

United States Department of the Interior

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.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Franklin High School Gymnasium and Agricultural & Shop Building

Other names/site number: Charles Street Gym; DHR file no. 145-5033

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

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

2. Location

Street & number: 511 Charles Street

City or town: Franklin State: VA County: Independent City

Not For Publication: N/A

Vicinity N/A

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

Applicable National Register Criteria:

 X A B X C D

<p>_____ Signature of certifying official/Title: <u>Virginia Department of Historic Resources</u> State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>	<p>_____ Date</p>
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<p>In my opinion, the property <u> </u> meets <u> </u> does not meet the National Register criteria.</p>	
<p>_____ Signature of commenting official:</p>	<p>_____ Date</p>
<p>_____ Title :</p>	<p>_____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>

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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.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION/ Education-Related/Gymnasium and Agriculture & Industrial Shop

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION/Education-Related/Gymnasium and Maintenance Shop

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/ Classical Revival/Neo-Classical Revival

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: BRICK; CONCRETE; METAL; OTHER:
Tar, Membrane

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Franklin High School Gymnasium, known commonly today as the Charles Street Gym, is located at 511 Charles Street in the City of Franklin, Virginia. The building stands at the head of Fourth Avenue where it intersects (“T” intersection) with Charles Street. It is an iconic, and highly visible, symbol of Franklin’s earlier history, valued by several generations of Franklin and Southampton County people who used the gymnasium during their high school days. It was built in 1935-1936 and was a part of the Franklin High School complex. The complex included the high school building, the gymnasium, and the athletic field, adjacent to the gymnasium. The old Franklin High School building, the grandstand, and the bleachers no longer exist. The building being nominated, now the last remaining building of the aforementioned complex, was constructed for the purpose of providing a gymnasium (for basketball and school functions such as dances) and a section for agriculture and shop instruction. The gymnasium is located at the front of the building, with the vocational classrooms in a separate wing, perpendicular to the gym and connected by a brick hyphen which contains the boys and girls locker rooms. The brick masonry building was constructed in the Classical Revival Style and was funded by the Public Works Administration and the Literary Fund of Virginia. The stylish, well-designed building filled a critical need for the high school students. Original architectural elements survive on the

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exterior as well as the interior and the building continues to serve primarily as a gymnasium, thereby, retaining a high degree of historic integrity.

Narrative Description

Setting

The Franklin High School Gymnasium sits at the very end of West Fourth Avenue where it intersects with Charles Street. The gym can be seen from the east end of Fourth Avenue. As one drives up, or walks up, Fourth Avenue, a distance of about one mile, the gym is the most prominent building on the streetscape. Other building along the way include the General Vaughan House (1885), the Emmanuel Episcopal Church, the R. J. Camp Parker, and the historic Fourth Avenue Apartments (1912), as well as several well maintained early to mid- 20th century residences. Concrete walkways lead from the adjacent J. P. King School parking lot and from the Charles Street sidewalk. Across the street, facing Fourth Avenue, are the historic Fourth Avenue Apartments (three-story frame buildings that were used for Franklin High School on Clay Street until 1922, at which time they were moved to their present location on Fourth Avenue and the new brick Franklin High School was constructed on the Clay Street site. Unfortunately, that building was torn down following construction of a new Franklin High School building on Crescent Drive. The gymnasium building has a frontage of 83 feet on Charles Street and is perpendicular to the end of Fourth Avenue. When the gymnasium was built, Charles Street was named Hill Street. The Franklin High School Gymnasium is one of a few historic public buildings remaining in the City of Franklin. It is located in close proximity to the National Register-listed Franklin Historic District (NRHP 1985; DHR #145-0006), and is within the boundaries of the local Franklin Historic District.

Site Description

The Franklin High School Gymnasium is on a one-acre parcel. The former athletic field was used for football and baseball games. The semi-pro baseball team called the “Franklin Kildees” played here in the 1940s on what was called “Franklin Field,” complete with grandstand and bleachers. The area that was used as the athletic field (for football and baseball) is now vacant. The immediate environs also include the modern J.P. King School and parking lot, a new gymnasium, a maintenance equipment staging area, a small modern shed, a small storage building and a small office building. These buildings and parking areas are outside the nominated boundaries.

Building Description

Built in 1935-1936, the Franklin High School Gymnasium is a Classical Revival building constructed of brick with Flemish bond variations: 3 courses of stretchers and one course of alternating headers and stretchers. The window sash are original to the building. The center section of the main façade (east) projects out slightly and contains a central entrance flanked by

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two recessed compass head windows on either side. These four recessed compass head steel-framed windows contain multi-light wire-mesh glass panes. On each of the four front windows are 36 squared panes per sash on the lower part of each window. Ten curved panes per sash are on the upper part of each window. On the arched window above the front entrance door are ten curved panes for that one sash. All of the window panes are held in by metal framing. Some parts of the casement windows slide and/or hinge out, awning-style. The recessed compass head windows and the semi-circular arch over the entrance are further articulated with brick corbelled arches with stone keystones.

The building foundation is of concrete construction. The front entrance includes two concrete steps. The recessed double-doors are framed with stone pilasters topped by a decorative stone architrave which has a slight Egyptian look. At each end of the architrave are square recessed relief panels with "19" and "35" respectively, marking the date of construction. Between the date panels is a long rectangular recessed panel with a Greek key motif. The cap of the architrave is a shallow pediment shape with a semicircular ornament with carved leaves at the peak. A stone beltcourse encircles the entire gymnasium portion of the building. The contrast with the brick walls visually divides the arched portions of the compass head windows from the sash below as well as the entrance with the doors and windows below the arched window. Centered above the entrance is a rectangular stone panel relief with scrolled festoons on either side and topped by a corbelled brick course. The building's corbelled brick cornice features brick dentils with a course of soldier bricks below and stone coping above. The roof is flat with tar material and covered with a membrane (in 2016).

There are nearly identical arched window transoms above the two double-door entrances at the rear of the gymnasium. On each window there are 24 panes per sash on the lower squared part of the window and 10 curved panes per sash on the upper arched part of the window. All of the windowpanes are held in by metal framing. The east entrance transom still has the same wire-mesh glass panes; however, the west entrance transom panes appear to have been replaced or covered with plywood.

The north and south facades are solid brick walls with classical motifs incorporated into the brickwork. A faux water table is delineated by a row of soldier bricks. Centered on each wall above the soldier row is a large recessed Roman arch, with another recessed arch within it that is the same dimensions as the compass head windows. Here the stone beltcourse breaks and this smaller arch includes a stone keystone, identical to those above the windows. On both sides of the recessed Roman arch are large rectangular recessed panels with a corbelled sill and a corbelled lintel. These panels are between the water table below and the stone beltcourse above. A pediment shaped parapet with a corbelled cornice and stone coping tops off both of these facades.

Centered on the rear of the gymnasium section of the building is a one-story brick section, between the two rear entrances of the gym. This section contains two locker rooms, the furnace room and a small office. There is one large brick chimney that extends up from the furnace

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room. Attached to this section of the building is a larger brick, one-story section that contained the vocational classrooms, now used for maintenance and storage. Both of these rear sections have the same soldier course watertable, with an additional soldier course simulating a beltcourse above the windows and entrances. These secondary elevations are not nearly as fanciful in neo-classical detail as the facade of the gymnasium.

Each of the two locker rooms (one male and one female) has a large window, each with 24 panes held in with metal framing. The bottom 6 panes of each window have hinged sections that swing open. There are 3 windows on each side of the agricultural and shop section of the building, for a total of 6. Each window has 24 panes held in by metal framing. An office window, part of the agricultural and shop section, has 20 panes held in by metal framing. At the rear of the agricultural and shop section of the building there are a window with 24 panes, a window with 16 panes (above a large shop door), and a window with 24 panes. The windows are original to the building. However, some windowpanes have been broken and two windows have been boarded-up. The windows have corbelled brick lintels and stone sills. The roof on both rear sections is flat, with a modest brick corbelled cornice with stone coping. The foundation and steps to the entrances are of concrete. A handicap ramp, added in recent years, is made of concrete and, when facing the front of the building, is situated on the left of the main entrance to the building.

The interior of the gymnasium is still one large open space. The flooring is the original maple wood. The walls are of glazed tile from the floor to about halfway up the walls. The upper portion of the walls is a different type of tile (unglazed) to the ceiling. The original ceiling is acoustical plaster positioned below steel joists. A suspended ceiling was hung below the original ceiling which is still there. An air conditioning system was recently installed in the front part (gymnasium) of the building.

The locker rooms are also mostly original with red square tile floors, beige tile walls, and original shower and toilet stalls with the original wooden doors. Also in this section is a furnace room that contains the original coal-fired furnace. The original large-sized chimney is still in place. The building is currently heated by an oil-fired system.

The agriculture and shop section was located at the back part of the building with separate entrances. There is a large room that was used for the shop program and another smaller room that was used for shop and agriculture classroom instruction. An office was available for use by the instructor. Today this space is used by the school for maintenance operations and storage. A one-story, concrete block, flat-roofed, shed addition was added to the rear of the shop classroom in 1960.

Degree of Integrity

The Franklin High School Gymnasium, although in need of “cosmetic” attention, retains a very high degree of integrity, both on the exterior structure and in the interior. On the outside of the building, the brickwork is intact and the window sash are original. Except for replacement doors

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at the front entrance, all other elements of the building are original. There are no additions to the building other than a permanent handicap ramp at the front entrance that is constructed in such a way as not to detract from the principal façade and its original appearance. The inside of the building remains largely as it was when it was first built. The maple floors are original. The locker rooms, for the most part, have original fixtures. The tiled walls throughout the interior are original. The gymnasium continues in use by Franklin High School. The wrestling team uses half of the gym for practice while the Robotics Team uses the other half.

In April 2017, at the request of Danny Custer, Maintenance Superintendent for the City of Franklin Public Schools (property owner), Highground Services, a design and engineering firm based in Franklin, Virginia, conducted a comprehensive evaluation of the property. Their report included the following statement: “Although there are several visible cracks in the brick walls, we found the building overall to be structurally sound. It is our belief that repairing these cracks and providing a new roof would result in many more years of useful life from the building, and we recommend making these improvements.” The report indicated that the building is structurally sound with no signs of foundation problems, and the walls are plumb. A full copy of that report is available. The City of Franklin allocated \$120,000 for roof and crack repair. That work was completed in September of 2017.

Essentially, the total building is as it was when it was first constructed, but for some “wear and tear”. The overall physical appearance is the same except there is some needed roof repair. Therefore, the building retains a high degree of integrity of location, materials, design, feeling, association and workmanship. The primary loss of integrity relates to the setting due to the removal of the original high school.

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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.

Criteria Considerations (N/A)

(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 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

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1935-1966

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Long, Raymond V., State Architect

Martens, W. F., Contractor

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Franklin High School Gymnasium is eligible for inclusion in the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criterion A in the area of Education. The Gym was built in 1935-1936 with funds from an outright Public Works Administration (PWA) grant (45 percent of the \$33,964.90 cost) and 55 percent of the cost was borrowed from the Literary Fund of Virginia. The Gym building was needed for physical education (front section of building) and the Shop for agricultural education purposes (rear portion of the building). The property is also locally significant under Criterion C in the area of Architecture. The Gym is a locally significant example of early 20th century Classical Revival architecture with plans drawn in 1935 and recommended by the PWA and State Architect Raymond V. Long. The Gym was in constant use from 1936 to 1966 as an integral part of the Franklin High School Complex. From 1966 to present, it has been used variously as a secondary recreational venue for community basketball and Franklin High School wrestling. In addition, the Franklin High School robotics team uses the building. The sections of the building formerly used for Agricultural and Shop classes are now used for storage and a maintenance shop. The period of significance is 1936-1966 representing the years it was used as the Franklin High School Gymnasium and Shop classrooms.

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

Education (Criterion A)

The City of Franklin began as a railroad village in Southampton County, ca. 1835. At the headwaters of the Blackwater River, it was an ideal location for emerging railways and other modes of transportation intended to move agriculture products from the surrounding rural areas to commercial markets. In the late nineteenth century, the now incorporated Town of Franklin, began to boom with the arrival of the Union Camp Corporation in 1887. This company grew to be one of the most successful producers of wood products in the United States and became the largest employer in the region¹. Union Camp's presence and prominence in the region remained strong well into the mid- to late-twentieth century. With its steady population growth and economic prominence in the first decades of the twentieth century, the county built the large neo-classical Franklin High School, for white students, in 1922. This was a bit of a contrast to the surrounding rural counties that were characterized by villages with small, wood-frame, one- and two-room segregated schools for both white and black students.²

¹ Franklin Historic District, National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination Form. Virginia Historic Landmarks Division, 1985.

² The Desegregation of Southampton County, Virginia Schools, 1954-1970. Carolyn Carter Modlin, Dissertation, 1998. Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. P. 10.

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The Franklin High School Gymnasium was built by the Southampton County School System in 1935-1936.³ Financing was through a PWA grant and a Literary Fund of Virginia loan. The Gym was built in order to provide Franklin High School with a much-needed place for the physical education of its students. In addition, the sections of the building containing the industrial arts shop and the agricultural classroom were needed in order to provide for non-academic, vocational education. One of the new progressive reform ideas that emerged at this time was the recommendation to include vocational and agricultural training for all students. It was recognized that a large unskilled and uneducated workforce was not desirable for the long-term benefit of the country and may have contributed to the Great Depression that began in 1929. All over Virginia, new school designs included vocational classrooms and existing schools, such as Franklin High School, sought to add space to incorporate this new training into their curriculum.

The construction of the gymnasium and vocational classrooms was one piece of a larger proposal by Southampton County to make several educational improvements at once. The School Board made one application to the PWA and the Literary Fund for three educational projects. Also proposed was an addition to a white high school in the Town of Newsoms (no longer standing) and a new high school, also in Newsoms, for African American students (heavily damaged by fire in 2013). Known as the Newsoms School for Blacks, it was constructed of brick with very minimal ornamentation and was about the same square footage or less than the Franklin High School Gymnasium.

For over 83 years, the Franklin High School Gymnasium has been in continuous use for educational purposes. The history of the gym and its association with New Deal, Great Depression-era programs provides valuable insight into local initiatives to improve the educational opportunities of students in a rural community during a time of economic hardship and racial segregation. The gymnasium dates to the Jim Crow era of segregation in Virginia's public education system and Franklin High School originally served only white students. The city's public school system completed desegregation after the 1968 Supreme Court decision *Green v. County School Board of New Kent County, Virginia* forced local school systems to abandon the Massive Resistance-era "Freedom of Choice" plan. The Franklin High School Robotics Team and the Franklin High School Wrestling Team are currently occupying the gymnasium, while the City of Franklin Building Maintenance Department is using the old shop and agricultural classroom space.

Architecture (Criterion C)

The Franklin High School Gymnasium is a locally significant example of Classical Revival architecture with Flemish bond variations. It was designed by the State Architect, Raymond V. Long. Classical revivals of varying sorts were extremely popular in Virginia during the first half of the twentieth century. Although a secondary building to the main high school, careful

³ The City of Franklin received a charter from the Virginia General Assembly in 1961. Previously, Franklin was an incorporated town, which allowed it to operate its schools as part of the county's system. State law, however, requires that independent cities maintain their own school system, separate from those of adjacent counties.

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attention to detail and style was incorporated into the gymnasium's exterior design elements. Interior features employed the most state-of-the-art materials and application available at the time. The resulting building was a public building with its own identity, portraying a semblance of stability and permanence during an unstable era. Although not attached to the 1922 Franklin High School, it was in close proximity and attention was given to designing a new building with a similar and compatible style. The high school was a two-story brick Classical Revival building with a parapet roof and centered pediment. The classically inspired pediment was attached to the brick façade and included a classical frieze supported by Ionic pilasters. The front entrance featured double-doors with a semi-circular fanlight above, embellished with a corbelled brick arch with stone keystone above. This detail was replicated in the entrances to the gymnasium and the windows on the primary façade. Other details found in the high school that were replicated on the gym include the use of soldier brick courses to delineate spaces between each story, such as a faux water table and detailing surrounding the windows. A stone panel above the main entrance of the school is similar to the panel above the gym entrance.

Colonial Revival and its associated counterparts, Classical and Neo-Classical Revival, were popular choices for new construction in the Town of Franklin, particularly for commercial and civic architecture. A devastating fire in the downtown area in 1881 prompted a requirement that new buildings be constructed of brick. The new designs tended toward the Colonial Revival and Italianate. Two notable earlier examples that may have provided some inspiration for the Franklin High School Gymnasium are the Franklin Professional Building (1920s) at 300 N. Main Street (DHR file # 145-0006-0180) and the Post Office (1916) at 301 Main Street (DHR file # 145-0006-0181). Both of these brick buildings incorporate arched entranceways and the use of stone to highlight classical detailing such as cornices, columns, and decorative relief panels.



Franklin Professional Building, DHR, 1983



Franklin Post Office, DHR, 1982

As mentioned in the educational analysis, the plans to improve educational facilities in the county included, in addition to the gymnasium, an addition to the whites-only Newsoms High School and a new Newsoms high school for black students. The white Newsoms school is no longer standing; however, the ruinous Newsoms School for Blacks (DHR file # 270-5014) offers

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an interesting comparison in architectural design choices. It was built of brick, most likely to follow the prevailing thought and most up-to-date technology of attempting to build fireproof buildings. The form of the building suggests Colonial Revival, but it is nearly devoid of architectural ornamentation. It is one-story with a hipped roof and a one-bay, hipped roof-covered entranceway. There are no windows on the façade, however, the side elevations have large banks of sash ribbon lights, typical of school architecture from this time period. The use of multi-light ribbon windows provided maximum natural light to classroom spaces. The brick walls are 4:1 common bond with a four-course soldier row above the foundation. The brickwork from the soldier row to just beneath the windows is Flemish bond with glazed headers. There was no use of brick corbelling to delineate entrances, windows, or a cornice as was done at the gymnasium. No stone was employed in the design at all. During the segregation era, it was typical for design decisions along with the associated expenses to be greater for an all-white school in a prosperous town such as Franklin versus a school for African Americans, especially in more rural areas.



Newsoms School for Blacks, Department of Historic Resources (270-5014), 2000

Over the years, since 1935, with various uses and serving as a venue for many school and community activities, the Franklin High School Gymnasium has retained, architecturally and structurally – to a very high degree – its original appearance. Although the gym building needs some minor (“cosmetic”) improvement, it still enhances the neighborhood in which it stands and the streetscape of that section of Franklin.

Background History

Beginning early in the 1930s, Southampton County school officials were increasingly realizing the need for a more broad-based school curriculum for county students. Toward this end, plans

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began to evolve in relation to providing not only academic education but also more vocational type training, especially agricultural and mechanical training. Commercial subjects such as typewriting, shorthand, bookkeeping and physical education were being more emphasized as an important part of developing young people and helping them in their pursuit of a productive life. Therefore, a proposal was made to establish a building that would house a gymnasium, an agricultural training room, and a machine shop at the Franklin High School, which was attended by the county's white students and was constructed in 1922. Additionally, emphasis was evolving toward establishing home economics training at Franklin High School.

At this time other proposals were also coming together to establish better schools for other towns in Southampton County. Special effort was put forward to improve existing schools for African American students as well and to build new ones where needed – especially in the Newsoms and Capron vicinities. At the forefront of this effort were Southampton Schools Superintendent F. F. Jenkins and the entire Southampton County school board. The Southampton County Board of Supervisors was also in full support. In July 1935, Southampton County put forth a joint application to the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works (commonly abbreviated as the PWA) for the construction of “a new negro [*sic*] school building for Newsoms, an addition to the white high school at Newsoms, and the construction of a gymnasium, agricultural education, and shop building, to be part of the Franklin High School complex.”⁴ This was followed by a request for a loan from the State Board of Education, Literary Fund of Virginia, for the sum of \$19,000, for the building at the Franklin High School.⁵

Once the PWA grant was awarded and the Literary Fund loan approved for all three projects, the County established a committee to select and purchase a site for the gymnasium, as well as receive bids for construction. The committee consisted of Dr. R.H. Cobb, J.W. Claud, and F.F. Jenkins, Superintendent of Schools for Southampton County.⁶ The PWA would assign an inspector to be on the jobsite once under construction. The State Architect, Raymond V. Long, designed the gymnasium building and the construction contract was awarded to W.F. Martens of Newport News for a cost of \$33,545. C.W. Buchanan & Company of Clarksville, Virginia, received the contract for the Newsoms Negro School at a cost of \$15,516.⁷

The three school projects came in under budget by \$10,000. The County used the excess funds to build two additional classrooms on the existing Franklin High School, one of which was to become the Home Economics Department. The *Tidewater News*, in an article dated January 17, 1936, announced the “largest single building project launched in 1935 was by the Southampton County School Board.” The school term, beginning in September 1936, included the opening of the new gymnasium, agricultural department, workshop, and model home economics department. Again the *Tidewater News* gave extensive coverage to the amenities and benefits available to the students, as evidenced in excerpts from the article of September 11, 1936:

⁴ Southampton County School Board Meeting minutes, July 9, 1935

⁵ Southampton County Board of Supervisors Meeting minutes, September 23, 1935

⁶ Southampton County School Board Meeting minutes, November 6, 1935

⁷ Southampton County School Board Meeting minutes, December 10, 1935

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Occupying a commanding position at the head of Fourth Avenue here, the gym-agricultural-workshop building is an attractive brick structure, 95 percent fireproof and equal in modernity and comfort to many college gyms, costing \$33,964.90, exclusive of equipment, 45 percent of which was an outright PWA grant and the remaining 55 percent borrowed from the Literary Fund of Virginia. Construction was begun in December 1935 and, except for concrete flooring in the workshop, is now complete.

W. H. McCann, B. S., will teach the agricultural courses and also instruct in the workshop. Woodwork, ironwork, and sheet-metal work will be taught; and, probably, elementary electricity and other craft instruction will be added later. Agricultural students will be benefitted by the shop work in that they will be allowed to build various farm articles used in their projects, while those who wish to take shop work independently of the agricultural course may do so. Professor B. T. Watkins said yesterday that about 27 will be enrolled for vocational agriculture and 24 for shop. The shop course will earn a credit of one unit and the agricultural course, one and one-half units.”

The Literary Fund of Virginia⁸

The Literary Fund of Virginia was established by an act of the General Assembly in 1810 specifically for the purpose of providing free education for the poor. This became the first instance of public education in Virginia. In 1816, the fund received a substantial increase in available funds when it was decided that all repayments of a loan Virginia had provided to the Federal government to prosecute the War of 1812 would be deposited in the Literary Fund. In 1818, Thomas Jefferson successfully encouraged passage of a bill allowing a portion of the fund to be set aside annually for a state university, soon to be the University of Virginia. The remainder of the fund was allocated to all of Virginia's localities for poor students. The amount provided was based on the number of students and the number of days they attended school. In 1829, additional changes were made to allow Literary Funds to assist in the construction of school buildings, not to exceed two-fifths of the cost. However, teaching enslaved African Americans to read and write was forbidden, starting with state laws passed in 1805 and followed up with additional restrictions in 1819 and 1831. Free African Americans had few opportunities to access education. Religious groups, particularly those with antislavery sentiments, such as Quakers, in limited instances provided basic literacy lessons for free African Americans and

⁸ The narrative history of the Literary Fund of Virginia was extracted from “A History of the Literary Fund as a Funding Source for Free Public Education in the Commonwealth of Virginia,” a dissertation by Foney G. Mullins, Doctoral Candidate at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 2001.

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enslaved people. In even rarer instances, free African American youth attended private subscription or boarding schools.⁹

During the Civil War the Literary Fund revenues, not supplemented by state taxes, were diverted to the Confederate war effort. After the Civil War, the Underwood Constitution of 1869 forced Virginia to set up a statewide process for providing public education to all, although racial segregation was embedded in the new education system. The Literary Fund again became a major source of funding for public education, but not just for the poor. Although a more structured system for the establishment of free education was in place by 1870, funds continued to be diverted from the Literary Fund to pay off war debt, which resulted in fewer schools being established and the perpetuation of private education facilities, primarily for the benefit of white children whose parents could afford it. This struggle for adequate funding continued through the 1880s. By 1900, enrollment had increased and most educational funds came from local taxes, with the Literary Fund as a minor secondary source.

The early twentieth century saw an increased focus on public education nationwide. New policies and acts of legislation were passed to increase education for all, although still decisively segregated, despite lip service to the “separate but equal” doctrine allowed by the U.S. Supreme Court, with the majority of public resources devoted to schools for white students. In 1906, under the leadership of Joseph Eggleston, Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Literary Fund became a lending agent to localities for the construction of new schools. Specific guidelines were enacted and repayment of the loans became the responsibility of the local boards of supervisors. These low-interest loans allowed many localities to undertake the construction of new schools with modern amenities.

Like all public services that relied heavily on taxes, progress for public education was slowed by the Great Depression even though it was a time of increased student enrollment. As during the Civil War, Literary Fund revenue was diverted to other uses, further impacting public education in Virginia. Yet, because of the establishment of federal recovery programs to stimulate the economy, school construction continued in localities such as Southampton County, now with a heavier reliance on federal funds instead of state funds. In 1935, at the time of the proposal by Southampton County to undertake several school construction projects, additional changes had been made to the Literary Fund that allowed easier access to loans. It was in this climate of reformed Literary Fund loans combined with direct aid from the federal government that the Franklin High School Gymnasium and Agricultural & Shop Building was conceived and constructed.

⁹ J. L. Blair Buck, *The Development of Public Schools in Virginia, 1607-1952* (Richmond: State Board of Education, 1952), 22-23; Ronald E. Butchart, “Freedmen's Education in Virginia, 1861–1870,” *Encyclopedia Virginia*, Virginia Foundation for the Humanities, 2015, <https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org> (accessed July 2019).

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The Public Works Administration

The Public Works Administration (PWA) was established in an era when construction of new schools had virtually ceased due to the Great Depression. A product of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal program, the PWA was authorized by the National Industrial Recovery Act of June 1933. Between 1933 and 1937, it is estimated that the PWA helped finance construction of approximately 70 percent of all school-related buildings in the United States. Over the life of the program, the PWA helped to provide accommodations for 1,389,655 students through construction of 5,235 new school buildings and the improvement of more than 1,100 existing school buildings.¹⁰

In Virginia alone, the PWA had initiated over 300 education-related construction projects by 1936, with nearly \$5 million in grants, and over \$3 million in loans to local jurisdictions. During this period in Virginia, the Virginia School Board was heavily involved in the planning of school buildings. In coordination with PWA funding, the State Architect's office, under the direction of Raymond V. Long, was responsible for administering and managing PWA school projects. Long, whose career lasted until 1960, was also involved in designing 35 more public schools within the Commonwealth as the State School Architect.¹¹ It is possible that Long was the architect for the new gymnasium building in Franklin, or more likely, oversaw the design of the building.

With historical designation, many local residents believe that the Franklin High School Gymnasium will be in a better position to secure funding for restoration and maintenance of a building that is widely recognized in the community for its historic and architectural importance.

¹⁰ Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works, Harold I. Ickes, Administrator, *PWA: A Four Year Record of the Construction of Permanent and Useful Public Works* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1937), 11. This reference is from the National Register Nomination Form for the Mount Vernon High School in Fairfax County, Virginia. The nomination form was prepared by Rebecca Wong, Wiss Janney Elstner Associates, Inc.

¹¹ Virginia Department of Historic Resources Preliminary Information Form Resource Information Sheet "George Washington High School".

Franklin High School Gymnasium and
Agricultural & Shop Building
Name of Property

Franklin City, VA
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9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Buck, J. L. Blair. *The Development of Public Schools in Virginia, 1607-1952*. Richmond: State Board of Education, 1952.

Butchart, Ronald E. "Freedmen's Education in Virginia, 1861–1870." *Encyclopedia Virginia*, Virginia Foundation for the Humanities, 2015, <https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org>, accessed September 2019).

Mullins, Foney G. *A History of the Literary Fund as a Funding Source for Free Public Education in the Commonwealth of Virginia*. Dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Education. Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. 2001.

Southampton County, Virginia School Board minutes 1935-1936.

The Tidewater News, Franklin, Virginia. Newspaper archives, 1935-1936.

Wong, Rebecca. *Mount Vernon High School, Fairfax, Virginia*. National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form. National Park Service. 2018.

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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

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, Richmond, VA

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Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): DHR #145-5033

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property approximately .5 acre

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 36.677850 | Longitude: 76.922660 |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The Franklin High School Gymnasium and Agricultural & Shop Building occupies a portion of tax parcel number 106-(051)-106-228 as recorded by the City of Franklin, VA. The property is bounded on the northeast by Charles Street, on the southeast by W. 4th Avenue, on the northwest by assorted outbuildings owned by the City of Franklin and the former Franklin High School Athletic Field, and on the southwest by the Joseph P. King Jr. Elementary School Gymnasium. The true and correct historic boundary is shown on the attached Sketch Map.

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Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The historic boundary is drawn to include the footprint of the Franklin High School Gymnasium and Agricultural & Shop Building, while excluding nearby unrelated and nonhistoric outbuildings owned by the City of Franklin. All known historic resources are encompassed by the boundary.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Clyde E. Parker, Board Member and Elizabeth Lipford, DHR staff
organization: Southampton County Historical Society
street & number: 101 Magnolia Avenue
city or town: Franklin state: Virginia zip code: 23851
e-mail: Magnolia101@charter.net
telephone: 757-647-8212
date: November 1, 2019

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Franklin High School Gymnasium and Agricultural & Shop Building

Franklin High School Gymnasium and
Agricultural & Shop Building
Name of Property

Franklin City, VA
County and State

City or Vicinity: Franklin

County: N/A State: Virginia

Photographer: Ronald Ratcliffe

Date Photographed: May-June 2016

Images: 0001, 0005, and 0011 through 0014

Photographer: Elizabeth Lipford

Date Photographed: November 12, 2019

Images: 0002 through 0004 , 0006 through 0010, and 0015 through 0019

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 19: VA_FranklinCity_FranklinHighSchoolGymnasium_0001
View: East façade, camera facing west

2 of 19: VA_FranklinCity_FranklinHighSchoolGymnasium_0002
View: Southeast façade, camera facing northwest

3 of 19: VA_FranklinCity_FranklinHighSchoolGymnasium_0003
View: Northeast façade, camera facing southwest

4 of 19: VA_FranklinCity_FranklinHighSchoolGymnasium_0004
View: Southwest façade, camera facing northeast

5 of 19: VA_FranklinCity_FranklinHighSchoolGymnasium_0005
View: Rear wing of south façade, camera facing north

6 of 19: VA_FranklinCity_FranklinHighSchoolGymnasium_0006
View: Northwest façade, camera facing southeast

7 of 19: VA_FranklinCity_FranklinHighSchoolGymnasium_0007
View: West façade, industrial shop classroom entry, camera facing east

8 of 19: VA_FranklinCity_FranklinHighSchoolGymnasium_0008
View: Gymnasium interior, camera facing northeast

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- 9 of 19: VA_FranklinCity_FranklinHighSchoolGymnasium_0009
View: Gymnasium interior, camera facing east
- 10 of 19: VA_FranklinCity_FranklinHighSchoolGymnasium_0010
View: Gymnasium interior, camera facing southwest
- 11 of 19: VA_FranklinCity_FranklinHighSchoolGymnasium_0011
View: Girls locker room, camera facing north
- 12 of 19: VA_FranklinCity_FranklinHighSchoolGymnasium_0012
View: Girls locker room, camera facing northeast
- 13 of 19: VA_FranklinCity_FranklinHighSchoolGymnasium_0013
View: Girls locker room, camera facing east
- 14 of 19: VA_FranklinCity_FranklinHighSchoolGymnasium_0014
View: Boys locker room, camera facing south
- 15 of 19: VA_FranklinCity_FranklinHighSchoolGymnasium_0015
View: Boys locker room, camera facing northwest
- 16 of 19: VA_FranklinCity_FranklinHighSchoolGymnasium_0016
View: Industrial Shop Classroom, camera facing southwest
- 17 of 19: VA_FranklinCity_FranklinHighSchoolGymnasium_0017
View: Industrial Shop Classroom, camera facing northeast
- 18 of 19: VA_FranklinCity_FranklinHighSchoolGymnasium_0018
View: Agriculture Shop Classroom, camera facing southeast
- 19 of 19: VA_FranklinCity_FranklinHighSchoolGymnasium_0019
View: Agriculture Shop Classroom, camera facing southwest

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 100 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. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

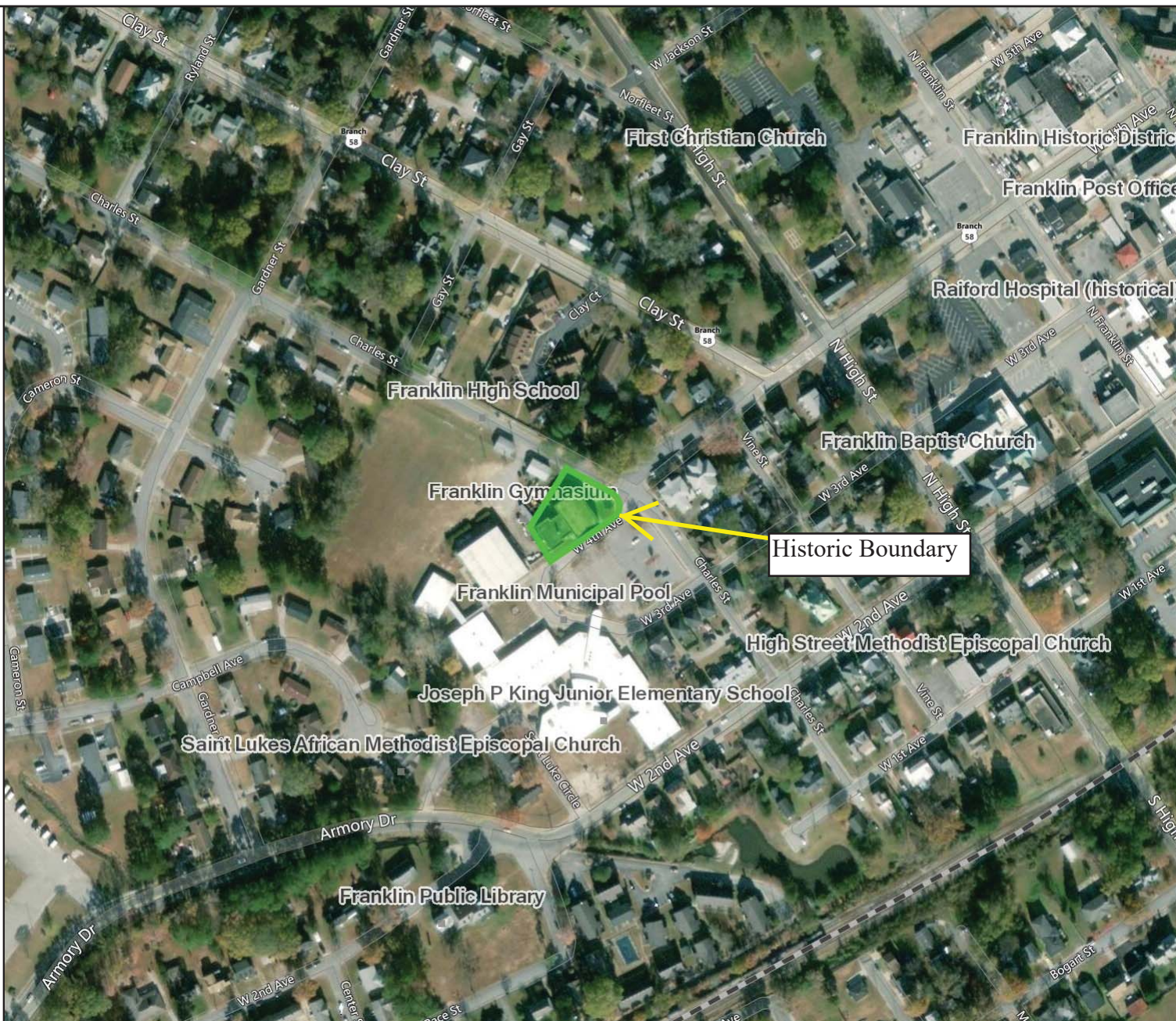


LOCATION MAP

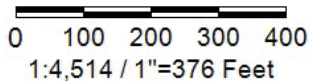
Franklin High School Gymnasium and Agricultural & Shop Building
City of Franklin, VA
DHR No. 145-5033

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Latitude: 36.677850
Longitude: 76.922660



Feet



Title:

Date: 11/20/2019

DISCLAIMER: Records of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR) have been gathered over many years from a variety of sources and the representation depicted is a cumulative view of field observations over time and may not reflect current ground conditions. The map is for general information purposes and is not intended for engineering, legal or other site-specific uses. Map may contain errors and is provided "as-is". More information is available in the DHR Archives located at DHR's Richmond office.

Notice if AE sites: Locations of archaeological sites may be sensitive to the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), and the Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA) and Code of Virginia §2.2-3705.7 (10). Release of precise locations may threaten archaeological sites and historic resources.



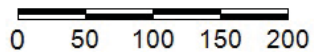
SKETCH MAP

Franklin High School Gymnasium
and Agricultural & Shop Building
City of Franklin, VA
DHR No. 145-5033

A contributing building



Feet



1:2,257 / 1"=188 Feet



Title:

Date: 11/18/2019

DISCLAIMER: Records of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR) have been gathered over many years from a variety of sources and the representation depicted is a cumulative view of field observations over time and may not reflect current ground conditions. The map is for general information purposes and is not intended for engineering, legal or other site-specific uses. Map may contain errors and is provided "as-is". More information is available in the DHR Archives located at DHR's Richmond office.

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