

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

1. Name of Property

historic name: Ursuline Convent of the Sacred Heart

other name/site number: Sacred Heart Convent, Ursuline Academy

2. Location

street & number: 1411 Leighton Blvd

not for publication: n/a

vicinity: n/a

city/town: Miles City

state: Montana

code: MT

county: Custer code: 017

zip code: 59301

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: Private

Category of Property: Building

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing

Noncontributing

 1

 building(s)

 sites

 structures

 objects

 1

 Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

Name of related multiple property listing: n/a

4. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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. ___ See continuation sheet.

Maurelle Steffy Signature of certifying official Date 1-31-92

MT SHPO State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria. ___ See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official Date
State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

Entered in the National Register

entered in the National Register ___ See continuation sheet.

Helena Byers 3/5/92

___ determined eligible for the National Register ___ See continuation sheet.

___ determined not eligible for the National Register

___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain):

Signature of Keeper

Date

6. Function or Use

Historic: Religion: church school, church-related residence

Current: Vacant/Not in Use

7. Description

Architectural Classification: Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals: Colonial Revival

Materials: foundation: stone
 walls: brick
 roof: asphalt

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Ursuline Convent of the Sacred Heart is an imposing three story building constructed of brick and stone. Like the Reform School Gymnasium, designed by Haire for Pine Hills Boys School, the convent projects the formality, symmetry and design elements of Colonial Revival style, while incorporating distinctive Romanesque and Queen Anne holdovers.

The convent is basically rectangular in massing and is capped by a gently-pitched hipped roof. Projecting elements add interest on all elevations. The main body of the building is composed of red brick and rests on a raised, battered foundation of rock-faced sandstone. Brick masonry is laid in common bond and is trimmed with five patterns of molded brick. Raised quoins trim the corners, carrying the rock-faced motif from the foundation into the upper stories. Fenestration employs double-hung windows arranged 1-over-1, in groupings of one, two and three. Round-arched, Palladian and rectangular openings are all to be found.

The south facade, with its main entrance pavilion, dominates the design of this building. Centrally placed, the pavilion rises to a full 2½ story height, capped by a triangular pediment which is supported by four tall Ionic columns, each on a large square base. Now painted pink, these columns are of wood. The stuccoed pediment is gabled and trimmed with dentils, and originally enframed an oxe-eye window. At an early date, the window in the pediment was replaced with a small sash unit.

The main entrance is recessed under a round-arched opening, placed centrally beneath the pediment. Paired oak doors with diamond patterned transom and sidelights all framed with wood open within; the round arch is accented by brick molding and corbelling. Stone steps lead to the porch decking of the pavilion.

Narrow paired windows with flat brick arches flank the front entrance. To either side of the pavilion, Palladian windows are placed, having continuous rock-faced stone sills and flat window heads. The central window is slightly larger, with a semi-circular transom and repeats the arch motif on the entrance. A series of eight single windows are uniformly spaced across the upper story. The window heads on these openings include the stone sills; window heads abut the cornice line.

On the west elevation, a round, central tower projects from the wall. A basement entrance opens at the base of the tower. Above this, at the first story level a set of three small, round-headed windows band the tower. They are unified by a continuous stone sill and decorative rolled brick moldings beneath the arch spandrels. Small portal windows accent the tower's second story. The third story on the tower is set off by molded brick courses, and a row of small windows. The tower is capped by a conical roof above a heavy cornice with dentils. Placed symmetrically around the tower are single windows, like those on the upper level north facade.

X See continuation sheet

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On the east elevation, a single-story, raised, enclosed entrance porch projects. This round, wooden, flat-roofed porch includes a central doorway framed by two engaged Ionic columns. A wooden panelled door is located beneath a large square transom, now infilled with plywood; inset panelling trims the area above the transom and along the doorway. The porch is sheathed with vertical bead-board; concrete steps access the doorway.

The north elevation achieves a balanced symmetry between two square towers which define the corners of the building, and project to enframe the rear entry and second story balcony. The rear doorway features a single-light, panelled door with a transom and sidelights. Above the transom, a large fanlight window lights the second-floor landing. Each tower, and the rear wall between, is illuminated by a series of single, uniformly-spaced windows. Squarely centered above the rear entrance, a small, gabled dormer projects from the roof. Gable returns and a Palladian window adorn this dormer. A pair of stout, interior chimneys rise above the rear planes of the roof. These chimneys include decorative corbelling and inset panels. A second rear entrance accesses the basement level. A wooden entry projects from the base of the west tower, and is tied into the foundation.

From the pavilion, one enters the convent through a main entry hall which joins a central hallway extending the length of the building. A stairwell winds up to the upper level; the stairs, windows and transomed doorways are all richly finished with oak. The interior spaces were devoted to kitchen/dining room facilities on the basement level, classrooms on the first floor, dormitory rooms and sitting rooms for the sisters on the second floor, and large open sleeping rooms on the third floor for students who boarded at the convent.

Sacred Heart Convent is located on a large corner lot in a residential neighborhood. To the north, two parochial schools and a gymnasium were constructed by Sacred Heart parish in 1949, 1957 and 1958. Facing Leighton Avenue to the south, the convent's main entrance is approached by a sidewalk across a grassy lawn at the front. To the west side, the property is paved to provide parking. At the rear (north), the property is now paved, to serve as a playground for the parochial schools. The front lawn rolls away to the east, fronting the entire block containing these Catholic school buildings.

The Ursuline Convent of the Sacred Heart today retains a very high level of integrity. The cross on the south pediment and the oxeve window in the front gable have been removed, but otherwise, the building is intact both on the exterior and interior. The building continues to convey a very strong sense of the historic setting, character and feeling of the property. And it communicates the historic associations this convent had with a century of education and religious development in Miles City.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: **Locally, Statewide**

Applicable National Register Criteria: A, C	Areas of Significance: Architecture Religion Education
Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): A	Period(s) of Significance: 1902-1941
Significant Person(s): n/a	Significant Dates: 1902
Cultural Affiliation: n/a	Architect/Builder: Charles S. Haire

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

Completed for the Ursuline Order in 1902, the Ursuline Convent of the Sacred Heart has long been a landmark building in eastern Montana. The convent marks the Ursulines' important role in establishing early institutions of learning in Montana, and especially their commitment to providing educational opportunities for children in Montana. The building is additionally the earliest known example of the work of Charles S. Haire, a prolific turn-of-the-century architect who designed many prominent buildings in Miles City. It is a highly significant building, in a local and statewide context, eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under criteria A and C.

Although a religious property, the significance of this building primarily derives from its associations with the history of the Ursuline Order in Miles City and from their contribution to the early educational history of eastern Montana, as well as its representation of the work of Charles S. Haire, and Colonial Revival architecture.

During the mid-1800s, Catholic orders turned their missionary efforts westward, to the native tribes of the newly annexed territories of the United States. Ministering to the native peoples of the area, the missionaries sought to educate and convert them, not only to Christianity, but to the ways of Euroamerican culture. The first such mission in Montana was Saint Mary's mission at present-day Stevensville, established in 1841 by the Society of Jesus Order--the Jesuits--at the behest of the Salish tribes.

As white settlers followed gold strikes into the region, other religious groups arrived in Montana, preaching not only to the Indian people, but to miners and other early settlers. Education was highly valued by residents of fledgling communities, who saw it as both an anchor to community growth and a necessity for their children. During the territorial and early statehood period, the Catholic orders played a leading role throughout Montana establishing educational missions, health facilities and social institutions, along with religious institutions.

The Order of St. Ursula, long known for their dedication to education of girls, were among the most active religious orders to operate in Montana. The Ursulines often came at the invitation of the Jesuits. Together these orders provided some of the first educational opportunities for children in Montana's mining camps and young towns. Their work was often cooperative, for the Jesuits generally focused upon educating boys.

The Ursulines came to Montana after Father Eli Washington Lindesmith, a commissioned Chaplain assigned to Fort Keogh near Miles City, suggested bringing religious women to help "subdue" the Cheyenne Indians. After Montana achieved vicariate status in 1883, Bishop John B. Brondel acted upon that idea, and requested Ursuline volunteers for the Cheyenne mission.

Six Ursulines, under the leadership of Reverend Mother Mary Amadeus of the Sacred Heart, travelled to Montana the following year. In addition to opening small missions among the Indian tribes in the state, their plans included establishing a motherhouse at Miles City, (although it was determined shortly thereafter that St. Peter's mission in Sun River would be more central as a motherhouse and distribution point). Of these original six Ursuline sisters, three arrived in Miles City, the others travelled to the south, and established the St. Labre mission among the Northern Cheyenne people.

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The Ursuline Convent of the Sacred Heart, had its beginnings in 1884 in a convent and school south of the Northern Pacific Railroad tracks in Miles City. The first Ursuline Convent in the Rocky Mountain region, Sacred Heart enrolled white children from the area; girls classes were held in the convent, while boys were taught in the church. In the years that followed, it grew to serve students from all over eastern Montana.

In 1897, the original convent was destroyed by fire. Bishop Brondel proposed that the nuns move their operations to Anaconda, and in the interim, Mother Amadeus called the nuns to St. Peter's mission. Hoping to retain the convent and school, the people of Miles City petitioned the bishop for their return.

The decision was made to maintain the Sacred Heart convent at Miles City; a site was purchased on Leighton Avenue and plans were laid for a large new convent. Charles S. Haire was contracted to design the building. It was completed and reopened on October 5, 1902.

The Ursuline Convent of the Sacred Heart housed classes for children of Miles City and the surrounding area until the early 1950s. Children from the community attended school in the convent building, and children from the surrounding area had the option of boarding in the convent through the school year. Having served the Miles City community for many decades, activities at the convent were scaled back in 1954, following a decision to construct new parochial schools next door. However, the convent continued to be used for small classes and as the nuns' residence.

Architectural Significance

A stately building, the Ursuline Convent of the Sacred Heart is a transitional building that looked toward 20th century architecture, while retaining several holdover design features from the late 19th century. Typical of most Colonial Revival buildings, design of the convent was based upon Classical architecture, with its dominant full-height entry porch supported on Ionic columns, its balanced symmetry and hipped roof. Stout, paired interior chimneys and corner quoins were inherited from early Georgian prototypes; early Adam period references are clearly apparent in the Palladian windows and rear entrance fanlight. These characteristics firmly place the convent within the Colonial Revival style. In addition, like many later period revival buildings, it also exhibits a free-handed eclecticism. Haire included a Romanesque brick arch over the main entrance, and a Queen Anne style tower on the west end.

The convent's architecture aptly expressed the educational emphasis of the Ursuline order. Architectural allusions to Classical forbears were not lost on the local citizenry. Indeed, in 1900, as the convent approached completion, the local newspaper publisher noted that "The most striking feature of the building's exterior, and which gives it an air of beauty and symmetry rarely seen in a structure of that kind, is the front, or main entrance. Four lofty Ionic columns support a pediment of classic design, the triangle of which is modelled after the Parthenon."

Continuing to draw upon Classical and Colonial Revival styles for the design of several Miles City buildings, architect Charles S. Haire repeated many elements in the design of the Reform School Gymnasium, the Carnegie Library, the Hospital, the first Custer County High School, the North Side School House and the South Side School House. Similarities may be noted in the 2 1/2 story massing, and the inclusion of the hipped roof, central pavilion and rectangular massing as major design elements.

Haire, a Helena-based architect, is known to have designed over 15 prominent buildings in Miles City during his career which spanned the years 1898-1910. Late 19th century local

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commercial architecture in Miles City was largely dominated by the work of Byron Vreeland, and was characterized by picturesque designs in red brick. As noted by John Goff in 1987, Haire diverged from this body of work, and introduced a more formal, academic look by drawing upon the Renaissance Revival, Baroque, Classical and Colonial Revival styles. Haire's buildings "stimulated a demand for new, light-colored formal and symmetric compositions", thus setting the pace for Miles City architecture of the early 20th century.

Charles S. Haire was a native of Ohio. After architectural studies, he worked from 1886-1887 as a draftsman for the Union Pacific Railroad, followed by the Great Northern Railway. He moved to Helena in 1888, and by 1893 was listed as an architect with the realty firm, Wallace and Thornburg. Haire designed buildings around Montana and, as state superintendent of building, oversaw building of the state college at Bozeman and the Normal School in Dillon. In 1906, he associated with John G. Link; Fred Willson was associated with that firm from 1906-1908. These powerful alliances brought together Montana's most prolific early 20th century architects, and their legacy is impressive. With five offices across the state, Link and Haire designed many county courthouses, the wings of the Montana State Capitol, as well as numerous civic and commercial buildings in Montana's larger communities.

Today the future of the Ursuline Convent of the Sacred Heart is uncertain. In recent years, the building was leased to the Southeastern Montana Mental Health program, which moved to new quarters in 1991. At present, members of the parish and general community seek new uses for the old convent.

A hub of learning and a symbol of early community, the Ursuline Convent of the Sacred Heart stands today as an apt tribute to the Order of St. Ursula. The convent's solid presence has graced this small community for over a century, marking the contribution of the Ursulines to the building of Montana and a history of dedicated service to the peoples of Montana.

9. References

Anonymous -- An Ursuline of the Roman Union, Ursulines of the West, ca. 1936.
Buchanan, A., Ursuline article, Seeing Miles City, 1912.
Goff, John, "Miles City Montana Historic Resource Survey", unpublished, on file MTSHP, October 1987.

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 # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data:

State historic preservation office
 Other state agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other -- Specify Repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: less than 1 acre

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	13	435220	5140000
B	13	435300	5140000
C	13	435220	5139940
D	13	435300	5139940

Verbal Boundary Description:

The historic property boundaries for the Ursuline Convent of the Sacred Heart encompass the southwest quarter of Block 7 of the High School Addition in Miles City, Montana. The boundaries are further defined on the enclosed USGS map, as the rectangle formed by the four UTM reference points.

Boundary Justification:

The historic property boundaries encompass that portion of the block which has formed the site of the convent throughout its history. Building lots within the block have never been platted.

11. Form Prepared By

Name/Title: Chere Jiusto

Organization: Montana State Historic Preservation Office

Date: November 1991

Street & Number: 225 N. Roberts

Telephone: 406-444-7715

City or Town: Helena

State: Montana Zip: 59620

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- Goff, John, ed. Susan McDaniel & Dena Sanford, "Miles City, Montana: An Architectural History," Custer County Society for the Preservation of Local Folklore, Legend, History & Tradition, Miles City, November 1988.
- Haire, Charles S., Architectural Drawings, Ursuline Convent of the Sacred Heart, undated, Montana State University, Renne Library, Special Collections #2040/91F, Bozeman.
- McDaniel, Susan & Dena Sanford, "Beautiful City of Miles," Custer County Society for the Preservation of Local Folklore, Legend, History & Tradition, Miles City, 1988.
- Sanborn Map Co., Maps of Miles City: 1893, 1904, 1910, 1916.
- Sievert, Ellen & Ken, National Register Nomination, "Ursuline Academy, Great Falls," unpublished, March 1991, on file MT SHPO.
- Yellowstone Journal, Illustrated historical edition, September 27, 1900, p. 16.