

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**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 PropertyHistoric name: Henry Clay Elementary SchoolOther names/site number: DHR ID# 166-0013

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

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

2. LocationStreet & number: 310 South James StreetCity or town: Ashland State: VA County: HanoverNot For Publication: N/A Vicinity: N/A**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

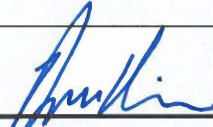
As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

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
Signature of certifying official/Title:

Date

Virginia Department of Historic Resources

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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

Signature of commenting official:

Date

Title :

State or Federal agency/bureau
or Tribal Government

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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>2</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>2</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: School

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS: Colonial Revival

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: BRICK, WOOD, METAL

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 Henry Clay Elementary School was constructed in 1934 and over its ninety-year life evolved into one of the most architecturally distinctive schools in Hanover County. The original Colonial Revival-style school was a linear building that contained thirteen classrooms, one of which served as the library, flanking a central corridor with four offices at the front entrance. Its later additions are what makes the school unique. The first addition in 1955 created a plan that was followed by all subsequent additions and resulted in three interior courtyards, with many of the corridors and classrooms having windows on a courtyard. This was the only school in the county that had this plan. The school closed at the end of the 2024 school year after a new elementary school was built in northern Ashland. In addition to the school, the War Memorial Building is included in the nomination. While the cornerstone was laid in 1949 as a memorial to those who served or were killed in the two World Wars, the building was not completed until 1951. It was used by civic groups and schools as a gymnasium and auditorium. It sits on an adjacent parcel but is joined to the elementary school by a covered walkway. The school retains integrity of location, association, setting, feeling, design, materials, and workmanship.

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Narrative Description

Setting

The Henry Clay Elementary School is located at 310 South James Street in Ashland, Virginia at the southwestern corner of James Street and Hanover Avenue on a triangular plot of land in a residential area of the town. The building faces slightly southeast towards South James Street. There is a narrow grass yard in front of the school between it and the public sidewalk with foundation plantings across the front of the school and a magnolia tree on either side of the projecting front portico. A wide concrete-paved area provides access from the public sidewalk to the front portico of the school. There is an asphalt-paved parking lot north of the school with an entrance off South James Street. The parking lot was the location of the former Henry Clay High School, demolished in the early 1970s, as well as several other associated school buildings. On the south side and rear of the school are playgrounds. At the northwest corner of the school is a semicircular driveway from Hanover Avenue where school buses dropped off and picked up the students. The War Memorial Building, which served as a gymnasium and auditorium for the school, stands behind the school to the west facing Hanover Avenue with a paved parking area between it and the school. A covered metal canopy connects the rear of the school with the eastern side of the War Memorial Building.

Inventory

Henry Clay Elementary School	1937, 1955, 1968, 1982, 1998	Contributing Building
War Memorial Building	1951	Contributing Building

Buildings

Henry Clay Elementary School, 1934, *Contributing Building*

The Henry Clay Elementary School is a long and deep one-story brick building that was constructed in at least five building campaigns. The original, nicely detailed Colonial Revival-style school opened in 1934 and was designed by Luther P. Hartsook and Edward F. Sinnott Sr. It consists of a projecting seven-bay, side-gable-roof central block with a three-bay front-gable-roof arcaded portico with arched openings highlighted by double rowlock courses. The side openings of the porch arcade have a decorative wrought-iron railing. The porch floor is concrete with concrete steps. The arcaded porch pays homage to the Hanover County courthouse that was constructed between 1737 and 1742 and features an arcaded front. The double-leaf central door with multiple lights above a raised panel has a five-light transom and a double-soldier-course surround. The windows in the central section are single nine-over-nine-light wooden-sash windows surmounted with brick jack arches with rowlock brick sills. The central block is detailed with brick quoins. A water table consists of a single row of raised brick laid in stretcher bond that continues on the flanking classroom sections. The classroom sections have a lower side-gable roof than the center block with ranks of five six-over-six-light wooden-sash windows for each classroom. The end blocks are emphasized by front-facing gable roofs. The use of symmetry in the design of Henry Clay Elementary School is a hallmark of the Colonial Revival style.

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The plan of the original school featured a wide east/west entrance corridor that terminated in the wide north/south double-loaded corridor. In addition to the front entrance, there were entrances at each end of the corridor and through the boys' and girls' bathrooms on the rear of the building. There was a total of thirteen classrooms with six on either side of the central block. The thirteenth classroom was located on the rear of the central block and faced the entrance corridor. The boys' and girls' restrooms flanked this classroom. The central block also contained the principal's and library's offices on one side of the entrance corridor and a teachers' room and medical aid room on the other side. One of the classrooms was designated as the library and another was designated as a clinic. There was no cafeteria, but the students could have used the adjacent high school cafeteria.

The original school retains some of its early finishes. The classrooms have large windows on one side, cloakrooms (most have had the doors removed but some survive) on one end, and chalkboards or whiteboards on the other two walls. Original classroom doors have nine lights over a large single recessed panel, and most doors have three-light transoms. Throughout the school, the floors are tile, and the ceilings are acoustical tile with lay-in lights.

Evolution of the School

There have been at least four major additions to the school over the years, creating a much larger building than appears from the front. The first addition in 1955 was designed by J. Henley Walker, Jr. of Richmond. The flat-roof brick addition was located behind and parallel to the original building but did not connect to it. This addition had a single-loaded north/south corridor with classrooms on the western side. A total of eight classrooms were added. At the same time, a large cafeteria, kitchen, and boiler room were built at the north end of the addition. New girls' and boys' restrooms and one classroom were also added at the north end. Because of later additions, only the northern end of the kitchen and the southern end of the classroom block are visible from the public right-of-way. There is little exterior ornamentation to this addition. The brick is laid in stretcher bond and has brick header course sills for the aluminum windows. The doors into the cafeteria/kitchen wing have a header course above the doors. The classrooms have a window wall of seven aluminum windows with a hopper window at the bottom of each window. Except for the classrooms at the north and south ends of the addition, these windows were on the western or rear elevation of the 1955 addition but now overlook the later courtyard created by the 1998 classroom addition.

The interior of the 1955 addition featured exposed and painted concrete-block walls in the corridors, classrooms, and cafeteria as well as tile floors and acoustical-tile ceilings. Both the long north/south corridor and the short corridors at the north and south ends had groups of triple-metal-sash windows on the eastern side facing what would become a courtyard. The almost-square classrooms had a sink on one wall with a chalkboard on the opposite wall and windows across the rear wall. The windows on the window wall are columns of aluminum windows with five lights in each column.

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The 1955 addition created a long rectangular courtyard between the original building and the 1955 addition with small openings at each end. The 1955 plans called for “future expansion” at each end of the original school that would connect it with the 1955 addition and provided both floor plans and elevation drawings for the additions that were finally built in 1968. The plans also indicated that temporary classrooms had been set up at the northern end where future expansion was designated. In 1968, two flat-roof, brick-veneer wings were built at each end of the original school as indicated on the 1955 architectural drawings and connected the original school with the 1955 addition. These additions completely enclosed the courtyard.

The two 1968 additions are brick laid in stretcher bond with little ornamentation. The front (east) wall of each addition is blank and projects slightly beyond the original school with a recessed entrance where the addition meets the original building. The 1968 additions have flat roofs that contrast significantly with the original Colonial Revival–style school but continue the symmetry of the original school. The double aluminum windows on the north and south sides of the additions are framed by cast concrete, the only windows to have this treatment.

The 1982 plans included improvements to the site as well as additions to the school. The architectural firm employed for these improvements was MacIlroy & Parris of Richmond. The site plan laid out the existing parking lot at the north end of the school and the bus driveway west of the parking lot at the north end of the cafeteria and kitchen wing. The site plan also indicated that an L-shaped maintenance building that stood at the north end of the cafeteria wing would be removed for the site improvements.

The 1982 improvements also included building a new library in the middle of the courtyard and reconfiguring one of the original bathrooms and the central rear classroom to provide access to the new library from the original school block. The new library was built between the original school and the 1955 addition, which created two smaller courtyards. The center rear classroom in the original school was subdivided into a storage room that also connected to the new library, a resource room, and a new corridor at the southern end of the classroom. This corridor extended across the southern end of the library to connect to the 1955 addition. The original girls’ restroom was also reconfigured to create a women’s restroom. The 1982 plans also proposed a covered walkway to connect the school with the War Memorial Building to the rear of the school, but it was not built until the 1986–1987 school year.¹

The 1998 alterations and renovations to the school brought a design approach to the final addition that differed from the original school and later additions that had continued to use Colonial Revival–style details and plan. The firm of Bond Comet Westmoreland + Hiner Architects of Richmond designed a contemporary addition across the rear but continued the use of red brick to tie it back to the existing school. They also continued to site the addition back from the existing school to create a third courtyard. Like the 1955 and 1968 additions, it has a single-loaded corridor with classrooms on one side and two classrooms on each end that connect this addition to the existing building. Labeled the kindergarten addition, it contained seven

¹ Hanover *Herald-Progress*, “New schools, improvements: \$37 million needed through 1992,” Nov. 12, 1986.

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kindergarten classrooms, an art lab, and a new rear entrance that became the primary entrance as the students were unloaded from the buses at the rear of the building off Hanover Avenue. The corner of each classroom angles out from the building and includes the only windows for each room. Like the earlier additions, the interior walls are painted concrete block, although there is exposed red brick at the classroom windows, and the art lab walls that face the corridors are also exposed red brick. The art lab is distinctly different from the other rooms of this newest addition. It has a soaring ceiling with exposed steel trusses, corrugated metal ceiling panels and large exposed HVAC ducts. This room also had windows that faced the corridor, and along with the courtyard windows created an open feeling at the new rear entrance. This addition also added storefront windows across the rear of the cafeteria.

Ashland War Memorial Building, 1951 *Contributing Building*

The Ashland War Memorial building is a large two-story building of brick laid in six-course American bond. The cornerstone of this building is inscribed "War Memorial/Dedicated Armistice Day/November 11, 1949." Construction did not begin until 1950 and concluded in 1951. Although this building is plain, verticality is stressed on the front. The seven-bay facade features a projecting two-story, three-bay entrance tower with central entrance sheltered by a one-story flat-roof porch supported by square brick columns. Above the entrance and extending almost to the flat roof of the entrance tower is a panel of bricks laid in a basketweave pattern. Flanking the entrance are tall, almost two-story glass-block windows that have been covered on the exterior but are visible on the interior. The remainder of the facade features aluminum windows. All window bays in the front section are outlined by header brick with panels of all-header bricks beneath each window. Brick pilasters separate the window bays in the gym section. The windows in the gym have been replaced with single-pane windows, but there has been no change in the size of the window openings. The front quarter of the building has an almost flat roof with tall brick side parapets that transitions to the large barrel roof that covers the gymnasium/auditorium section of the building. There is a stepped parapet on the rear of the roof, and all parapets have terracotta tile coping. One-story, flat-roof sections are located on each side of the building.

The front door opens into a pine-paneled room. A projecting brick fireplace with a raised hearth is opposite the front door. Restrooms are located on either side of this room. An enclosed stair rises three floors on the front wall. The stairway to the second floor is concrete but the remaining stairs are wood. The second floor has been used as an American Legion meeting room while the third floor was used by the Ashland Little League. The gymnasium/auditorium consumes the remainder of the building. A stage with a plain proscenium is located at the southern end. The walls are painted concrete block, and the ceiling is acoustical tile. Doors on either side of the stage provide access to the stage and, on the east, access to the basement beneath the stage. The Boy Scouts have used the basement.

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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

(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

1934 - 1975

Significant Dates

1934

1955

1968

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Hartsook, Luther P.

Sinnott, Edward F.

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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.)

Henry Clay Elementary School was constructed in 1934 at 310 South James Street in Ashland, a railroad town in Hanover County, Virginia. Architect Luther P. Hartsook, of Ashland, Virginia, and Edward F. Sinnott Sr., of Richmond, designed the one-story brick building in the Colonial Revival style. In 1933, during the Great Depression, the county applied for and received federal funds from the newly established Public Works Administration to construct the school for White students. Completed in a year, the school was expanded by four additions constructed on the sides and rear of the original building in 1955, 1968, 1982, and 1998. The current entrance is at what had been the rear of the school.

Henry Clay Elementary School is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of Education as an early example of a PWA-funded school building and the first consolidated elementary school for White students in Ashland, Hanover County's only incorporated town. The property is also locally significant under Criterion C in the area of Architecture for its embodiment of the Colonial Revival style common to educational buildings in Hanover County and throughout Virginia during the period, as well as for its evolved floor plan, which is unique among Hanover County schools and reflects changing architectural and educational trends during the mid-20th century. The period of significance extends from its original construction in 1934 until the end of the historic period in 1975, while the school was still in use and prior to the non-historic building campaigns.

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

In 1869, during the Reconstruction era that followed the Civil War, Virginia adopted a new state constitution that mandated public elementary education throughout the Commonwealth. Many political conservatives, whose children during and after the colonial period usually were either tutored at home or attended private-subscription schools and academies, opposed the concept of public education and the funding of public schools with tax dollars. The advocates of the new system eventually succeeded by acknowledging local control over each jurisdiction's schools. As a result, the quality of both public education itself and the infrastructure that supported it—the buildings in which children were taught—varied widely from one county or city to another, depending on local customs, revenues, and preferences.²

By 1873, there were 37 one-room schoolhouses in Hanover County: 28 log buildings, nine frame buildings, and no schoolhouses of brick or stone. The first graded school (in which students were taught in “grades” by age groups) in the county was reported in Ashland in 1878. It had two teachers, eighty-four students, three grades, and a six-month session. A decade later, three White

² William A. Link, *A Hard Country and a Lonely Place: Schooling, Society, and Reform in Rural Virginia, 1870–1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), 7–23.

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graded schools and three Black graded schools were reported. By 1900, Hanover County had 99 mostly one-room schools, of which 62 were for Whites and 37 for Blacks. Children either walked to school or their parents gave them rides in wagons or on horseback. Eventually, a system of hired wagons evolved, in which school boards paid wagon drivers to transport the children.³

In 1906, the General Assembly passed an act mandating the creation of a system of high schools, with one high school in each school district. By 1912–1913, Ashland had its first four-grade high school for White students, and by 1915–1916, a new, eight-room Ashland High School had been constructed on the southwestern corner of Hanover Avenue and James Street at a cost of \$23,000. Although it was permissible under the act of 1906 to house an elementary school in the same building as a high school, this was not done in Ashland. Instead, an elementary school was constructed on a part of the high school lot, just southwest of the new high school, in 1934.⁴

By the time local officials considered building the elementary school, the United States was in the depths of the Great Depression. In an attempt to counter its effects, the U.S. Congress created numerous federal agencies to funnel employment-stimulating grants and loans to states. Among the first was the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works—better known under its later name, the Public Works Administration (PWA)—established in 1933, early in President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s New Deal. Unlike the later Works Progress Administration (WPA), the PWA contracted directly with private construction firms that hired qualified workers and completed the projects. The PWA’s undertakings include the Lincoln Tunnel and Triborough Bridge in New York City; the Hoover Dam on the Nevada-Arizona border; and Los Angeles International Airport. Ultimately, the “PWA accomplished the electrification of rural America, the building of canals, tunnels, bridges, highways, streets, sewage systems, and housing areas, as well as hospitals, schools, and universities.”⁵ Among its smaller projects was the Henry Clay Elementary School.

In September 1933, a Hanover County committee that included J. Walton Hall, Superintendent of Schools, and Luther P. Hartsook, architect, applied for and received PWA funding to construct a school in Ashland referred to as the Ashland District School. Requests for proposals were issued in January 1934, and the work soon began. Hartsook’s firm included a young architect named Edward F. Sinnott Sr., who worked there from 1920 to 1934. He assisted in designing Henry Clay Elementary School, as well as several other Hanover County school projects.⁶

³ Rebecca Bray and Dr. Lloyd Jones, *A History of Education in Hanover County, Virginia, 1778–2008* (Ashland, VA: Hanover County Public Schools, 2010), 34–35, 40, 45.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 46, 48, 68.

⁵ “Public Works Administration,” on Wikipedia website, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_Works_Administration, accessed Nov. 23, 2025.

⁶ “Federal Funds Hasten State’s Recovery Drive,” *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, Sept. 21, 1933; *ibid.*, “PWA Allots State Schools \$1,800,000,” Jan. 7, 1934; *ibid.*, “Notice to Contractors,” Jan. 25, 1934; Edward F. Sinnott Jr. Papers, Acc. No. Mss3 Si663 a FA2, on Virginia Museum of History and Culture website, http://librarycatalog.virginiahistory.org/final/portal.aspx?_gl=1*qafhmo*_ga*NjE2NTk3MTI5LjE3NjM4NDgxNDM.*_ga_KMSS2K2Q0Z*cze3NjM4NDgxNDIkbzEkZzEkdDE3NjM4NDgxNzQkajI4JGwwJGgw&lang=en-US, accessed Nov. 23, 2025. Sinnott’s name is on the plans for the elementary school along with Hartsook’s.

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Luther P. Hartsook was born on February 10, 1890, in Sioux City, Iowa. By 1913, he was working as a draftsman in the office of prolific Richmond architect W. Duncan Lee. From 1916 to 1918, he was associated with architect Alfred G. Lambert, also of Richmond. Hartsook eventually moved to Ashland, where he was elected to the town council in 1918 and became the town treasurer by 1933, and designed schools and other buildings in Hanover County, as well as residences, banks, and churches in Richmond. He died in Ashland on January 9, 1943, and is buried there in Woodland Cemetery.⁷

Hartsook's association with Edward F. Sinnott Sr. began in 1920. Sinnott was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on June 27, 1890, and moved about 1900 with his family to Richmond, where he resided for the rest of his life. He began working as a draftsman with Noland & Baskervill after graduating from high school in 1912, and then apprenticed under architects Marcellus Wright, Charles M. Robinson, and W. Duncan Lee. He served in World War I and then returned to Richmond and joined Hartsook's firm in about 1924. He became a registered Richmond architect in 1925. In 1934, after ten years with Hartsook, Sinnott established his own firm in Richmond. He designed banks, theaters, churches, and schools. He died in Richmond on December 19, 1974, and is buried in Mount Calvary Cemetery.⁸

By May 10, 1934, the construction of the "elementary school building for Ashland" was well under way. An editorialist in the local newspaper wondered, "Why shouldn't the local school be christened the 'Henry Clay' School" for the nineteenth-century Hanover County-born political figure?⁹ The advice was taken on September 5, 1934, when the new one-story, thirteen-classroom brick school was dedicated. Both it and the nearby high school were named for Henry Clay. The new elementary school had cost about \$55,000 to build, with 30 percent of the funding coming from the PWA and the remainder from the Virginia Literary Fund, which had been created by an act of the Virginia General Assembly in 1810 to finance education-related undertakings. The new building contained a library and was to have a fully electric kitchen and cafeteria, but they were struck from the plans for lack of funds.¹⁰

George P. Compton served as the first principal of the new school, as well as of the high school. In November 1935, the elementary school was chosen as the site of a traveling dental clinic to improve the condition of White children's teeth in the county. In December 1938, the school

⁷ "L. P. Hartsook Dies at Home In Ashland," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, Jan. 10, 1943; John E. Wells and Robert E. Dalton, *The Virginia Architects, 1835–1955; A Biographical Dictionary* (Richmond, VA: New South Architectural Press, 1997), 182–183.

⁸ Edward F. Sinnott Jr. Papers, Virginia Museum of History and Culture website, accessed Nov. 23, 2025; Wells and Dalton, *The Virginia Architects*, 412–413; "Edward Francis Sinnott [Sr.]," on Find a Grave website, <https://findagrave.com/memorial/154618757/edward-francis-sinnott>, accessed Dec. 6, 2025.

⁹ "A Suggestion on the School," *Ashland Herald-Progress*, May 10, 1934.

¹⁰ "School Leaders to Attend Big Ashland Event," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, Sept. 5, 1934; "Hanover's Largest School, Henry Clay, is Overcrowded," *Ashland Herald-Progress*, Mar. 3, 1955.

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was among those canvassed by the Ashland Future Farmers of America to determine which needy children would receive toys that the organization was collecting and repairing.¹¹

During World War II, the manufacture of school buses ceased so that metal and other materials could be used in the war effort. This stressed the transportation system for Henry Clay Elementary School, as well as other schools. The number of older high school students declined, however, when some left to serve in the armed forces. In 1944, as several cases of poliomyelitis were reported in Hanover County, parents were authorized to keep their children at home without the repercussions that came with violations of the compulsory-attendance law.¹²

After the war ended and the veterans returned home, the baby boom soon began. Because the school-age population increased rapidly and produced "serious overcrowding," the county ordered additions to Henry Clay Elementary School. Two one-story steel temporary buildings were authorized there in December 1949.¹³

At the same time, a fund-raising drive was underway to construct a War Memorial Building. In December 1948, members of the Ashland War Memorial Association toured proposed sites in the company of Frank Ellison, architect. A small parcel on the Henry Clay High School grounds about 75 yards west of the elementary school eventually was chosen and acquired in a land exchange. Construction began in January 1950. The building, designed for use as a community center "for any white group in the County," featured meeting rooms, facilities for American Legion Post 206 and Boy and Girl Scouts, a stage, and a combination auditorium/gymnasium with an adjoining kitchen. The Ashland War Memorial Building neared completion in August 1951, and Henry Clay High School soon was using its gymnasium for physical education classes.¹⁴

By January 1952, as overcrowding continued, it was necessary to open an old school building that had been closed for a year and a half to accommodate additional students. By 1955, the county had secured money from the so-called Battle Fund, which was established by Virginia Governor John S. Battle in 1950 to build separate but supposedly equal schools for Black and White students. Rather than construct new schools, however, the county's Board of Supervisors voted to add eight new classrooms and a cafeteria to the western side of the all-White Henry Clay Elementary School and six classrooms to the all-Black John M. Gandy school. The board hoped that some of the new classrooms would be open for students by the start of the spring semester in 1956. In August 1955, the Hanover County School Board approved plans drawn by

¹¹ Ibid., "G. R. Compton Is President of Teacher Group," Sept. 5, 1935; *ibid.*, "School Dental Clinic Gets Fund in Ashland," Nov. 3, 1935; *ibid.*, "Hanover Aids 184 Families In 3 Months," Dec. 10, 1938.

¹² Bray and Jones, *Education in Hanover County*, 73–76.

¹³ "Building Boom Experienced in Hanover," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, Dec. 29, 1949; Bray and Jones, *Education in Hanover County*, 101.

¹⁴ "Committee Tours, Seeking Ideas For Memorial Project," *Ashland Herald-Progress*, Dec. 23, 1948; *ibid.*, "Contributors All 'Own' Memorial," Dec. 15, 1949; *ibid.*, "Sport Sparks," Jan. 12, 1950; *ibid.*, "Clarify Use of Memorial," July 26, 1951.

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architect J. Henley Walker for the Gandy school but returned his plans for the Henry Clay school to be revised.¹⁵

The 1955 plans for Henry Clay Elementary School called for a cafeteria and additional classroom space. Even that was inadequate for the large numbers of elementary school students, and the seventh grade attended classes in the high school. Some of the first- and second graders were on a half-day schedule, while the rest (who rode buses to school) were on a full-day schedule.¹⁶

Henry Clay High School closed in 1959, when Patrick Henry High School was completed about three and a half miles northwest of Ashland, and the Henry Clay High School students were transferred to the new high school. The elementary school students remained in their building in Ashland, which still suffered from overcrowding. To help alleviate the overcrowding, some of the elementary school classes were taught in the former high school as late as 1970. Five years earlier, in 1954, the United States Supreme Court had ruled against schools being racially segregated in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*. It took almost a decade, however, for the court's decision to be adopted in Hanover County. The first instance of desegregation there occurred in the fall semester of 1963, when two Black students were admitted to Patrick Henry High School and eight to Lee-Davis High School. In June 1964, eleven more Black students applied for transfer to Lee-Davis that fall, three for transfer to Battlefield Park Elementary School, and three to Henry Clay Elementary School.¹⁷

In 1968, additional classrooms were constructed on the northern and southern ends of Henry Clay Elementary School that had been included in the J. Walker Henley, Jr. 1955 drawings for the school's enlargement. In 1982, the architectural firm of MacIlroy and Parris proposed numerous landscaping and other alterations to the site, including a new library and covered walkway between the elementary school and the Ashland War Memorial to replace a "ramp."¹⁸

The covered walkway, or "open-air canopy" that links Henry Clay Elementary School to the Ashland War Memorial Building was added during the 1986–1987 fiscal year. The school also received a new air-conditioning system, while the memorial building received renovations to

¹⁵ "Building Boom," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, Dec. 29, 1949; *Ashland Herald-Progress*, "Building in Ashland is High for Year," Dec. 29, 1949; "Ashland Class to Overflow into Old House," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, Jan. 12, 1952; *ibid.*, "School Plan Endorsed in Hanover," July 1, 1955; *ibid.*, "2 Hanover School Jobs Approved," Aug. 3, 1955. The Battle Fund is discussed at length in Ashley Neville and John Salmon, "Armstrong Elementary School, Lynchburg, Virginia," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, DHR No. 118-5320, 2012, Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, VA.

¹⁶ Bray and Jones, *Education in Hanover County*, 101; J. Henly Walker Jr., AIA, Richmond, VA, "Additions, Henry Clay School, Ashland, Virginia," 1955, courtesy Todd Kilduff, P.E., Deputy County Administrator, Hanover County, VA.

¹⁷ Trivett, Steve, Personal Communication with Ashley Neville, 9 December 2025; Bray and Jones, *Education in Hanover County*, 123, 145; *Ashland Herald-Progress*, "Record 7,000 Enrollment Expected As Schools Open, High Schools To Open On Integrated Basis," Aug. 29, 1963; *ibid.*, "17 Negroes Apply For Admission To 3 White Schools, Applications In For Lee-Davis, Henry Clay, Battlefield Park," June 4, 1964.

¹⁸ MacIlroy and Parris, Architects, Richmond, VA, "Addition and Alterations, Henry Clay Elem. School, Hanover County, Virginia," 1982, courtesy Todd Kilduff, P.E., Deputy County Administrator, Hanover County, VA.

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include art and music classrooms. About a decade later, in 1998, the firm of Bond Comet Westmoreland + Hiner Architects carried out an extensive rehabilitation of the school, removing and replacing outdated plumbing, windows, and other fixtures, as well as constructing another row of classrooms on the western side of the building.¹⁹

Despite all of the construction campaigns, the Henry Clay Elementary School was closed in the spring of 2024, following the end of the school year.

Architectural Context

Within a ten-year period between 1929 and 1939, the county built seven brick public schools for White students. Luther P. Hartsook and Edward F. Sinnott, Sr., either individually or in practice together, designed five of the schools that were built in Hanover County in the late 1920s and 1930s for White students as the county transitioned from its earlier frame schools to brick consolidated school buildings. Although the Henry Clay High School, which was built in 1915, was a two-story brick building, other county public schools built before 1929 were one- or two-story frame buildings. No architect has been identified for the Beaver Dam High School built in 1932 or the Washington-Henry High School built in 1939.²⁰

All but one of the schools, Rockville, utilized Colonial Revival-style details such as symmetry, arches, quoins, gable roofs, and jack arches over openings, all features that are found on Henry Clay Elementary School. The Colonial Revival style was popularized during this time by the creation of Colonial Williamsburg by John D. Rockefeller, Jr. and W. A. R. Goodwin. A 1938 article in the Hanover Herald-Progress noted that the style of the new Washington-Henry High School would be “similar to that followed in the Williamsburg Restoration.”²¹

In 1929, the brick Montpelier school was built to serve both as a high school and an elementary school because the frame high school had burned in 1928. Montpelier continued to serve as both until Patrick Henry High School opened in 1959. The Montpelier School was built with funds raised solely by local citizens instead of funding from the county or state.²² The school closed in 1981 and was saved from demolition by the residents who formed the Save Our Schools Foundation, and it is now the Montpelier Center for Arts and Education. The Colonial Revival-style Montpelier School is the most ornate of the schools built during this period and features a

¹⁹ Ashland *Herald-Progress*, “New schools, improvements: \$37 million needed through 1992,” Nov. 12, 1986; Bond Comet Westmoreland + Hiner Architects, Richmond, VA, “Additions and Renovations to Henry Clay Elementary School, Hanover County Public Schools, Hanover County, VA,” 1998, courtesy Todd Kilduff, P.E., Deputy County Administrator, Hanover County, VA.

²⁰ Henry Clay High School, Rosanne G. Shalf, *Ashland, Ashland*, (Ashland, Va.: By the Author, 1994), p. 147., Beaver Dam High School, Hanover County Historical Marker, Hmdb.org, <https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=80002>, accessed 12/4/2025, Washington-Henry High School, Washington-Henry Elementary School website, https://hanoverwhe.ss12.sharpschool.com/about_us/our_school, accessed 12/4/2025.

²¹ J. Walton Hall, “Development of Public Grade Education Features County in Last Decade,” *Hanover Herald-Progress*, 11 August 1938 in *Hanover County, Virginia, A Retrospective*, (Hanover, Virginia: The Hanover County Historical Society, 1993) p. 74.

²² The Montpelier Center for Arts & Education, <https://www.montpeliercenter.org/history>, accessed 11/30/2025.

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side-gable center block flanked by front-gable blocks that contained classrooms. Light-colored quoins that contrast with the red brick walls are found on all sections of the facade. The double-leaf front entrance doors with tall multiple-light transoms are recessed on either side of the central block and are reached through arched openings with keystones. Luther P. Hartsook is credited as the architect for the Montpelier School although Edward Sinnott, Sr., worked with Hartsook at this time. The Doswell School is also credited to Hartsook as the architect and is a smaller version of the Montpelier School with a central entrance and without the decorative elements found at Montpelier School. Battlefield Park, built in 1936 and designed by Edward Sinnott, Sr., was the only two-story brick school among the schools built in the 1930s. It originally housed both high school and elementary grades until the new Lee-Davis (now named Mechanicsville High School) opened in 1959. Colonial Revival in style, Battlefield Park is a two-story, twenty-one-bay-long, red brick school with a slightly projecting central pedimented entry block with brick quoins and a Flemish-bond course of contrasting colored brick every seventh course.²³

The Rockville school, built in 1937 and credited to Edward Sinnott as architect, showed influences of the Art Deco style that Sinnott also used in his design for the Henrico Theatre that opened in 1938.²⁴ The Rockville School was brick but had a flat roof and pilasters capped with contrasting colored stone or concrete across the facade. A decorative motif was found on the higher flat roof of the central auditorium. The Rockville School was demolished in 1990.²⁵

The floor plan at Henry Clay School is unlike any of the other schools built in Hanover County. The original 1934 school had a simple rectangular plan with a double-loaded corridor with offices by the entrance. The 1955 addition, whether by chance or design, set a program that incorporated courtyards into the school and continued to be followed through the last addition in 1998. In contrast, Montpelier, Beaver Dam, Doswell, Rockville, and Washington-Henry have a floor plan that was developed by the State Department of Education's Division of School Buildings. By 1920, the State Board of Education had established a School Building Service that sold plans to localities at a minimal cost. This service standardized plans for schools that featured a basic classroom size of about 25 by 35 feet, expansive windows, usually multiples of multiple-light sash windows, and high ceilings. In rural areas, the school was expected to play an expanded role and become the focus of community life. An important part of the newly consolidated rural schools was an auditorium/gymnasium that could also function as a community center. The auditorium/gymnasium provided space for town plays and programs and could be used as indoor recreational facilities after physical education was included in the curriculum in 1920. Schools built with this plan can be found throughout the state. The original plan, dated May 1927, is "Design 14-B," and incorporated a central entrance that opened into a large open auditorium/gymnasium with classroom wings along each side (Doswell and

²³ Doswell School and Battlefield Park Elementary School, Land and Community Associates, *Survey of Historic Resources, Hanover County, Virginia, Phases I and II*, Report on file with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, VA, March 1992, p. 65.

²⁴ Bryan Clark Green and Susan Reed, "Henrico Theatre, Highland Springs, Virginia" National Register Nomination, DHR 043-0284, Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, June 7, 2005,

²⁵ Land and Community Associates, p. 65.

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Rockville). Variations of this plan included a classroom on the front (Montpelier, Beaver Dam, and Washington Henry).²⁶

²⁶ Ann McCleary, Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff, National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, File 07-1175, "Public Schools in Augusta County, Virginia, 1870-1940," 1984, Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, Va.; Ann McCleary, Thematic National Register Nomination Inventory Form, File 007-0964, "Crimora School, Public Schools In Augusta County, Virginia, 1870-1940," 1984.

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Name of Property

Hanover County, VA
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9. Major Bibliographical References

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Henry Clay Elementary School
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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

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): DHR ID# 166-0013

Henry Clay Elementary School
Name of Property

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 10.5

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: 37.757180 Longitude: -77.485850
2. Latitude: 37.755296 Longitude: -77.486417
3. Latitude: 37.755470 Longitude: -77.487368
4. Latitude: 37.756452 Longitude: -77.487909

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 boundaries for the nominated property are Hanover County tax parcels 7870-50-8456 and 7870-50-6406. Tax parcel information is available from the Hanover County Real Estate Assessments office and online at <https://parcelmap.hanovercounty.gov/>.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The property's historic setting and all known associated historic resources have been included within the nominated area's boundary.

Henry Clay Elementary School
Name of Property

Hanover County, VA
County and State

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Ashley Neville and John Salmon
organization: Ashley Neville LLC
street & number: 7908 North Pinehill Drive
city or town: Henrico state: VA zip code: 23228
e-mail: ashleyneville@comcast.net
telephone: 804-307-4601
date: April 14, 2026

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: Henry Clay Elementary School

City or Vicinity: Ashland

County: Hanover

State: Virginia

Photographer: Ashley Neville

Henry Clay Elementary School
Name of Property

Hanover County, VA
County and State

Date Photographed: November 26, 2025, May 14, 2025 (all interior), and March 16, 2026
(courtyards and rear of school)

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

- 1 of 26. Facade, center block, original school, view to the northwest
- 2 of 26. Front of original school, view to the southwest
- 3 of 26. Front of original school and east end of 1968 addition, view to the north
- 4 of 26. North end of school showing 1968 and 1955 additions, view to the southwest
- 5 of 26. Rear showing 1998 addition, view to the northeast
- 6 of 26. Entrance corridor in original building, view to the northwest
- 7 of 26. Corridor in original building, view to northeast
- 8 of 26. Classroom in original building with coat closet doors removed, view to the southwest
- 9 of 26. Classroom in original building with intact closet doors, view to the northeast
- 10 of 26. Corridor in 1955 addition, view to the southwest
- 11 of 26. Classroom in 1955 addition, view to the southwest
- 12 of 26. South courtyard showing rear of original school, view to the southwest
- 13 of 26. 1955 Cafeteria, view to the southeast
- 14 of 26. 1982 Library addition, view to the southwest
- 15 of 26. 1998 Corridor, view to the southwest
- 16 of 26. Classroom in 1998 addition, view to the northwest
- 17 of 26. War Memorial Building, front, view to the southeast
- 18 of 26. War Memorial Building, western side and rear, view to the northeast

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- 19 of 26. War Memorial Building, eastern side and canopy connecting it to school building, view to the northwest
- 20 of 26. War Memorial Building, front room, view to the southeast
- 21 of 26. War Memorial Building, auditorium/gymnasium looking to the rear, view to the south
- 22 of 26. Henry Clay Elementary School, rear with 1998 cafeteria entrance and school bus loading/off loading, view to the east
- 23 of 26. Henry Clay Elementary School, new 1998 cafeteria entrance and school bus loading/off loading, view to the northeast
- 24 of 26. Henry Clay Elementary School, new 1998 rear entrance, view to the east
- 25 of 26. Henry Clay Elementary School, north courtyard, view to the north
- 26 of 26. Henry Clay Elementary School, southwest courtyard, view to north

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations 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.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
Tier 2 – 120 hours
Tier 3 – 230 hours
Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.

LOCATION MAP

Henry Clay Elementary School
Town of Ashland, Hanover County, VA
DHR ID# 166-0013

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

A: 37.757180, -77.485850

B: 37.755296, -77.486417

C: 37.755470, -77.487368

D: 37.756452, -77.487909

 Nominated Boundary

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Feet



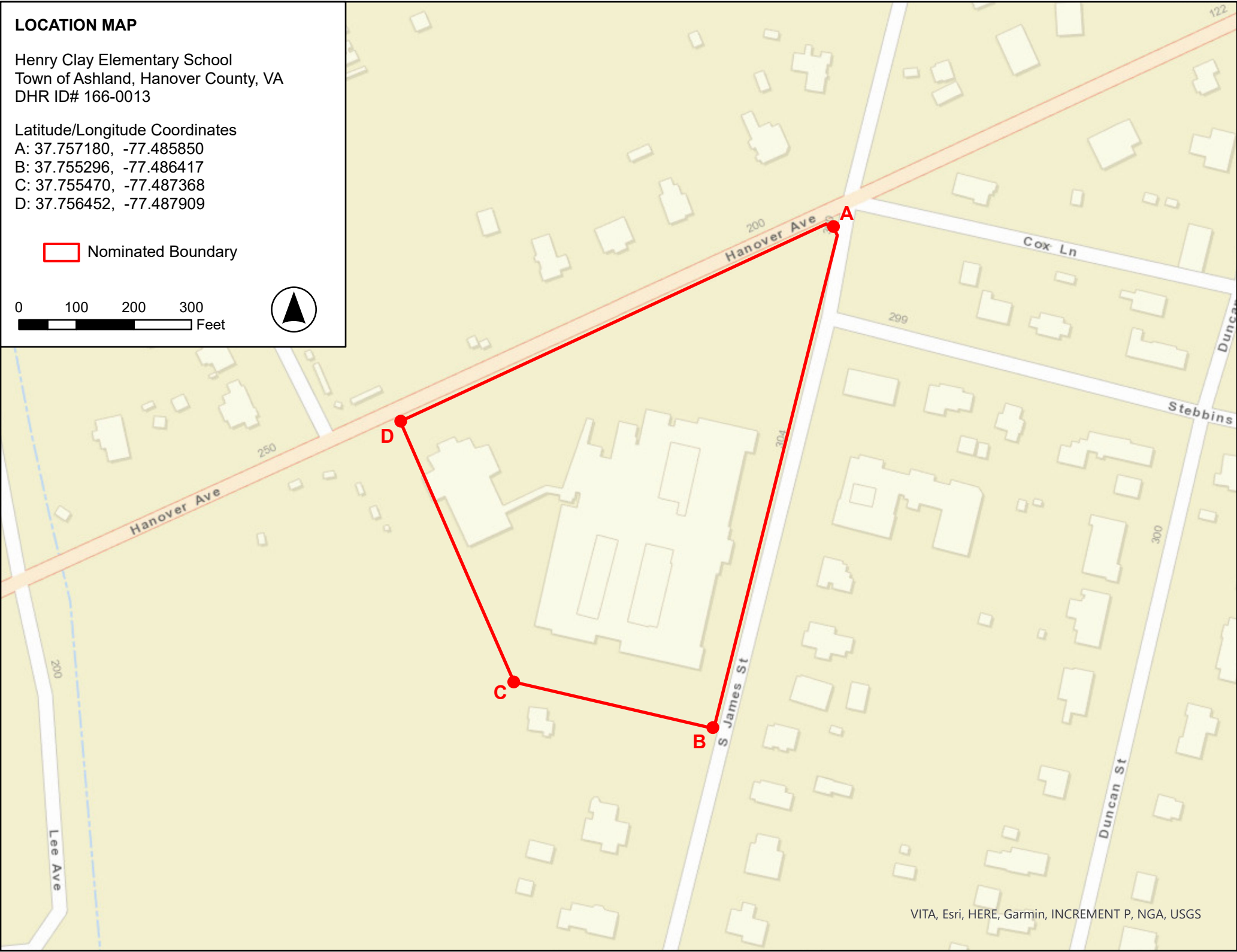
LOCATION MAP

Henry Clay Elementary School
Town of Ashland, Hanover County, VA
DHR ID# 166-0013

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates
A: 37.757180, -77.485850
B: 37.755296, -77.486417
C: 37.755470, -77.487368
D: 37.756452, -77.487909

 Nominated Boundary

0 100 200 300 Feet



TAX PARCEL MAP

Henry Clay Elementary School
Town of Ashland, Hanover County, VA
DHR ID# 166-0013

 Nominated Boundary

0 150 300 Feet

TAX PARCEL MAP

Henry Clay Elementary School
Town of Ashland, Hanover County, VA
DHR ID# 166-0013

 Nominated Boundary

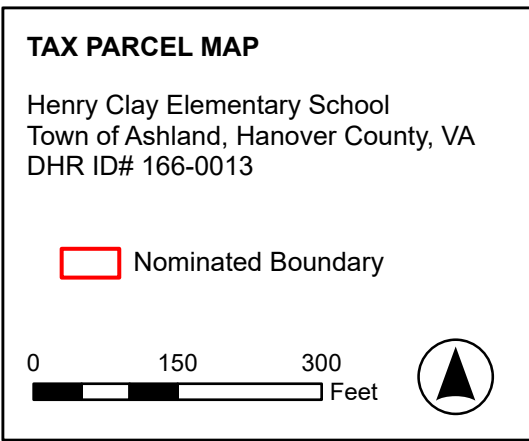
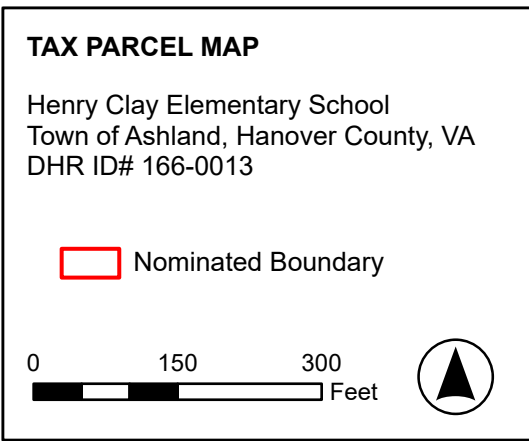
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TAX PARCEL MAP

Henry Clay Elementary School
Town of Ashland, Hanover County, VA
DHR ID# 166-0013

 Nominated Boundary

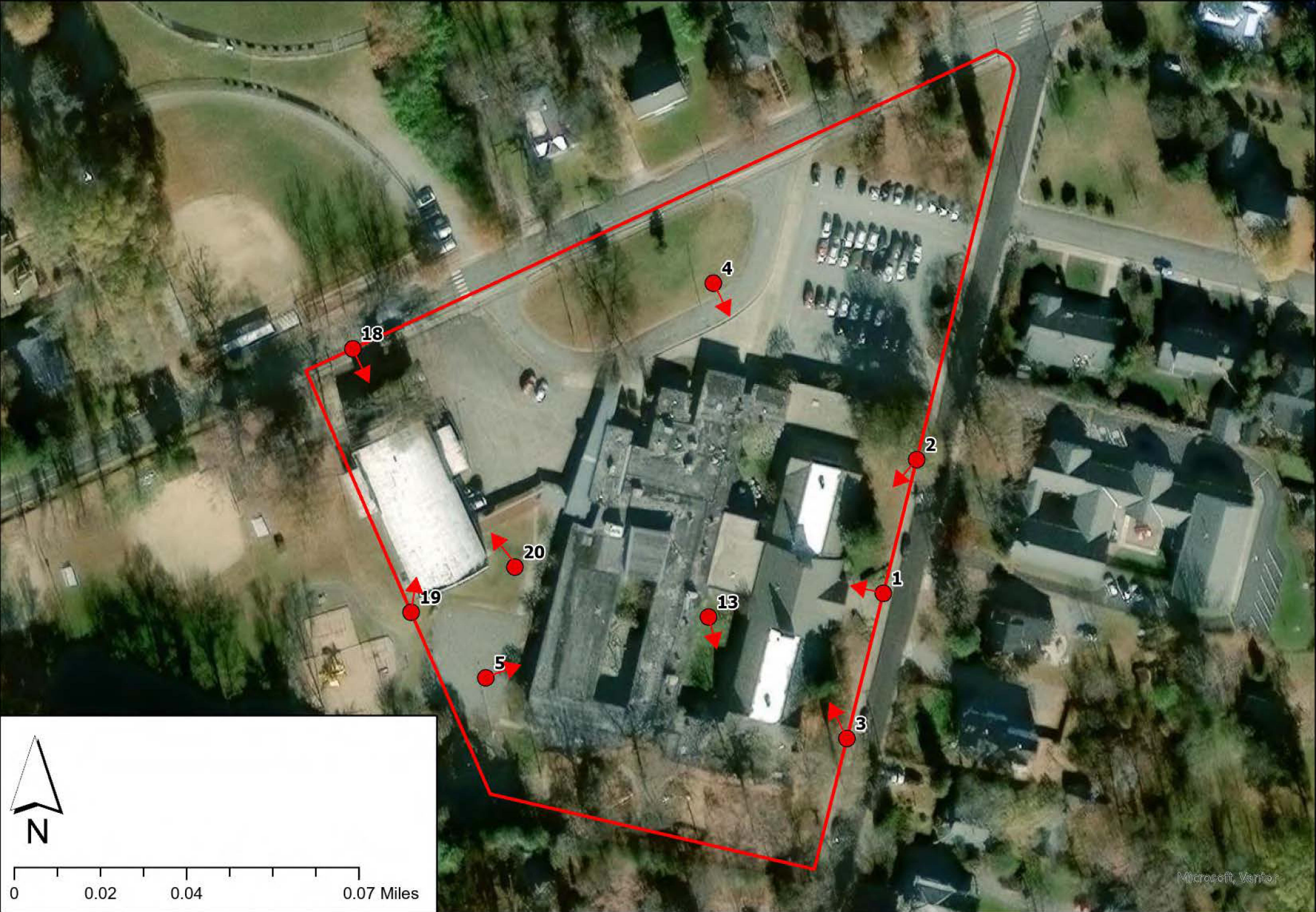
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Henry Clay Elementary School Sketch Map
Ashland, Hanover County, VA
VDHR #166-0013

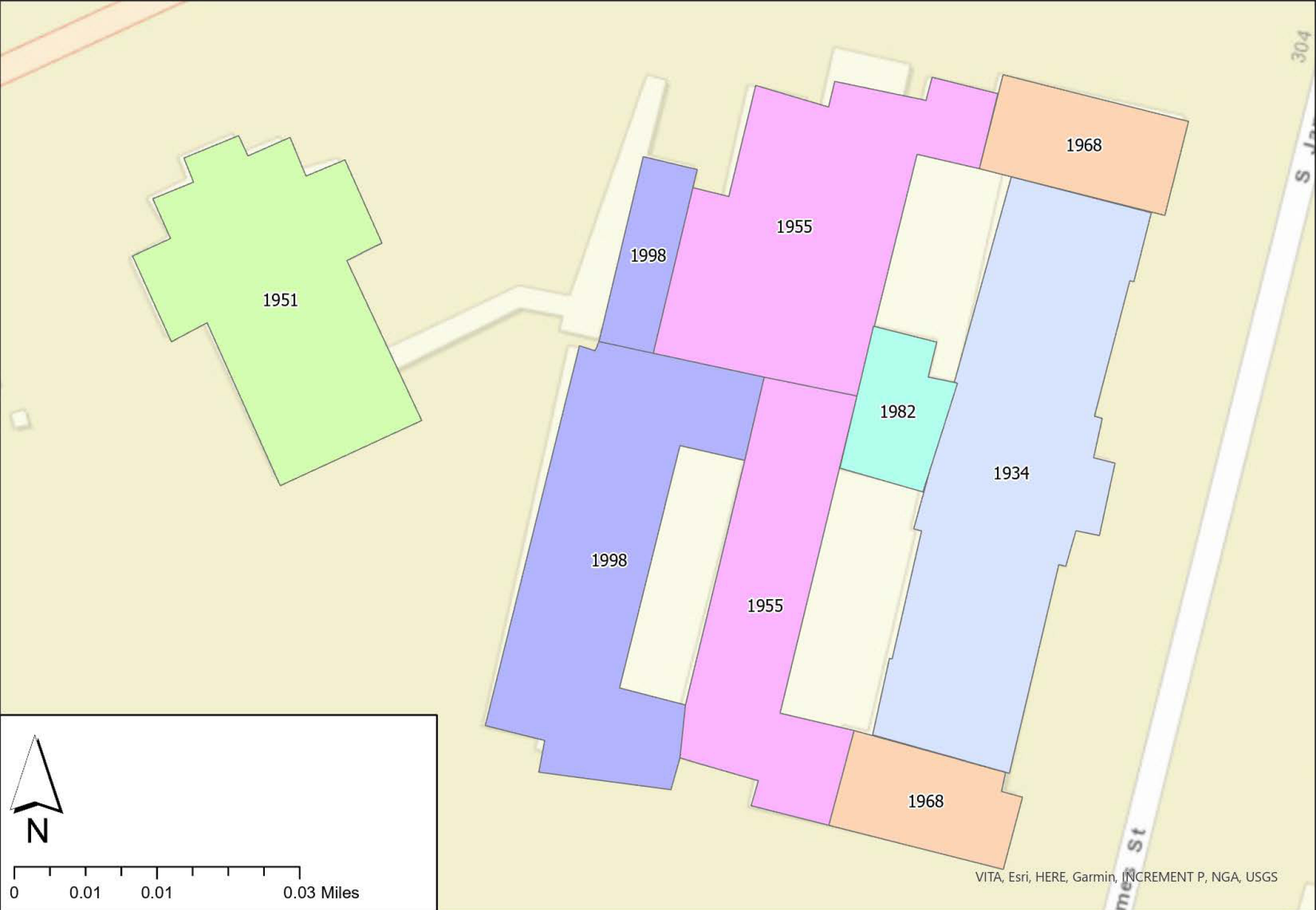
- Buildings
- Henry Clay Boundary
- Existing Land Use



Microsoft, Vantor

Henry Clay Elementary School Photo Key
Ashland, Hanover County, VA
VDHR #166-0013

- Photo Location and View Direction
- Henry Clay Boundary



Henry Clay Elementary School Evolution
Ashland, Hanover County, VA
VDHR #166-0013

Source: Hanover County Public Schools Capital Planning Study
May 24, 2018

VITA, Esri, HERE, Garmin, INCREMENT P, NGA, USGS