

SHIPROCK BOARDING SCHOOL, BOILER ROOM
(Building No. 1207)
(SR-1207)
1206 Pinon Street, Navajo Nation Reservation
Shiprock
San Juan County
New Mexico

HABS NM-193-A
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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

FIELD RECORDS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
INTERMOUNTAIN REGIONAL OFFICE
National Park Service
Southwest System Support Office
PO Box 728
Santa Fe, New Mexico

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY

Shiprock Boarding School, Boiler Room
(Building Number 1207)

HABS No. NM-193-A

- Location: 1206 Piñon Street, Shiprock, San Juan County, New Mexico; USGS Shiprock Quadrangle, Lying and Being Situated Within Sections 13 and 24, Township 30 North, Range 18 West, N.M.P.M.
- Present Owner: Bureau of Indian Affairs, Shiprock, New Mexico
- Present Occupant: Maintenance
- Present Use: Utility Plant Building
- Significance: The utility plant building SR-1207 at Shiprock Boarding School was constructed in a style characteristic of most boarding school buildings of that era.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

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PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of Erection: 1952
2. Architect: Perkins & Will
3. Historical Narrative

Shiprock, New Mexico, is the largest community within the northeast portion of the Navajo Reservation. William T. Shelton, an Indian Agent, founded Shiprock in 1903. Shiprock derives its name from the volcanic upthrust known as the Shiprock Pinnacle. The literal Navajo translation for Shiprock is **Tse Bitai** meaning "Rock With Wings." Mr. Shelton was referred to in Navajo as Nata'ani Neez, meaning Tall Chief. Mr. Shelton was very influential among the Navajo people in spite of his controversial nature.

In the late 1800's, the Presbyterians became the major influence in "educating and christianizing" the Navajos. The first white teacher sent to the reservation by the Presbyterian Home Mission Board was Miss Charity Gaston. She arrived in Fort Defiance in 1871 from the East to teach the "white man's paper" to children ages 6 to 16. The Indians were very skeptical about "White man's teaching papers" and after seven years of teaching, Ms. Gaston only had eleven students. In 1879, the first boarding school construction was authorized by Congress to be built in Fort Defiance. However, there was no funding appropriated to for the project. One could say that things have not changed a great deal in the past 125 years. Congress continues to legislate educational opportunities but fails to appropriate adequate funds for school facilities on the reservation.

Education was still not a priority for the Indians in the early 1900's. Learning to read and write the English language and to convert to the ways and customs of the white man was not appealing to the Navajos. By 1909, there were approximately 152 students regularly attending school. Most of the students went to school against their parents' wishes. The parents often sent the sick and weak children to school while keeping the strong to herd the sheep and help at home.

The Shiprock Boarding School located on the Navajo Reservation in Shiprock, New Mexico was one of the few schools constructed in the 1950's. The Shiprock Boarding School was opened in 1952 to serve all school age children from kindergarten through twelfth grade. It

is still in use as an educational facility and dormitory to house students. The mid 1930's began a time of social and economic revolution on the Navajo reservation. The Navajos were impacted by World War II in many ways. They committed to serve their country when called; they moved off the reservation temporarily to fill the labor vacuum created by the war; and they came back to the reservation from these experiences "more worldly" and educated in the ways of clothing, foods and life-styles. They gained a new appreciation for housing, "things," money and above all else, education. Navajo tribal leaders and tribal people expressed concern regarding the need to expand the Navajo Tribe's education system.

The boarding schools and community day schools were experiencing difficulty with the lack of resources including money to keep the schools adequately operating. It was customary to include agricultural operations at most schools to generate their own food supplies. The Shiprock Boarding School developed and maintained its own apple and peach orchards; raised hog and sheep; and planted vegetable gardens. Transportation was another major problem. The reservation dirt roads were often impassable and prohibited access to the schools.

During the 1940's, it became more apparent to the Navajo people that a more formal system of education was needed. The Navajos returning to the reservation after serving in the war came back with a more clear idea of the role of education for their people. Education soon became the Navajo Nation's primary need creating more problems with the lack of the facilities needed to educate the increased number of students. As a result, only elementary students through age eleven would learn on the reservation. Children over twelve would be educated in neighboring towns in off-reservation dormitories and federal community public schools.

By the late 1940's, it became apparent that more schools were needed. The Navajo-Hopi Long Range Rehabilitation Act was passed in 1950. This act called for the appropriation of ninety million dollars over a ten year period to for better utilization of resources on the reservations. While the act was passed in 1950 there were no funds appropriated for these purposes until 1955. In this appropriation there was \$25,000,000 allocated for school construction. However, this appropriation was only adequate to provide about one-half the facility needed for the growing Indian school population.

In addition to the construction of schools, the Long Range Act provided for the construction of dormitories, and the refurbishment of existing sub-standard school facilities. The Shiprock Boarding School, for example, was allotted \$331,559 for dormitories and furniture. Though there was progress toward providing healthy and safe facilities for learning, there still was not enough school facilities to adequately house and educate the Indian school age children.

The Navajo Emergency Education Program (NEEP) passed by Congress in 1954 helped further the Universal Education Program by providing educational opportunities as quickly as possible for every school age Navajo child. The NEEP accomplished this goal by making use of almost any functional and available space conducive to learning.

As a result of an intensive restructuring and appropriating of funds to meet the Universal Education Program goal, the gap between school age population and available school space narrowed. However, the Universal Education Program did not come without sacrifices. There were overcrowded classrooms, dormitories and substandard facilities. Nonetheless, the goal to increase total enrollment of Navajo students from 7,946 in 1950 to 22,052 by September 1954 was surpassed by reaching a total enrollment of 22,188 students.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

The original 1952 buildings were constructed of native sandstone similar to that used in construction of the Intermediate Dormitories at the Shiprock Boarding School. The stone was available without charge at a quarry located approximately eleven miles outside of Shiprock. The Contractor and local Navajo workers quarried, loaded, transported, trimmed and cut the stone at the Contractor's expense. The stone was set as random-range rubble ashlar varying in size and shape.

The buildings display such architectural details as sandstone veneer walls, buttresses and chimneys, painted wood siding, exposed wood joists at overhangs, wood clerestory window frames at corridors and banked wood windows at living and dining rooms.

1. Exterior

Building SR-1207 is a two story square plan with a one story appendage on one corner. The structure is a combination masonry wood system. The building has no significant improvements or changes. The plans from 1979 include an inventory of room functions. This building depicts such architectural details as sandstone veneer walls; exposed wood joists at overhangs; and banked wood windows.

2. Interior

Building SR-1207 originally contained a boiler room, generator room, and storage. The interior is made of concrete slab on grade, concrete and steel frame with a concrete deck.

Floor finishes are concrete, tile, and steel decking. The walls are cinder block with a plaster finish.

3. Mechanical

Building heated from central plant.

4. Cost

The original cost of the structure was: \$499,954.

PART III. INTENT OF NEW PROPOSAL

A. Architectural and Site Design Rationale

The design of the new Shiprock Alternative School campus reflects the intent of the Shiprock Master Planning Team. Their objective was to ensure that the placement of the buildings, play fields, and parking would support the educational goals of the school and reinforce the Navajo life style and traditions.

The schematic design process involved 3 separate design/planning workshops which included the design team, teachers, administrators, school board members and staff from the school. These workshops allowed the participants an opportunity to provide input about the goals, dreams, and needs of the future of students in the twenty-first century as they are known today.

1. Site Design

The site layout reflects the educational needs of both an elementary school students and high school students. These separate school facilities had to be considered while blending them on a common site with consideration of Navajo cultural beliefs impacting the placement of buildings to the sacred corners of their land. Following is a list of critical site determinants:

- Main Campus entry from the east allowing for the capture of the sunrise.
- Preservation of sight lines to Mount Hesperus and Shiprock monument.
- Axial relationship of ashlar stone wall to symbolize and tie to existing building structures.
- Recognizable, separate school identities (elementary and high school)
- Structural placement along the existing curved road symbolizing student growth and

development.

- Separate activity courtyard for elementary school children.
- Three distinct play areas for elementary school children.
- A cultural courtyard to be located within the heart of the school community. This would be a place to teach and celebrate Navajo culture.
- Sun angles, regarding the solstices and equinoxes, as applied to important seasonal activities and cultural events.
- Separation of pedestrian and vehicular circulation.
- Local climatic conditions (snow from the north and blowing winds from the west).
- Morning bus drop off for all children at the cafeteria for breakfast.
- Berming, vegetation, and screen walls along the western face of the buildings and public spaces to block the western winds and sand storms.
- Isolated sports fields and parking for after-hours events.
- Age-appropriate recreation and sports fields located adjacent to each school.
- Distinctly separate parking areas for both the elementary school and high school with the SASI administration building sharing parking from each parking lot.
- Secured bus and school vehicle parking adjacent to maintenance building.
- Fenced and secured service delivery yard.

All of the classrooms were initially organized along the curved land of the existing road symbolizing the progression of student growth from preschool thru high school. The shared use facilities were located centrally along the east-west axis with the facilities acting as buffers between the two schools. Administration components for each school were planned to be located to the east of the classrooms and adjacent to their respective parking areas. The SASI administration building was centrally located between the two parking areas. The maintenance building was located to the west of the cafeteria building and isolated from the primary educational structures of the campus. Elementary playgrounds were located at the southeast corner of the site; and, the high school athletic fields were located to the north. As the design evolved, the elementary school was separated into two buildings dividing classrooms by age with the view toward the Shiprock monument becoming the dividing line. Easy public access to the gymnasiums was a strong factor in determining their location. Therefore, the gymnasiums for each complex became the anchors at the end of the curved classroom wings.

At the first design workshop, it was suggested that the project needed a central gathering place that would tie the complex together. With that concept in mind, the cultural courtyard was created at the center of the shared use facilities of the two schools. Conceptually, the courtyard would become symbolic of the hogan representing the family or the ceremonial circle. Entry into the courtyard would be from the east, the Navajo customary entry place; and, the stage would be located opposite the entry as a place of honor.

The courtyard has been designed to provide three areas with distinct functions. The perimeter of the courtyard is the first area which is intended to serve as a covered circulation spine connecting the elementary and high school classrooms to the cafeteria and media center. The second area is intended to serve as a gathering space for classroom students; casual reading areas off the library; and garden areas that allow students to learn about plants. Separating the circulation spine (first area) and the second area (student activities) is a series of raised planters and trees. The center of the circular courtyard is the third area, or performance area which will house the amphitheater to accommodate large and small groups for educational and community activities.

2. Architectural Building Design

The design of the building responds to the functions within the buildings.

Administration :

The administration areas are located centrally in each of their respective schools with adjacent parking lots. The elementary administration area serves as the entry to the school. Its unique building form has been developed to attract and identify the building's entry to students, parents, and visitors to the campus. The principal's office and receptionist are located near the entry. There are located close together to provide for maximum security and supervision of the central hallway leading to the student classrooms.

The high school administration area is located adjacent to the main student commons entry and near the high school parking lot. Visitors will be greeted at the main entry which is located off the commons area by the receptionist. From this vantage point, a person can easily access the principal, conference room, attendance and records offices. Faculty and staff have access to the administration area through their lounge and workroom.

Elementary Classrooms :

The elementary classrooms are divided into two buildings separated by age distinction. The early childhood classrooms and lower grades are located in the same building with the administration office to provide close supervision and increase security. The upper grades have been placed in a separate building to set them apart from the younger children. Common classrooms, computer labs, Navajo classroom, science, and multi-purpose rooms are located between the two classroom buildings allowing for maximum access by all grade levels.

High School Classrooms :

The high school classrooms have been designed around a large centrally located student commons area that is surrounded with classrooms, the gymnasium, and the administration areas. A central circulation spine runs north to south from the commons, providing access to the classrooms. This corridor has been designed to allow for natural light within the corridor. General classrooms have been paired, allowing for maximum teaching flexibility. The teen parenting classroom has been located near the cafeteria for easy access. The science and art classrooms have been located to allow next to exterior patios and service area to allow for easy access to the outdoors. These spaces can also be used for after-hours activities without compromising the rest of the school's security.

Cafeteria :

The centrally located cafeteria building includes a full kitchen and radiates from the center of the cultural courtyard. Covered access to the cafeteria has been provided from each school site. A small stage is designed for joint use by all students. Covered dining areas into the cafeteria are provided adjacent to the high school entrance and elementary entrance.

Library/Media Center :

The library/media center is located centrally, radiating from the center of the cultural courtyard with covered access to each school. The library is subdivided at the entry into two zones: one for high school students, and the other for elementary students. All multipurpose library functions have been located within the central core of the library to provide easy access by all users. Library windows overlook the central courtyard.

SASI Administration :

The offices located in the library/media center building are entered from the east parking lots. East entries are a significantly important cultural component of several buildings. The office spaces are organized around the perimeter to allow for natural light into offices. The central core includes a board room, lounge, toilets, and a workroom. The security office has a view of both campus entries and parking areas for general visual security.

Maintenance Building :

Located at the far west end of the site and directly west of the cafeteria, is the maintenance building which is secured by a fence and walled enclosure. This facility contains the bus maintenance area and the general maintenance shop.

Building Organization :

The conceptual massing and building forms were derived directly from the site design concepts and the functional building components.

Classroom buildings are simple parapeted structures with perforated openings for natural light. The curving classroom buildings follow the existing road path designed for maximum efficiency while providing natural light within. The sloped west roofs are intended to flow with the wind rather than trying to block the western winds. The expansive gymnasiums at each end of the complex are the anchors to the facility.

The Cafeteria and Library which are the two shared use facilities appear to grow out of the cultural courtyard. The courtyard represents the center of a traditional Navajo hogan with the surrounding buildings forming a circle that creates a completed hogan. Low sloping metal roofs top these buildings, distinguishing them from the standard classroom buildings. The character and quality of these buildings also are intended to be special and enlightening to the spirit of the students and the community. Larger volumes within these buildings feature large areas of glass, open steel structures and exposed painted mechanical systems.

Photocopy of U.S. Geological Survey Map, San Juan County, Shiprock Quadrangle, New Mexico.

Photocopy of original drawing located at Architectural Research Consultants, Inc. (ARC) office, Albuquerque, New Mexico, Shiprock Boarding School 1998, Existing Site Plan.

Photocopy of original drawing located at Shiprock B.I.A., Shiprock, New Mexico, Architectural Plan of Building SR-1207.

PART IV. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. References:

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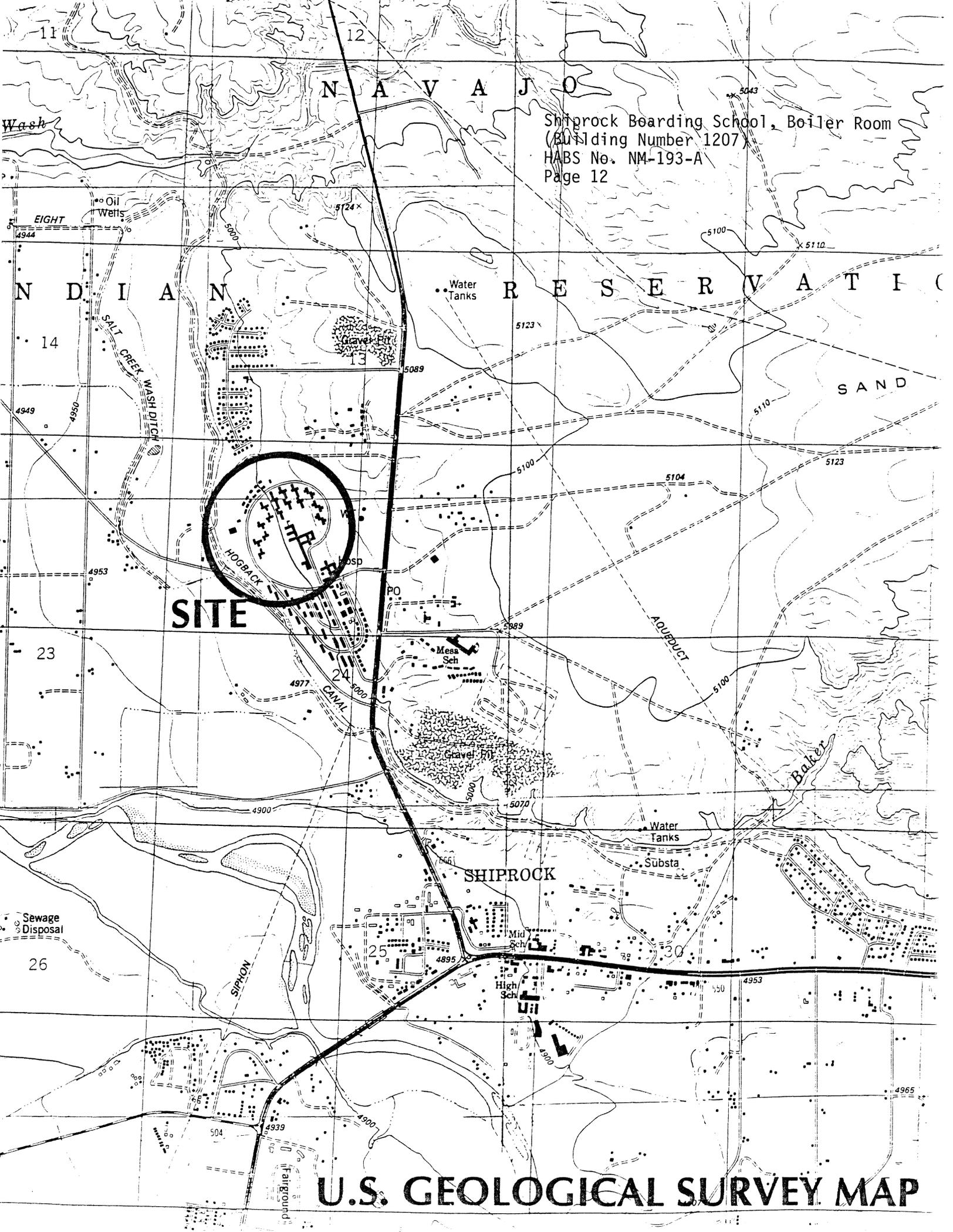
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Organization:	DLR Group
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SHIPROCK

U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY MAP