

VLR-12/11/84

NRHP-6/19/85

PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN AUGUSTA COUNTY, VIRGINIA, 1870-1940
 VIRGINIA HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION
 Thematic National Register Nomination Inventory Form

Historic Name:	Deerfield School	Common Name:	Deerfield Elementary School
Street Address/Rt. No.:	Rt. 600	VHLC File Number:	07-1154
Vicinity of:	Deerfield	Owner:	Augusta County School Board
USGS Quad:	Deerfield 7.5		Fishersville, Virginia 22939

Date(s):	1937	Architect/Builder:	Kellis Bibb & G. G. Shaver
Original Use:	School	Style:	Vernacular
Present Use:	Elementary School		
Condition:	Good		
Altered <u>X</u> ; unaltered <u> </u>			

Physical Description:

The Deerfield School, built in 1937, is one of the last two examples of the central-auditorium plan built in Augusta County. Both of the 1930s examples, including the Augusta County Training School, were of frame construction, whereas all the earlier examples were brick. The plans are identical to the second group of central-auditorium plans without the classrooms in front of the auditorium built between 1927 and 1931. Instead, the central double-door entry leads directly into the combined gymnasium/auditorium. Like the other examples, the classrooms are contained in gabled wings to each side, with the gable ends of the wing projecting slightly from the main block. Due to the small population in this Valley, the Deerfield School contained only four rooms, two on each side of the auditorium, but the design did incorporate a stage which provided additional space.

The exterior lacks distinct attributes of any particular style such as the Colonial Revival styles that had characterized the ca. 1930 schools. The transom-lighted entrance is slightly recessed between groups of three 6/6 sash windows. The facades of the wings are also quite plain, pierced only by square vents in the gables. Clusters of five 6/6 sash identify the classrooms on each side. The building rests on a concrete foundation and has a boiler room in the partial, but not exposed, basement.

The interior has experienced few major alterations. The central auditorium, retaining its wood floors, is still used for its original purpose. However, due to the small size of the school, it retains, more than the other surviving examples, a clear reflection of its multi-purpose character. The room doubles as the library, with volumes stretched along the north wall. Two temporary partitions have created small spaces at each side of the front door, providing an office to the north and a clinic room to the south. The room also provides space for audio-visual storage. The boys and girls restrooms are still located behind the stage area.

(continued)

Statement of Significance:

Located in the remote Deerfield Valley in western Augusta County, the Deerfield School has preserved the character of a small rural consolidated school. Now serving only elementary grades, this four-room school has been saved from further consolidation because of its distance from the nearest elementary school. As was the case with many of the earlier consolidated schools, two grades are combined in each of the four rooms. **The Deerfield School is also significant** as an example of the persistence of the central-auditorium plan first built in the County in 1923. Produced by the State Division of School Buildings, this plan assumed immense popularity in Augusta County from the mid 1920s through the early 1930s. As the depression hit, no new schools were constructed until 1937 and 1938, but both continued to use this plan. After the plan service was discontinued in the 1940s, counties began to hire architects and contract for school construction, leading to the end of the more state-wide conformity in school plans found in the two previous decades.

In 1904, Deerfield built one of the first consolidated schools in the County, a one-story, four-room frame building. Photographs from the 1910s proudly show the wagons used to transport the students in these early days of consolidation. This school taught elementary grades as well as some high school. After the old school burned, the present building was constructed in 1937 north of the earlier site. G. G. Shaver, the head of the School Board's Maintenance Department and Kellis Bibb supervised the construction. **These two men built most of the County's schools**

(continued)

Geographic Data/Acreage: two acres

Verbal Boundary Description: Beginning at a point on W side of VA 600 approx. 500' S of intersection of said route with VA 629; thence extending approx. 300' S along S (continued)
 Boundary Justification: The bounds have been drawn to include the school and the immediate school yard.
 UTM: 17/639570/4228380

Prepared By: Ann McCleary, Architectural Historian

Date Prepared: September 1984

Deerfield Elementary School
07-1154

Physical Description continued

The classrooms all house two grades each, K-1, 2-3, 4-5, and 6-7. These rooms retain their wood floors and plaster walls, but the ceilings have been lowered. The wardrobes, teachers' closets, and chalk boards all suggest the designs proposed by the Division of School Buildings in the 1930s.

In 1948-49, a cinderblock cafeteria/kitchen addition was constructed to the rear of the north wing. During the 1940s, the County added more permanent kitchen and cafeteria facilities to many of its schools. This particular addition follows the proposed form of additions to this plan, merely continuing one of the wings. In 1979, the last major addition was built--a cinderblock gymnasium/play room behind the south wing.

The white wooden fence that outlines the front school yard has been here since the 1940s.

Statement of Significance continued

from the establishment of the Maintenance Department in 1927 until the state law was passed requiring that the construction work be put out to contract.

With renewed attempts to further consolidate the County schools in the 1950s and 1960s, the high school students were bused to the new Buffalo Gap High School in the early 1960s.

Verbal Boundary Description continued

side of VA 500; thence approx. 300' W; thence approx. 200' N to a point on S side of dirt road; thence approx. 300' ENE along S side of dirt road to point of origin.

USGS 7.5' quadrangle
Deerfield, VA

(scale:1:24000)
1967 (PR 1977)

● DEERFIELD SCHOOL, Augusta County, VA
(PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN AUGUSTA COUNTY, VIRGINIA,
1870-1940)

UTM References:

17/639570/4228380

