United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

   historic name: Church Street School
   other names/site number

2. Location

   street & number: Jasper Street, 750' west of int. of Church Street
   city, town: Thomasville
   state, code: N. C., NC
   county: Davidson
   code: 057
   zip code: 27360

3. Classification

   Ownership of Property: [X] private
   Category of Property: [X] building(s)
   Number of Resources within Property: Contributing 1
                                           Noncontributing 1
                                           Total 2

   Name of related multiple property listing:

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

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

   As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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.

   Signature of certifying official
   [Signature]
   Date: 1-25-90

   State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

   I, hereby, certify that this property is:
   [ ] entered in the National Register.
   [ ] See continuation sheet.
   [ ] 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 the Keeper
   Date of Action

   State or Federal agency and bureau
### 6. Function or Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)</th>
<th>Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EDUCATION: School</td>
<td>Vacant/Not in use</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 7. Description

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Architectural Classification (enter categories from instructions)</th>
<th>Materials (enter categories from instructions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OTHER: Colonial Revival</td>
<td>foundation Concrete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>walls Brick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>roof asphalt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>other Wood</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Describe present and historic physical appearance.
The Church Street School faces east toward Church Street and is located on Jasper Street in Thomasville, N.C. It is so named because its predecessor schools were all located on nearby Church Street (see Historical Background). Jasper Street runs west from Salem Street (N.C.109), goes past the intersection with Church Street, and turns northwest at the school to a dead end at Brown Street. The surrounding area is residential. The original school grounds site is approximately 9-1/2 acres in size, which contains the original school with wing additions, a 1951 gymnasium and playing fields just to the rear of the main building, and a 1961 one-story primary school building located immediately in front of the southern wing of the main building. The gymnasium and the playing fields are on a level grade about twenty feet lower than the front of the site. The original property has been sub-divided, and only 5.67 acres of the site that contains the main building and one-story primary school are being nominated.

The Church Street School is T-shape in basic plan, with parallel wings at each end, and an auditorium that projects to the rear, all of which are two stories in height; a one-story primary school addition was built in front of the southern wing. The original main part of the building (built 1935-1937) is two stories of Neo-Colonial Georgian style. The original front elevation is divided into three sections: the center section is five bays wide and projects from the main facade. The center three bays also project slightly from the rest of the center section, and are defined by four brick pilasters, two on each side of the entry, that are topped by simple capitals; they terminate under a stone entablature that carries the name "CHURCH STREET SCHOOL." The two side sections of the front elevation are each six bays wide. The windows are nine-over-nine double-hung sash in the side sections, and twelve-over-twelve double-hung sash in the middle three bays. All the windows have simple wood surrounds, and are underpinned with stone sills. The walls are brick laid in Flemish bond, and the side-gabled, asphalt shingle roof is hidden by a parapet wall on the front elevation.

The front entry is reached by going up four stone steps to a small, uncovered stoop, then up one more step to a recessed double doorway with six lights each and topped by a single-light transom. On the brick facade above the recessed doorway is a brick flat arch decorated with a stone keystone.

On either side of the entry vestibule, there is the principal's office, medical room, and teacher's lounge. In the original building, there are six classrooms on the first floor, and a stairwell at either end that leads to the second floor, where there were seven classrooms, the library, and a projector.
room. A long hall runs the length of both floors. The large windows allow maximum light for each classroom, which is entered by a simple, two-panel door with a small window in the upper panel, and topped by a three-light transom.

The other main section of the original building is the two-story auditorium that projects to the rear in the middle of the main structure. The exterior is also of brick laid in Flemish bond, and on each side are four of the same style windows as the center bays of the facade: twelve-over-twelve double-hung sash. There is also a smaller six-over-six double-hung sash window on each side behind the stage. Also on each side are double two-paneled-door entries that are topped by a five-light transom. The rear of the auditorium is largely stuccoed, has no openings, and has a three-story exterior brick chimney capped by corbelling. The interior floor is gently raked toward the large stage at the west end, and on either side of the stage are doors that lead to the dressing rooms with two-panel doors and simple surrounds. The stage is elevated, covers about one-half of the width of the wall and is surrounded by fluted woodwork on the sides and across the top. The ceiling is paneled with acoustical tile, and the top of the walls are decorated by a simple moulding. The seats are typical curved-back wood with bottoms that raise and lower.

Two-story wings built in 1951 frame each end of the original building to which they are perpendicular and extend several yards in front of and behind the original main building. The addition on the north side contains the kitchen and cafeteria on the first floor, and three classrooms on the second. On the south side, the addition encompasses three classrooms on each floor. Designed by the same architect as the rest of the building, William Roy Wallace (see Section 8), they are built of matching brick laid in Flemish bond with nine-over-nine double-hung sash windows, and the interior classrooms match those of the main building. The end elevations that face Jasper Street have a flush, single-door entry with nine lights, a four-light transom and simple wood surrounds. The entry is protected by an unsupported, pent-roof cover and is reached by going up five steps bracketed by simple iron railings. The end elevation on the opposite end has the same style entry door and pent-roof cover, and the wing on the north side also has a chimney for the cafeteria that extends a few feet above the roof.

The site also contains a non-contributing, one-story primary school building built in 1961. It faces north, and has a side gabled roof with broad eaves supported by extended roof beams. Classrooms open to both the north
and south sides. The primary school building is detached from the main structure, but connected to it by a covered walkway.

Although it has suffered some vandalism, the Church Street School still has a relatively high degree of integrity. The wing additions to the main building are completely compatible with the original architecture in scale, exterior brick, window treatment and interior appointments. The primary school building is unobtrusive in size and scale, and has little impact on the integrity of the site. In the main building and wings, most of the window sash is intact, as are the exterior doors, entryways, exterior stairs, and pent-roof covers of the wings doors. The brickwork is in very good condition. In the interior, the doors, transoms, cabinets, plastered walls and wood floors are all in good condition. Some of the acoustical ceiling tile has fallen down, but the woodwork in the classrooms and offices is basically intact. The kitchen, cafeteria and heating equipment is still in place, although suffering from disuse and neglect. Nowhere in the building has there been serious damage from abuse, neglect, fire or water damage. The one-story primary school building on the site is also basically intact, although it too has suffered some vandalism in the form of broken windows and debris strewn about.
Summary

The Church Street School is eligible for the National Register under Criterion A because of the significant role it played in the school-building program of the 1920s and 1930s for Thomasville in general, and in particular for its important role in the education of Afro-Americans in that city. Built as part of a project that also included companion white schools in Thomasville (Kern Street School) and nearby Lexington (Grimes School), it was constructed in 1935-1937 under a combination of WPA grant and local money as the first brick school facility in Thomasville for Afro-Americans. It was originally a consolidated school that included all grades and represented a considerable commitment by the community for the education of its Afro-American youth, who attended there until 1968 when the school system was integrated. It is also eligible under Criterion C for architecture, because it was built as an up-to-date school facility according to the standards of the time, and was designed by a well-known Winston-Salem, N.C. architect, William Roy Wallace (1890-1983). The Church Street and Kern Street Schools are the only known surviving buildings by Wallace in Thomasville.
Education Context

Prior to 1865 when the Civil War ended, there were no public schools for Afro-Americans, and indeed, their education was discouraged. In 1868, a new state constitution was adopted that called for "free public schools for all the children of the state," and North Carolina was re-admitted to the Union. Mixing of the races in the schools was to be regulated by the State Board of Education, the legislature, and the county authorities.¹ The following year, the Reconstruction legislature of 1869 passed a law that made the counties responsible for schools in their jurisdiction. However, the practical reality was that little or no money was available for school construction, since most of the state school funds had been invested in securities that became worthless after the war, the poll tax levied for new school funds was inadequate, and the local economies were devastated. Prejudice about educating and mixing with the former slaves also remained a factor. Those schools for Afro-Americans that were built and maintained were often funded by Northern organizations, such as the Baltimore Association of Friends, the Soldiers' Memorial Society of Boston, the American Missionary Association, the American Union Freedmen's Commission and the Peabody Fund. Private schools were also built with church or local funds.² In 1877 the first state Normal School for the training of Afro-American teachers opened in Fayetteville. In 1881 four more were opened in New Bern, Franklinton, Plymouth and Salisbury, and in 1891 another was built in Elizabeth City. However, these schools were chronically underfunded, the instruction was meager and the number of teachers trained was quite inadequate.³

It wasn't until just after the turn of the century that the situation changed significantly. In the 1900 gubernatorial election, Charles B. Aycock campaigned for greatly improved public education, and in his inauguration speech the next year promised that his administration would carry through. A campaign was launched throughout the state to promote spending much more money for schools in the state, with positive results.⁴ In the first ten years of this century, almost 3,000 schools were built, the state school budget tripled, and the value of school property quintupled. In 1903 the state adopted a policy of loaning money to counties for building and improving schools, which amounted to some $250,000 per year for the first ten years.⁵ The office of the state superintendent of public instruction was greatly expanded, and in 1907 a compulsory attendance law was passed.⁶ For the first time, direction was given to the counties on the construction of
school buildings in 1902 (with the short-lived exception of the school year 1869-70), when the State Superintendent of Public Instruction issued a bulletin that contained examples of one- and two-story buildings. In 1914, a second bulletin was issued which contained drawings by a "reputable architect who was familiar with school hygiene." For $5.00 per classroom, plans for these buildings could be purchased from the state. In 1903, a new school law was passed that required all plans for public schools to be approved by the State Superintendent.7

As much as these new measures helped improve schools in general, most of the improvements were directed toward upgrading and building new facilities for whites. Between 1900 and 1918, for example, 5,070 new rural schoolhouses for white students and 1,293 for Afro-American students were built; there are no comparable statistics available for the cities. Of those built, the facilities for mill children and Afro-Americans were not of equal size and quality.8 Most of them were small, overcrowded frame structures that had poorly trained and paid teachers, high teacher-student ratios, poor library facilities and inadequate equipment. In Thomasville, the Church Street School, a two-room frame building that was enlarged shortly afterward, was built to replace the existing log school for Afro-Americans (see Historical Background). The first public secondary schools for Afro-Americans were not built in the state until about 1918.9

Modern school construction did not begin in North Carolina until the 1920s, however, when there was a concerted state effort to do so. The push came in the form of state appropriations for Special Building Funds in 1921, 1923, 1925 and 1927. Of the one hundred counties of North Carolina, ninety-nine borrowed money from the Funds to build 1,081 schools during that period.10 In Davidson County, about fourteen schools were built with these funds, including two in Thomasville, a new Thomasville Graded School (1923) and the Colonial Drive School (1928); both the latter were for whites.11

Education for Afro-Americans during this time was given a boost by the formation of the Division of Negro Education in the State Department of Education in 1921. In addition to a full-time director, an inspector was appointed to devote full time to supervision secondary schools for Afro-American students. From 1922 to 1929, the number of secondary schools for Afro-Americans went up from 26 to 111, and total enrollment increased from 1,448 to 13,251.12 In Thomasville, Afro-Americans attended secondary school as part of the Church Street School.13
When the Great Depression hit in late 1929, school construction came to a halt, and the focus turned to keeping the ones that were already built open. The state attempted this by severe reductions in staff and teacher salaries, the redirecting of transportation routes, and in 1933, it completely took over the responsibility for eight months of public instruction. Things began to look better by the mid-1930s, however, for two reasons: 1) in 1934, the tobacco and cotton growers got the best price for their crops in several years, and business was improving in general; and 2) the Public Works Administration (PWA) was making loans and grants available for rehabilitation and construction of new schools.

Historical Background.

In 1852, Thomasville was established by John W. Thomas, who, in 1860, deeded a plot of land for the building of a Masonic Hall on Randolph Street with the proviso that it also be made available as a school. The hall remained Thomasville's only free white elementary school until 1903. In 1868, Thomas also conveyed a lot on Church Street for the Thomasville Methodist Episcopal Church Colored, and again specified that the site be used for a school as well. A one-room log church was built there, and served as the school for Afro-Americans until 1904. The drive across the state for better schools in 1900-1901 had a direct effect on Thomasville: a 1900 candidate for mayor, John W. Lambeth, championed a bond issue of $10,000 for building local schools; he was elected, and the bond issue passed. Considering that the town only had a population at the time of 751, it was a bold undertaking, and in 1901 the new Main Street School for whites opened to grades 1-7. However, new furniture factories being built in the vicinity boosted the population to 2500 by 1903, and more grades were added through the upper grades over the next few years. In 1904, a new two-room school was built for Afro-Americans on Church Street, but it was soon found to be too small, and a large frame building was built on the same lot shortly afterward.

The Main Street School was enlarged in 1915 to handle the growing population, but by the 1920s, when the new money from the state became available, a new school was planned. The issue was forced when Main Street burned in 1922, and it was replaced with a new building (no longer extant) that opened the following year. Another white elementary school was built in 1928, the Colonial Drive School, in the southwestern part of town.

In May, 1935, the cities of Lexington and Thomasville requested money for new schools from the Davidson County Board of Education.
Thomasville wanted two schools, one for Afro-Americans and one for whites, and Lexington needed one for whites. The following month, the Board of Education made an inspection to determine the need for new schools, and agreed to seek PWA funds for the requested buildings. In September, the board voted to seek a PWA grant of $157,000 toward the building of the three schools, and instead of borrowing the difference of approximately $192,000 between the grant and the total projected cost of $349,000 from the PWA, the county decided to make up the difference with a bond issue.

This decision proved to be a fortuitous one, because the PWA gave the application a prompt favorable response since the county did not request a loan as well. Thus by October, 1935, the PWA grant was approved and the bond issue prepared. Fifty-five percent of the funds were to be provided by the county and the remaining 45% from the PWA grant. County officials were "jubilant" over their good fortune, because PWA funds were being strictly limited by that time, and many applications were being turned down. By November, 1935, the architect, William Roy Wallace of Winston-Salem, had completed the plans so that they could be put out for bid, and the bonds were sold in Raleigh. A ten-acre site was acquired for the Church Street School.

When the bids were received in early December, R. K Stewart got the contract for the Thomasville schools, which were the Church Street School for Afro-Americans, and the Kern Street School for whites; and Ward and Thomason got the contract for the new Grimes School in Lexington. The total project price for all three schools was $377,000; $157,000 of the total was provided by the PWA grant. It was hoped that the new schools could be open for the following fall, but construction delays and delayed delivery of desks and equipment postponed the opening of Grimes and Kern Street until November, 1936 and Church Street in the first part of 1937. Together, the three schools were the "largest single school building undertaking in the history of Davidson County."

When the new Church Street School (located on Jasper Street) opened in 1937, it had 515 students, and E. L. Peterson was the first principal. In 1951, two wings and a gymnasium were added, and in 1961, the one-story primary school addition was constructed. It continued to serve the Afro-American community as a meeting center as well as a school until 1968, when the schools were integrated, and then was turned into an 8th grade center. From 1974 until 1982, it was used as a 6th grade center, and it was closed in the latter year when the new Thomasville Middle School was opened. In 1960, another school for Afro-Americans was built, the Turner
Street School, which was converted in 1968 to the city schools administration office. In 1987, the Church Street School and grounds were sold to Rev. W. E. Banks of Thomasville. Present plans are for 5.67 acres of the site, which include the original school building and the primary school, to be developed into housing for the elderly.

Architectural Context

At the time of its construction, the Church Street School incorporated the very latest in school construction ideas (see attached illustration). Its shape permitted each classroom to be large and airy with lots of light entering through large windows. The design was also made with future expansion in mind by allowing wings to be added on either end of the main classroom section. The Church Street School and its companion, the Kern Street School (also extant) are the only school buildings of this style built in Thomasville and are the only ones constructed in the Thirties. The Kern Street School and the Grimes School in Lexington are identical, and have the same basic plan as Church Street, but have different decorative detail.

The architect of all three, William Roy Wallace (1889-1983) of Winston-Salem, N.C., did almost all the architectural work for Davidson County schools from the mid-1930s into the 1950s. A native of Lancaster County, Pa., Wallace learned architecture under the tutelage of Charles Barton Keen, whose Philadelphia firm he joined at the age of 18 about 1907. Two years later, Keen came to Winston-Salem to work on Renolda House for the Reynolds family, and brought young Wallace with him. By the time Renolda House was finished in 1912, Keen had become popular with other wealthy clients, so he maintained an office in Winston-Salem and put Wallace in charge.

In 1922, Mrs. Reynolds persuaded Keen to return to build Reynolds Senior High and Reynolds Auditorium, and the following year, when they were completed, Keen insisted that Wallace come back to Philadelphia as a full partner. By 1929, Wallace decided he wanted to be on his own, so he moved back to Winston-Salem and set up in business with architect Harold Macklin in the then-new Reynolds Building. In addition to his work for the Davidson County schools, in Winston-Salem he designed, among a number of buildings, the Pine Hall Brick and Pipe Co.; the Old Town Telephone Co. building; the Twin City Club; the Fries Memorial Moravian Church; Highland Presbyterian Church; and his own Cape Cod home. He continued to go to his office to work until shortly before his death at the age of 93.

2 Ibid., p. 202-203.

3 Ibid., pp. 423-426.


5 Ibid., p. 591.

6 Ibid.


10 Ibid., pp. 72-73.


12 Long, cited above, p. 4.

13 Interview with Dr. Clarice Rains, Thomasville City Schools, 30 November 1989, by William H. Huffman.


15 Vestal, cited above; Kennedy, cited above.

16 Ibid.

17 Ibid.

18 Ibid.

19 Ibid.


27 Davidson County Deed Book 269, p. 501.


Typescript historical sketch from the Church Street School Alumni Association; Kennedy, cited above.

Kennedy, cited above.

Davidson County Deed Book 661, p. 588.


Ibid.
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:

☑ See continuation sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 5.67

UTM References
A [1][7] [5][8][2][2][0][0] [3][9][7][1][8][5][0]
Zone Easting Northing
B
Zone Easting Northing
C
D
See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

☑ See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

That portion of the property historically associated with the school which constitutes its current legal parcel. The remainder of the original parcel, now subdivided from the original school, contains the 1951 gymnasium and does not contribute to the historic character of the 1935-37 school building.

☑ See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Dr. William H. Huffman
organization Consultant
date October 31, 1989
street & number 5045 Beckford Drive
telephone 704-364-8237
City or town Charlotte
state N.C.
zip code 28226
VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

A tract of land lying and being in Thomasville Township, Davidson, County North Carolina, and more particularly described as follows:

Beginning at an existing iron post on the northern line of the right of way of Jasper Street, being the Southwest corner of property of Lucretta Bray, South 8 degrees 30 minutes West a distance of 30.50 feet to an existing iron stake; thence South 1 degree 0 minutes East a distance of 91.5 feet to a new iron stake; thence South 88 degrees 48 minutes East a distance of 157.65 feet to a new iron stake; thence South 7 degrees 30 minutes west a distance of 275.4 feet to an existing iron post; thence North 86 degrees 30 minutes West a distance of 516.5 feet; thence North 3 degrees 40 minutes East a distance of 550.09 feet to the southern right of way line of an unnamed alley; thence South 86 degrees 30 minutes East a distance of 371.98 feet to an existing iron post, being the Northwest corner of property of Lucretta Bray; thence South 3 degrees 30 minutes West a distance of 160.39 feet to the point of beginning. Containing 5.67 acres.

Church Street School Alumni Association. Typescript historical sketch.

Davidson County. Deed Books.


Lexington Dispatch. Various dates.


Rains, Dr. Clarice. Thomasville Schools official. Interview with William H. Huffman, 30 November 1989.


IDENTIFICATION OF PHOTOGRAPHS

Church Street School
Jasper Street
Thomasville, NC
Photographer: Major Sanders
September 11, 1989
Location of negatives: Major S. Sanders, AIA
1327 Beaman Place
Greensboro, NC 27408

1. Front facade, looking southwest
2. Front entrance, looking west
3. Southern facade, looking north
4. Northern facade, looking south
5. Northern facade, windows, looking north
6. First floor classroom in main building, looking west
7. Auditorium, looking west
8. Second floor library, looking east
9. Stairwell leading from first floor to second, looking east