

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

LISTED ON:
VLR 06/16/2011
NRHP 08/24/2011

**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

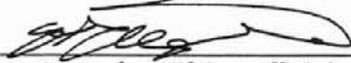
historic name Louisa High School
other names/site number VDHR Number 254-0004

2. Location

street & number 212 Fredericksburg Avenue not for publication
city or town Louisa vicinity _____
state Virginia code VA county Louisa code 109 zip code 23093

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 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 of certifying official Virginia Department of Historic Resources
State or Federal Agency or Tribal government
Date 7/14/11

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

Signature of commenting official/Title 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 the Keeper _____

Date of Action _____

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
[X] public-local
public-State
public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- [X] building(s)
district
site
structure
object

Number of Resources within Property

Table with 2 columns: Contributing, Noncontributing. Rows: buildings, sites, structures, objects, 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

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Government Sub: City Hall

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Other

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE: Granite
roof METAL: Tin
walls STONE: Granite
other N/A

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)

- 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.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C a birthplace or a 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)

EDUCATION
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance 1907-1940

Significant Dates 1907, 1916, 1924

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above) N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Architect: Charles M. Robinson ; Builders: Leigh Brothers (1907), Elgin Morris, 1924

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

(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

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: Virginia Department of Historic Resources

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10. Geographical Data
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Acreage of Property 1.62 Acres

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

Zone	Easting	Northing									
1	18	236842	4	212633	2				3		
											4

 See 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.)

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11. Form Prepared By
=====

name/title Mr. Kevin M. Throckmorton, Historian and Staff of VA Department of Historic Resources
 organization (none) date January 2011
 street & number P.O. Box 424 telephone (540) 748-3472
 city or town Louisa state VA zip code 23093

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Additional Documentation
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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 Town of Louisa
 street & number 212 Fredericksburg Avenue telephone (540)-967-1400
 city or town Louisa state VA zip code 23093

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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.). A federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. **Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 36 hours per response including the 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 National Register of Historic Places, National Park Service, 1849 C St., NW, Washington, DC 20240.

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**Louisa High School
Louisa County, VA**

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Summary Description:

The Louisa High school is situated on a 1.62-acre parcel (the southwest corner of a town-owned parcel of just over 12 acres) located in a residential neighborhood of early 20th-century frame bungalows and late-20th-century houses, two blocks from the center of the town of Louisa, Virginia. North of the school is a large open area used as a park and baseball diamond. The granite ashlar school building that served the Louisa County school system for eighty years is now utilized as a town hall and performing arts center. The 1907 school building, designed by Charles M. Robinson¹ was originally built as a one-and-a-half story stone building with a recessed central entrance under a round arch and with large dormers on its steep roof. Ca. 1916, a second story was added along with an auditorium addition to the rear. These additions also appear to have been designed by Robinson, a prolific architect who designed school buildings across Virginia and who served from 1910 to 1929 as supervising architect for the Richmond City School Board. Early in 1924 a fire gutted the building, leaving only the granite walls. It was rebuilt in its two-story configuration in 1925. A deteriorated concrete block annex, built in 1957², was demolished in 2003 when work to rehabilitate the school for use as a town hall was begun. A 2006 addition to the building's east elevation serves as an art gallery.

Detailed Description:

Setting

The property is located within the approximately 12-acre Gooch subdivision plot, divided in 1906 into a school lot (160 ft x 736 ft) flanked by 25 residential lots. The property being nominated consists only of the original school lot of approximately 1.62 acres located at the northeast corner of School Street and Fredericksburg Avenue.

Main Classroom Building

Exterior

The former high school building is four square, two stories over a high raised basement, with a hipped roof shingled with painted pressed tin shingles. The front (south) elevation is a three-bay design with a recessed entry. Windows are set symmetrically in groups of threes. Above the basement, the window bays are two-stories tall, separated by stucco panels. The front elevation is faced with granite ashlar. The central entry is recessed behind a large, semicircular granite arch. Above the arch is a pair of large windows with transoms that light the main stairwell. The 1907 entry has two sets of doors, an inner set leading to the main floor and the outer doors leading to the basement level. The original door configuration was retained in the rehabilitation keeping the historical character of the building intact. The windows are 6-over-6 double-hung windows in each of the classroom bays. The large window above the arch is also a group of two 6-over-6 double-hung windows; however, these are taller than the classroom windows. It also incorporates 6-window transoms above the double-hung windows. These windows are the same throughout the main classroom building. The east elevation has a two-bay design with symmetrically placed windows in groups of two. The window bays above the basement are two-stories tall, with a stucco panel separating the windows. The rear

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(north) elevation has significant changes that have not detracted from the historical building. The chimney was removed from the 1907 structure and a staircase and elevator shaft was built onto the rear of the building. One window of the second floor was changed to a door to provide access to the stair and an elevator. The addition holding the stair and elevator is a tan brick structure, matching the granite ashlar. It does not detract from the historical significance of the building. Otherwise, the original appearance of the two-bay structure with two-story window panels was retained. The west elevation is identical to the east elevation, retaining the windows in groups of two with stucco panels separating the windows between the first and second floors.

Interior

The 1907 entry has two sets of doors, an inner set leading to the main floor and the outer doors leading to the basement level. The basement is half finished, and half crawlspace with concrete floors and holes for drainage. It now houses the fire extinguishing apparatus and generator systems, with the majority of the wiring for the building. Originally, the basement housed a lunch room with a bathroom on the southwest corner.

The main floor is accessed by a pair of doors centered within the semicircular arch at the front of the building. The entry vestibule leads directly to a broad stair and up to the central hall. Four corner classrooms open off the central space. The walls are plaster with wooden doors and transoms above most doorways. With the conversion of the building to a town hall, offices were installed, segmenting two of the classrooms and altering two rooms on the first floor. In conformance with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*, the walls segmenting the offices in the west classrooms were not built completely to the ceiling to preserve the metal tray ceilings in the classrooms. Cloakrooms present throughout the building in various rooms were preserved. They currently house various electrical components of the building for easy access and limited intrusion on the historical spaces. On the east classrooms, a wall was relocated to extend the classroom, creating a boardroom for the town. Again, to meet the *Secretary's Standards*, slightly different wood was chosen to show the place of the original wall, and an original door was utilized in the new construction. Vertical circulation is provided by a wood stair, among the most significant interior elements. The double stair rises from either side of the main doors to a landing midway between the first and second floors. At the landing it becomes a single stair rising to the second floor. The stair incorporates square newel posts at each landing similar to the Arts and Crafts style with square wooden pickets between the rail and stair. The large window above the front doors shines natural light on the stair and allows light to enter both floors.

On the second floor, a center hall provided a common assembly space. Four classrooms occupy the corners on this floor, similar to the first floor. Plaster is utilized in the walls and paneled wooden doors have transoms above the doorways. This section is better preserved than the first floor. Since town offices were needed downstairs, it was decided to keep the second floor as original as possible. The four classrooms are in their original configuration; with carpet on the hallway portion. Wood is utilized throughout the rest of the building as the primary floor, except in the art room, which has linoleum covering the original floor. Most of the chalkboards were removed by the time the town acquired the building in 2002. However, two small pieces of chalkboard were retained in the art room and the northwest classroom near the entry door. At the center of the hall, the room that once contained a library and a teacher's workroom³ has been changed to access the new stair and elevator additions. These additions reveal the stone

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exterior walls. Remnants of the tray ceiling that once graced the auditorium were utilized here to repair sections of the ceiling that were in poor condition. Modern HVAC and electric systems were installed throughout the building with little impact on the original structure. Much of the wiring was hidden, and dropped ceilings were not utilized to preserve the character of the building and the original tin ceilings. Lighting fixtures chosen were tasteful and period appropriate, since all of the original electrical components were removed and typical fluorescent light fixtures were installed in the 1960s.⁴

Auditorium Addition

Exterior

The auditorium was added ca. 1916. It is a one-story structure, with a hipped roof. It is faced with granite ashlar on all sides. On the west and east elevations, there are five window bays. These bays have 9-over-9 double-hung windows in groups of two symmetrically spaced the length of the auditorium. The auditorium is connected to the rear (north) of the main building by a hyphen which also connects the new addition. The new addition is constructed of brick that closely matches the granite ashlar. Modern doors were utilized in the rear to provide access for loading and unloading of equipment for performances.

Interior

The interior of the auditorium was preserved in the original configuration, with slight alterations made to the stage and entrance to the auditorium. The original entrance was at the rear of the auditorium, accessed by the hyphen. The new entrance was placed in one of the window bays of the east face, so the entrance is on the side of the auditorium, instead of the rear. Because this space will be used for performances, significant changes have been made to improve sound quality in the room. The metal tray ceiling was too deteriorated to salvage, so a new pattern was selected that also improves sound quality. The window bays have sound panels that can be removed to provide access to windows. The original concrete floor was reused, with the addition of handicap access near the rear of the auditorium. There have been changes made to the stage; however, all of these changes were documented and a slightly different kind of wood was used to show the location of the original stage versus the new addition. Backstage, there have been significant revisions made. The original configuration was kept intact, but an addition was built on the rear to house dressing rooms and a restroom. The granite exterior walls were left was exposed in the interior of the building to show the boundary between the new construction and the original auditorium.

New Construction

Exterior

The 1957 annex was demolished in 2003 because of the significant deterioration of the building. It was not in keeping with the historical character of the main building. In its place a gallery addition was constructed that closely matches the footprint of the original building. It is constructed of brick that is close to the color of the granite facing on the

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main building. The north and south elevations have small, three-panel windows in the gallery addition. The east elevation has windows that are similar to the windows on the original structure. However, these windows do not have the 6-over-6 panes, instead using solid glass. The two structures are connected at the west elevation through the hyphen. The structure features a hipped roof, similar to the main building.

Interior

The interior contains a kitchen, bathrooms, and a gallery to house artwork. The town decided to build this addition primarily to preserve the interior of the original school. It was constructed off of the original hyphen that led to the 1957 annex. The granite exterior walls were exposed in the interior of the building to show the boundary between new construction and the original structure. The new entrance to the auditorium is also accessed through the extension of the hyphen.

Summary Statement of Significance

The Louisa County High School was constructed in 1907, soon after the Commonwealth of Virginia enacted the Mann High School Act in 1906 which provided state matching funds to communities for school construction as part of the state’s effort to establish and maintain a system of public high schools.⁵ Louisa was among the first counties in the Commonwealth to take advantage of these matching funds. By 1910, the school also had a “normal department” or teacher training program.⁶ Legislative action in 1908 provided for the creation of normal departments in established high schools to provide a year of instruction for high school students interested in teaching, another strategy for enhancing educational opportunities in Virginia.⁷ The County’s use of granite ashlar was unusual for a school built in a region where brick schools were the usual choice. Initially a one-story building, the school was expanded ca. 1916 through the addition of a second story and an auditorium wing at the rear of the building, likely in response to the availability of larger loans from Virginia’s Literary Fund.⁸ After a fire in February 1924, the school was rebuilt and reopened the following year.⁹ Originally, the school served students in grades one through eleven. Both the 1907 construction and 1916 expansions of the school were designed by Charles M. Robinson, who served as architect for the City of Richmond School Board between 1910 and 1929 and designed school buildings all over the Commonwealth.¹⁰ In 1940, Louisa County consolidated its three high schools in a central high school located in Mineral. The former Louisa High School became Louisa Elementary School and served as such until 1987. An annex was added in 1957 to provide additional space and alleviate overcrowding; it was demolished in 2003.¹¹ The recent restoration of the building for use as the town hall will allow it to serve the community for many additional years.

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Criteria Statement

The Louisa High School is associated with the growth of educational opportunities in Louisa County and in Virginia during the first decades of the 20th century. The school’s construction, curriculum enhancements and building expansion were connected with legislative actions in the Commonwealth responding to the efforts of Progressive Era reformers to broaden educational opportunities for all students. The Louisa High School is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places at the local level under Criterion A, for its association with a significant period in the history of education in the Commonwealth that was defined by the expansion of educational opportunities and the adoption of Progressive Era ideals to improve both the quality of rural schools and the educational experience students received in them. In 1907, Louisa was one of the first counties to take advantage of state funding for the construction of a high school provided with passage of the 1906 Mann High School Act.¹² By 1910, after legislation to establish the program was passed in 1908, a normal department was established in the school through which students could be trained as teachers who would further expand educational opportunities for students in Virginia’s rural counties. For many years, the Louisa High School was the only accredited high school in the county.

The school is also eligible under Criterion C for architecture. The building is a product of well known Virginia school building architect, Charles M. Robinson. Robinson designed schools all over the Commonwealth, and served as architect for the Richmond School Board from 1910 to 1929 where he was responsible for at least 23 new or expanded school designs. His designs are also seen in primary and secondary schools in Hanover, Henrico and Louisa counties and in the cities of Portsmouth, Newport News, Norfolk, Fredericksburg and Richmond, among others. The Louisa High School is the only school in the region built of granite ashlar; others are more commonly built of brick. Architecturally, the school expresses the ideals of education reformers who believed that the country school should be modern, both dignified and beautiful and should serve as a center for community life.¹³

Period of Significance:

The period of significance for the Louisa High School starts in 1907, the date of the original school’s construction, and extends through 1940 when the building became an elementary school after the county’s three existing high schools were consolidated in one high school in Mineral.

Historical Background:

Opportunities for receiving a high school education in Virginia at the turn of the century were limited despite the legislative authorization for secondary education (what was then called “the higher branches”) in 1875 to qualify students either to teach in the public schools or to enter college.¹⁴ Reverend L. J. Haley, first superintendent of Louisa County schools from 1873-1887, was a strong advocate of public education. Under his leadership, the county constructed its first high school in 1877. Haley High School (now a dwelling) was a modest four-room, two-story frame building that still stands today on Elm Avenue in Louisa.¹⁵

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The construction of the 1907 Louisa High School is associated with a critical period of history for Virginia's public schools that began with passage of a new state constitution in 1902 to replace Virginia's Underwood Constitution of 1870 and that was influenced by Progressive Era reformers who were pressing for change in Virginia's public schools. Andrew Jackson Montague, Governor of Virginia from January 1, 1902 through February 1, 1906, campaigned on a pro-education platform, and as Governor pushed for improved schools and increased funding for school construction.

While the 1902 Constitution, for the first time in a Virginia constitution, expressly prohibited the education of white and black children in the same school, it also included several measures that Progressive Era reformers had sought, including increased funding for schools. In 1904, following the lead of Richmond residents Lila Meade Valentine and Mary Munford who established the Richmond Education Association, Governor Montague helped found the Cooperative Education Association (CEA). Through that organization dozens of the state's most respected education advocates sought dramatic improvements in the public school system, including improved teacher training and making a high school available to every student. The following year CEA representatives organized meetings throughout the state to publicize the organization's goals. As a result, fifty local associations emerged to press for improvements in their districts' schools; additional groups were formed in the following year.¹⁶

In 1906, in response to this demonstration of support for improvements in public education, Virginia passed the Mann High School Act to "establish and maintain a system of public high schools."¹⁷ The Mann Act obligated the state to pay matching funds to any district that built a high school. Although the State had authorized secondary education as early as 1875, the Mann Act proved to be the first serious attempt to fund, develop, and regulate high schools. Statewide statistics reveal the phenomenal growth of high schools in the ensuing decade, from 74 in the 1905-06 school session to 218 in the 1906-07 session, to 448 in the 1912-13 school year, and to 575 in the 1917-18 session.¹⁸ While improved tax revenues allowed sponsorship of major school construction and improvement of teacher salaries, that funding was applied unequally under Virginia's racially segregated school systems.

On April 6, 1907, the School Board of the Louisa Courthouse District paid \$1,000 for the "school lot" in the center of the Gooch subdivision, a parcel of property located a short distance from the County courthouse.¹⁹ The Louisa High School was constructed for white students later that same year. Mineral High School, also in Louisa County, opened for its first session in the 1910-11 school year, seven miles away in the town of Mineral, VA.²⁰

Governor Claude Augustus Swanson's administration (1906-1910) marked the high point of progressive reform in Virginia. As a member of the State Board of Education Governor Swanson led a movement for more capable school superintendents.²¹ If Governor Swanson is regarded as Virginia's "education governor" then the work of Joseph D. Eggleston, Jr., as superintendent of public instruction from 1906 through 1913, was partly responsible for the Swanson administration's educational legacy. Eggleston's successes included an increased number of high schools, enhancements to the high school course of study, increased teacher pay, longer school terms, increased per-pupil expenditures, teacher certification, requirements for construction of school privies and school consolidation.²²

In 1906 Eggleston became Virginia's first elected superintendent of public instruction. Eggleston believed that the "modern" school should be a "more dignified and beautiful structure," with large playgrounds, a school garden, and an agricultural plot, along with facilities for manual training, domestic science, and a more diversified curriculum. He understood that by serving as a center for the formation of children's clubs, cooperative industries for women and

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and citizens' leagues, the new country school would "socialize the isolated districts" and "maximize the community life against the individual."²³

Local historian Pearl Harris explains the increased attention the Commonwealth was paying to education:

A new generation was coming forward and its leaders were giving their energies to rebuilding Virginia. These men felt that popular education was one of the first and most fundamental factors for insuring greater economic and social progress... The development of the education system in Louisa during this era reflected the new attitude. The people of the county recognized the potential of popular education, and progress was accelerated until each community could point to its school with pride.²⁴

Teacher training in Virginia was institutionally formalized in 1908, when the Virginia legislature passed the Strode bill, which -- among a number of items -- provided for "normal school" (teacher training) departments in established high schools selected by the State Board of Education, and funded with state monies.²⁵ Normal schools responded to the need for more and better-qualified teachers as public education opportunities were improved and expanded throughout rural Virginia in the early 1900s. State funds were specifically appropriated for teachers within the normal departments, and students completing the normal course of study were obligated to teach a minimum of two years in Virginia's rural public schools.²⁶ Louisa County established a normal department at Louisa High School in 1910; Cumberland County did the same at the Hamilton High School in 1914. The high school normal departments made it possible for students to become teachers even if they were unable to attend normal schools (colleges). By 1912, the Virginia legislature had established three normal schools for women in Harrisonburg (1909), Fredericksburg (1911), and Radford (1912).²⁷ By 1918, funding for normal departments in high schools had declined in favor of teacher training that would be taken following the high school course of study.²⁸

Beginning in the 1910s, new subjects were added to the curricula of Virginia's public schools, ranging from music, drawing, agriculture and industrial arts in the elementary schools to bookkeeping, shorthand, typing, agriculture, homemaking, industrial arts, and laboratory science in the high schools.²⁹ The expansion of the curriculum led to the incorporation of new spaces in schools such as large rooms for use as an auditorium and community center, as well as gymnasiums.

In addition to financial assistance for school construction, the State Board of Education began a plan and design service to save the county schools the costs of architects' fees while providing plans meeting the most modern specifications. By 1911 the Board of Public Instruction was furnishing -- without cost -- plans and specifications for 16 schoolhouse designs, including two, three, four, six, and eight-room schools.³⁰ In 1920, this service was moved to the newly established State Division of School Buildings, which furnished plans, advised on sites, wrote specifications for buildings, and supervised their construction. Historian J. L. Blaire Buck argued that this service "established high standards of construction and of design throughout the state."³¹ By 1923, the State had also appointed a State Supervisor whose sole responsibility was school buildings. Even after the establishment of the plan service, the county school boards still assumed responsibility for school construction. The state plans provided only a basic outline, but the construction details were left up to the builder.³² The existence of school buildings built

according to state plans in diverse communities in Virginia and executed showing a variety of features, materials, and adornments is evidence of

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the tremendous impact of the work of the State Board of Education.

The 1913-1914 Louisa High School annual, *Catalogue*, provides the following history of the early years and identifies the significant changes occurring in Virginia’s schools during this time:

The Louisa High School, the outgrowth of the old Haley High School, was founded in 1906, with M.T. McClure as principal. Under his efficient guidance the system of grading was thoroughly revised in order to meet the demands of the State Board of Education; the course of study extended to meet the entrance requirements of the State University; and a Normal department added for the benefit of those who desire preparation for teaching and who can not afford a collegiate education... the school has been placed on the accredited list of preparatory schools for the university.³³

The Louisa School of 1907 is an early example of the work of architect Charles M. Robinson whose long and prolific career in Virginia produced many public buildings and numerous schools across the Commonwealth. Born in Loudoun County, Virginia, Robinson was the son of architect James T. Robinson. After studying under John K. Peebles as well as D.S. Hopkins of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Robinson established an office in Richmond in 1906. From 1910 to 1929 he served as supervising architect for the Board of Public Instruction for the City of Richmond.³⁴ Robinson’s work in Richmond during that time included at least 23 new schools or school additions. Robinson also designed buildings on the campuses of Radford College, the University of Richmond, James Madison University, Mary Washington College (now the University of Mary Washington), the College of William and Mary, and Virginia State University, among others.³⁵ The volume of his work, the variety of his designs and the architectural statements his buildings offer to the neighborhoods in which they stand provide justification for Robinson’s distinction as Virginia’s “school building” architect.

The one-story 1907 Louisa High School was expanded to two stories and an auditorium annex was added to the rear of the main building about 1916.³⁶ The timing of the expansion suggests that it was in response to legislation passed in 1916 that permitted local school boards to borrow larger sums of money from the Literary Fund.³⁷

While many schools in the region around Louisa County were commonly built of brick, the Louisa School is unique in its use of granite ashlar as a building material. Other schools in Virginia from the same period exhibit variations on the design used for the Louisa High School suggesting either that plans were provided to or shared among school divisions, even before the school buildings design service started providing plans for school construction or that Robinson’s work in Richmond enabled him to secure commissions throughout the Commonwealth. While similar in design to the Louisa school, other Virginia schools were executed in brick including the old high schools in Stephens City in Frederick County, in Bridgewater and Dayton in Rockingham County and in the now much altered Appomattox County high school. The Lucketts School in Loudoun is an example of the same basic design in a frame building.

The Louisa High School expresses – architecturally -- Superintendent Eggleston’s and progressive era principles of

the modern school. Large windows light eight classrooms, four on each floor. A central stair is well lit from the door and window in the central bays of the first and second floors. Well placed on its lot, the school was surrounded

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by land for recreation and organized games. With its auditorium annex, the school could be a center for community activities and programs.

In February, 1924, a fire at the school left only its stone walls standing. A local contractor, Elgin Morris, rebuilt the school and it reopened the following year.³⁸ By 1928 the eight-room school served 260 pupils, 170 of whom were in the elementary grades.³⁹ Due to overcrowding, the first two grades were housed in a private dwelling, no longer standing, adjacent to the school property.⁴⁰

In 1940, Louisa County consolidated its three high schools and constructed a new building for high school students outside the town of Mineral. The former Louisa High School continued to serve the county's elementary school students. The building was overcrowded again by 1955 with the closing of Bell's Crossroads School. Wilmer Shank, a local builder, constructed an annex to the east side of the building in 1956-1957 to ease overcrowding.⁴¹ In 1986, the deteriorating condition of the old Louisa high school building and an increasing student enrollment necessitated the construction of two new county elementary schools and the refurbishment of an older intermediate school for use as an elementary school. In 1987, with that construction complete, the former Louisa High School was closed and was subsequently purchased by W. A. C. Pettit, III, who resided at the Sargeant-Pettit house next to the school property. The school remained abandoned until 2002, when the town purchased the property from Mr. Pettit and began planning to restore the building as the new Louisa Town Hall. With the demolition of the 1957 annex and the construction of a gallery addition, the newly restored building was reopened in 2006 as a town hall, art gallery, and performing arts center. It is regarded as a local and community landmark, and its restoration for local government use and for cultural arts education will allow it to continue to benefit Louisa County's citizens for many years to come.

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Verbal Boundary Description

The property being nominated as the Louisa High School is at 212 Fredericksburg Avenue at the northwest corner of the intersection of School Street and Fredericksburg Avenue. The school sits on a 1.62-acre piece of a larger tax parcel of 12.38 acres identified on the tax parcel maps for Louisa County as 40A2 2 B 1.

Boundary Justification

The property being nominated includes only the school building with its additions and the 1.62-acre site on which it sits.

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Louisa County, VA**

Section Photo List Page 12

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The following information is the same for all photographs.

Subject: Louisa High School

Location: Louisa County, Virginia

DHR File #: 254-0004

Date: June 2011

Photographer: Kristin Kirchen

Photographs archived at: Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, Virginia

Photograph 1 of 9 – ¾ view showing front (south) and west side elevation.

Photograph 2 of 9 – Façade. New addition to the right.

Photograph 3 of 9 – East elevation showing new addition.

Photograph 4 of 9 – West Elevation, showing auditorium and main building.

Photograph 5 of 9 – Rear elevation showing new addition to the left and auditorium to the right.

Photograph 6 of 9 – Interior, main staircase and entrance, first floor.

Photograph 7 of 9 – Interior, second floor landing and hallway.

Photograph 8 of 9 – Second floor classroom.

Photograph 9 of 9 – Auditorium.

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Louisa County, VA**

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Endnotes for Sections 7 and 8.

- ¹ *The Archive 1938*, p. 3.
- ² McGehee telephone interview, 11 March 2002.
- ³ Holmes, telephone interview, 10 October 2008.
- ⁴ Sadler, p. 2.
- ⁵ Buck, p. 143.
- ⁶ Harris, p. 31.
- ⁷ Heatwole, p. 327.
- ⁸ Buck, p. 196.
- ⁹ *The Archive 1938*, p. 3.
- ¹⁰ Weaver, Section E, p. 12.
- ¹¹ Sadler, p. 3.
- ¹² Harris, p. 39.
- ¹³ McCleary, Section 8, p. 11.
- ¹⁴ Buck, p. 81.
- ¹⁵ Email correspondence and photo from Pattie Cooke, Louisa County Historical Society.
- ¹⁶ http://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Progressive_Movement#its2
- ¹⁷ Buck, p. 143
- ¹⁸ Buck, p. 168.
- ¹⁹ Louisa County Clerk's Office, *Clerk's Book of Deeds and Transfers*, p., 138.
- ²⁰ Harris, p. 42 .
- ²¹ http://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Swanson_Claude_A_1862-1929.
- ²² http://encyclopediavirginia.org/Eggleston_Joseph_Dupuy_Jr_1867-1953.
- ²³ http://encyclopediavirginia.org/Eggleston_Joseph_Dupuy_Jr_1867-1953.
- ²⁴ Harris, p. 31.
- ²⁵ Buck, p. 145.
- ²⁶ Yengling, Section 8, p. 10-11.
- ²⁷ www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Eggleston_Joseph_Dupuy_1867_1953.
- ²⁸ Buck, p. 235.
- ²⁹ McCleary, Section 8, p. 14.
- ³⁰ McCleary, Section 8, p. 12.
- ³¹ Buck, p. 347.
- ³² McCleary, Section 8, p. 12.
- ³³ *Catalogue*, p. 5.
- ³⁴ Weaver, Section E, p. 21.
- ³⁵ Wells, pp. 377-386.
- ³⁶ *The Archive 1938*, p. 3.
- ³⁷ Buck, p. 196.
- ³⁸ Waltman, special supplement to *The Central Virginian*, 1987.
- ³⁹ Harris, p. 40.
- ⁴⁰ Sadler, p. 5.
- ⁴¹ Waltman, special supplement to *The Central Virginian*, 1987.

Louisa High School
Louisa Co, VA
VDHM # 254-0004
Mineral quad
18/236042/4212633
1927 NAD

610 000 FEET
(SOUTH)

4210
78° 00'

237

2 150 000 FEET (SOUTH)

239

