

Walker-Grant, Fredericksburg, Virginia

NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 10-90)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

VLR - 9/14/98
NRHP - 10/30/98

**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 any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Walker-Grant School

other names/site number Fredericksburg Colored School
VDHR# 111-145 5006

2. Location

street & number East side of Gunnery Road between Dunmore and Ferdinand Streets

not for publication N/A

city or town Fredericksburg

vicinity N/A

state Virginia code VA county Fredericksburg code 630 zip code 22401

3. State/Federal Agency 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide X locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

William J. Johnson 9/26/98
Signature of certifying official Date
Director, Virginia Department of Historic Resources

State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. 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 Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

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

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 0 buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 0 sites
<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 0 structures
<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 0 objects
<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 0 Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Education Sub: school

Walker-Grant, Fredericksburg, Virginia

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Education Sub: school

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Art Deco

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete; brick
roof Asphalt
walls Brick
other

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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) Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
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.
Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.
owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
removed from its original location.
a birthplace or a grave.
a cemetery.
a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
a commemorative property.
less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Education
Ethnic Heritage: Black

Period of Significance 1935-1948

Walker-Grant, Fredericksburg, Virginia

=====
11. Form Prepared By
=====

name/title __ Holly L. Hanney; David A. Edwards _____

organization __ Va Dept.of Historic Resources _____

date __ July 1998 __

street & number _ 107 N. Kent St. _____ telephone _ 540-722-3456 _

city or town __ Winchester _____ state _ VA _ zip code 22601 __

=====
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 the SHPO or FPO.)

name __ Fredericksburg School Board _____

street & number _ 817 Princess Anne Street _____ telephone ____ (540) 372-1130 ____

city or town __ Fredericksburg _____ state _ VA _ zip code _ 22401 ____

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CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 1

**Walker-Grant School VDHR 111-145
Fredericksburg, Virginia**

Summary Paragraph

Walker-Grant School, built in 1935, is located in Mayfield, an African-American neighborhood situated south of the downtown commercial area of the city of Fredericksburg, Virginia. The school sits on a terraced slope at the corner of Gunnery Road and Ferdinand Street. The three-story, flat-roofed, brick school with Art Deco-style details faces south. The south elevation is three stories in height, while the north elevation is two stories. Originally an L-shaped building, expansions in 1938 and 1940 added classroom space to the north and west. Despite the later additions, Walker-Grant School retains a high degree of original architectural integrity.

Architectural Description

The school sits on the northwest corner of an irregularly-shaped lot that slopes down on the east and west sides. It is bordered on the north by a group of houses, on the east by Dixon Street, on the south by a wooded area, and on the west by Gunnery Road. The land directly in front of the south elevation is terraced and slopes down to a large level area that includes a playground to the west and a basketball court and baseball field to the east. A set of double concrete stairs leads down from Dixon Street to the basketball court. The second story of the building is at street level on the north while the ground slopes down to expose the first story on the south. The first floor is reached from Gunnery Road by a set of stairs on the east side of the building or by a sloping pathway on the west side. The construction of a concrete ramp has made the original set of stairs on the west end inaccessible. There are sidewalks surrounding the entire school.

All exterior walls are constructed of concrete blocks faced with bricks that are laid in a mixed garden wall bond with tinted headers. Brick pilasters, laid in stretcher bond and topped by cast-concrete caps, are found at each corner of the building and divide groups of two to five windows across the southern elevation. The pilasters rise to a brick parapet that is topped by cast-concrete coping. Positioned on the parapet above a pair of paneled doors with lights is a cast-concrete shield incised with the date of the building's construction—1935. The east elevation features two large, bilaterally symmetrical, brick panels. They are framed by a row of stretcher bricks, one half brick deep with inset, square, cast-concrete squares at each corner. The panels are laid in Flemish bond without tinted headers. Both east and west side entrances

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have bracket-supported hoods with metal hipped roofs. On the south elevation simple flat metal hoods shelter the middle and west entrances. A flat metal roof shelters the ramp that extends from the Gunnery Road entrance. The original plans for the building called for these entrances to be sheltered by copper roofs. Six steps lead up to the entrance on the east elevation.

The first floor, visible only on the southern elevation, has thirteen bays. The original school building consists of the eleven bays to the east and is symmetrical with a set of four windows on either side of a pair of double doors. End bays originally contained a door with a transom and pairs of windows above; one door has been blocked with brick infill. The three-bay western addition was built in 1938 and includes paired windows in each bay and on each floor except for the first-story westernmost bay which has a single door and a window. Early photographs show two windows in this section. As in the original building, the addition also has pilasters with cast-concrete caps, a brick parapet, and six-over-six double-hung sash windows. The doors are all wood with nine-lights.

The double-door entrance located in the center of the façade originally served as the main entrance to the building. The doors are framed by two corbeled courses of brick and flanked by smaller versions of stone-capped brick pilasters. A twelve-light transom has been covered with brick infill. Above the former transom a white metal sign reads "Walker Grant" in raised metal letters. This sign covers a cast-concrete panel with the inscription, "Fredericksburg Colored School."

The windows on the second and third floors are wood framed with concrete sills. The two windows on the east and west elevations, however, are metal framed. Those on the south elevation are six-over-six double-hung sashes and are arranged in two groups of five on the 1935 facade and double units in the side bays and the 1938 western addition. A soldier course forms the lintels of these windows. On the north elevation the windows have eight-over-eight double-hung sashes arranged in groups of four. The east and west end elevations have double, eighteen-light awning windows. There are also two sets of wooden double doors on the east and west ends of the second floor. Separated by a center post, the doors have nine lights like those on the south elevation. Pilasters with cast-stone caps flank the door and window on the east elevation. North of the east entrance is a window well with a six-light window covered with a metal screen and a descending stairway to an entrance with a metal door.

In 1938 the building was remodeled and expanded to include a high school. Two classrooms, added to the second and third floors on the north side of the building, changed the L-shaped building into a rectangular building with a central hallway. At the same time, a two-story wing

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was added to the southwest corner and the corridor was extended to make the new wing accessible from the west entrance. In 1940, a third story was added to the west wing and the building assumed its present appearance.

Inside the school there is little decorative detailing. The two classrooms on the first floor are situated on the south side of the hall. The flooring on this level is all vinyl tile. A variety of brickwork and concrete blocks is found throughout the first-floor interior. Alternating rows of concrete block and brick form the south wall of the classrooms. Walls on the north side of the hall are laid entirely in brick. The remaining walls on this level are concrete block. Steel support beams are visible in the hall/classroom partition walls. The double doors at the original main entrance have now been separated by a concrete block wall so that each of the doors leads into a classroom. Concrete stairs with solid metal balustrades found on the east and west ends of the north wall lead to upper levels with landings between the second and third floors. The upstairs classroom floors have tongue-and-groove wood boards while the hallways have vinyl tiles consistent with the first floor. Hallway walls are plastered above brick tiles that rise several feet above the floor. The classroom entrances have wooden doors with six lights and three-light transoms. There are wooden door surrounds and baseboards. Classroom walls on the second and third floors are plastered. Each room is equipped with built-in blackboards and closets. The bathrooms are found at the east and west ends of the south side of the second floor.

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Statement of Significance

Walker-Grant School is historically significant under Criterion A in education and ethnic history as the first and only segregated African-American school of secondary education in the city of Fredericksburg. Built in 1935 according to plans and elevations provided by the Virginia Department of Education, the building originally housed a grammar school. It was enlarged in 1938 and again in 1940 to include high school facilities. Long identified as a landmark by the city's African-American community, it now serves as a cultural and educational center for young people in the community. Originally named Fredericksburg Colored School and later named Walker-Grant School, it is a fine example of a well-preserved school of the Great Depression era. The alumni association actively participates in programs for the preservation of the building.

Historical Background

In the late 1860s provisions for free public schools in Virginia were established by the Underwood Constitution which allowed educational expenses to be paid with state and local funds. Separate schools for whites and blacks were instructed to teach orthography, reading, writing, arithmetic, grammar and geography.¹ The city of Fredericksburg traces its support of public elementary schools for whites and blacks to the 1870s. In the beginning, the public schools were held for only five or six months a year in private houses because the appropriations for school purposes were not adequate for the acquisition or construction of new buildings. Many teachers were hired because of their need for a salary rather than their ability and desire to teach. In 1876 funds received from the city and state were largely supplemented by the Peabody Fund which enabled the school board to adopt a ten-month session and separate grades.²

The city's first school for African-American students was established in the basement of the Shiloh Baptist Church with two grades. On August 28, 1883, the Fredericksburg City Council appropriated \$3,500 to purchase a lot at the northeast corner of Princess Anne and Wolfe Streets for a new city school building. This new two-story brick school was called the Fredericksburg Colored School. By 1894, the Fredericksburg School Board had established six grades. In the 1920s the citizens of the city saw the need for an improved elementary school building to accommodate approximately 250 students in all classes. In the 1922 annual report to the Fredericksburg City Council, Levin J. Houston, Jr., the city manager, reported 1000 white students with thirty teachers in the elementary and high schools, and 267 black students with

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five teachers and no high school.³

The separate but equal doctrine had a devastating impact in the area of education. In the 1930s black Parent-Teacher Associations spent most of their time fighting segregation. With the exception of larger urban areas, few tax-supported African-American high schools existed in Virginia. A large percentage of students attending traditionally African-American colleges had received a high school education. By the time many students had received their high school diplomas, their money for a college education had already been spent. Due to the high costs of tuition as well as room and board, the majority of African-American parents lacked sufficient funds to send their children to schools located in distant cities.⁴ In an effort to meet student needs, African-American churches organized private high schools.

In early 1934 the city council recognized that the 1880s "colored elementary school" needed to be replaced. The old school, at the corner of Princess Anne and Wolfe streets, was situated in a high traffic area. In addition, the school was overcrowded, and had unsatisfactory heating, and unsanitary conditions. That spring a parcel of land was purchased on the east end of Gunnery Road from Messie Howard for five hundred dollars and an eighteen-foot-wide strip of land between that property and the city-owned Gunnery lot was purchased from Mr. C. O'Connor Goolrick for eighty-five dollars.⁵ A building contract of \$33,371 for a new school was awarded to J.H. Bennett, Inc., of Richmond, after Mr. Bennett agreed that all electrical, plumbing and heating work would be performed by residents of Fredericksburg and neighboring counties.⁶ The school, known as the Fredericksburg Colored School, opened in the fall of 1935.

High schools for African-American students in the Fredericksburg area were non-existent until 1905. In the spring of that year representatives from several surrounding communities met at the Orange County Courthouse to discuss the possibility of establishing a regional high school for black students, but no decision was made for lack of agreement on a location. The Fredericksburg committee, however, determined to provide a high school education for the African-American youths of the city. According to *Historical Background of Negro Secondary Education in Fredericksburg, Virginia* by Paul E. Bowes, committee members held a meeting in the home of Joseph Walker in September 1905 where the decision was made to open a high school. Officers elected included: Joseph Walker, chairman of the board of trustees; Reverend S.A. Brown, president; and J.C. Grant, a teacher in the elementary school, secretary. Jason C. Grant Jr., said "the school was established because these men deplored the fact that there was no high school in the town to which they could send their youth and so they (the young people)

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could only become laborers and servants and the like."⁷ The first high school for African-American students in Fredericksburg began in the rented basement of Shiloh Church, New Site, in October 1905. The high school was considered private because it was not supported by public funds, but anyone desiring an education was allowed to attend. The one teacher hired taught the first class of fifteen to twenty pupils. The school was called the Fredericksburg Normal And Industrial Institute, and also known as Mayfield High School.⁸

A site for the high school was found in 1906 in the Moorefield area of Fredericksburg when the Board of Trustees purchased a parcel of property and farmhouse on the Howison Farm for \$1,200. At the time of this transaction Judge A.T. Embery, who represented the owners of the property, changed the name of the neighborhood to Mayfield. Like the earlier school, the new school was first named the Fredericksburg Normal and Industrial Institute (F.N.I.I.) and accepted boarding students from neighboring counties as well as students commuting from the city. The F.N.I.I. received strong support from churches and private groups in the community. Under Reverend W.L. Ransome, principal and president of the school board in the 1910s, the city council was persuaded to provide some support to the school with the stipulation that the city pupils could attend for free. The school also received aid from several state church groups. Reverend Ransome had the school placed on the state accredited list of secondary schools and graduates were awarded provisional certificates to teach in Virginia elementary schools for one year.⁹

In 1925 construction of a new building, called Mayfield High School, began on the site using funds provided by the trustees, city churches, and private citizens; however, the building was never completed. An article in the Fredericksburg Daily Star dated 11 November 1925 stated, "... though we have not attained our ultimate object, we have gone sufficiently far to open our doors for the reception of students and inspection of our friends."¹⁰ By 1935, the local churches and citizens of the community were struggling to support the Mayfield High School due to the strains of the Great Depression and the loss of church support. The higher requirements for secondary school accreditation also took their toll. Finally, in October 1937, the trustees determined that Mayfield High School could no longer support itself. Accordingly, the Fredericksburg School Board took over the school and assumed the entire cost of operating it.¹¹ The president of the school board requested in February 1938 that the city council consider a proposal to expand the 1935 Fredericksburg Colored School building to add new rooms for both regular and vocational high school classes.¹² On 21 June 1938, the city council adopted the Special School Construction Committee's plan for a five-room addition to the north side and the

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addition of another two rooms and an entry for the manual training and domestic science departments on the west end.¹³ The building contract was awarded to the Lucas Construction Company. High school classes began in November 1938 at the renamed Walker-Grant School.

The name Walker-Grant is derived from the names of city residents Joseph Walker and Jason C. Grant, both of whom contributed a great deal to black education in Fredericksburg. Joseph Walker was described as "a dependable worker, highly respected by both races, he had a keen mind and an enduring interest in education. He had received his own education by personal study, contact on his jobs and close personal observation of the speech and actions of others."¹⁴ Denied an education when he was a slave, Joseph Walker, wanted to provide educational opportunities to the African-American youth of Fredericksburg. Jason Clifton Grant was educated in Pontiac, Michigan, and at the Wilberforce Educational Institute in Ohio before moving to New York. While working as a waiter in Saratoga Springs, he met Joseph Russell, a teacher from Fredericksburg who persuaded him to teach in the Fredericksburg area. After teaching in country schools around Fredericksburg and in the city, Jason Grant became principal of the Fredericksburg Colored School. As "a man of many talents and deep insights, he was also dedicated to education, and was known for his knowledge and the thoroughness, strictness and fairness with which he taught."¹⁵

In 1940, due to increased enrollment, a third story was added to the west wing, which provided a laboratory and a larger library for the students. In 1952 a new, larger building was built across the street for the high school students. When the public schools were integrated in 1968, Walker-Grant was used as Fredericksburg's middle school. The middle school students moved to a new building in 1988. Walker-Grant remained empty and unused until its alumni association lobbied successfully to use the school for community activities and programs. Walker-Grant School remains an important educational and historic resource for the African-American community in Fredericksburg.

Endnotes

¹Ruth Coder Fitzgerald, *A Different Story* (Fredericksburg: Unicorn, 1979),129.

² S. J. Quinn, *The History of the City of Fredericksburg* (Richmond: Hermitage Press, Inc., 1908), 200.

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³ Fitzgerald, 130-133.

⁴ Ibid., 233.

⁵ Minutes of the Fredericksburg City Council, Volume 25, March 1, 1935, pp. 536-37

⁶ Minutes of the Fredericksburg City Council, Volume 25, March 12, 1935, p. 539.

⁷ Linda Raymond, "Changing Panorama Is Recalled As Walker-Grant Alumni Gather",
The Free Lance Star, 27 May 1968.

⁸ Fitzgerald, 135-36.

⁹ Ibid., 137.

¹⁰ *Fredericksburg Daily Star*, November 11, 1925, p. 2, column 4.

¹¹ Fitzgerald, 138.

¹² Minutes of the Fredericksburg City Council, Volume 26, February 8, 1938, p. 495.

¹³ Minutes of the Fredericksburg City Council, Volume 26, June 21, 1938, pp. 536-38.

¹⁴ Fitzgerald, 134.

¹⁵ Ibid., 135.

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Bullock, Henry Allen. *A History of Negro Education In The South: From 1619 to the Present*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967.

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The Free Lance Star. 17 August 1934.

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Pierce, Truman M., James B. Kincheloe, R. Edgar Moore, Galen N. Drewry, and Bennie E. Carmichael. *White And Negro Schools In The South: An analysis of biracial education*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall Inc., 1955.

Quinn, S.J. *The History of the City of Fredericksburg, Virginia*. Richmond: The Hermitage Press. Inc., 1908.

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U. S. Department of the Interior. Bureau of Education. *Negro Education*. Washington, D. C., 1916.

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Walker, Joseph. "Life of Joseph Walker," interview by John J. Lanier. Fredericksburg, Virginia.

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**Walker-Grant School VDHR 111-145
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Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries of the property are delineated by the polygon whose vertices are marked by the following UTM Reference Points: 1. 18/285075; 2. 18/285100/4241050; 3. 18/285080/4240950; and 4. 18/284940/4240950

Verbal Boundary Justification

Although the parcel of land containing the Walker-Grant School consists of 24.1 acres, boundaries of the nominated property (approximately 3 acres) defines only sufficient acreage to include the school and original school yard.

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Section Photos Page 11

**Walker-Grant School VDHR 111-145
Fredericksburg, Virginia**

All Photographs are of:
WALKER-GRANT SCHOOL
Fredericksburg, Virginia

Location of Negatives: Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, VA

Holly Hanney, photographer
April, 1998
View of south elevation looking northwest
Negative No. 13872:16A
Photo 1 of ~~12~~ 10

Jennifer MacGowan, photographer
April, 1993
View of west elevation looking east
Negative No. 13619:10A
Photo 2 of ~~12~~ 10

Jennifer MacGowan, photographer
April, 1993
View of north elevation looking southeast
Negative No. 13619:18A
Photo 3 of ~~12~~ 10

Holly Hanney, photographer
April, 1998
View of east elevation looking southwest
Negative No. 13872:4A
Photo 4 of ~~12~~ 10

Holly Hanney, photographer
April, 1998
View of playground and baseball field on the south side of the school looking southeast
Negative No. 13872:24A
Photo 5 of ~~12~~ 10

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Jennifer MacGowan, photographer

April, 1993

View of basketball court on south side of the school and west side of Dixon Street looking east

Negative No. 13619:2A

Photo 6 of ~~12~~ 10

Jennifer MacGowan, photographer

April, 1993

View of southeast classroom on second floor looking southwest

Negative No. 13620:42

Photo 7 of ~~12~~ 10

Jennifer MacGowan, photographer

April, 1993

View of second-floor west wing classroom looking northeast

Negative No. 13620:40

Photo 8 of ~~12~~ 10

Jennifer MacGowan, photographer

April, 1993

View of stairs on east end of first-floor looking northeast to second floor

Negative No. 13620:37

Photo 9 of ~~12~~ 10

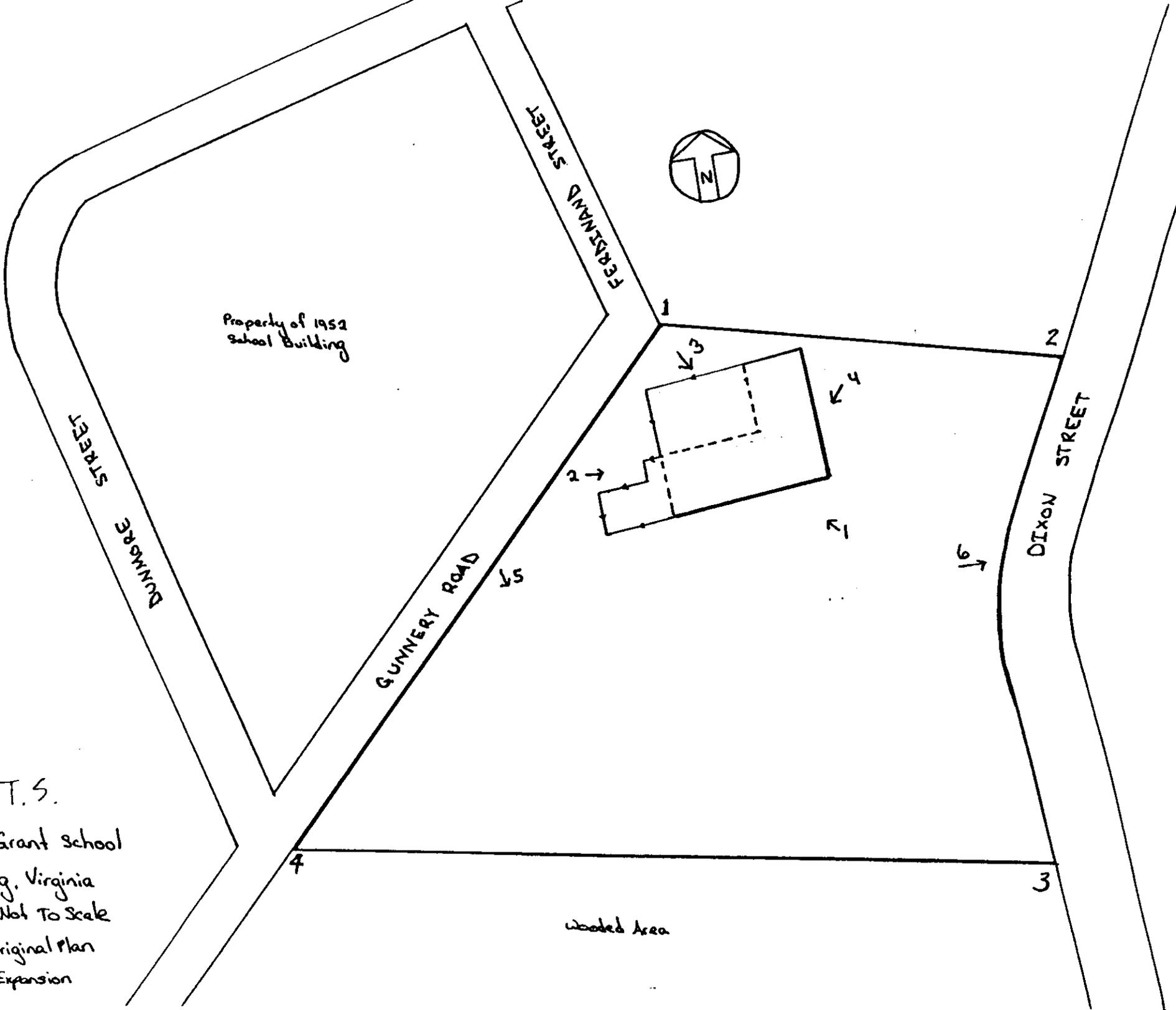
Jennifer MacGowan, photographer

April, 1993

View of second-floor hallway looking southwest

Negative No. 13620:44

Photo 10 of ~~12~~ 10



Property of 1952
School Building

DUNMORE STREET

FEASMAN STREET

GUNNER ROAD

DIXON STREET

Wooded Area

H.T.S.

Walker-Grant School

Fredericksburg, Virginia
Sketch Map Not To Scale

- Original Plan
- Expansion



RICHMOND 57 MI
7 MI TO U.S.

5460 / SE
(SALEM CHURCH)

DHR# 111-145
WALKER-GRANT
SCHOOL
Fredericksburg, VA
TM References:
18/285075/4241060
18/285100/4241050
18/285080/4240950
18/284940/4240950

17'30"

4240

