

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

LISTED ON:  
VLR 06/17/2010  
NRHP 08/16/2010

# 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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. 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 certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Central High School  
other names/site number VDHR #001-5065

### 2. Location

street & number 32308 Lankford Highway  not for publication  
city or town Painter  vicinity  
state Virginia code VA county Accomack code 001 zip code 23420

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 at the following level(s) of significance:  
    national     statewide X local

*M. Catherine Hunter* July 8, 2010  
Signature of certifying official Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property     meets     does not meet the National Register criteria.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting official Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

    entered in the National Register     determined eligible for the National Register  
    determined not eligible for the National Register     removed from the National Register  
    other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

**Category of Property**  
(Check only **one** box)

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	private
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
4	3	buildings
0	3	sites
0	3	structures
0	0	objects
0	0	buildings
4	9	<b>Total</b>

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

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

N/A

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION/school

RECREATION AND CULTURE/sports facility

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE/processing/cannery

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Vacant

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

MODERN MOVEMENT/Art Deco

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Continuous brick, concrete slab,

foundation: cinderblock

Brick, wood clapboard, vinyl siding,

walls: cinderblock, aluminum siding

Flat, membrane; gabled with asphalt shingle and standing seam metal; shed with asphalt shingle and standing seam

roof: metal; gable with corrugated metal

other: Limestone and granite detailing

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**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

**Summary Description**

See Continuation Sheets.

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**Narrative Description**

See 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)

- 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.
- 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.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

**Period of Significance**

1932-c.1939

**Significant Dates**

1932, 1935

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above)

**Cultural Affiliation**

**Architect/Builder**

J.W. Hudson (1932); J.W. Hudson, Jr. (1935)

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply)

Property is:

- 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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

**Period of Significance (justification)**

The primary period of construction for the school was 1932-1935, which included the vocational shop and home economics cottage. The final double classroom outbuilding was completed by 1939, along with the entire Public Works Administration school building program. The remaining buildings are of modern construction dating to well after WWII and represent a different era than the early historic core.

**Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)**

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria)

See Continuation Sheets

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**Narrative Statement of Significance** (provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance)

See Continuation Sheets

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**Developmental history/additional historic context information** (if appropriate)

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### 9. Major Bibliographical References

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

A Brief History of Education in Accomack County, Virginia. Accomack County Education Association, 1963.

*The Eastern Shore News*.

"The Eleanor Roosevelt Papers," *Public Works Administration: Teaching Eleanor Roosevelt*, ed. Allida Black, June Hopkins, et al. Hyde Park, New York: Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site, 2003.

*The Peninsula Enterprise*.

Phil McCaleb, "Re:Central High school," email message to Sarah McPhail, November 5, 2007.

**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

Name of repository: **Virginia Dept. of Historic Resources,  
Richmond, VA**

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):   #001-5065  

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## 10. Geographical Data

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**Acreage of Property**   12.22  

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage)

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	<u>  18  </u> Zone	<u>  431275  </u> Easting	<u>  4161538  </u> Northing	3	<u>  18  </u> Zone	<u>  431553  </u> Easting	<u>  4161634  </u> Northing
2	<u>  18  </u> Zone	<u>  431376  </u> Easting	<u>  4161756  </u> Northing	4	<u>  18  </u> Zone	<u>  431403  </u> Easting	<u>  4161352  </u> Northing

**Verbal Boundary Description** (describe the boundaries of the property)

Central High School and its outbuildings occupy Accomack County tax parcel #111-00-A0-00-0025-00. It is situated between the towns of Keller and Painter on the west side of U.S. Route 13, and contains an area of 532,710 square feet.

**Boundary Justification** (explain why the boundaries were selected)

The boundary includes the primary school building, the supporting outbuildings, and the athletic fields historically associated with Central High School and which are still physically part of the legal parcel and maintain historic integrity.

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## 11. Form Prepared By

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name/title   Marcus R. Pollard, historian    
organization   Commonwealth Preservation Group   date   3/26/2010    
street & number   PO Box 4266   telephone   757-651-0494    
city or town   Suffolk   state   VA   zip code   23439    
e-mail   marcusrp@commonwealthpreservationgroup.com  

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## Additional Documentation

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **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. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

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## Photographs:

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Submit clear and descriptive black and white photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

**Name of Property: Central High School**  
**City or Vicinity: Painter**  
**County:Accomack**  
**State: Virginia**  
**Photographer: Sarah McPhail, Marcus Pollard**  
**Date Photographed: 2007-2009**  
**Location of Original Digital Files: 201 Linden Avenue, Suffolk, VA, 23434**  
**Number of Photographs: 14**

**Description of Photograph(s) and number:**

**Photo #1:**  
**Main school building, SE Façade, camera facing NW**

**Photo #2:**  
**Main school building, NE Elevation, camera facing SW**

**Photo #3:**  
**Main school building, NW Elevation, camera facingSE**

**Photo #4:**  
**Main school building, Theater/auditorium, camera facing NE**

**Photo #5:**  
**Double classroom outbuilding, SW façade and SE elevation, camera facing N**

**Photo #6:**  
**Vocational Shop, SE façade and SW elevation, camera facing NW**

**Photo #7:**  
**Home economics cottage, SW façade, camera facing NE**

**Photo #8:**  
**New gymnasium, NE façade and NW elevation, camera facing S**

**Photo #9:**  
**Garage, NE façade and SE elevation, camera facing W**

**Photo #10:**  
**Concession stand, SW façade, camera facing NE**

**Photo #11:**  
**Athletic field with two dugouts, camera facing SW**

**Photo #12:**  
**Basketball court, camera facing SW**

**Photo #13:**  
**Covered picnic area, SE and NE elevations, camera facing W**

**Photo #14:**  
**Playground, SE and SW elevations, camera facing NW**

**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.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. fo the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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**Summary Paragraph**

Central High School was constructed in two phases in 1932 and in 1935 with the second phase built to match the first in design and style. Contractor J.W. Hudson of Raleigh, North Carolina completed the first phase while his son, J.W. Hudson, Jr. completed the second phase. The building is an excellent example of the modern Art Deco style and is typical of schools built during the 1930s. The T-shaped building is constructed of brick masonry with brick and stone detailing and is two stories in height. The school is situated in a prominent position alongside the state highway between the towns of Painter and Keller, and served as a high school until 1984, when it was converted to a middle school. The early outbuildings were built during or right after construction of the main building to serve the high school as extra class space, a vocational training center, and a home economics facility, representing the pedagogical approach of high school education at that time. The entire complex retains its integrity with the historic core clearly representing Depression era public works school construction and design and the later buildings integrated into the site without detracting from the integrity of the historic buildings. The core school and its historic outbuildings were constructed beginning in 1932 and ending before WWII.

**Narrative Description**

Central High School was constructed in two phases between the years 1932 and 1935. Contractor J.W. Hudson of Raleigh, North Carolina was chosen to construct the first unit of the school. The building is of modern Art Deco design, typical of schools built in the 1930s. The building has a T-shaped footprint. It is constructed of brick masonry with brick and stone detailing on its north and south entrances. The building is two stories in height and rests on a brick foundation.

The north entrance façade is flanked by brick pilasters with a running bond brick pattern with a stone capital and base. The school building is set back about 100 yards from Lankford Highway (US 13). The building has a horizontal emphasis. The different brick patterns used throughout the construction accentuate the north and south entrances. The northeast corner of the building has a marble corner stone with "CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL 1932" engraved in it. The front of the school has two arches spanning the entire height of the building. "CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL" is engraved in the northern most arch, which was the original entrance into the school prior to the completion of the second unit. The original steel hopper and aluminum replacement windows are evenly spaced around the building.

The second unit of the school, completed in 1935, has the same characteristics as the first unit except for the materials used on and around the south entrance. The materials used in the 1935 construction appear to be of a lesser quality with a less costly design reflecting the budgetary concerns of the time. The two units are connected by a hyphen which matches the two units in appearance and in materials used. The hyphen is flanked on either side by brick pilasters topped with stone caps.

An auditorium was constructed as a part of the second unit of the school. The auditorium hosts a stage with a wood-frame surrounding the opening and a wood floor. The lower walls of the auditorium are yellow brick, the upper walls are covered in plaster, and the ceiling and rear upper wall are covered with wood paneling. The balcony was enclosed and converted to a classroom when the high school was changed into a middle school in the 1980s. The original metal frame chairs with wooden seats are intact and in fair condition. Currently, the floor is clad in linoleum tiles.

The interior of the building retains much of its original character. The lower walls of the hallway are yellow brick. The upper walls in the hallways are plaster. Most of the class rooms are large and have built-in wooden bookcases and blackboards. The single-leaf, wood frame classroom doors feature a 9-light window and lower wood panels. The school

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was renovated in 1984. At this time, the balcony of the auditorium was closed in and converted to a classroom. The hallways are lined with metal lockers and the floor is clad in linoleum tile.

The one-story wood-frame double classroom building rests on a cinderblock and brick foundation and is covered by a gabled roof clad in asphalt shingles. Clapboard siding and 9/9 windows cover the façade of the building. There are two brick chimneys and two front (south) entries. Appended to the rear (north) side of the dwelling is a shed addition with a standing seam roof. The interior features wood flooring and baseboard wainscoting that appear to be original.

The one-story vocational school was originally built as an agricultural school and a January 1935 building shows it completed before the end of construction of the second phase of the main building. The building rests on a concrete slab foundation and is covered by a corrugated metal gabled roof and clapboard siding. All the windows are 9/9 except for one 4/4. The 5-panel wood door entry is covered by a gabled awning. There is one parged chimney. The rear garage addition (SW side) has a multi-panel door and rests on a cinderblock foundation. The interior features wood floors, baseboard wainscoting and wood panel walls. Other original features of the building include built-in chalkboards and book cases. All are intact and in fair condition.

The home economics building is a one-story Colonial Revival style dwelling, which a January 1935 photograph shows as having been completed before the end of construction of the second phase of the main high school building. It rests on a brick foundation and is covered by a standing seam roof. The roof covering the main unit of the house is gabled while the roof covering the rear (north) unit of the building is flat. The windows of the building are 8/8, 6/6, and 4/4 and have been covered by storm windows. The covered front (south) entry of the house has a 6-panel wood door covered by a shed roof, which is supported by four square columns. The interior of the house features wood floors, plaster walls, and a brick mantel in the front (south) room.

The grass-covered athletic fields are enclosed with a chain-link fence. There is a pair of goal posts in the open grassy area north of the main school and outbuildings. The athletic field features two dug-outs constructed of cinderblocks and covered by a shed roof clad in asphalt shingles. The site also features a 1-1/2 story concession stand, built with cinderblocks and covered by gabled and shed roofs clad in asphalt shingles.

A small pavilion structure north of the vocational building sits on a concrete slab foundation. The stick-built structure is covered by a gabled roof clad in asphalt shingles and serves as a covered outdoor dining and meeting location. There is vinyl siding in the gable. Near the pavillion is a deteriorated playground with rusting equipment and surrounded by a chain link fence.

The garage sits south of the caretaker's house and vocational buildings. It rests on a concrete pad foundation. It has cinderblock walls and is covered by a gabled roof clad in asphalt shingles. There is clapboard siding in the gable.

A pair of outdoor basketball courts marks the southernmost boundary of the parcel. The surface of the courts is a mix between grass and asphalt. There are four metal goal posts which are all substantially rusted.

The new gymnasium was constructed to replace the old gymnasium c1986-87. The two-story structure rests on a concrete slab foundation. Its four exterior walls are clad in aluminum siding. The modern gabled roof covering the gym is clad in standing seam metal. There are two sets of double metal doors for entry into the gym. The interior floors are covered with square floor tiles.

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The interior and exterior of the buildings retain most of their historic appearance, character, and materials. The site has strong integrity with the core of contributing buildings dating to the original period of construction and the noncontributing buildings either representing the natural progression of a school in continuous operation (athletic facilities) or playing a peripheral role (picnic pavillion and playground) which do not detract from overall integrity. All of the NC resources were constructed well after WWII, with the earliest likley being c1960s.

**Inventory**

1. Main school building (**C**): This is a large brick masonry building which maintains strong integrity with its original brick exterior highlighted by limestone and granite details. Some original metal jalousie windows remain and the entire school site is intact as well. The interior boasts plaster walls with historic yellow brick wainscoting as well as historic built-in cabinets and blackboards. The auditorium retains its historic chairs and has a paneled ceiling. The walls are plaster and yellow brick and the stage retains its historic wood frame around the opening.
2. Double classroom outbuilding (**C**): This building was constructed of cinderblock with a brick foundation shortly after construction of the main school building and two original outbuildings but pre-WWII. It retains its historic wood clapboard siding and gabled roof clad in asphalt shingles. There are historic 9/9 windows, two chimneys, two historic front entries, and an historic rear addition with a shed metal standing seam roof. The interior has wood floors and bead board wainscoting.
3. Vocational shop (**C**): This building was constructed during the period when the main school building was constructed. It has a concrete slab foundation, a gabled roof with historic corrugated metal cladding, and historic wood clapboard siding. There are historic 9/9 windows, a five panel wood door with a gable awning, wood floors, bead board wainscoting and built-in chalk boards and book cases.
4. Home economics cottage (**C**): This house was built during the period of construction of the main school building and was designed to serve as the home economics classroom. It has a brick foundation, historic wood clapboard siding, a side gable metal standing seam roof with a flat rear extension. There are historic 8/8, 6/6, 4/4 windows, two brick chimneys and a covered entry with a shed roof. The interior has wood floors, plaster walls and a brick mantle.
5. New gymnasium (**NC**): This building was constructed c1986-87 with a concrete slab foundation, a gabled standing seam metal roof, aluminum siding, metal doors and tile interior flooring.
6. Garage (**NC**): This simple garage has a concrete pad with modern cinderblock construction, a gabled asphalt roof, and wood siding in the gable.
7. Concession stand (**NC**): This modern 1 and ½ story cinderblock building was built to serve as a concession stand for various athletic events. It has a gable and shed roof with asphalt shingles.
8. Dugout (**NC**): One of two modern dugouts along the baseball field constructed of cinderblock with asphalt shingle shed roofs.
9. Dugout (**NC**): One of two modern dugouts along the baseball field constructed of cinderblock with asphalt shingle shed roofs.
10. Athletic field (**NC**): The athletic field has been used for both football and baseball with its current configuration focused on baseball. The facilities are all modern.
11. Basketball court (**NC**): This basketball court is modern construction, though deteriorated, with a cracked asphalt paving and grass court, rusted hoops, and surrounded by a chain link fence.
12. Picnic pavillion (**NC**): This modern canopy covers a concrete pad outdoor eating area.
13. Playground (**NC**): This modern playground is severely deteriorated and overgrown with grass, rusted equipment surrounded by a chain link fence.

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph**

Central High School was constructed in two phases between 1932 and 1935 by the father and son team of J.W. Hudson (1932 phase) and J.W. Hudson, Jr. (1935 phase). Both phases of the building are Art Deco in design and are built to work visually and functionally as one building. Budget constraints as a result of the Depression were the cause of the two phase construction plan. The Art Deco style was common for American schools in the 1930s. This main building is of brick masonry construction with stone details at its main entrances. The building is two stories in height and is an imposing structure just off of the state highway between the towns of Painter and Keller. There are three contributing outbuildings which served as extra classroom space, a vocational school, and a home economics classroom. Central was the first district wide high school in the county and remained a high school from its construction in 1932 until it became a middle school in 1984, representing a vital part of the community for much of the twentieth century and a focal point for education in the county. It retains a strong level of historic and architectural integrity and is recommended eligible under Criterion C for Architecture at the local level as an excellent example of large scale Art Deco design and a rare example of the Art Deco style on the Eastern Shore. Its historic outbuildings and intact site also support the argument for a high level of architectural integrity.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

Central High School was constructed between the years of 1932 and 1935. The main school building is of Art Deco design, typical of many schools built in the 1930s. Funding for the construction came in the form of a \$25,000 loan from the State Literary Fund. The contract for the school's construction was awarded to John W. Hudson of Raleigh, North Carolina<sup>1</sup>. The construction of the first unit of the school was completed in 1932. The grand opening was attended by Dr. Sidney B. Hall, the state superintendent of public education.<sup>2</sup> It was formally occupied in January of the following year. Once complete, the school consisted of eight classrooms, restrooms, and a heating plant on the first floor.<sup>3</sup> The new centrally located and named high school was the first district wide high school and combined the previously separate high school student bodies of Belle Haven, Pungoteague, Wachapreague, and Painter. Unfortunately, Accomack County was fully segregated at this time and a separate "Negro high school" was also opened in 1932 in Accomack. This school was named for Mary Nottingham Smith, a supervisor of African American schools who served in that position until her passing in 1951.<sup>4</sup>

The construction of the first phase of Central High School was not without controversy. The School Board was required to borrow \$25,000 from the State Literary Fund to pay for the project. This bond was approved by Judge Nottingham but several citizens filed suit and requested an injunction against the bond and funding.<sup>5</sup> The case was appealed to the state Supreme Court and Judge Epps ruled in favor of the school board and funding the new Central High School.<sup>6</sup>

The construction of the second unit of Central High School was approved in March of 1934 by the Public Works Administration (PWA). Between 1933 and 1939, the Public Works Administration funded the construction of more than 34,000 projects. They helped fund 70% of new schools and hospitals built during the time period.<sup>7</sup> The contract was awarded to J.W. Hutchinson [Hudson], Jr. of Raleigh, North Carolina. The second unit was completed in 1935 and a formal opening was held in March of the same year. The completed school building had 14 classrooms, an auditorium, a library, a principal's office, restrooms, and laboratories.<sup>8</sup> The building served its purpose as a central high school until 1984 when it was converted to a middle school.

The school is centrally located between the small, Eastern Shore towns of Painter and Keller. Central, like many other small, rural high schools was the center of a great deal of community focus and pride. According to past students and

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faculty members, there was a tremendous continuity in the school. Many attribute this to the fact that the school only had three principals during its life as a high school. The first two served a combined term of over 40 years and the last one served for six. Central High School also served the community from time to time. Starting in the mid 1930s, the original gymnasium, which is no longer standing, was also the location of the local community cannery.<sup>9</sup> Community canneries were formed during the world wars as a way for mothers and wives to feed their families while the men were away. On the Eastern Shore, they were also utilized by residents who canned their surplus crops and produce to provide food for their families throughout the fall and winter. The cannery also gave the community members a place to go and interact with each other. The cannery at Central High School was closed after WWII when the demand for canning food declined.<sup>10</sup>

The curriculum at Central High School consisted of basic and vocational subjects. The main school building was the location of the typical academic classes such as math, science, and history and the vocational classes were taught in the vernacular "shop building" and Colonial revival style "home economics cottage". The male students reported to the shop building to learn skills such as welding, wood working, Agronomics, and rudimentary mechanical training while the female students reported to the home economics cottage to learn skills such as diet and meal planning, sewing, nutrition, and health. From time to time, Agricultural extension service classes were taught at night in the shop building. The curriculum of the school remained the same or close to the same until its 1984 conversion to a middle school.<sup>11</sup> The vocational outbuildings were partially funded with funds from the 1917 Smith-Hughes Act which specifically focused on providing home economics and agricultural education facilities.<sup>12</sup>

Upon its conversion to a middle school, the existing outbuildings were used as general classroom buildings. The classrooms in both the main school building and the outbuildings retain much of their character, including original built-in bookcases and blackboards.

The buildings are currently vacant and it is proposed that the school will be converted for use as an environmentally friendly "green building" containing a restaurant, retail space, and a furniture studio and workshop.

The architectural style of Central High School is Art Deco. The Art Deco style was popular from the 1920s through the 1940s (though there have been later revivals) placing Central High School in the middle of this period. As with many popular styles, it began in Europe in the early twentieth century before moving to the United States. Art Deco in its highest form can be a very grand style and is considered to have evolved in part from the reaction to the harshness of WWI. While a few buildings in the United States demonstrate an elaborate form of Art Deco, most are more functional, workaday in their execution as seen in Central High School with its functional design and select highlights and architectural flourishes. The basic concept of Art Deco design is based in geometric shapes as with much of the modern movement but with more artistic flair than later more severe modern styles. This simple and functional, yet elegant style was popular in the United States during the Great Depression era, in particular for the many public buildings commissioned during that time. Central High School mirrors that trend.

The Eastern Shore boasts only a few notable Art Deco resources with three in Accomack County and three in Northampton County: one municipal building, one commercial building, three theaters, and Central High School. The municipal building, a fire station (DHR # 182-0002-0314), is a contributing resource within the Cape Charles Historic District. Still in use by the local fire department, it has a stone parapet and door trim and corbelled brick work along the sides of the entrance bay along with a parapet roof. The commercial building (DHR # 182-0002-0138) is also a contributing resource to the Cape Charles Historic District with a glass block storefront and parapet roof. Besides Central High School, the most significant Art Deco resources on the Eastern Shore are the three theaters, two in Accomack County and one in Northampton County. Constructed in 1945, the Roxy Theater in Chincoteague (DHR # 190-0015) is

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

**National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

Central High School

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Accomack County, VA

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Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)  
N/A

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still in operation and features a two-story stone accented parapet, an original marquee, door, ticket booth, and terrazzo floors in the lobby. The Roseland Theater in Onancock, constructed in 1950 (DHR # 273-0001-0203), features a two story façade with a paneled brick upper level with a central marble and stone accent which is echoed in the original first level storefront which includes the original doors and ticket booth. Designed by German architect Alfred M. Lublin and constructed in 1941 (DHR # 182-0002-0161), the Palace Theater in Cape Charles is a contributing resource within the Cape Charles Historic District and features an original stone and brick façade and triangular marquee with a restored interior that includes terrazzo floors and walnut paneling. Given its monumental size, largely intact exterior and interior, its notable design, the three original and contributing outbuildings, and the intact site, Central High School is certainly a rare and important Art Deco resource on the Eastern Shore.

Central High School is recommended eligible under Criterion C, Architecture, for the period of 1932-1939. The building is representative of Art Deco style and a rare large, rural example of the Art Deco style on the Eastern Shore. Central High School also is indicative of the numerous PWA projects of the 1930s "New Deal Era". The interior and exterior are intact and retain much of their original appearance and character. The core of historic outbuildings, along with the intact site, contributes to the architectural and historic integrity of this resource.

<sup>1</sup> "County School Board is Upheld in Action Regarding New H.S." *The Eastern Shore News*, 5 August 1932.

<sup>2</sup> "Formal Opening of New C.H.S. Building," *The Eastern Shore News*, Onancock, VA: Vol.XXXV, No.21, December, 9, 1932, p.1.

<sup>3</sup> "Central High Opening Friday, December 15", *The Peninsula Enterprise*, 10 December 1932.

<sup>4</sup> A Brief History of Education in Accomack County, Virginia, Accomack County Education Association, 1963, p.15-16.

<sup>5</sup> "Injunction Refused in Central School Matter," *The Peninsula Enterprise*, vol.LII, no.7, August 8, 1932, p.1.

<sup>6</sup> "Injunction Is Not Granted to Taxpayers by Supreme Court," *The Eastern Shore News*, vol.XXXV, no.17, August 19, 1932, p.1.

<sup>7</sup> "The Eleanor Roosevelt Papers." Public Works Administration." Teaching Eleanor Roosevelt, ed. by Allida Black, June Hopkins, et. al. (Hyde Park, New York: Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site, 2003). <http://www.nps.gov/archive/elro/glossary/pwa.htm> [Accessed November 19, 2007].

<sup>8</sup> "New School Unit at Central is approved by Public Works Administration" *The Eastern Shore News*, vol.XXXVI, no.48, March 23, 1934, p.1.

<sup>9</sup> Phil McCaleb, "RE: Central High School", e-mail message to Sarah McPhail, 5 November 2007.

<sup>10</sup> Phil McCaleb, "RE: Central High School".

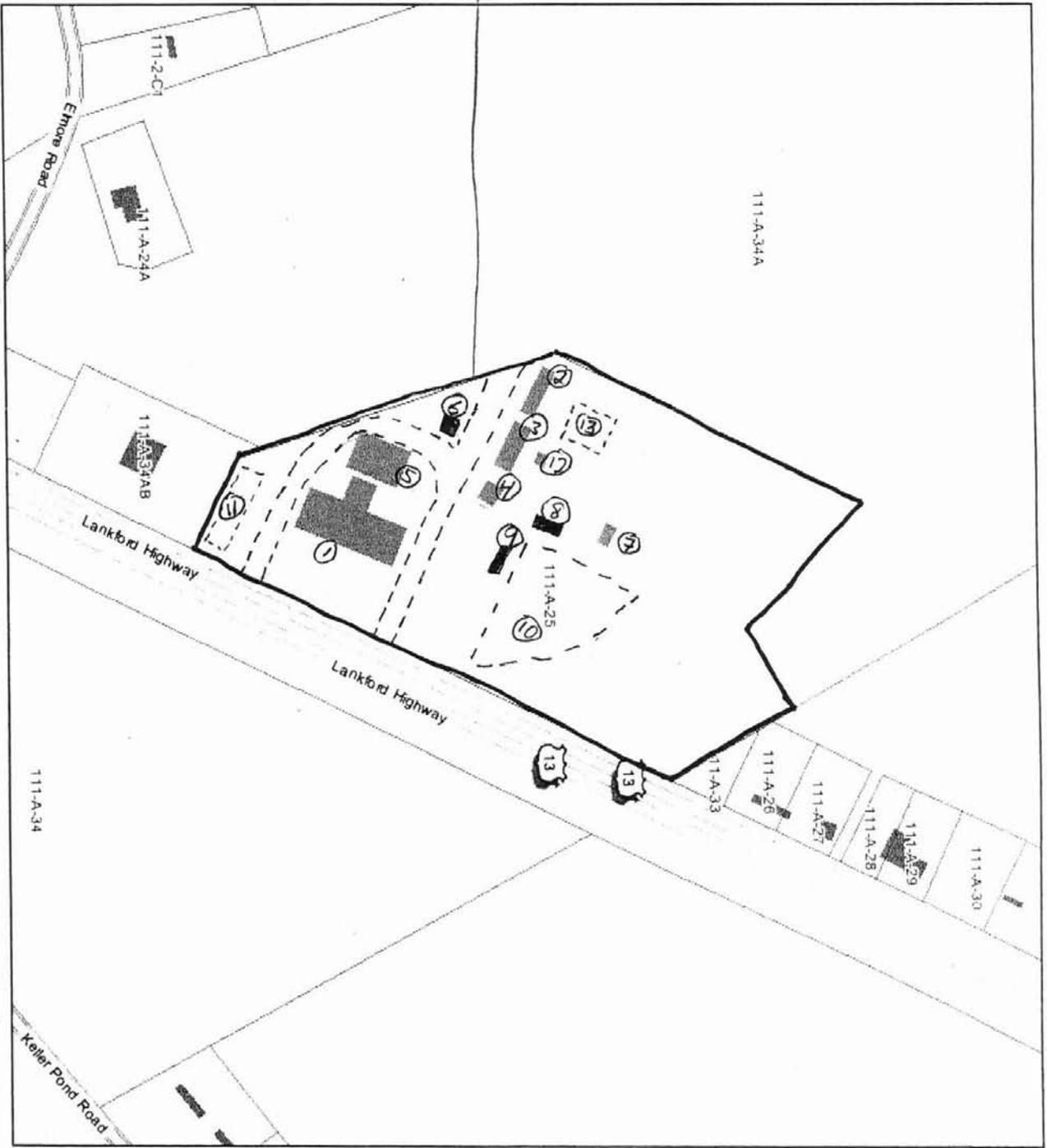
<sup>11</sup> Phil McCaleb, "RE: Central High School".

<sup>12</sup> "A Brief History of Education in Accomack County," p.16.

Central High School  
 Accomack County, VA  
 DHR# 001-5065  
 Site Plan

1. Main school building
2. Double classroom outbuilding
3. Vocational shop
4. Home economics cottage
5. New Gymnasium
6. Garage
7. Concession stand
8. Dugout
9. Dugout
10. Athletic field
11. Basketball court
12. Picnic pavilion
13. Playground

National Register  
 Boundary



Not to scale

