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 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 an 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 Clayton Graded School and Clayton Grammar School/Municipal Auditorium

other names/site number Clayton Elementary School

2. Location

street & number 101 & 111 Second Street n/a not for publication

city or town Clayton n/a vicinity

state North Carolina code NC county Johnston code 1911 zip code 27520

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination 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] Jeffrey Crow [State Agency] 8/17/01

North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources
State of Federal agency and bureau

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

[Signature] [State Agency] Date

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

[ ] entered in the National Register, [ ] determined eligible for the National Register

[ ] See continuation sheet, [ ] removed from the National Register.

[ ] See continuation sheet, [ ] other, (explain:)

[Signature of the Keeper] Date of Action
Clayton Graded School and Clayton Grammar School and Municipal Auditorium

5. Classification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ownership of Property</th>
<th>Category of Property</th>
<th>Number of Resources within Property</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Check as many boxes as apply)</td>
<td>(Check only one box)</td>
<td>(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ private</td>
<td>□ building(s)</td>
<td>Contributing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☑ public-local</td>
<td>□ district</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>□ public-State</td>
<td>□ site</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ public-Federal</td>
<td>□ structure</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ object</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Name of property

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

EDUCATION/school
RECREATION AND CULTURE/auditorium

Current Functions

VACANT/NOT IN USE
VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification

LATE 19th & 20th CENTURY REVIVALS/
Classical Revival

Materials

foundation _BRICK_
walls _BRICK_
roof _ASPHALT_
other _CONCRETE_
STONE/limestone

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)
Clayton Graded School and Clayton Grammar School and Municipal Auditorium

Name of Property: Clayton Graded School and Clayton Grammar School and Municipal Auditorium

County and State: Johnston/N.C.

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.)

- [X] 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.
- [X] 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: n/a

- [ ] 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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

- ARCHITECTURE
- EDUCATION

Period of Significance
1915 - 1951

Significant Dates
1915; 1926

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation
n/a

Architect/Builder
Hook, Charles Christian - architect

Narrative Statement of Significance
(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography
(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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:

- [X] State Historic Preservation Office
- [ ] Other State agency
- [ ] Federal agency
- [ ] Local government
- [ ] University
- [ ] Other

Name of repository:
10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 2.26

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

Verbal Boundary Description
(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification
(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title   Beth P. Thomas

organization __________________________ date   February 20, 2001

street & number 3628 Lubbock Drive telephone 919-881-0362

city or town Raleigh state N.C. zip code 27612

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.

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 SHPO or FPO.)

name   Town of Clayton   c/o Mr. Steve Biggs, Town Manager

street & number   PO Box 879 telephone 919-553-5002

city or town Clayton state N.C. zip code 27520

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.
7. Narrative Description

The Clayton Elementary School Complex includes a 1915 brick Graded School (later the High School) and a 1926 brick Grammar School and Municipal Auditorium. The buildings occupy a lot one block southwest of Clayton’s main commercial area, bounded by Second Street (northeast), Fayetteville Street (northwest), Horne Street (southwest) and the Horne Memorial Methodist Church (southeast). A slight ground elevation along the Second Street frontage allows the buildings to overlook the streetscape. Concrete sidewalks surround the block and miscellaneous hardwoods, magnolias, and shrubbery complete the landscape.

The two structures share common characteristics, including red brick exteriors, large vertical windows, decorative brickwork and overall symmetry. Both are examples of the Classical Revival style, though the Graded School is more restrained in its expression of this.

Clayton Graded School (1915)

The main block of the Graded School building is rectangular and rises two stories above a raised basement. A one-story gymnasium wing projects to the rear. The front (northeast) facade features a nine-bay section flanked by slightly projecting end bays with paired windows. All windows are one-over-one sash with concrete lintels and sills. A projecting concrete band encircles the building above the second floor windows; a brick water table at basement level also encircles the structure. Concrete steps lead to the main entrance, centered in the facade with double half-glazed doors topped by a three-part, divided light transom and flanked by sidelights.

The east side elevation of the Graded School features a set of concrete steps leading to a two-story porch which shelters the side entry. The upper level of the porch is open except for modern lattice and grating. A set of stairs leading from the porch to the second level may have been open but are now enclosed. Extending east from the concrete steps is a modern metal-roofed walkway which connects the Graded School to the adjacent grammar school building.

Projecting from the rear of the Graded School is a one-story gymnasium wing featuring four rectangular windows on the east and west elevations with concrete lintels and a concrete-capped parapet roof line. On the west side of the main block are another set of concrete steps which lead to a double-door entry similar to the main school entrance on the front facade. This entry configuration is repeated at the second level of the west end, and a set of exterior modern metal steps has been erected to reach that door.

The interior of the Graded School features eight classrooms per floor in the main block, with an office in the center front. Interior stairs at the end of each hall access the second floor. The
building is simply finished inside with original plaster walls, plain board chair rails, door frames, and baseboards, five-panel doors, and hardwood floors. Classrooms retain their original slate blackboards and large paired windows. Dropped ceilings, installed in the 1970s, obscure the originals which still exist. A charming original feature which remains in place are the coat hooks which line the halls.

Clayton Grammar School and Municipal Auditorium (1926)

Standing east of the Clayton Graded School School is the Clayton Grammar School and Municipal Auditorium building. Unlike the more common rear location for an auditorium, the two-story, gable-front auditorium fronts Second Street, with the elementary classrooms recessed to the rear. The main elevation of the auditorium is highly ornate, featuring a projecting three-bay limestone frontispiece. Three arches, flanked by pilasters with molded caps and topped with keystones, shelter the double, half-glazed, wood-paneled main doors. Above these doors are fanlights. Between the lower and upper levels of the limestone front is a molded cornice. The upper level is composed of three rectangular bays with pilasters flanking twelve-over-twelve sash windows. A double diamond motif decorates the limestone frieze band across the front of the building. Above this, within the gable, is an inset limestone block with the carved date of 1926.

The classic symmetry of the auditorium is further represented on the east and west side elevations, both of which exhibit six bays of paired windows with limestone sills and lintels. Those on the first level are rectangular, flanked by projecting pilasters which rise to cornice level and are topped with sloped caps. The second floor windows are also rectangular, but are crowned with flat brick arches with limestone corner blocks and keystones. Also decorating the side elevations of the auditorium are a projecting brick course at water table level.

Incorporated across the rear of the auditorium, and in matching side wings, is the three-story classroom block which contains eighteen classrooms. The main entries into the classroom area are located in the side wings, where two-story recessed porches with arched openings on the first level lead to doors similar to those at the front entrance of the auditorium. Stairway access to the two upper floors is also provided in these wings. An exterior metal stair has been attached to the east section to access the second floor and third floors from the outside, and the original porches at those levels are now open.

The east and west elevations of the classroom block are four bays wide, with rectangular paired windows on all three levels, brick sills, projecting pilasters and a brick soldier course. The entire block has a flat metal roof. The rear, or south, elevation features a central arched opening
sheltering double doors, and paired rectangular windows. Large blind brick panels enliven the otherwise plain rear elevation.

The interior of the auditorium is accessed through a tile-floored lobby at the main Second Street entrance. Stairs to either side of the lobby rise to the upper balcony seating area. Double half-glazed doors lead from the lobby into the auditorium. This large space is divided into three sections by two aisles. Approximately 600 original metal framed wood seats remain in place, those on the aisles emblazoned with the CHS monogram of Clayton High School. At the front of the room is the original stage, with a simple paneled surround and proscenium. The original blue stage curtain, also monogrammed, remains. Along each wall on the second level are passageways which link the balcony seating with exits near the stage. The walls of the passageways are paneled on the exterior and sheathed in narrow board on the interior. Original hanging light fixtures with white glass globes remain as well.

The interior of the classroom section features six classrooms on each of three floors. The rooms are approximately twenty-four feet by thirty-five feet in size, with two in each wing and two across the rear of the building. The stage area of the auditorium is surrounded by this six-room arrangement. In the center of each floor, between the two rear classrooms, are spaces used as offices and teacher lounges. Large triple windows with six-over-six sash and molded sills light the classrooms. Plain chair rails, molded door surrounds, six-panel doors and some of the slate blackboards remain. The long halls on each floor, running across the back of the building, feature arched openings at each end.

Integrity Statement
The Clayton Elementary School Complex has not been used since 1997. All exterior windows and doors are currently boarded over to protect the building from vandals and deterioration. However, the original features do remain beneath the boards and are visible from the interior of the buildings. They will be retained and utilized in the planned rehabilitation. As is typical in older school buildings, changing needs over the years have resulted in some modern interior alteration, including installation of dropped ceilings, partitioning of some interior spaces, and the application of modern materials such as sheetrock. These changes do not compromise the architectural or historical integrity of these buildings; they retain all significant original elements of style, form, and function.
Clayton Graded School and Clayton Grammar School and Municipal Auditorium
Clayton, Johnston County, N.C.

8. Statement of Significance

Summary
The Clayton Elementary Graded School and Clayton Elementary School and Municipal Auditorium has educational significance under Criterion A for its associations with the long history of private and public education in Clayton, North Carolina. The Complex consists of the former Clayton Graded School, built in 1915, and the Grammar School and Municipal Auditorium, completed in 1926. Standing on a site occupied continuously by school buildings since the 1890s, the buildings serve as reminders of North Carolina’s period of great improvement and expansion of school facilities and educational opportunities for children in the first decades of the twentieth century. These buildings, especially the Auditorium, have local significance as cornerstones of the community’s social, civic, and educational life since their construction. The period of significance extends to 1951. Although the building functioned as a school after 1951, it has been determined that the property does not meet Criterion Consideration G, and therefore the fifty-year cut-off date for Criterion A is the end of the period of significance.

The school buildings are significant architecturally under Criterion C as intact, well-preserved examples of early twentieth century brick schools which were built throughout the state but are now among its most endangered historic resources. The two school structures in Clayton are among only a few intact surviving examples of their type in Johnston County, exhibiting the hallmark symmetry, red brick finish, and restrained Classical Revival ornamentation of the period. The Grammar School and Municipal Auditorium, unusual for the prominent facade orientation of the auditorium, was designed by Charles C. Hook of Charlotte, one of North Carolina’s preeminent early twentieth century architects, and is the best surviving example of his school design in Johnston County.

Historical Context
The small northwestern Johnston County town of Clayton was known as Stallings Station in 1853, when a small, two-story frame school was erected on (now) Fayetteville Street by H.L. Winton of New Jersey. By 1858 he had added a brick dormitory, the first brick building in town, for boarding male and female students (Clayton News, August 8, 1983). This early school, known as Clayton Academy or Clayton Institute, was the forerunner to a succession of private and public schools in Clayton which served the community and its surroundings well into the late twentieth century.
Cotton, tobacco, and agricultural markets supported the growth of the town, which was incorporated in 1869. By 1890 it had become known as Clayton, and the old Academy building was rolled across Fayetteville Street to the site of the present elementary school complex. The original school building was replaced in 1900 by a two-story frame school featuring ten large classrooms and an auditorium, as well as a large brick dormitory for boarders and faculty. In 1901 the Clayton School Company was incorporated to oversee the town’s educational facilities and programs. The 1903-1904 school term at the Academy offered instruction for primary, intermediate, preparatory and high school students, as well as classes in music, art, business and teacher training (Clayton News, August 8, 1983). By all accounts, the Clayton Academy was a revered local institution and source of great pride for the citizenry.

The first two decades of the twentieth century saw phenomenal educational development in North Carolina, spurred by progressive governmental leadership, greater economic prosperity, and a growing awareness of the state’s “intellectual backwardness” (Lefler, p. 589). Major campaigns were waged to convince the people of the need for local school taxes, consolidated school districts, more and better school buildings, and longer school terms, all of which were important components of public school expansion and improvement at the time. In Johnston County, a special county tax approved in 1909 allowed for construction of larger schools throughout the county to serve more students. In 1910 the former Academy was operating as the Clayton Graded School, tuition-free to district residents (Smithfield Herald, September 2, 1910).

An article in the Smithfield Herald on April 1, 1910 celebrated the transition of the Clayton Academy into the public Clayton Graded School:

“...The question arises...why should the old enchanted Alma Mater ever yield to any new educational propaganda? For years proudly her ancient penants (sic) floated above her as she nobly stood the pressure, then ‘Et tu, Brute?’ (and thou too, Brutus?) on August 10, 1909 by an overwhelming majority vote for special tax...the Clayton Graded School came into being. God moves. The unalienable rights of children are being meted out to them in this advancing civilization of ours...Now with every form of wealth in the city and surrounding county contributing its part to the maintenance of the school, the graded school bell will sound a greater welcome to more than 500 white boys and girls; for nine months in the year they can go into the sacred halls of learning. There in the future this institution will stand para-
Four years later, $25,000 in bonds for the Clayton Graded School District were sold to Hanchett Bond Company of Chicago for the purpose of constructing a new school building. The new facility, designed for grades one through ten, was expected to be one of the best equipped school plants in the state. Electric lights, hot air heat, and artificial ventilation were among its planned modern conveniences (Smithfield Herald, July 16, 1915). The new facility opened on September 20, 1915 with 300 students using twelve classrooms (four of which were labs) and a library.

By 1924 the Graded School was no longer adequate for the needs of elementary and high school instruction. That year, another bond referendum approved $150,000 for a new grammar school building. The old Graded School would become the local high school. Designed by Charlotte architect Charles Christian Hook, the new school would include eighteen classrooms, a music studio and a large auditorium for the town’s use. R.L. Blalock of Kinston, N.C. was awarded the construction contract for the Clayton Grammar School and Municipal Auditorium at a bid of $79,344.00. The heating contract was awarded to J.L. Powers of Bennettsville, S.C. for $6300.00 (Smithfield Herald, October 2, 1925). Opened in September, 1926, the Clayton Grammar School operated continuously as a public school until 1997, as did the High School. The auditorium, site of all of the town’s important cultural events, closed one year earlier. In 1997 Johnston County deeded the properties back to the Town of Clayton. The great affection the citizens of Clayton hold for these landmarks, and their important place in local history, spared them from demolition, the fate of so many early school buildings being phased out of use. The Clayton buildings are slated for rehabilitation and adaptive reuse as town office, cultural facilities, and meeting space. They will thus continue to fulfill a prominent function and place in the life of this small town.

Architectural Context

The Clayton Elementary School Complex includes the 1915 Clayton Graded School (later the High School) and the 1926 Grammar School and Municipal Auditorium. Both buildings are significant as well-preserved examples of early twentieth century brick schools in North Carolina; both retain a high degree of architectural integrity. The Graded School and the Grammar School...
Clayton Graded School and Clayton Grammar School and Municipal Auditorium
Clayton, Johnston County, N.C.

are good examples of the Classical Revival style as it was applied to schools, and they exhibit form and finish typical of their period and uses. Both are executed in red brick, with symmetrical main facades and feature concrete and limestone decorative elements.

Numerous similar brick schools were built across North Carolina during the first two decades of the twentieth century. A 1996 survey of schools in Johnston County found only three intact examples remaining, including the school buildings in Clayton, Selma (NR, currently slated for demolition) and Smithfield (NR). All of these exhibit the characteristics of early-twentieth century school construction. Examples of other similar schools existed in the towns of Micro, Kenly, and Princeton (whose school was considered the finest in the county); all have been destroyed. Schools in Pine Level and Four Oaks have had unsympathetic alterations which compromise historic integrity (“Hurricane Fran Damage Assessment,” 1996, Johnston County files, NCHPO, n.p.).

The architect of the Grammar School and Auditorium building was Charles Christian Hook (1870 - 1938), who came to Charlotte, N.C. in 1890 to teach mechanical drawing in the public school system. By 1892 he had become Charlotte’s first full-time professional architect, specializing in the Colonial and Classical Revival styles which emphasized classical elements, symmetry, and restrained ornamentation. Hook produced plans and designs for a wide variety of buildings, including schools, post offices, theaters, railroad stations, city halls, and houses, and his work appeared throughout the state (Hanken, no page given). He was widely known by the 1920s when his designs were selected for the new Clayton Grammar School and Municipal Auditorium as well as other new Johnston County schools in Pine Level, Princeton, Glendale and Benson (Smithfield Herald, August 1, 1924). (Of these, the Pine Level School has been altered; the Princeton, Glendale and Benson schools have been lost.) The Clayton Grammar School and Municipal Auditorium building is the best surviving example of Hook’s school architecture in Johnston County. Its most prominent and innovative feature is the elegant auditorium that functions almost as a free-standing entity, since the classroom block is recessed to the rear. Auditoriums, a common amenity in early twentieth century schools, are normally located in a rear wing, with entrances inside the school building. Hook’s auditorium, however, forms the facade of the building, with three sets of doors opening to Second Street. This unusual placement may have been dictated by its function as the auditorium for the adjacent high school, but would have facilitated the town’s use of the space as well.
Clayton Graded School and Clayton Grammar School and Municipal Auditorium
Clayton, Johnston County, N.C.

9. Bibliography


Johnston County Deeds, various books.


Smithfield Herald. April 4, 1914; July 16, 1915; September 24, 1915; April 1, 1916; February 28, 1924; August 1, 1924; October 2, 1925; May 21, 1926; August 13, 1926.


Clayton Graded School and Clayton Grammar School and Municipal Auditorium
Clayton, Johnston County, N.C.

10. Geographic Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property lies on the southwest side of Second Street at the intersection of Second Street and Fayetteville Street, and is bounded by Second Street to the northeast, Fayetteville Street to the northwest, Home Street to the southwest and Home Memorial Methodist Church to the southeast. The boundary is delineated on the attached Johnston County GIS map, parcel 1690, drawn to a scale of 1”=125’.

Boundary Justification

The nominated 2.26 acre parcel contains all the land historically associated with the Clayton Graded School and Clayton Grammar School and Municipal Auditorium.
**DISCLAIMER**
Johnston County assumes no legal responsibility for the information represented here.

Clayton Graded School
and Clayton Grammar School
and Municipal Auditorium
Clayton/Johnston Co., N.C.

A. Clayton Graded School
B. Clayton Grammar School
and Municipal Auditorium

February 26, 2001
1 inch = 125 feet
Buildings Not To Scale
Produced by the United States Geological Survey in cooperation with the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources.


North American Datum of 1927 (NAD 27) is shown by dashed corner ticks. The values of the shift between NAD 83 and NAD 27 for 7.5-minute intersections are obtainable from National Geodetic Survey NADCON software.

There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map.

Landmark buildings verified 1964.