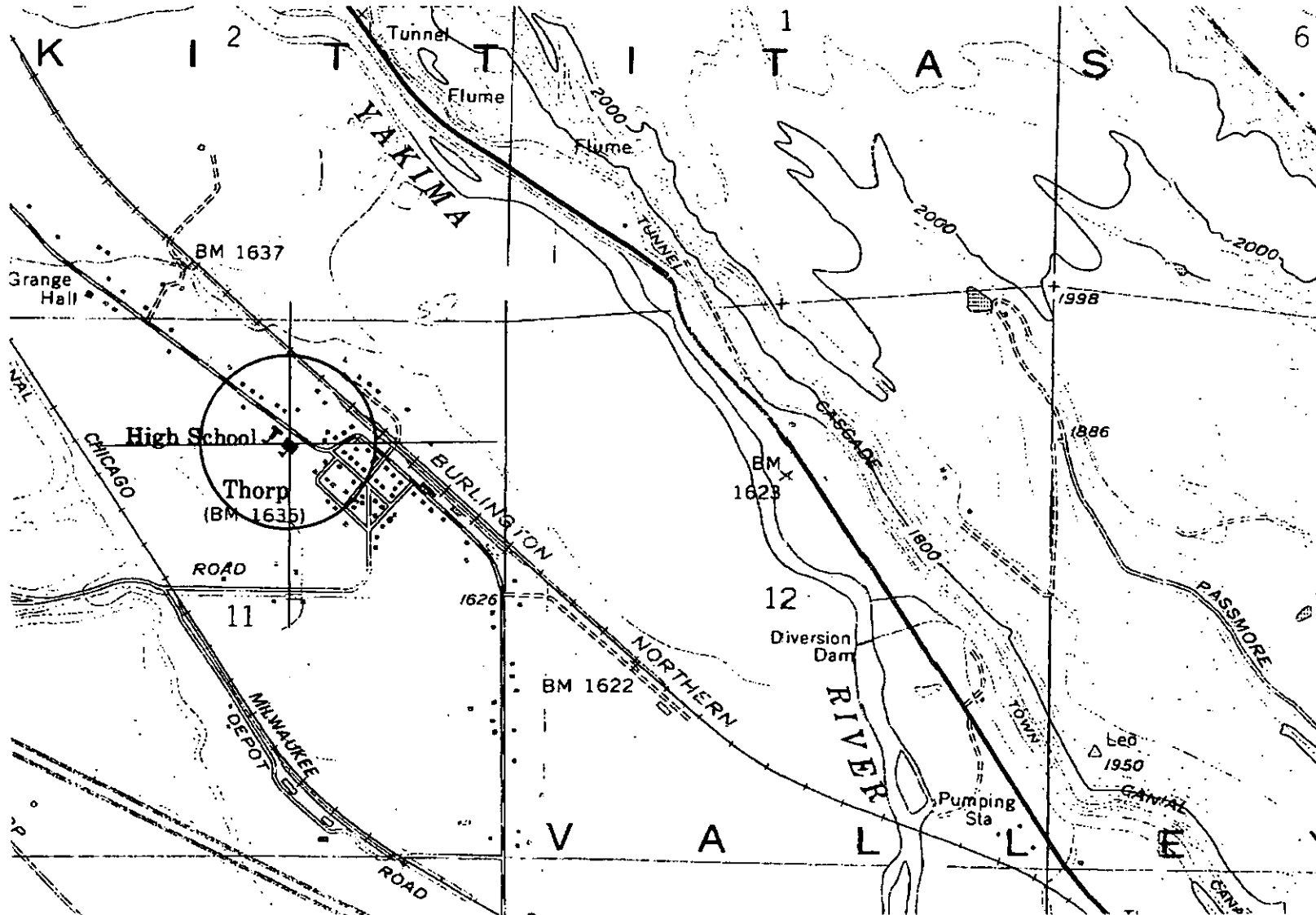
The nominated property is located at 10831 N Thorp Hwy, Thorp, WA 98946. It is located on Township 18N, Range 17E in Section 11 of the Willamette Meridian in Kittitas County, Washington. It is legally described Tax Parcel 165933.

### Boundary Justification

The nominated property encompasses a portion of the urban tax lot that is occupied by Thorp Grade School. The boundary includes the footprint of the grade school and extends approximately 10" around the perimeter of the exterior façade. It does not include the high school to the west, or the bus garage to the east.

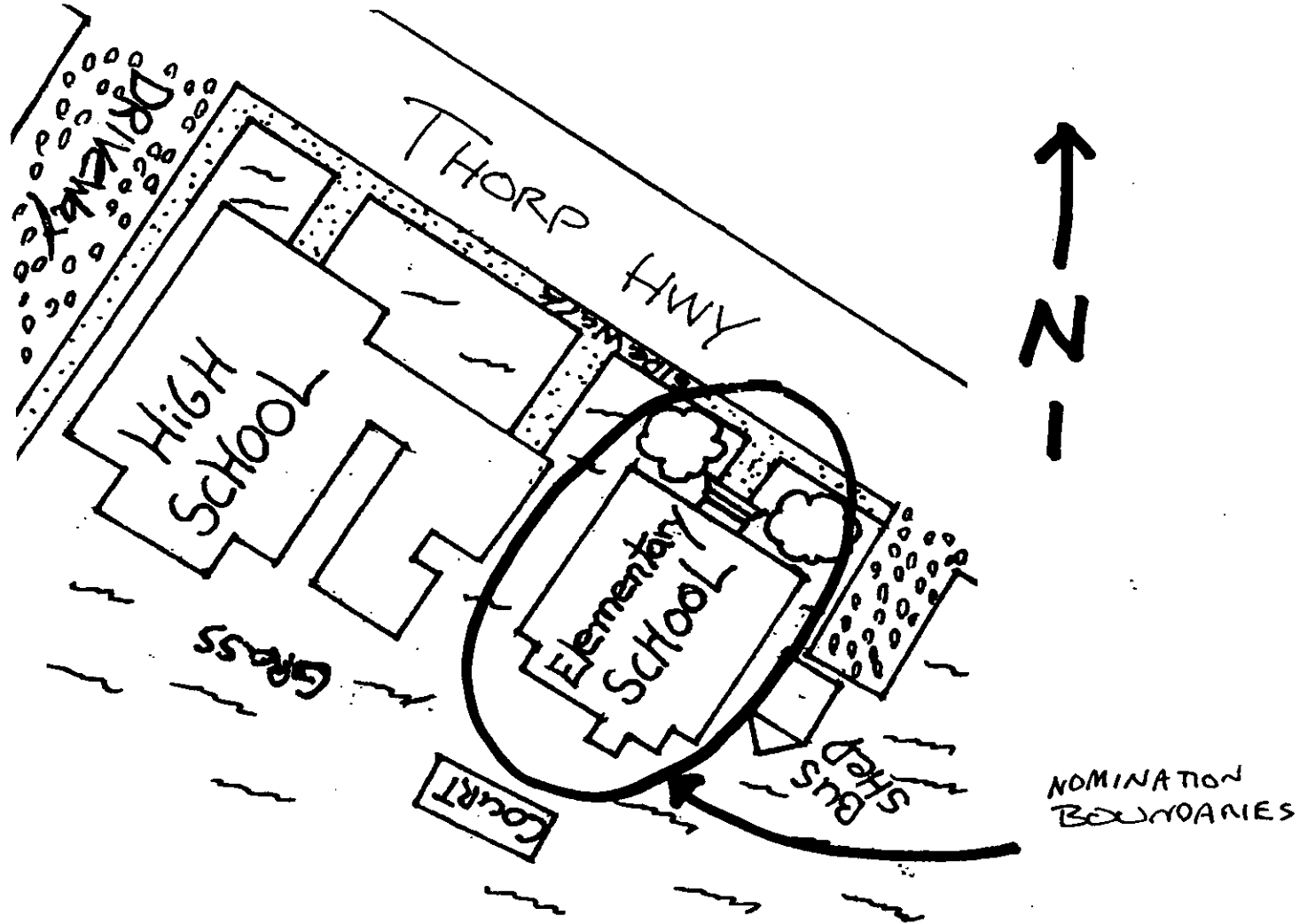
# Thorp School – USGS Quad Map

UTM: Zone 10 676547 E 5215454 N



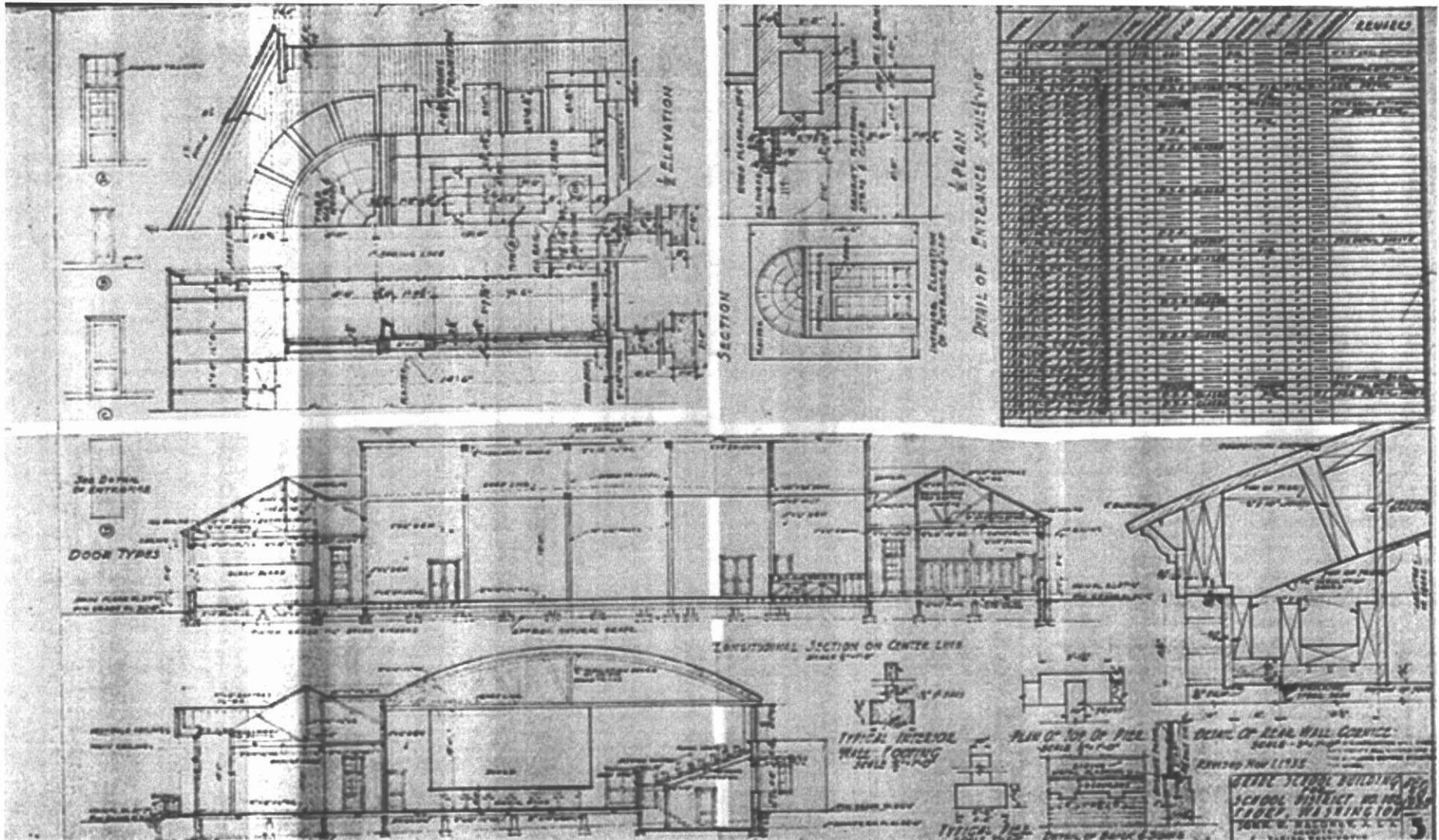


# Thorp School - Site Plan



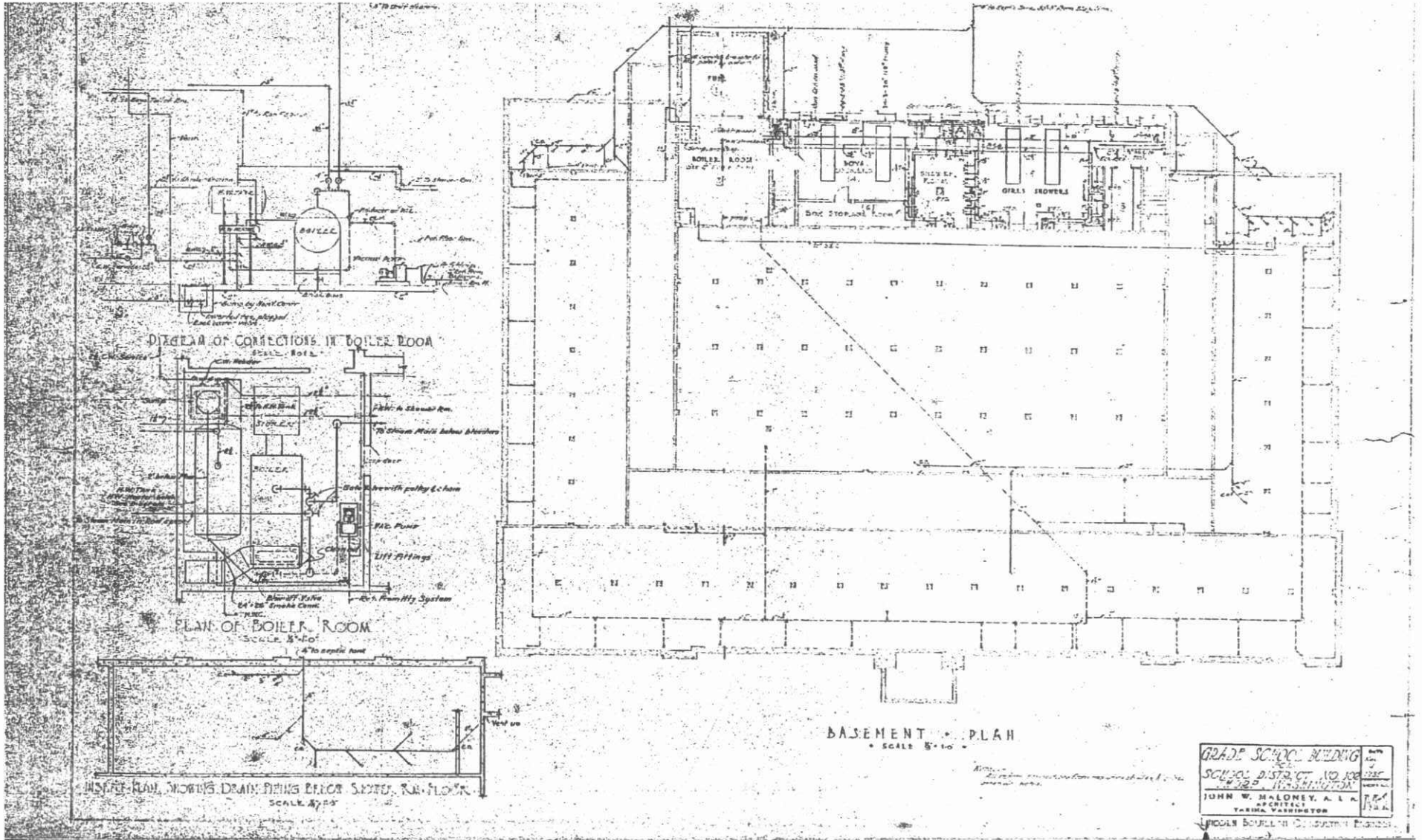


# Thorp School - Exterior Detail & Cross Section, 1935





# Thorp School – Basement Floor Plan, 1935





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### ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

**PHOTOGRAPHS** (Modern photos taken by Tanner Dotzauer in 2008: Historic Photos located in the Thorp Mill Collection of the Central Washington University Archives)

***Photo 1***

East Façade of building.

***Photo 2***

East Façade of building with detail of front entrance.

***Photo 3***

West elevation of building at rear.

***Photo 4***

South elevation of building (photographer looking northeast).

***Photo 5***

North elevation of building (photographer looking northeast).

***Photo 6***

Interior entrance hallway (Photographer looking north).

***Photo 7***

Interior classroom, classroom desks, floor and black board (Photographer looking northeast).

***Photo 8***

Interior gymnasium (Photographer looking north).

***Photo 9***

Interior stage (Photographer looking south).

***Photo 10***

Historic Photo of Thorp Grade School, Exterior Rear Façade Ca. 1937.

***Photo 11***

Historic Photo of Thorp Grade School, Exterior Entrance, Class of 1938.

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***Photo 12***

Historic Photo of Thorp Grade School, Exterior Front Façade, Thorp Basketball Boys of 1942.

