

Latimer High and Elementary School

Dillon Co., South Carolina  
County and State

Name of Property

**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 Property

Historic name: Latimer High and Elementary School

Other names/site number: Latimer School

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: 122 Latimer Street

City or town: Latta State: SC County: Dillon

Not For Publication:  Vicinity:

## 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

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

Latimer High and Elementary School  
Name of Property

Dillon Co., South Carolina  
County and State

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

---

**Signature of commenting official:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

---

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

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that this property is:

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

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

**Category of Property**

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
-

Latimer High and Elementary School  
Name of Property

Dillon Co., South Carolina  
County and State

Site

Structure

Object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing

3

Noncontributing

3

buildings

sites

structures

objects

Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION; school

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION; education-related

HEALTH CARE; clinic

VACANT/ NOT IN USE

\_\_\_\_\_

Latimer High and Elementary School  
Name of Property

Dillon Co., South Carolina  
County and State

---

## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

foundation; CONCRETE

walls; BRICK, CONCRETE

roof; ASPHALT

### 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

Latimer High and Elementary School is located in Latta, a small town in rural Dillon County, South Carolina. The school is situated in the center of a flat 13.4-acre lot bounded by Latimer Street on the north, East Leitner Street on the east, and Mace Court on the west. The façades of the two main school buildings front Latimer Street.<sup>1</sup> The high school and elementary school buildings were constructed in 1954 and 1956 respectively, but were designed by the same architectural firm and were planned as a campus.<sup>2</sup> As such, they have similar materials and stylistic features. The buildings are connected by a covered walkway with a flat roof and claustra brick screen and are arranged in an elongated U plan. Latimer High and Elementary School features a Modern design with minimal ornamentation. The buildings are constructed of concrete

---

<sup>1</sup> The building technically faces north/northwest, but the descriptions in the nomination use north. South, east, and west for simplicity. Please see the attached construction phases and site map for further clarification.

<sup>2</sup> On-site plaques commemorating construction.

Latimer High and Elementary School  
Name of Property

Dillon Co., South Carolina  
County and State

masonry block with running-bonded red brick veneers, flat roofs, aluminum frame windows, and flat painted metal roof overhangs. Latimer High School features a technology and music wing, classrooms, administrative offices, a vestibule, cafeteria, and a gymnasium in its 1954 original core. The gymnasium is roughly twice the height of the rest of the campus and has a low-pitched roof. A kitchen/cafeteria expansion was completed to the west and south of the high school entrance in 1966 to form an ell plan. A classroom addition was added to the south in 1992, expanding the ell plan. The 1956 elementary school building comprises an entry vestibule, administrative offices, and classrooms arranged in a long plan running east to west along Latimer Street, in line with the high school building. A library was constructed to the rear/south of the elementary school in 1968 and is connected via an enclosed hallway. A classroom addition was added to the southeast of the original elementary school in 1970, extending the ell southward. The elementary and high school entrances feature painted steel linteled overhangs supported by painted brick with horizontal bands in the coursing, and metal doors. A single-story brick pavilion constructed circa 1994 with a flat roof and four piers of running bonded brick with horizontal bands in the coursing stands in front of the elementary school entrance on Latimer Street to create a central focal point for the campus complex. Latimer High and Elementary School retains integrity and has experienced few alterations. It functioned as a school until 2014. The rear (southern portion) of the lot holds a parking lot, a driveway with a turnaround, a storage shed, a garage, a plastic playground set, and a communication tower (all noncontributing), and an agricultural class building constructed in 1954 behind the high school (contributing). To the east of the elementary school is a noncontributing parking lot. Although some alterations have been made to the property, most occurred during the period of significance, and the property retains integrity and is able to convey its historical associations as a mid-century public school.

---

### **Narrative Description**

Latimer High and Elementary School is located in Latta, a small town in rural Dillon County, South Carolina. The school is situated in the center of a flat 13.4-acre lot bounded by Latimer Street on the north, East Leitner Street on the east, and Mace Court on the west. The façades of the two main school buildings front Latimer Street. There are parking areas to the east and north of the elementary school building, and along Latimer Street along the southern façade of both the high school and elementary school buildings. An asphalt paved driveway runs east to west from East Leitner Driver through the rear courtyard. It runs parallel to the elementary and high school buildings, passes between the high school and agricultural building, and loops easterly to the south of the agricultural building. The rear yard to the south of the school buildings is mowed and lined with trees along the southern property line (photo 5).

The Latimer High and Elementary School campus was designed by Sumter, S.C.-based architectural firm James and DuRant (later James, DuRant, Mathew & Shelley). The high school and gymnasium were constructed in 1954 and the elementary school was completed in 1956. The buildings are connected by a covered walkway with a flat roof and claustra brick screen and are arranged in an elongated U plan. The U opens to the rear of the building, where a parking lot, asphalt paved driveway, and a lawn is located. Latimer High and Elementary School are Modern buildings with minimal ornamentation.

Latimer High and Elementary School  
Name of Property

Dillon Co., South Carolina  
County and State

The Latimer School campus was expanded several times in response to the growing student body and to better meet educational needs. All the additions were designed by the same architectural firm, James and DuRant, and utilize the same minimalist Modern aesthetic and brick veneered elevations as the original buildings, creating a unified campus appearance. The cafeteria/kitchen was expanded in 1966, the library was added in 1968, eight additional elementary classrooms were built in 1970, and four new classrooms were added to the former high school building in 1992.<sup>3</sup>

All the historic buildings within the Latimer School complex are constructed out of concrete masonry units (CMUs) clad with a red brick veneer laid in American running bond pattern. The CMU walls are exposed inside the buildings and are painted. The flat roofs of the buildings are framed with steel web trusses clad in a Built Up Roof (BUR) system of tar paper coated with rolled tar and a gravel coating, a common mid-century treatment for low or flat pitched roof systems.

The floors in the school complex are linoleum attached to the poured concrete floor system with mastic. Exceptions are the gymnasium, which has thin oak flooring with a polyurethane protective coating, and the bathrooms, cafeteria, and kitchen, which have ceramic tile. The interior rooms including the hallways, offices, classrooms, and the cafeteria feature dropped acoustical tile ceilings. The tiles have been replaced in many sections of the buildings.<sup>4</sup> Steel stud partition walls with sheetrock have been added in the administrative rooms of the elementary school to facilitate the current adaptive use medical facility.

The central four sections of the sexpartite banks of windows on the façade and elevations of Latimer High and Elementary School have been infilled with painted plywood, while one end section has been left open, and the other end section of each window bank has an air-conditioning unit installed in the opening. This is a common alteration for 1950s schools, when the buildings, which were designed for natural airflow and light, were retrofitted for central heating and air conditioning.<sup>5</sup> The glazing is still intact behind the paneling, and the window frames and mullions remain intact. Various smaller windows were bricked in and enclosed on the rear/south and west elevations of the high school and elementary school buildings.

The school transitioned to an integrated facility in 1970 and continued operating as an educational campus, with grades 4 through 6 held in the former elementary school building and

---

<sup>3</sup> *The State*. 27 May 1966, "Notice to General Contractors", pg. 46 solicited bids from contractors for "the construction of additions to the lunchroom of Latimer School."; *Florence Morning News*, "Restored Vidalia Hall Attracts Visitors", 10 December 1967, pg. 5 noted that the State Board of Education had approved a new library for Latimer Elementary School. *The State*, 10 March 1968, pg. 58, included calls for bid for the library's construction *Florence Morning News*, 29 July 1969, pg. 3. *Florence Morning News*, "Invitation to Bids," 3 September 1969, pg. 7. Latta School District 3 placed bids to complete an 8,875 square foot expansion included eight classrooms for the elementary school, designed by James and DuRant.

<sup>4</sup> On site interview with Mr. Larry Legette, Director of Plant Operations for Dillon County Schools District 3, 29 September 2023, 11:00 am.

<sup>5</sup> Dobrasko, "Equalization Schools in South Carolina, 1951-1960," National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, 2009.

Latimer High and Elementary School  
Name of Property

Dillon Co., South Carolina  
County and State

grades 7 through nine held in the former high school building until 2014, when the student body was transferred to a new Latta School campus 1.25 miles away.<sup>6</sup> The Latimer High and Elementary School campus was conveyed to the Town of Latta in 2017. Part of the high school houses the Dillon School District 3 Latta busing department, and a community health clinic, while the other half is vacant. Part of the Elementary School building is used as Dillon School District 3 storage and a community health clinic, and part is vacant.

### **1) High School Building (1954, 1966, 1992)- Contributing Building**

#### Exterior

The high school building, which was the first to be constructed on the campus site in 1954, is oriented on the westernmost half of the site, fronting Latimer Street. The building exhibits an elongated ell plan and is one-story with a flat roof, apart from the double-height gymnasium, which features a low-pitched gable roof. The exterior has running bond brick veneer, painted metal roof overhangs with internal gutters, and painted metal downspouts. Most of the window openings are infilled, but still clearly read. Where windows remain, they are typically one-over-one metal sash replacements. The original metal windows feature ten lights and hopper units (Figures 1-2). The high school was erected by Ruscon Construction Company of Charleston, South Carolina from the designs of James and DuRant.<sup>7</sup> The building includes a technology/music wing, gymnasium, main wing – housing the original classrooms and administrative offices-, a cafeteria/kitchen, and a classroom addition.

The façade (north elevation) of the high school building is continuous, but features small projections and unique fenestration patterns, reflecting the interior use of the spaces, which is common for Modern buildings. The main wing is positioned centrally, between the gymnasium to the east and the cafeteria/kitchen to the west (photo 3). The main wing is a longitudinal unit that houses classrooms on each side of a central hall, a vestibule, and administrative offices. The recessed front entrance is located at the western end of the main wing (photo 6). The entry alcove is framed by brick piers that project approximately one wythe from the running bonded façade of the building. The brick piers and walls of the entry alcove are painted white, with every fifth course recessed and painted green. A steel lintel between the piers supports a smooth stucco ceiling. The steel double entry doors are recessed approximately ten feet in from the façade and have two glazed panels each and minimalist metal door handles. They are framed by sidelights and a transom set in a steel framework, typical of mid-century institutional buildings.

The western end of the main wing, which housed the administrative offices and vestibule, projects approximately one foot from façade of the classroom section to the east (photos 4-5). The front façade of the administrative area has three one-over-one aluminum frame windows to the east of the formal entrance into the high school. This section of the façade originally featured three paired ten-light windows (Figure 2). The eastern section of the main wing is comprised of five bays of classroom space (photo 2). The western bay originally included a single ten-light

<sup>6</sup> *Index Journal*, “Latta Announces School Plan”, 12 June 1970, pg. 9. Grades 1 to 3 were transferred to formerly all-white Floydale School, and grades 10 to 12 were transferred to formerly all-white Latta High School.

<sup>7</sup> On-site plaque commemorating construction.

Latimer High and Elementary School  
Name of Property

Dillon Co., South Carolina  
County and State

window (now bricked in) at its western end, and a quadripartite window, which now has plywood on the two center window units flanked by one-over-one replacement windows. There are four bays of fenestration on the eastern half of the main wing's façade, featuring sexpartite windows for the classroom spaces (photo 3). Extant windows are one-over-one replacements, most of which have been enclosed with painted plywood on the exterior installed within the original metal mullion frames, and with sheets of painted plywood over the entire window bays on the interior. Some windows have been replaced with HVAC units. At the eastern end of the main wing, an original pair of steel doors provide egress to the west of the gymnasium on the facade. The doors are protected by a cantilevered steel, flat roofed overhang (photo 2).

To the east of the main wing is a gymnasium, which doubles as an auditorium. The gymnasium features five bays of fenestration on the façade and rear (south) elevation featuring clerestory window openings below the eaves of the low-pitched gable roof. The windows have plastic paneling over them (likely original or pre-1970) that allow indirect light to diffuse into the gymnasium interior. On the rear (southern) elevation of the gymnasium is an overhanging roof made of steel I-beams and joists and with steel vertical supports that projects approximately twelve feet from the gymnasium and runs along the south elevation, where it engages with a covered walkway leading to the agricultural building at the west corner of the gym (photos 48 and 97). The area below the overhang is used for storage and has a poured concrete floor. The easternmost bay of the overhang area has been enclosed with painted CMUs and is used to store fuel and other hazardous material.

The technology/music wing is located east of the gym, forming the east end of the front façade and wraps around to form the east elevation. The wing is accessed from the east via two metal doors at the claustro-brick screened covered walkway (photo 53). The technology/music wing is a square-plan, one-story space with a rectangular one-story bay projecting from the façade. It housed the music and technology rooms for the high school (photos 1 and 98). The southeastern corner of the technology/music wing houses the boiler and physical plant for the campus (photos 18 and 19). The eastern elevation has the following fenestration running north to south: a window that has been enclosed with an air conditioning unit, a metal egress door with a cantilevered steel overhang, two windows that have been covered with plywood, another window that has been enclosed with an air conditioning unit, a vertically oriented metal sash window, a set of steel louvred egress doors with a metal shed roofed hood, and two hopper windows that have been bricked in. A brick chimney rises from roof of the boiler room. The wing has egress via metal double doors on the southern elevation. The projecting rectangular bay on the façade (northern elevation) has a one-over-one metal sash window that has been modified via brick infill to reduce the window opening size, circa late 1990s. The upper walls of the auditorium stage in the gymnasium that can be seen rising from the center of technology/music wing. The auditorium has a casement window on the façade (northern elevation).

The window fenestration patterns of the technology/music unit and gymnasium are repeated on the rear/southern elevation. The rear/southern elevation of the high school's administrative and classroom areas has following fenestration from west to east: twin set of two-over-two vinyl windows, metal door with a vertical lite and a flat metal lintel overhang, a metal door with three horizontal lights, and three bays of sexpartite windows with plywood paneling and air



Latimer High and Elementary School  
Name of Property

Dillon Co., South Carolina  
County and State

conditioning units fitted into the easternmost of each bay, similar to the windows on the façade/northern elevation of the high school (photos 62 and 73). A covered walkway with painted steel vertical supports and a flat roof that steps slightly with the terrain leads south from the classroom unit and connects to the agricultural building that is situated parallel to the high school building (photo 96) and to a noncontributing garage building (photo 46). There is a steel egress door with upper panel glazing that leads into the rear courtyard from the easternmost technology/music wing wrapping the gymnasium (photo 12). The hopper windows on the technology unit have been enclosed with brick on the east and south elevation, but the original window openings still read (photo 13).

The cafeteria/kitchen is located at the northwest corner of the school complex (photo 4). It has a flat roof and rectangular massing that projects approximately twenty-five feet north of the entry area. The cafeteria's west wall creates the ell in the high school's overall plan. The northern elevation/facade of the cafeteria has no window openings. The western elevation (photo 7) has two window openings with metal sash windows. These window openings were originally doors and were partially enclosed sometime in the late twentieth century. The openings retain their painted steel lintels. In 1954, the cafeteria wing included the kitchen (projecting to the west beyond the ell plan) and the cafeteria dining area (creating the southern leg of the ell plan of the high school building). A pair of painted steel doors provide egress via a small hall adjacent to the kitchen. The doors date from 1954. There are three additions to the cafeteria wing that all appear to date to 1966. Though the construction drawings for the additions are not extant, the three additions utilize the same veneer brick, window and door units, and metal cornice bands. All three additions are depicted clearly on a 1983 aerial photograph.<sup>8</sup> These comprise projecting bays to the south and north of the original kitchen at the westernmost end of the 1954 building (photo 8) and a rectangular addition to the north, immediately west of the high school entrance facing Latimer Street (photos 4, 7, and 26). An additional set of egress doors leading south to the rear yard were added in 1966 (photo 30). A small shed roofed bay with a brick veneer that does not match the 1966 veneer was added to the west of cafeteria wing addition between 1994 and 2005.<sup>9</sup> A bank of windows on the southern façade of the cafeteria addition were enclosed sometime after 1974 (figure 2). Windows on the administrative unit of the high school building and the western elevation of the cafeteria/kitchen unit have been replaced with vinyl windows during the 2017 adaptive use. There is a metal egress door and a set of two-over-two vinyl windows on the eastern elevation of the cafeteria wing. There is a set of two-over-two vinyl windows and a wall-mounted air conditioning unit on the southern/rear elevation of the cafeteria wing. The 1992 addition projects approximately five feet beyond the 1966 cafeteria wing to the south (photo 62).

A classroom addition was constructed in 1992 to the south of the cafeteria wing. It has a red brick veneer laid in American running bond that is similar to the earlier phases of the school complex. The addition features vinyl windows. The rear (southern) elevation forms the short end

---

<sup>8</sup> 1983 aerial at 122 Latimer Street, Latta, SC, Historic Aerials, <https://www.historicaerials.com/viewer> (accessed 14 January 2024).

<sup>9</sup> 1994, 2005 aerials at 122 Latimer Street, Latta, SC, Historic Aerials, <https://www.historicaerials.com/viewer> (accessed 14 January 2024).

Latimer High and Elementary School  
Name of Property

Dillon Co., South Carolina  
County and State

of the ell plan. It has no windows and has a centrally placed set of metal frame egress door with glazing, recessed approximately six feet into the mass of the building, sheltered by an integral overhang. While the materials and Modernist design are similar to the original buildings, the addition is differentiated by its vinyl windows, lighter mortar color, and lack of steel lintels above the egress doors (photos 9 and 10). The addition bumps in approximately two feet from the 1966 cafeteria wing addition to the high school (photo 62).

### Interior

The high school's formal entrance (photo 6) opens into a vestibule with painted CMU walls and drop tile ceilings as found in the rest of the high school building. On the western wall is a 1954 plaque installed when the building opened (photo 31). The eastern wall of the vestibule has contemporary style metal block frame window panels with fixed glazing and a metal framed door that leads to the administrative offices (photo 32). The southern wall features two wooden laminate doors framed by 2-by-4-unit metal frame sidelight panels that lead to the classroom hall and a hallway leading south to the 1992 classroom addition (photo 33).

A long, continuous hallway runs east to west beyond the vestibule. The smaller rooms to the western end of the hall (rooms 109-114 on figure 11) were used as faculty and administrative spaces and the health station. They have laminate floors and painted CMU walls (photo 37).

To the east of the administrative offices, the hallway continues to the classrooms, which line both sides of the hall. At the eastern end of hall is a set of wooden double doors and steps leading into the gymnasium (photos 34 and 35). A small hallway in the center of the hall leads to metal double doors that provide egress to the southern courtyard (photo 40). The hallway features ceramic tile baseboards, CMU classroom partition walls, painted steel door jambs and wooden panel doors (photos 36). The high school classrooms have storage cubbies and coat hangers at one end and the teachers' desk and blackboard at the other. They have fixed hopper windows lining the interior/hallway wall and operable windows on the exterior walls (photos 38 and 39).

A large science classroom (number 107 on figure 11) is located in the center of the hallway. The room has partially enclosed window bays on the exterior wall, and hopper windows near the ceiling on the hallway wall, typical of the rest of the classroom spaces. The eastern end of the room (photo 41) has wooden doors with three horizontally oriented glazing panels leading to a laboratory and storage room. The drop tile ceiling has fallen, revealing the original web truss roof structure above. The western end of the room (photo 42) has built in storage units.

The gymnasium doubles as an auditorium and all-purpose space and features a stage at the east end. It has painted CMU walls with built-in laminate wood bleachers lining the north and south walls. The low-pitched roof is supported by three steel truss frames with an arched profile reminiscent of a Tudor arch. Steel I-beams run east to west and act as purlins to tie each of the trusses together, with x-bracing made of steel angle iron installed every other bay for extra lateral stability. Fireproof sprayed insulation (original) lines the underside of the metal roof sheathing (photos 14 and 15). The steel structure of the gym is painted. The flooring is thin strips of polyurethane-coated oak that is typical for school gym floors. The auditorium stage is elevated four feet above the gymnasium area on a wooden frame with painted oak flooring. The stage

Latimer High and Elementary School  
Name of Property

Dillon Co., South Carolina  
County and State

proscenium is ornamented with two bands of brick, of two courses each, that are painted the school colors (green and yellow). The brick bands are broken above the center of the stage by a central brick feature that reads like a square keystone and is created with the header end of bricks (photo 16).

The technology/music wing that wraps the gymnasium at its eastern end contains a hallway (photo 21) leading to bathrooms, a storage closet that was formerly the band room closet (photo 20), a music room, the technology room (photos 22 and 23), and egress doors. These spaces retain their original square tile laminate flooring, partition walls, doors, and windows, though later drop tile ceilings were added below the original drop tiles (which are still extant) in the early 2000s.

The cafeteria is accessed via a wooden door leading from the vestibule (photo 24). The walls are painted CMUs and the floors are ceramic tiles that are original. Two columnar steel supports in the cafeteria help support the flat roof. The cafeteria and kitchen have later acoustical drop tile ceilings. Original metal pipe railings create a rectangular central area in the cafeteria that houses original metal and Formica cafeteria tables with hinge mounted stool seats (photo 25). The kitchen is accessed by a wooden laminate door with a vertical glazed panel. The kitchen is situated to the west of the cafeteria, in the bay that projects westerly from the western elevation of the high school building (photo 27). It contains cooking and baking equipment dating circa 1960s to circa 2000s. A roll up metal concession window faces east into a side hall that provides egress on the southern wall of the cafeteria/kitchen unit (photo 28 and 29).

The 1992 classroom addition contains a central hall opening south from the cafeteria via a metal door and featuring four large classrooms with painted CMU walls and checker pattern laminate flooring. The hall has windows with four by three grid pattern set in a fixed metal framework for each of the four classrooms (photo 43). A commemorative construction plaque (photo 44) hangs at the southern end of the hall. The classrooms were built with central heating and air conditioning, so the window openings have not been retrofitted with cooling units as they have in the older parts of the building. Each classroom has particle board and laminate cubby storage at one end and vinyl baseboards (photo 45, room 116 on figure 11).

## **2) Agricultural Building (1954) - Contributing Building**

The agricultural building is situated to the south of the high school in the rear courtyard area. The one-story building has a rectangular plan, a flat roof with an overhang that projects one foot beyond the exterior walls, and a red brick veneer (photos 46 and 52). The building is parallel to the gymnasium and is accessed via a covered walkway leading from the south elevation of the classroom hall in the main wing of the high school. The walkway covering is not original, and first appears on a 1983 aerial photograph.<sup>10</sup> The covering structure has square painted steel vertical supports and a flat metal roof made of painted I beams. The walkway bridges an asphalt driveway that runs east to west between the high school and the agricultural building (photo 48).

---

<sup>10</sup> 1954, 1957, 1959, and 1983 aerials at 122 Latimer Street, Latta, SC, Historic Aerials, <https://www.historicaerials.com/viewer> (accessed January 4, 2024).

Latimer High and Elementary School  
Name of Property

Dillon Co., South Carolina  
County and State

The walkway roof steps down at its connection with a west elevation of the agricultural building, where it continues across the elevation to create shelter over the metal exterior doors into the building on the west elevation. The west elevation has a metal entry door and two windows that are covered with plywood (photo 11). The north elevation has five evenly spaced metal downspouts and two window openings that are covered with plywood (photo 47). The east elevation has no fenestration openings. The south elevation has the following fenestration running east to west: a garage door bay that has been enclosed with brick; an original metal entry roof with a vertically oriented window pain and a flat roofed metal overhang; a former large window opening that has been enclosed with brick and now features two smaller window openings with brick sills, covered in plywood; a single sash window opening that has been enclosed with brick; and a single sash window opening that is fitted with an air conditioning unit. There is a shed roofed overhang supported by two wooden posts to shelter a mechanical unit, situated between the two single sash window openings (photo 52).

The interior of the building has painted CMU walls, concrete floors covered with vinyl tile affixed with mastic, and drop tile ceilings. The painted wooden doors are original and have metal jambs and casing as found in the high school building. The building housed classroom spaces for agricultural classes, a bathroom, a teacher's office, and storage areas.<sup>11</sup> The building is currently used as a kitchen and breakroom for Dillon County School District maintenance staff and for storage. The western entry door leads into a large classroom space. A CMU partition wall at the east end of the classroom has four metal doors with a plexiglass fixed window between (photos 100 and 101). The northernmost door leads into another large classroom. The second door leads to a faculty office with a plexiglass fixed window facing east and west into each classroom. The southernmost two doors lead to storage closets with no window openings. Moving east, the second large classroom currently has kitchen cabinetry running along its northern and southern walls (photos 102 and 103). It has a bathroom at its northeastern corner (photo 105). The classroom has two doors at its eastern end, placed near the exterior walls, that lead to a longitudinally oriented room with painted CMU walls. This space was a classroom but is now used for storage and has wood framed bunk beds attached to the walls (photo 104). All the interior space configurations are original to the building.

### **3) Elementary School Building (1956, 1968, 1970)- Contributing Building**

#### *Exterior*

The ell-plan elementary school, which has a similar footprint and massing to the high school, was constructed on the easternmost portion of the lot facing Latimer Street in 1956. It was designed by James and DuRant & Associates and erected by E.C.B. Construction (photo 58). The elementary school includes a 1968 library addition and a 1970 classroom addition.

The high school and elementary school are connected by a covered walkway on the northern elevation with a flat roof with a painted steel overhang constructed in 1956, creating a unified campus with a U-shaped plan. The walkway is supported by square painted steel posts and is open to the southern courtyard area (photo 56). Two brick piers and a steel lintel mark the

---

<sup>11</sup> The interior of the building is not accessible and is used by Dillon District 3's bus maintenance department.

Latimer High and Elementary School  
Name of Property

Dillon Co., South Carolina  
County and State

transition from the elementary to the high school space. The western half of the walkway has a claustra brick wall facing Latimer Street, while the eastern half nearest the elementary school has a screen of vertically oriented steel bars along the façade (photo 55). It runs from the elementary school lobby westerly to the high school building. Two metal doors lead from the elementary school into the walkway. (photo 54).

The elementary school's formal entrance is located at the westernmost end of the building, next to the covered walkway that connects the building to the adjacent high school. The entrances for the high school and elementary school are stylistically similar and utilize the same materials. The elementary school's formal entrance has two metal doors with simple modern brushed steel hardware and upper and lower glazed panes. The doors are framed within a steel grid with a continuous transom above and tripartite, vertically oriented sidelights with steel fixed bottom panels and two glazed panels above. The doors are recessed below an overhang framed with steel I beams and clad with vinyl soffit materials on the ceiling. To the west of the entry doors is a brick support pier and windowless brick bay with steel doors leading to the covered walkway. To the east of the entry doors is a running bond brick wall with painted bands of green. The entry overhang is supported by painted banded brick that matches the ornamentation of the high school entrance (photo 57). The green banding on the brick columns of both the high school and elementary school entrance areas are recessed courses of brick, while the banding on the entrance area walls are flush painted courses. There is a detached entry pavilion constructed in front of, but not connected to, the elementary school entrance on the southern façade after 1994.<sup>12</sup>

The façade (north elevation) of the elementary school has the following fenestration running west to east: a double window with a metal mullion and one-over-one light pattern, an aluminum frame window with three vertically oriented lights (denoting the administrative office area) (photo 59); six sexpartite window bays with metal frames (denoting classroom spaces along a long interior hall) (photo 60). The four central openings of each have been enclosed with painted plywood. The west window of each bay is functional and open, while the easternmost of each bay has been fitted with an air-conditioning unit. Moving east, the façade jogs in approximately one foot and the roofline drops one foot. This section of the façade has three sexpartite windows with the same treatment as the previously described windows. At the eastern end of the façade is a set of metal egress doors (photo 61). All the façade windows have brick sills. The façade has running bonded red brick veneer and painted steel overhangs extending the flat roof to match the construction and style of the high school.

The eastern elevation of the school has three banks of sexpartite classroom windows, which have painted paneling over the four central openings of each window, while the one end window is enclosed with a cooling unit and the other is left with its original one over one aluminum frame and glazing exposed. There is a painted steel lintel above each window, and a painted metal overhang runs the length of the elevation (photo 63). Eight additional elementary school classrooms were added to the rear of the elementary school along its eastern elevation, extending

---

<sup>12</sup> 1994 and 2005 aerials at 122 Latimer Street, Latta, SC, Historic Aerials, <https://www.historicaerials.com/viewer> (accessed January 4, 2024).

Latimer High and Elementary School  
Name of Property

Dillon Co., South Carolina  
County and State

the ell plan, in 1970. This addition was built in preparation for the school's integration. The addition was designed by James and DuRant & Associates and constructed by Boozer and Wharton, Inc. (photo 91). The 1970 classroom wing projects approximately five feet from the 1956 elementary school on the east elevation (photo 66).

The addition is constructed of the same materials as the rest of the campus and exhibits modern stylistic features. It has a red running bond brick veneer and metal downspouts at symmetrically spaced intervals on the elevations. The east and west elevations are divided into five bays demarcated by pairs of projecting brick fins with a panel of running bonded brick between. Each bay has two window openings oriented near the partition fins. The windows have cast stone spandrels with a pebble texture. The windows are one-over-one light configurations with aluminum frames. The fenestration is as follows in the bays: one window in each of the three northernmost bays has been partially bricked in and fitted with an air conditioning unit; the fourth bay has two unaltered windows; and the fifth/southernmost bay has one partially bricked window with an air handling unit. There are two stamped metal vent covers in each of the bays, except the one that has no window modifications. A continuous metal overhang runs the length of the façade, below which is a cast stone horizontal band that runs the length of the elevation above the window openings (photo 64).

The rear/southern elevation of the classroom addition has no window openings. The overhang and stone horizontal band continue unbroken at the corners of the building. A painted metal egress door flanked by brick fins is oriented in the center of the elevation. It has a concrete wheelchair ramp and painted metal pipe handrail that may be original. A brick fin is located symmetrically near the corners of the building. The fenestration on the western elevation facing into the rear courtyard is identical to the eastern elevation, except there is an air conditioning unit in one window in each of the five bays (photo 65).

The western elevation of the elementary school's ell (the easternmost portion of the campus, 1956 construction phase) has the following fenestration, running north to south: a pair of louvered metal doors with a shed roofed hood, a sexpartite window bank, a recessed metal egress door flanked by brick fins, to the south of which is the 1970 classroom addition (photo 72).

The western elevation of the elementary school has asymmetrical fenestration including a horizontally oriented two pane vinyl window, an opening that has an air handling unit, and a double window with one over one pane configuration and a vinyl mullion. The breezeway ties into this elevation near the entry area of the school (photo 70).

The rear/south elevation of long portion of the elementary school ell has the following fenestration running westward from the 1970 addition: two bays of fenestration with sexpartite windows, with the same enclosure treatment as the façade; a projecting hallway leading to the library addition (photo 67); four banks of sexpartite windows; a pair of one-over-one vinyl windows with a vinyl mullion, a door opening that has been bricked in but retains its original metal painted overhang hood, a pair of metal double doors with louvers, another door opening that has been bricked in but retains its original metal painted overhang hood, and an intact metal

Latimer High and Elementary School  
Name of Property

Dillon Co., South Carolina  
County and State

door with hood (photo 68). A bank of sexpartite windows is located at the western end of the elevation (photo 69).

A library was added to the elementary school to the rear/south of the building in 1968. It is connected to the original elementary school building by a fully enclosed hallway. The library has a square plan with a flat roof and the same overhang treatment and materials as the rest of the campus. The connecting hallway has a pair of metal double egress doors flanked by projecting brick fins on the west elevation, while the west elevation of the library itself has no openings (photo 71). The rear/southern elevation has two small window openings that have been fitted with air units, in the center of which is a pair of metal doors with glazed upper and lower panels, framed by sidelights in a metal framework. The doors have a metal flat roofed hood, and they are accessed from the rear courtyard by cast concrete steps with metal pipe railings (photo 67). The eastern elevation of the library has no openings, while the connecting hallway has three aluminum frame windows (photo 72).

### Interior

The entry doors on the façade at the western end of the building lead into a small vestibule with painted CMU walls. A laminated wooden door on the right leads into a closet that is now a medical lab, and a wood door with glazing to the left leads into a waiting room that was the school's administrative offices (photo 78). Wood laminate double doors open into a hallway that runs lengthwise from east to west (photo 74). Faculty and administrative offices now house a pharmacy, while the rest of the hall is lined with elementary school classrooms with hopper windows and painted CMU walls that now operate medical offices and affiliated spaces (photo 75). The hallway has vinyl flooring and drop tile ceilings that were installed circa 2017 when the main hall of the elementary school became a community health center. The building retains its tile baseboards, original windows and doors, classroom spaces, and door casing (photo 76). The school's administrative offices have one over one windows (photo 77).

Toward the end of the principal hallway, a secondary hall runs east to connect to the library addition. At the end of the classroom hallway on the right are the restrooms, and to the left is another classroom (photo 80). At the eastern end of the hallway, a door marked "do not enter" leads to the ell of the elementary school, which is vacant. On the other side of the door, a continuous hallway runs north to south from the original east end of the elementary school built in 1956, to the southern end of the 1970 classroom addition. There is a wooden door that connects the spaces, with steps leading down to the elementary school hallway.

The hall leading south to the library is divided in half by a set of solid metal doors in the steel jamb/frame that act as a fire break (photo 81). Beyond the double doors moving south are two metal doors with three horizontal glazed openings each lead into the library. The library has a square plan (figure 12), divided into windowless storage rooms to the right of the entrance. To the left is a bank of offices and study rooms with a partition wall punctuated with square metal window frames (photo 84). The largest room is the library, which runs longitudinally from east to west and has particle board and laminate original reading nooks at one end and the original built in book checkout counter at the other end, which features original built in work desks in the adjoining room (photos 86 and 87). An original framed partition wall with projecting painted

Latimer High and Elementary School  
Name of Property

Dillon Co., South Carolina  
County and State

boxed vertical supports divides the library from the study spaces and offices (photo 85). Metal doors with sidelights on the southern wall lead into the rear courtyard (photo 83).

The eastern ell of the Latimer campus is a continuous hallway that runs from the elementary school southward into the 1970 classroom addition. The ell ‘reads’ as one space inside. Metal double doors with vertically oriented single panes typical of mid-century institutional buildings open from the elementary school’s façade (photo 88). Classrooms line each side of the painted CMU hallway. The rooms in the 1956 section feature hopper windows. The 1970 addition is differentiated by an engaged pier on the hallway’s east wall. The addition classrooms do not have interior hopper windows (photo 89). Metal egress double doors with a transom at the southern end of the hall lead to the courtyard. A short secondary hall running between two classrooms at the break between the 1956 and 1970 portions of the ell has metal double doors with a transom that open westerly into the rear courtyard (photo 90). The classrooms in the 1956 portion of the ell have built in original storage cubbies and one end of each classroom and chalk boards at the other end near the entry doors (photos 92 and 93). The classrooms in the 1970 addition have simple wood frame painted cubbies at one end and a teacher’s station at the other, similar to the older section of the building. The rooms have new drop tile ceilings but are otherwise original (photo 94).

#### **4. Playground set (circa 2000) - Noncontributing structure**

A plastic playground set is in the rear yard to the south of the 1992 classroom addition to the high school building. The playground postdates the period of significance and is therefore noncontributing.

#### **5. Bus parking lot (circa 1994)- noncontributing structure**

A large parking lot that is currently utilized for school bus parking is located at the southeast corner of the parcel near the tree line that demarcates the property’s southern border (photo 95). It is paved with asphalt. It is accessed via a driveway from East Leitner Street. The parking lot was originally the location of the baseball field for the school. It postdates the period of significance and is therefore noncontributing.<sup>13</sup>

#### **6. Elementary school parking lot (circa 1994) - noncontributing structure**

There is an asphalt paved parking lot to the east of the elementary school running parallel to East Leitner Street. It is accessed by an entrance on Latimer Street and from the rear school driveway onto East Leitner Street. It postdates the period of significance and is therefore noncontributing.<sup>14</sup>

#### **7. Entrance Pavilion (circa 2000)- Noncontributing structure**

A brick pavilion is in front of the elementary school entrance on the façade/north face of the building near the center of the Latimer School complex’s overall U plan. It is not connected to

<sup>13</sup> Email from alumnus Carolyn McDaniel, 24 November 2023. The parking lot first appears on aerial images in 1994, and was not present in 1983. Aerials at 122 Latimer Street, Latta, SC, Historic Aerials, <https://www.historicaerials.com/viewer> (accessed 14 January 2024).

<sup>14</sup> The parking lot first appears in a 1994 aerial at 122 Latimer Street, Latta, SC, Historic Aerials, <https://www.historicaerials.com/viewer> (accessed 14 January 2024).



Latimer High and Elementary School  
Name of Property

Dillon Co., South Carolina  
County and State

the elementary school. The pavilion has four brick piers of American running bonded red brick, which step in every fourth course to create a horizontal banding aesthetic that mirrors the painted brick bands on the high school and elementary school's principal entrances. The pavilion has a flat roof with painted steel overhangs (photo 51). The entrance pavilion was erected between 1994 and 2005, and therefor postdates the period of significance and is noncontributing.<sup>15</sup>

### **8. Courtyard Pavilion (circa 2000)- Noncontributing structure**

A wood frame pavilion is located to the south of the elementary school in the rear courtyard, adjacent to a noncontributing parking lot (photo 28). The rectangle plan structure has a medium pitch gable roof with architectural asphalt shingles, vinyl siding on the gable ends, wooden support posts, and a poured concrete floor. There a picnic tables in the pavilion. The courtyard pavilion postdates the period of significance and is therefore noncontributing.

### **9. Communication Tower (circa 1970s)- Noncontributing structure**

A communication tower is located to the south of the elementary school in the rear yard. The metal structure sits on a poured concrete pad (photo 49). The tower postdates the period of significance and is therefore noncontributing.<sup>16</sup>

### **10. Shed #1 (circa 1992)- Noncontributing Building**

A wood frame shed building with asphalt shingle roof and vertically oriented aluminum siding (circa late twentieth century) is located along state road S-17-160 near the eastern property line, behind the elementary school ell and adjacent to a noncontributing parking lot (photo 50). Shed #1 postdates the period of significance and is therefore noncontributing.

### **11. Garage (circa 1992)- Noncontributing Building**

A rectangular plan brick garage constructed after 1992 lies to the east of the agricultural building. There are no windows on the east or west elevation. There is a metal egress door on the southern elevation and a vinyl roll up garage door on the southern elevation facing the driveway that passes between the high school and agricultural building. The garage has a low-pitched hip roof clad in asphalt and a red brick running bonded veneer (photo 46). The garage postdates the period of significance and is therefore noncontributing.

### **12. Shed #2 (circa 2000)- Noncontributing building**

A wood frame shed with asphalt shingle roof and a rectangular plan (circa late twentieth century) is in the rear yard to the south of the breezeway connecting the two schools and west of a noncontributing parking lot (photo 99). It is situated near the southern tree line. Shed #2 postdates the period of significance and is therefore noncontributing.

### **Integrity**

Latimer Elementary and High School has integrity to convey its significance in all seven aspects:

<sup>15</sup> 1994 and 2005 aerials at 122 Latimer Street, Latta, SC, Historic Aerials, <https://www.historicaerials.com/viewer> (accessed 14 January 2024).

<sup>16</sup> The tower was installed sometime in the 1990s. Email from alumnus Carolyn McDaniel, 24 November 2023.

Latimer High and Elementary School  
Name of Property

Dillon Co., South Carolina  
County and State

Latimer High and Elementary School conveys the *feeling* of the equalization era in which it was constructed, through its simple but effective workmanship, construction, and design elements. The buildings retain their forms, stylistic elements, rooflines, structure, fenestration, exterior brick veneers, and interior spaces dedicated to individual educational needs. Original metal plaques are extant for each phase of the campus' construction.

The school campus' *setting* and *location* remain the same. The buildings have not been moved, and the lot has retained the same size and acreage since its creation in 1954. Latta remains a rural community and the school is located in the midst of the predominantly African American residential community whose children it historically served. Alumni still live in the community and have an active alumni association.

The Latimer campus has integrity of *design* because the original floor plans and minimalist Modern stylistic features are intact. Most of the alterations to the campus were made during the period of significance and were designed by the same architects who designed the high school and elementary school buildings initially.

Latimer High and Elementary School campus retains its original *materials*, including the structure of the buildings, most windows, interior finishes, floor plan, and exterior brick veneer. The entryways to the administrative wings retain their steel overhangs, doors, and painted banded brick ornamentation. The classrooms retain original cubbies for storage and built in furniture is extant in the cafeteria/kitchen, science classrooms, and library. The *workmanship* and materials reflect the mass-produced products available throughout the United States after World War Two, and the modern, streamlined aesthetics and finishes popular in educational facilities of that era.

The Latimer School campus conveys its *association* with the equalization school movement and to segregated education in mid-century Dillon County. Latimer retained its use as an education facility until its closure in 2014. Alterations made to the campus buildings following integration in 1970 are minimal and are in keeping with its education use.

Latimer High and Elementary School  
Name of Property

Dillon Co., South Carolina  
County and State

## 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

Latimer High and Elementary School  
Name of Property

Dillon Co., South Carolina  
County and State

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION  
ETHNIC HERITAGE: BLACK  
ARCHITECTURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1954-1970

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

James and DuRant Architecture Firm (architects)  
Boozer and Wharton, Inc. (1970 elementary school addition, contractor)  
E.C.B. Construction Company (1956 elementary school, contractor)  
Ruscon Construction Company (1954 high school and agricultural building, contractor)

Latimer High and Elementary School  
Name of Property

Dillon Co., South Carolina  
County and State

**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 Latimer High and Elementary School (or Latimer School) complex is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places at the local level under Criterion A in the areas of Education and Ethnic Heritage: Black for its associations with African American education in Latta and with the state's effort to preserve segregation through its equalization program, which provided money for school improvement, primarily for Black facilities, in the 1950s and 1960s. The Latimer school was the only Black school in Latta during the period of significance, and the school complex provided educational opportunities to Black students in Latta that were previously not possible. The busing system gave students from the greater Latta area of Dillon County access to the Latimer School. The campus was gradually expanded during the period of significance with the addition of a library, larger cafeteria and kitchen, and an elementary classroom addition, which were constructed during the period of significance. Latimer campus is also significant under Criterion C: Architecture at the local level as a rare intact example of midcentury Modern design applied through the state equalization program. The campus reflects changing design philosophy for educational buildings in the mid twentieth century and the increased funding for African American education in the 1950s in South Carolina. Latimer's architectural style and materials are typical for equalization school architecture in the state, and it is one of the only examples (and likely the most intact) of this school form in Latta. The period of significance is from 1954 when the high school opened, to 1970 when the campus integrated.

---

## **Narrative Statement of Significance**

### Black Education in Latta before Equalization

The town of Latta was established in 1887 as a rail hub for the surrounding agricultural communities of Dillon County. The town developed as a stop along the Florence Railroad, a bypass line of the Atlantic Coast Line (ACL) Railroad Company that connected nearby Florence, South Carolina to Wilson, North Carolina. The new rail line spurred growth in the area, and the Town of Latta was incorporated in 1890. The town is named for York County, South Carolina native Captain Robert Latta, who surveyed the area for ACL.<sup>17</sup>

Latta was a rural community throughout the twentieth century, with limited employment opportunities beside farming cotton or tobacco. Typical of a southern town, Latta's public and educational facilities were segregated for most of the twentieth century. The railroad line that runs through the center of Latta divided the town's residential community into a Black "bottom" (the southeastern portion of the town) and a white residential area (to the northwest of the rail line). Prior to the construction of Latimer School, there were no bus systems for Black students,

---

<sup>17</sup> *Sumter Watchman and Southron*, December 28, 1887, pg. 3. "History of Latta, South Carolina," <http://www.townoflatta.sc.gov> (accessed 14 January 2024); Brigman, National Register nomination, "Latta Downtown Historic District", 1998.

Latimer High and Elementary School  
Name of Property

Dillon Co., South Carolina  
County and State

who had to walk miles to reach their respective community schools scattered throughout the county, leading to higher rates of absence for Black students as compared to white students. Alumnus Edna McClam, who graduated Latimer High School in 1956, remembers Latta as a heavily segregated community, including the privately owned grocery stores (which refused to serve Black residents), public spaces such as schools (with completely separate buildings on separate campuses), and the train depot in the center of town (which had separate ticketing and seating areas for Black customers).<sup>18</sup>

The first school for Black children in Latta opened in 1889 in the Odd Fellow's Hall in the town center, on the current site of the Jackson and McGill Funeral Home on Washington Street.<sup>19</sup> The student body quickly outgrew the space, and the school board purchased a lot on Willia Street and erected a two-room school building. In 1915, another room was added, and the school term was extended from five to six months. The Latta Colored Graded School's terminal year was ninth grade. The new school also became too small for the growing student body. A new Latta Elementary School was constructed, and a new two-story building for the high school age students, known as Dillon County Training School (DCT), was opened in 1925, with classes in farming and home economics but no science, music, or technology courses.<sup>20</sup> A grammar school was erected in the Town of Dillon in the 1930s, seven miles from Latta, and was at the time the only modern building for Black elementary school students in the county.<sup>21</sup>

LeVern Owens, an alumnus of the DCT, left school after the 10<sup>th</sup> grade in 1942 to serve in World War Two. He described the pre-equalization facilities for Black students that he attended in Latta as "a mess, everyone in there together [no separate classroom space for each grade]. It was a plain tin building with coal heat. Outside bathroom, just one to share." Owens stated that his school experience as a Black student in Jim Crow-era South Carolina, "wasn't nice because a lot of us didn't get the learning we needed, I know I didn't get what I needed." He explained that his father was a farmer and like many of his classmates, he was needed at home on the farm, so he attended school sporadically. It was "so far to walk, no way to get there, it was a five-mile trip and if the weather was bad or daddy needed someone to work on the farm we would stay to help." There was no cafeteria in the building.<sup>22</sup> Hazel Williams, who served as Latimer Elementary School secretary in the 1960s and who attended pre-equalization Black schools in Dillon County, notes of her educational experience that, "my early years in school, we went through a lot, we had it rough. It wasn't nice at all, no bathrooms, but we made it, we came through. The only heat was big potbelly heaters."<sup>23</sup>

<sup>18</sup> In person interview with Edna McClam, September 30, 2023, interviewed by Christina R. Butler.

<sup>19</sup> Mission statement, "Alumni 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Reunion. Home of Latimer Hornets, November 23-24, 2007" booklet, pg. 4. The original address of the Odd Fellow's Hall is unknown. Washington Street currently runs north-south between Second Main Street and Fladger Street. The 1924 *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map*, Latta, sheet 4 shows that Washington Street was originally called Marion Street, but the buildings on the street are not labeled by use.

<sup>20</sup> Bethea, "The History of Dillon County/Latimer Schools."

<sup>21</sup> Mission statement, "Alumni 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Reunion. Home of Latimer Hornets, November 23-24, 2007" booklet, pg. 4.

<sup>22</sup> Phone interview with LeVern Owens, September 4, 2023, interviewed by Christina R. Butler. Mr. Owens had taken home economics at Odd Fellows School and became a cook in the military. He later was a chef for Princeton University.

<sup>23</sup> In person interview with Hazel Williams, September 30, 2023, interviewed by Christina R. Butler.

Latimer High and Elementary School  
Name of Property

Dillon Co., South Carolina  
County and State

The conditions faced by them and other Latta-area Black students were typical of similar communities across South Carolina. The *Public Schools of South Carolina: A Report of the South Carolina Education Survey Committee*, or Peabody survey, published in 1947, found numerous inequalities between Black and white educational programs and facilities throughout the state. The report's recommendations would later guide the construction of equalization-era schools like Latimer High and Elementary School. Peabody found that school "plant" or campus investments for white students was an average of \$221 per pupil versus \$45 per Black pupil.<sup>24</sup> The report found that 6% of white and 8% of Black children in the state were not enrolled as students, and 1 in 6 white and 1 in 5 Black students, respectively, were absent each day of the school year. White and Black students surveyed listed their reasons for truancy as illnesses, "not interested", "work for pay", and "kept home to work." Of 172 students surveyed, twelve Black students (and no white ones) listed "clothes unsuitable for school" as a reason for being absent. Their reasons for truancy highlight the challenges for rural Black students to receive an education, as twice as many of them were working at home or for pay as were white students.<sup>25</sup> Most high schools were unable to offer a broad curriculum including science, art, and music, because many districts in the state, including those in Dillon, were smaller than allowed by the 1895 State Constitution and could not generate enough local tax revenue for improvements.<sup>26</sup>

The Peabody report found that Black students in the state were less likely to complete a secondary education; 1 out of 4 white boys enrolled by the first grade completed high school compared to 1 of 30 Black boys, while 1 out of 3 white girls and 1 out of 14 Black girls completed their education.<sup>27</sup> In Latta, secondary education terminated with the 11<sup>th</sup> grade for Black students, rendering it impossible for them to complete twelve grades without transferring to the closest Black high school, which opened in Marion in 1949 and was located approximately twelve miles away, prior to the opening of Latimer High School in 1954. LeVern Owens noted that it was "pretty common not to make it to the 11<sup>th</sup> grade."<sup>28</sup>

The all-white political establishment did not act to improve Black education in the state, however, until two landmark lawsuits successfully challenged the concept of separate but equal educational provisions. As noted in one study of South Carolina's equalization schools, "the threat of integration in South Carolina caused politicians to pour money into the state's public school system, materially improving schools for both Black and white children across the state."<sup>29</sup>

### The Equalization Program and Constructing Latimer High and Elementary School

<sup>24</sup> Peabody, *Public Schools of South Carolina: A Report of the South Carolina Education Survey Committee*, pg. 208.

<sup>25</sup> Peabody, *Public Schools of South Carolina: A Report of the South Carolina Education Survey Committee*, pg. 38.

<sup>26</sup> Peabody, *Public Schools of South Carolina: A Report of the South Carolina Education Survey Committee*, pg. 7, 17. South Carolina had 1680 school districts as compared to 172 in North Carolina and 215 in Georgia, demonstrating the irregular nature of districting in the state. Many rural schools in upstate South Carolina were operating inadequate facilities under amendments made by the state Pg. 168.

<sup>27</sup> Peabody, *Public Schools of South Carolina: A Report of the South Carolina Education Survey Committee*, pg. 6.

<sup>28</sup> Phone interview with LeVern Owens, September 4, 2023, interviewed by Christina R. Butler.

<sup>29</sup> Dobrasko, National Register nomination, "Equalization Schools in South Carolina, 1951-1960", Multiple Property Listing Form, 2009.

Latimer High and Elementary School  
Name of Property

Dillon Co., South Carolina  
County and State

Latimer High and Elementary School was constructed as part of South Carolina's equalization school program.<sup>30</sup> The landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) court case (which followed and grew out of the *Briggs v. Elliott* South Carolina case of 1952), overturned the Supreme Court's 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* "separate but equal" ruling and led to the eventual integration of public facilities throughout the South. Although the complaint was eventually broadened to challenge segregation as a whole, the *Briggs v. Elliott* that originated in Clarendon County, South Carolina, dealt with unequal educational transportation, where parents were frustrated by the lack of busing for Black students to reach their remote rural schools.<sup>31</sup> The difficulties for Black students to attend school due to transportation hardships was a consistent complaint across the rural state.

In an effort to circumvent desegregation, the state created a plan under Gov. James Byrnes to erect new school buildings of equal construction and material quality that could underpin the legal argument that the state was making a good faith effort to at last live up to the "equal" portion of the *Plessy* doctrine. The equalization program was administered by the State Education Finance Commission (SEFC) and funded through a general statewide sales tax. As one historian argues, these equalization schools were an "imaginative spatial response to the impending threat of desegregation", and a form of "backlash architecture . . . of white resistance designed as a response to the increasingly effective civil rights movement."<sup>32</sup> Alumnus Edna McClam commented on the excitement of going to new Latimer School and the irony of the equalization movement: "We were happy to have a new school. We were appreciative, we had water fountains. So funny, they gave us the brand-new buses. But basically, they just gave us new things to shut up Martin Luther King."<sup>33</sup>

Equalization school expert Rebekah Dobrasko notes that the equalization program "utilized modern school design, materials, and architecture to build new rural, urban, Black, and white schools in communities throughout the state. Nationally recognized educational consultants worked with local architects to design these new "equalization" schools based on postwar thinking about educational processes and architecture. The new design trends were applied to both Black and white schools, resulting in materially equal school plants."<sup>34</sup> The majority of equalization funds went toward constructing Black schools in the 1950s since their facilities were most in need of improvement, but the equalization program also built white facilities, both to appease white opponents of the program and because of legitimate needs among white rural communities.<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>30</sup> Dillon County School District 3 does not retain records for its schools in Latta from the period of significance. Interviews with faculty and alumni, however, provide insight into Latimer School's operation and integration experience.

<sup>31</sup> Dulaney, Marvin. "Briggs v. Elliott", *South Carolina Encyclopedia*, <https://www.scencyclopedia.org/sce/entries/briggs-v-elliott/> (Accessed November 12th, 2023).

<sup>32</sup> Wyeneth, "The Architecture of Racial Segregation", 43.

<sup>33</sup> In person interview with Edna McClam, September 30, 2023, interviewed by Christina R. Butler.

<sup>34</sup> Dobrasko, National Register nomination, "Equalization Schools in South Carolina, 1951-1960", Multiple Property Listing Form, 2009.

<sup>35</sup> Lowe, *The Slow Undoing: The Federal Courts and the Long Struggle for Civil Rights in South Carolina*, pg. 58.



Latimer High and Elementary School  
Name of Property

Dillon Co., South Carolina  
County and State

The SEFC established by the State General Assembly supervised the building fund expenditures for new construction, equipment, transportation, and other improvements that had been deemed “necessary to enable all children of South Carolina to have adequate and equal education advances.” Following the Peabody report recommendations, the state also consolidated rural school districts.<sup>36</sup> Dobrasko notes that the state’s “separate but equal” school program transformed the “architecture of education in South Carolina.” The state spent almost \$100 million on Black school construction in the first six years of the program. Prior to 1951, the state had only 80 accredited high schools for African American students. By 1957, the state had 145 Black high schools.”<sup>37</sup> By the end of 1955, Dillon County had been allotted \$1,299,992 “for use in financing Negro school construction”, or 67.8% of the total allotted equalization school funding to date. With the opening of Latimer High School, Dillon County school superintendent Boyd Carmichael declared that “facilities for Negro students in the county today are equal and in many instances excel the buildings provided whites. All Negro high schools are equipped with excellent home economics departments, cafeterias, gymnasiums, libraries, agricultural shops, and well lighted classrooms.”<sup>38</sup>

Dillon County constructed several known equalization schools, including circa 1953 South Dillon High School (white facility, extant, located in Dillon) and circa 1955 Stewart Heights Elementary School (white facility, extant, located at 1018 W. Calhoun Street in Dillon), which were both Modern in design.<sup>39</sup> Latta Elementary School, an extant formerly white facility located on N. Richardson Street in Latta was also originally constructed with equalization funding, with a new gym, agricultural building, and superintendent’s office being designed by James, Durant, and Mathews and constructed in 1955.<sup>40</sup>

Upon its construction, Latimer High and Elementary was the only educational facility for Black students in the town of Latta. Ellen Simmons, who taught at DCT, then Latimer High, and who later became the assistant principal of Latimer Elementary School after integration, remembers the superintendent sharing the proposed school plans with the DCT faculty in 1953, when the school was tentatively titled Latta Colored School. The faculty created a committee to select a better name and the superintendent consented with the stipulation that the new name must also start with an “L”; “We didn’t know a Black person with that name, so we got a *Negro Digest* and the only Black person in there was Latimer, who designed the streetlight system for Washington, D.C. So we picked Latimer,” for Lewis Howard Latimer (1848-1928), an African American draftsman and inventor.<sup>41</sup> Latimer High School opened in the fall of 1954 and the students at DCT transferred to the new campus (figure 1 shows the building newly completed). The first graduating class completed their secondary education in 1955 (figure 9).

<sup>36</sup> Dobrasko, National Register nomination, “Equalization Schools in South Carolina, 1951-1960”, Multiple Property Listing Form, 2009.

<sup>37</sup> “South Carolina’s Equalization Schools 1951-1960”, <http://www.scequalizationschools.org> (accessed November 4, 2023).

<sup>38</sup> *News and Courier*, 22 December 1955, pg. 1B.

<sup>39</sup> “South Carolina’s Equalization Schools 1951-1960”, <http://www.scequalizationschools.org> (accessed November 4, 2023).

<sup>40</sup> <https://www.barynya.com/sc/latta.htm> (accessed 12 November 2023); Bethea, *A History of Latta, SC*, 12-13.

<sup>41</sup> Phone interview with Mrs. Ellen Simmons, 30 September 2023. “Lewis Howard Latimer.” <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/10420881/lewis-howard-latimer> (accessed 10 November 2023).

Latimer High and Elementary School  
Name of Property

Dillon Co., South Carolina  
County and State

Latimer Elementary School was constructed by E.C. Brown Construction Company of Sumter, South Carolina in 1956, at a cost of \$88,200.<sup>42</sup> As part of the equalization program, the Latimer campus was equipped with busing services, an indoor gymnasium, new modern classrooms, indoor lavatory facilities, a full cafeteria, and new books and desks, all of which were often lacking from segregated schools prior to that time. The building featured central heat, administrative offices, a library, and a health room.<sup>43</sup> New buses provided through equalization funding allowed students from outside Latta proper to attend Latimer as well.<sup>44</sup> Latta Elementary School students moved to Latimer Elementary School when it was completed in 1956 for the fall semester. With the completion of Latimer Elementary School, Black students could progress from 1<sup>st</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade on one central campus, with busing services that made attendance possible for students from across Latta and surrounding rural parts of Dillon County.<sup>45</sup>

### Attending Latimer School

The Latimer campus provided Black Latta students with education opportunities that were not previously available, and which were important in helping students prepare for college and to enter various fields of employment. Hazel Williams explained that during her time as school secretary (1960-1964), the county maintained the school grounds and classrooms regularly, and Latimer was well-funded for books and supplies.<sup>46</sup>

Roosevelt Ladson, who graduated from DCT and later finished his secondary education by completing 12<sup>th</sup> grade after military service and who taught at Latimer High School from 1958 to 1960, explained that “education in South Carolina changed quite a bit because when I finished, you come out in 11<sup>th</sup> grade and before they had the new school, and you couldn’t go to the 12<sup>th</sup> grade. What really helped the new school [Latimer] was they had a librarian and a library and a gym, so they became able to go mostly anywhere after you graduated. But during the time before, they didn’t have a library so DCT wasn’t classified that you could go right to a four-year college. The opportunity wasn’t there like it is today.”<sup>47</sup>

Students at Latimer had opportunities to travel as part of their education. For example, seniors from Latimer High attended and competed in the New Farmers Convention in Atlanta, Georgia in 1956, and the first graders from newly opened Latimer Elementary School traveled to Beaufort, South Carolina for an “education tour” in 1957.<sup>48</sup> In 1965, 135 preschool age children were enrolled in the new Head Start Program in Dillon County, which was held at Latimer Elementary School. The goal was to prepare disadvantaged students for the first grade. The

---

<sup>42</sup> Article, N.d. “Contract let for new Latta colored elementary school.” Vertical file, “Latimer School”, Dillon County Public Library.

<sup>43</sup> Article, N.d. “Contract let for new Latta colored elementary school.” Vertical file, “Latimer School”, Dillon County Public Library.

<sup>44</sup> Interview with Edna McClam, conducted at Latta Community Center, 30 September 2023, 9:00 am.

<sup>45</sup> Interview with Edna McClam, conducted at Latta Community Center, 30 September 2023, 9:00 am.

<sup>46</sup> Interview with Hazel Williams, conducted at Latta Community Center, 30 September 2023, 11:00 am.

<sup>47</sup> Phone interview with Roosevelt Ladson, 4 September 2023.

<sup>48</sup> *The State*, 27 September 1956, pg. 22; *Beaufort Gazette*, 2 May 1957, pg. 17

Latimer High and Elementary School

Dillon Co., South Carolina

Name of Property

County and State

students came from “both rural and town areas and run the full gamut of the economic scale.” One of teachers stated that, “Head Start at Latimer School is an inspiration, as well as an advantage, to the preschoolers, their parents, teachers, and helpers.”<sup>49</sup>

Latimer School provided a wide array of extracurricular offerings to its students, including basketball and baseball teams, flag corps, school parades, and an elementary and high school band (figures 5, 6, and 7).<sup>50</sup> Latimer High School alumnus Leroy “Bobby” Stanton (1946- 2019) was signed to the New York Mets upon graduation in 1970.<sup>51</sup> Roosevelt Ladson notes that they had a “nice gym on campus when they built the new school, there’d been pressure on the state ‘cause the other school [DCT] really didn’t have much.”<sup>52</sup>

The school cafeteria offered free lunch, an important source of sustenance for working class children. Retired secretary Hazel Williams, who collected lunch tokens each day, noted that, “those kids wouldn’t have been able to pay. Probably most were sharecroppers and didn’t have any money. This is a poor town. Lots of parents were partially illiterate.”<sup>53</sup>

The first principal of Latimer, J.H. Giles, transferred from DCT when the new Latimer campus opened. Robert L. McBryde served as the principal of Latimer High School from 1958 until integration in 1970, after which he became the principal at Latimer Middle School over grades 4 through 9 (figure 8). Mr. McBryde also served as the first Black superintendent in Dillon County.<sup>54</sup> Latimer’s principals were dedicated to keeping class sizes small, following educational best practices set out by the Peabody report, even as the student body was expanding. Ms. Hazel Williams, who was the elementary school secretary from 1960 to 1964 and served as a classroom aid and substitute teacher in the later 1960s and 1970s, stated that Principals McBryde (Latimer High School) and Mr. Collington (Latimer Elementary) divided the classes so student numbers would not surpass thirty, and worked to secure funding for the 1970 elementary school classroom expansion.<sup>55</sup>

Latimer High School was an important tool for allowing Black Latta students to improve their lives and futures through education. South Carolina State College (a historically Black college which later gained university status in 1992) held registration and recruiting events at Latimer, and students received scholarships to help them attend college, in line with the Peabody report, which had recommended “improved articulation” between schools and colleges through programming and cooperative studies.<sup>56</sup> Alumni matriculated to colleges including Francis Marion College (which also gained university status in 1992) and Clemson University in South

<sup>49</sup> *Florence Morning News*. 18 August 1965, pg. 10.

<sup>50</sup> The baseball field was located to the rear/south of the elementary school, where there is a noncontributing bus parking lot today.

<sup>51</sup> Typed notes, n.d., pg. 247. Vertical file, “Famous Latta residents”, Dillon County Public Library.

<sup>52</sup> Phone interview with Roosevelt Ladson, 4 September 2023.

<sup>53</sup> Interview with Hazel Williams, conducted at Latta Community Center, 30 September 2023, 11:00 am.

<sup>54</sup> Anderson, *School Directory of South Carolina, 1954-1955*, pg. 65. Bethea, *A History of Latta*, pg. 13. Phone interview with Mrs. Ellen Simmons, September 30, 2023.

<sup>55</sup> In person interview with Hazel Williams, September 30, 2023, interviewed by Christina R. Butler.

<sup>56</sup> *The State*, 10 September 1961, pg. 32; *Florence Morning News*. 29 May 1964, pg. 1. Peabody, *Public Schools of South Carolina: A Report of the South Carolina Education Survey Committee*, pg. 43.

Latimer High and Elementary School  
Name of Property

Dillon Co., South Carolina  
County and State

Carolina. Many returned to be educators in Dillon County.<sup>57</sup> Mrs. Ellen Simmons attended Black schools in neighboring Marion County, went to college, and taught briefly elsewhere in the state before taking a teaching position in Dillon County. Simmons worked in Dillon County schools from 1952 until 1990, teaching science, economics, compensatory reading, and she held teaching certificates in each field. She jokes that, “I taught everybody and their grandma.” She had five years teaching experience at five different schools prior to choosing to work in Latta, and made the transition from DCT to newly opened Latimer High School in 1954.<sup>58</sup> Edna McClam, “left the cotton and tobacco and said goodbye to Latta”, moving north to attend Penn State and flee segregation, equipped with her education obtained at Latimer School. She notes, “it was a pretty good education. We all got jobs and went to college, my sister got a master’s [degree]. The Black teachers we had were pretty good.”<sup>59</sup>

From its initial construction, Latimer High School was equipped with a dedicated agricultural training building, located to the rear (south) of the principal high school building. Students had home economic offerings, and music, art, and science courses as well.<sup>60</sup> The school had a Farmers Home Administration (FHA) club that met in the agricultural building and prepared students for home ownership.<sup>61</sup> Prior to integration, Latimer High and Elementary School had an all-Black faculty and staff.<sup>62</sup>

### Integration

By the 1960s, white facilities had received 53.9% of the equalization state budget, and Black South Carolinians continued to push for full integration. Stephen Lowe notes that, “the school equalization program was never intended to be a means of securing social justice for Black South Carolinians. Rather it was intended to undermine or delay desegregation under the guise of moving forward toward compliance. The program was nevertheless successful in decreasing some of the disparities between Black and white schools.”<sup>63</sup>

South Carolina school districts did not begin to desegregate until 1963, and many schools did not fully integrate until 1970. The federal government refused to give funding to segregated schools, which had continued operating counter to the 1964 Civil Rights Act, eventually forcing the long-delayed integration process. Like most others, Dillon County’s schools eventually adopted so-called “freedom of choice” or token desegregation plans, which allowed students to choose to transfer to integrated schools, but otherwise left segregated assignment plans intact. These plans unsurprisingly resulted in minimal levels of integration and virtually never resulted in the any integration in Black schools.<sup>64</sup> Federal courts ordered South Carolina’s school districts to fully

<sup>57</sup>Dillon County Training School / Latimer School Reunion booklet, 2005, pg. 4-8.

<sup>58</sup> Phone interview with Ellen Simmons, September 30, 2023, interviewed by Christina R. Butler.

<sup>59</sup> In person interview with Edna McClam, September 30, 2023, interviewed by Christina R. Butler.

<sup>60</sup> In person interview with Edna McClam, September 30, 2023, interviewed by Christina R. Butler.

<sup>61</sup> Phone interview with Mrs. Ellen Simmons, conducted at Latta Community Center, 30 September 2023, 1:00 pm. The FHA is US Department of Agriculture agency.

<sup>62</sup> In person interview with Edna McClam, September 30, 2023, interviewed by Christina R. Butler.

<sup>63</sup> Lowe, *The Slow Undoing*, pg. 61.

<sup>64</sup> National Park Service. “Separate but Equal?”, <https://www.nps.gov/articles/separate-but-equal-south-carolina-s-fight-over-school-segregation-teaching-with-historic->

Latimer High and Elementary School  
Name of Property

Dillon Co., South Carolina  
County and State

integrate by the fall of 1970 or lose federal funding. Districts would not be permitted to operate majority Black or majority white schools under the guise of student choice, even if desegregation required such measures as new attendance zones, busing students to create racially mixed student bodies, or closing and merging schools. Dillon County was one of four in the state in the summer of 1970 that came under federal sanction for submitting unacceptable plans for combining their Black and white student bodies. The county's three school districts adopted federally approved integration plans for the first time that fall, which resulted in the integration of not just its Black and white schools but also rural Leland Grove School, a segregated Lumbee Indian school.<sup>65</sup>

As is true today, in 1970 Latta was part of Dillon County School District 3. In June 1970, Federal officials rejected the district's original desegregation compliance plan, and the U.S. Department of Education drafted a new plan for the county. Schools in Latta prepared to reopen as integrated facilities with integrated student bodies and faculty in the fall of 1970 under a plan approved by the District Superintendent W.M. Moody and the U.S. Department of Education.<sup>66</sup> The all-white 95-pupil Floydale Community School prepared to close and its students were moved to Latimer School, "which has been the all-Negro grammar and high school." Students in grades 1-3 would attend formerly white Latta Primary School; Latimer Elementary School would hold grades 4 through 6; Latimer High School would be reassigned as Latimer Junior High School to enroll grades 7 through 9; and formerly white Latta High School would instruct grades 10 through 12.<sup>67</sup> The Latimer school complex would be "regarded as two schools, with grades 7 through 9 in the junior high portion."<sup>68</sup> The Latimer campus was in good condition in 1970 and did not require upgrades to facilitate integration, except for replacing the furniture with smaller middle school-size appropriate chairs and construction of the 1970 elementary school classroom addition to facilitate a large student body for the fall term.<sup>69</sup>

Despite being a product of the segregated equalization program, Latimer School provided real educational improvements for the Black community, and during the integration phase is noteworthy for its peaceful transition to an integrated facility. From fall 1970, Latimer campus had Black and white teachers and students. Ellen Simmons, whose career at Latimer spanned from 1954 to her retirement in 1990, notes, "it was kind of rough the first year but I give my principal credit, he did a whole lot better than a lot of other schools I heard about. He was fair, and wanted to do what was right, and he backed me in a way a lot of Black principals wouldn't have. When they integrated, they did it by classes, they sent everyone to what was originally the high school. Grades 1-3 went to the former all white primary school, 4-8 regardless of color everyone came to Latta. They didn't have a choice. That's when Latimer became a middle school."<sup>70</sup> Hundreds of "segregation academies", or private white schools, opened throughout

[places.htm#:~:text=South%20Carolina%20maintained%20its%20fully,stopped%20this%20system%20by%201970.](#)  
(accessed 21 November 2023).

<sup>65</sup> Lowe, *The Slow Undoing*, pg. 164; *News and Courier*, "Compliance Plans Announced in Latta", 8 May 1970, pg. 1B. Dobrasko, "Equalization Schools: South Carolina's History of Unequal Education." "Dillon Districts Open Smoothly," *The State*, 9 September 1970, p. 5B.

<sup>66</sup> *The Times and Democrat*, 13 June 1970, pg. 3.

<sup>67</sup> *The State*, 12 June 1970, pg. 17.

<sup>68</sup> *The Index Journal*, 12 June 1970, pg. 9

<sup>69</sup> Phone interview with Mrs. Ellen Simmons, conducted at Latta Community Center, 30 September 2023, 1:00 pm.

<sup>70</sup> Phone interview with Mrs. Ellen Simmons, conducted at Latta Community Center, 30 September 2023, 1:00 pm.

Latimer High and Elementary School

Dillon Co., South Carolina

Name of Property

County and State

the state between the 1950s and 1976 (when the federal court system struck down segregation in private schools) as a way for white parents to prevent their children from attending integrated public schools.<sup>71</sup> There were at least two segregation academies within a fifteen mile proximity to the town, the Pee Dee Academy in Marion (which opened in 1965 and today has a 3% Black student body) and the Avalon Academy in Dillon, which closed in 2006 with a 80% white student body.<sup>72</sup> However, there were no private white schools in Latta. Ellen Simmons states that, “there are no private schools even now, integration worked better here than other parts of the state.”<sup>73</sup>

Rebekah Dobsrasko notes that, “school districts regularly opted to close the Black high school and bus those students to previously all-white schools, continuing the history of racial discrimination against Black schools” and eroding community and school identity.<sup>74</sup> Latimer School, however, remained open until 2014 and had a majority but not exclusively Black student body.<sup>75</sup> Hazel Williams remembers that the Black and white children at Latimer in the 1970s “mostly got along. There was a few of the white boys who want to try you, maybe because you’re Black, and the girls would shame them and say she’s being nice, why are you acting like that? And they calmed down. I don’t really remember too much tension in integration. Wasn’t as controversial. I think everything was pretty calm. Everyone got along really well, the Black and white teachers.”<sup>76</sup>

Of the students, Mrs. Simmons explained, “Some accepted it very well, some did not. I had one lady, white lady, who dropped out of school because she didn’t want to go to school with Black students and we got in an argument. We kept that room clean ourselves and she didn’t want to clean that is what taxes pay for, we’d spent five minutes at the end with rotating schedules. She paid taxes so her daughter wouldn’t have to clean the floor. I said too bad, I pay too, everyone pays taxes. But overall picture was good. No violence or big problems.”<sup>77</sup>

### Legacy and Alumni

Latimer High School and Elementary School holds significance for the thousands of African American alumni who attended the school. Not content with remaining in a small farming community with limited chance of landownership, and equipped with a high-quality education, teachers remember that many of their students went to college and several returned to teach at

<sup>71</sup> “Equalization Schools: South Carolina’s History of Unequal Education.”

<https://ldhi.library.cofc.edu/exhibits/show/equalization-schools/public-schools-desegregate#:~:text=Between%201964%20and%201977%2C%20almost,by%20the%20fall%20of%201970.>

(accessed 14 January 2024); Vaden, *Before the Corridor of Shame*, lv.

<sup>72</sup> “Avalon Academy”, <https://www.privateschoolreview.com/avalon-academy-profile> (accessed 15 January 2024);

“Pee Dee Academy”, <https://www.privateschoolreview.com/pee-dee-academy-profile> (accessed 15 January 2024);

Vaden, *Before the Corridor of Shame*, pg. 38.

<sup>73</sup> Phone interview with Mrs. Ellen Simmons, conducted at Latta Community Center, 30 September 2023, 1:00 pm.

<sup>74</sup> Dobsrasko, “Equalization Schools: South Carolina’s History of Unequal Education.”

<https://ldhi.library.cofc.edu/exhibits/show/equalization-schools>”, (accessed 5 November 2023).

<sup>75</sup> Latta remains a demographically diverse community, with a %61.5 white and %31.6 percent Black population.

“Data US: Latta.” <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/latta-sc> (accessed 4 November 2023).

<sup>76</sup> Interview with Hazel Williams, conducted at Latta Community Center, 30 September 2023, 11:00 am.

<sup>77</sup> Phone interview with Mrs. Ellen Simmons, conducted at Latta Community Center, 30 September 2023, 1:00 pm.

Latimer High and Elementary School  
Name of Property

Dillon Co., South Carolina  
County and State

Latimer School. Other alumni were able to obtain master's and doctorate degrees.<sup>78</sup> Alumni entered various professional fields thanks to the education they received at Latimer, including some who later taught or worked at Latimer School. DCT/Latimer Alumni Association continues to meet and publishes an annual alumni yearbook, and the group raises funds to provide scholarships to Black students in Latta and other parts of Dillon County, keeping the educational spirit of Latimer School alive.<sup>79</sup>

### **Criterion C: Architecture**

Latimer High and Elementary School is also significant under Criterion C: Architecture at the local level as a locally rare example of Modern-style educational facilities constructed during the 1950s South Carolina equalization school program, which reflected the changing pedagogical ideals of the mid twentieth century. In the 1950s, South Carolina's State Educational Finance Commission (SEFC) approved school construction plans and distributed state funds to districts "with the intent of equalizing facilities between the races." The SEFC created a guide for architects designing these new facilities in order to ensure proper school plants, interior layouts conducive to education, and appropriate building sites, all as a prerequisite for distributing funds to the applicant districts.<sup>80</sup> Their oversight likely accounts for the stylistic similarities for the more than 700 equalization schools constructed across the state. The Latimer High and Elementary School buildings and their subsequent additions were designed by Sumter, S.C.-based architectural firm James and DuRant (later James, DuRant, Mathew & Shelley). Eugene DuRant of Elliott, South Carolina and Robert Shelton James were both graduates of Clemson University. The firm specialized in Modernist education buildings and designed an addition to Dillon Public School (white, in the town of Dillon) in 1957 and Latta Elementary School in 1955.<sup>81</sup>

Equalization schools like Latimer were built to reflect changing design and pedagogical ideals in educational architecture. While schools of the past focused on teaching individual subjects through lecture alone, educational experts of the mid-twentieth century began to also emphasize intellectual development and students' individual learning needs. Schools were now expected to teach basic skills, teach students to think, instruct in multiple fields of knowledge, explore the abilities of individual students, provide a healthy and safe environment, help students develop character, teach home economics and vocational skills, and develop civic confidence.<sup>82</sup>

Latimer High and Elementary School's exterior design and interior finishes followed the hallmark twentieth century educational recommendations of *School Architecture: Its Principles*

---

<sup>78</sup> Phone interview with Mrs. Ellen Simmons, conducted at Latta Community Center, 30 September 2023, 1:00 pm.  
Phone interview with Roosevelt Ladson, 4 September 2023.

<sup>79</sup> Mission statement, "Alumni 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Reunion. Home of Latimer Hornets, November 23-24, 2007" booklet, pg. 1.

<sup>80</sup> Dobrasko, National Register nomination, "Equalization Schools in South Carolina, 1951-1960", Multiple Property Listing Form, 2009.

<sup>81</sup> Wilson, National Register nomination, "Dillon Graded School and Dillon Public School", 2014. Construction plaque in the lobby of Latta Middle School (formerly Latta Elementary).

<sup>82</sup> Engelhardt, *Planning Secondary School Buildings*, pg. 4-6.

Latimer High and Elementary School

Dillon Co., South Carolina

Name of Property

County and State

*and Practices*, the widely used campus planning book by John Joseph Donovan. According to Donovan, schools should be hygienic and well-lit by carefully planned natural and artificial light, while temperatures and ventilation should be regulated through planned physical plants and the use of natural air flow.<sup>83</sup> Cafeterias were to be located in the corner or at the end of a building to mitigate distracting odors in the rest of the building, and were to be divided into designated seating areas, a lunch counter, and an enclosed kitchen and storage area (figure 10).<sup>84</sup> Indoor gymnasiums with high open truss ceilings and shower facilities would allow children to enjoy physical activity in all weather. Donovan's book was first published in 1921 and guided school planning throughout the twentieth century. Prior to the equalization program, however, few Black schools were equipped or built to these design specifications due to funding shortages created by racist educational policies in South Carolina and other southern states.<sup>85</sup>

Midcentury treatises on educational architecture referred to campuses as the "school plant," a term defined as "the buildings and facilities located in the area of a school that are used by students or used to directly support the school."<sup>86</sup> School plant design was intended to reflect the educational needs of the students rather than focus on exterior grandeur. Architect William Caudill's 1954 book, *Toward Better School Design*, emphasized modernist design elements popularized by contemporary architects including Robert Neutra, Walter Gropius, and Eero Saarinen over the formal, centrally planned buildings that had been preferred before World War Two in American educational design.<sup>87</sup> Caudill included studies on light and ventilation that concluded that strip windows within a simple one-story school "envelope" were ideal.<sup>88</sup> For economy of design, steel structures for gymnasiums and low-pitched roofs of web truss construction were preferable.<sup>89</sup> Large overhangs supported by cantilevered steel structural members provided indirect natural light conducive to reading in the classroom.<sup>90</sup> Latimer High and Elementary School exhibits all of these architectural "best practices" of mid-century educational architecture.

Longitudinally planned one-story school buildings "emphasized environment, education, and economy" and were believed to be better for the emotional and physical needs of students.<sup>91</sup> While "school buildings of the past have only achieved 'beauty' by reducing the window area to allow for decorative treatment of the exterior", modern school designers argued that the preferred

---

<sup>83</sup> Donovan, *School Architecture: Principles and Practices*, 203-209, 260-267, 523-527.

<sup>84</sup> Donovan, *School Architecture: Principles and Practices*, 515-522.

<sup>85</sup> Donovan, *School Architecture: Principles and Practices*, 223-232.

<sup>86</sup> "School plant", *Law Insider*, <https://www.lawinsider.com/dictionary/school-plant#:~:text=School%20Plant%20means%20all%20buildings,to%20directly%20support%20the%20school>. (accessed 12 November 2023)

<sup>87</sup> Caudill, *Toward Better School Design*, 13-17.

<sup>88</sup> Caudill, *Toward Better School Design*, 56, 76-80.

<sup>89</sup> Caudill, *Toward Better School Design*, 90, 100-101.

<sup>90</sup> Caudill, *Toward Better School Design*, 64-66.

<sup>91</sup> Caudill, *Toward Better Building Designs*, 2-4, 90. Dobrasko, National Register nomination, "Equalization Schools in South Carolina, 1951-1960", Multiple Property Listing Form, 2009. Forsi, Tricia. "Mid-Century School Design and its Role in the Pursuit of Education." *PMA Findings*. <https://pmapdx.com/blog-pmafndings/14344/mid-century-school-design-and-its-role-in-the-pursuit-of-education> (accessed 10 November 2023).



Latimer High and Elementary School  
Name of Property

Dillon Co., South Carolina  
County and State

“contemporary treatment refuses this separation of function and design.”<sup>92</sup> James and Durant reflected Modern preferences in their designs for Latimer High School and Elementary School in their use of one-story campus buildings with large, horizontally oriented banks of windows that extend nearly to the roof overhang, greatly increasing natural light inside the building and dispensing with exterior ornament such as casing or window cornices to frame small openings.

Latimer’s campus has typical midcentury modern organizational principles of utilizing indoor and outdoor corridors to connect later campus additions and expansions.<sup>93</sup> Both the elementary and high school sections of the campus are laid out in a typical long ell plan, with classrooms on each side of a long hall. Caudill’s case study examples placed dining, administrative, and recreational units in the short bay of the ell plan. The plan was conducive for later additions to be constructed cheaply and without disrupting campus flow.<sup>94</sup> Latimer High School diverges by placing the gymnasium at the other end of the ell plan, likely because the gym was utilized by both the high school students and the elementary school students, who could access the gymnasium via a cover breezeway connected to their building, or via a set of exterior doors that open into the rear U shaped courtyard.

Equalization schools, following the recommendations of educational experts, included several dedicated rooms in their campuses to provide for the improved secondary school offerings that better equipped students for college or employment, and for better health and quality of life for students.<sup>95</sup> Ideal secondary school plants should include spaces for administration, assembly, physical education, music, art, business, science, home economics, agricultural or shop spaces, dining, student center, academic, and library units designed for “flexibility, fluidity versatility convertibility, expandability.”<sup>96</sup> Latimer High and Elementary School featured each of these key units, and the gymnasium provides a prime example of the desired flexibility in design in its dual athletic, auditorium, and gathering design, replete with sliding storage racks below the stage for metal frame folding chairs (photo 17). Following the guidelines set by mid-century school planning experts, the Latimer campus is arranged with demarcated interior units within a unified campus: building service and circulation; administration, staff, and pupil service; instruction spaces; general units including auditoriums and gymnasium.<sup>97</sup> Latimer’s classroom spaces were equipped with moveable furniture and built in storage space for each student, such as cubbies and coat storage racks, another hallmark recommendation for fostering students’ individuality.<sup>98</sup>

### Other Modern Schools in Latta

<sup>92</sup> Engelhard, *Planning Secondary School Buildings*, pg. 36.

<sup>93</sup> Caudill, *Toward Better School Design*, 160.

<sup>94</sup> Caudill, *Toward Better School Design*, 152-154.

<sup>95</sup> Dobrasko, National Register nomination, “Equalization Schools in South Carolina, 1951-1960”, Multiple Property Listing Form, 2009.

<sup>96</sup> Caudill, *Toward Better School Design*, 139, 149; Engelhardt, *Planning Secondary Buildings*, 29.

<sup>97</sup> Engelhardt, *Planning Secondary School Buildings*, pg. 37.

<sup>98</sup> Forsi, “Mid-Century School Design and its Role in the Pursuit of Education.” *PMA Findings*.

<https://pmapdx.com/blog-pmafindings/14344/mid-century-school-design-and-its-role-in-the-pursuit-of-education> (accessed 10 November 2023). Peabody, *Public Schools of South Carolina: A Report of the South Carolina Education Survey Committee*, pg. 37. The Peabody report advised, for example, that stationary desks should be replaced with movable furniture, and adequate storage should be provided.

Latimer High and Elementary School  
Name of Property

Dillon Co., South Carolina  
County and State

In addition to Latimer School, other local expressions of mid-century Modern educational facilities include the former white Latta Elementary School (1955), now Latta Middle School; Latta High School (1974), which was built adjacent to the elementary school campus (figure 18); and a gymnasium building (1955) used by the white elementary and high schools, and which was heavily renovated in 2013 to become the Ellis Performing Arts Center.

Besides the Latimer campus, the only other extant local example of an equalization school is the former Latta Elementary School, a segregated white facility constructed in 1955. Built by the Boyle Construction Company of Sumter, this project received \$223,140 of initial SEFC funding with an additional \$11,500 being allocated while work was in progress. This project also included a new gymnasium building discussed in more detail below. Additions were constructed in 1962, 1969, 1970, and 1972, and the building was remodeled in 1983 and 1997. Renovations in 1997 replaced the original windows, installed steel stud and sheetrock walls in the school, and removed old fixtures and ceilings.<sup>99</sup> The school is a one-story CMU building with a red brick veneer in American running bond. Since it was designed by James and DuRant, the same architects who designed Latimer High School and Elementary School, Latta Middle School exhibits similar Modern design features including sexpartite banks of metal windows (which have been modified, partially enclosed, and fitted with air conditioning units), a flat roof with projecting painted metal overhangs, steel entry doors, and minimal ornamentation. Its façade faces Academy Street and the principal entrance has a flat roofed projecting overhang supported by two brick columns with a single band of cast stone approximately five foot from the paved walkway leading to the entry doors (figure 14). The building exhibits an irregular E plan (figure 13). The interior has a cafeteria/kitchen, administrative wing, and classroom wing that are connected by interior hallways. The midcentury façade has been refaced with a gable roofed new entrance with a stucco veneer on the central extension of the E plan, which was added in 1997 (figure 15). This campus was converted into Latta Middle School after the district's 1970 integration.<sup>100</sup>

To the north of the former elementary school and fronting on US 301 is the Ellis Performing Arts center, which was built in 1955 as the original gymnasium building for the elementary school as

---

<sup>99</sup> Article, N.d. "Work started on Latta School project as \$172,200 contract goes to Boyle Co", vertical file, Dillon County Library. *The State*, "Sumter Firm Gets Latta Job," 14 April 1955, pg. 3B. *The State*, "\$2 Million SC School Projects OKd", 9 September 1955, pg. 1. "Latta School Facilities", <https://www.dillon3.k12.sc.us/districtInformation.php> (accessed 15 January 2024). A historic aerial image from 1994 shows the current configuration of Latta High School and Latta Middle School after their various additions were completed. 1994 aerial at 602 N. Richardson St., Latta, SC, Historic Aerials, <https://www.historicaerials.com/viewer> (accessed 15 January 2024); *The State*, "Advertisement for Bids", 9 March 1997, pg. 74. A plaque in Latta Middle (formerly Elementary) notes that an addition was designed by James and Durant and erected by Boozer and Wharton, contractors.

<sup>100</sup> Dillon District 3 staff and faculty were not able to verify when Latta Middle School was created. The first mention of Latta Middle School occurs in an article titled "Pee Dee Education Grant Recipient" in *Florence Morning News*, 28 September 1992, pg. 3. Phone interview with Mr. Larry Legette, Director of Plant Operations for Dillon County Schools District 3, 19 January 2023, 10:00 a.m. The current Latta Elementary School (300 Viking Drive, Latta) was constructed in 2014. "Latta School Facilities", <https://www.dillon3.k12.sc.us/districtInformation.php> (accessed 15 January 2024).

Latimer High and Elementary School  
Name of Property

Dillon Co., South Carolina  
County and State

well as the adjacent white high school campus (figure 17). Though dating to the mid-century era and built with equalization funding, in 2011 the building underwent a \$2.5-million renovation that took two years to complete. It reopened in June 2013 with an overhauled state-of-the-art performance space in the interior, as well as a totally new facade.<sup>101</sup> The one-story building has a projecting flat roofed entrance with steel doors with glazed panels, between which are vertically oriented ribbon windows with steel frames. The overhang is supported by curved banded brick piers, above which is a stepped geometric cornice with lettering reading “The Ellis Performing Arts Center.” The rest of the building has a red brick running bonded veneer, painted metal overhangs, and textured CMU courses at the base of the building.

While the renovated Ellis Center included some midcentury-inspired décor upon its opening, the property’s transformation into an entertainment space, combined with its exterior changes, undercut its ability to represent its original use as a 1950s public school gymnasium. The former Latta Elementary retains material and stylistic elements from its era of construction as a segregated white elementary school in 1954 through its veneer, massing, window fenestration, and flat overhanging roof. However, the building has been modified several times through additions and stylistic updates, including a new façade and entrance. These changes do not completely undermine its ability to represent its original midcentury context, however the extent of alterations exceeds those that have been made to the Latimer campus, making the latter the most intact local representation of the type of Modern design used by the equalization program.

One other, post-equalization Modern school in Latta is the current Latta High School, located at 618 N. Richardson Street on the north side of the former elementary school and gymnasium/Ellis Center (figures 13 and 18). Both the 1974 high school and 1955 elementary school were designed by James and DuRant and have a similar minimalist Modern aesthetic to Latimer High and Elementary Schools. The high school built in 1974 as an integrated facility after the previous high school building located at the same site was destroyed in a fire. The high school was also expanded with additions in 1976, 1981, 1992, and 1998 and remodeled in 1992, 1996, and 2014.<sup>102</sup>

Latta High School is a one-story building with an asymmetrical U plan. A classroom wing with a long central hallway connects the two outer arms of the U to create an internal courtyard. A gymnasium (which is one-story but taller than the rest of the building) is wrapped by classrooms and is connected to the northernmost arm of the overall U plan. The high school has a claustrophobic brick covered walkway with a flat roof that leads to a covered waiting area next to the parking lot. The building has a sand-colored running bond brick veneer but unlike the c.1955 elementary school, the flat roof has no projecting overhangs, only a painted flat metal cornice feature. The fenestration is comprised of pairs of one-over-one metal sash windows with a course of brick

---

<sup>101</sup> “Ellis Performing Arts Center.” South Carolina Picture Project, <https://www.scpictureproject.org/dillon-county/ellis-performing-arts-center.html> (accessed 15 January 2024). *Florence Morning News*, “Performing Arts Now Have Home in Latta,” 23 June 2013, pg. 1, 5. *The State*, “Sumter Firm Gets Latta Job,” 14 April 1955, pg. 3B.

<sup>102</sup> *Charleston News and Courier*, “Blaze Guts Latta School,” 31 August 1969, pg. 1A; *The State*, “Fire Razes Latta School,” 31 March 1972, pg. 11B. “Historic Latta,” <https://sciway3.net/proctor/dillon/history/lattahigh.html> (accessed 18 January 2024). “Latta School Facilities,” <https://www.dillon3.k12.sc.us/districtInformation.php> (accessed 15 January 2024).

Latimer High and Elementary School  
Name of Property

Dillon Co., South Carolina  
County and State

between them. The building is recessed from US 301 by a parking lot with a circa 2000 aluminum fence supported by brick piers. The entrance, a stuccoed gable roofed overhang with curved banded stuccoed masonry supports that lead to glazed steel doors with glazing panels around them (similar to those found on the performing arts center) were added circa 2014 (figure 16).

While Latta High School speaks to the enduring influence of Modern design into the 1970s, much of its current footprint was built within the last fifty years, and its original 1974 construction year is outside the period of significance for Latimer High School and Elementary School. It also was not built through the state equalization program and is more closely associated with a post-integration era of school construction and design, when school districts like Latta's were for the first time having to account for all of their local residents when planning new school plants, not just strictly those who were white or Black.

### Conclusion

Latimer High and Elementary School is locally significant under Criterion A: Education and Ethnic Heritage – Black as the only public school for African American residents of the town of Latta from its 1954 construction until integration in 1970. It is also locally significant under Criterion C: Architecture as a remarkably intact example of a midcentury Modern school plant constructed through the state equalization program. Latimer School was a vital institution for the local African American community and possesses key associations with the midcentury struggle over equality and justice in public education in Latta and South Carolina as a whole.

---

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

The Latimer School complex is located on 6 previously vacant parcels that were part of the subdivision of Milton Berry's estate in January 1924 (figure 3). The Dillon County School District 3 purchased the parcels from private owners on February 19<sup>th</sup>, 1953 and consolidated them into one lot. The lot totaled 13.04 acres, which is the current size of the parcel still today.<sup>103</sup> After the school campus closed in 2014, Dillon County District 3 sold the lot to the Town of Latta in February 2017.<sup>104</sup>

The Latimer School complex continued in use as an educational facility and was modified to meet new educational needs. The classroom in the east side of the school (historic high school) became a kindergarten wing in 1992, and the school nurse's office in the high school was converted to a special need class room in the 1990s.<sup>105</sup> The school closed in 2014, when the elementary and kindergarten student body was transferred to the new Latta School complex in 2017.

---

<sup>103</sup> Dillon County Deed Book 58, pg. 600.

<sup>104</sup> Dillon County Deed Book 600, pg. 88.

<sup>105</sup> On site interview with Mr. Larry Legette, Director of Plant Operations for Dillon County Schools District 3, 29 September 2023, 11:00 am.

Latimer High and Elementary School  
Name of Property

Dillon Co., South Carolina  
County and State

---

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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

### Primary Sources

1954, 1957, 1959, and 1983 aerials at 122 Latimer Street, Latta, SC. Historic Aerials. Accessed January 4, 2024. <https://www.historicaerials.com/viewer>.

Anderson, Jesse T. *School Directory of South Carolina, 1954-1955*. South Carolina State Department of Education.

Caudill, William W. *Toward Better School Design*. New York: F.W. Dodge Corporation, 1954.

Dillon County Training School/ Latimer School Reunion booklet, 2009. Printed by DCT/Latimer Alumni Association.

Dillon County Training School / Latimer School Reunion booklet, 2005. Printed by DCT/Latimer Alumni Association.

Donovan, John J. *School Architecture: Principles and Practice*. New York: McMillan Company, 1921.

Engelhardt, N.L., N.L. Engelhardt Jr., and Stanton Leggett. *Planning Secondary School Buildings*. New York: Reinhold Publishing Corporation, 1949.

Ladson, Roosevelt. Interview with Christina R. Butler. Conducted via phone, 1:00 p.m., 4 September 2023.

Legette, Larry. On site interview with Christina R. Butler. Latimer Elementary and High School Campus, 11:00 am, 29 September 2023.

McClam, Enda. Interview with Christina R. Butler. Latta Community Center, 9:00 a.m., 30 September 2023.

McDaniel, Carolyn. On site interview with Christina R. Butler. Latimer Elementary and High School Campus, 11:00 am, 29 September 2023.

Owens, LeVern. Interview with Christina R. Butler. Conducted via phone, 11:00 a.m., 4 September 2023.

*Public Schools of South Carolina: A Report of the South Carolina Education Survey Committee*. Nashville, TN: Division of Surveys and Field Services, George Peabody College for Teachers, 1948.

Latimer High and Elementary School  
Name of Property

Dillon Co., South Carolina  
County and State

Simmons, Mrs. Ellen. Interview with Christina R. Butler. Conducted via phone from Latta Community Center, 1:00 p.m., 30 September 2023.

State Educational Finance Commission. *South Carolina's Educational Revolution: A Report of Progress in South Carolina*. Columbia: The State Educational Finance Commission, c. 1954.

State Superintendent of Education. *Ninety-ninths Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Education. State of South Carolina, 1954-55*. Columbia: State Budget and Control Board, 1956.

State Superintendent of Education. *Ninety-ninths Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Education. State of South Carolina, 1955-56*. Columbia: State Budget and Control Board, 1957.

State Superintendent of Education. *Ninety-ninths Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Education. State of South Carolina, 1966-1967*. Columbia: State Budget and Control Board, 1968.

State Superintendent of Education of the State of South Carolina, *Reports and Resolutions of South Carolina to the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina*. Columbia: State Budget and Control Board, 1945-1959.

Vaden, Luci. *Before the Corridor of Shame: The African American Fight of Equal Education After Jim Crow*. University of South Carolina dissertation, 2014.

Williams, Hazel. Interview with Christina R. Butler. Latta Community Center, 11:00 a.m., 30 September 2023.

#### Newspapers

*Charleston News and Courier*. Accessed digitally.

*Florence Morning News*. Accessed digitally.

*The Beaufort Gazette*. Accessed digitally.

*The Dillon Herald*. Microfilm accessed at Dillon County Public Library.

*The Latta Observer*. Microfilm accessed at Dillon County Public Library.

*The State Newspaper*. Accessed digitally.

*Sumter Watchman and Southron*. Accessed digitally.

#### Secondary Sources

Latimer High and Elementary School  
Name of Property

Dillon Co., South Carolina  
County and State

Allan, Clarence B. *A History of Latta Schools, Latta, SC.* South Carolina: Palmetto Polaris Consortium, 1974.

Bethea, Christopher Lynn. *A History of Latta, S.C.: Home of Champions.* N.d. Latta School history vertical file/binder. Historic Records Room, Dillon County Library.

Brigman, Nancy Green. "Latta Downtown Historic District." National Register Nomination Form. Accepted April 17, 1998.

Butler, Christina. "Pleasant Grove Elementary School." National Register Nomination Form. Accepted September 20, 2023.

DeLaine, J.A., Jr. Briggs v. Elliott: *Clarendon County's Quest for Equality.* Pine Brook, NJ: O. Gona Press, 2003.

Dobrasko, Rebekah. "South Carolina's Equalization Schools 1951-1960."  
<http://www.scequalizationschools.org>

Dobrasko, Rebekah. "Architectural Survey of Charleston County's School Equalization Program, 1951-1955." University of South Carolina Public History Program, April 2005.

Dobrasko, Rebekah. "Equalization Schools: South Carolina's History of Unequal Education."  
<https://ldhi.library.cofc.edu/exhibits/show/equalization-schools>

Dobrasko, Rebekah. "Equalization Schools in South Carolina, 1951-1960." National Register Multiple Property Listing Form. Submitted August 21<sup>st</sup>, 2009.

Dulaney, W. Marvin. "Briggs v. Elliott." *South Carolina Encyclopedia*.  
<https://www.scencyclopedia.org/sce/entries/briggs-v-elliott/> (accessed 12 November 2023).

Fesak, Mary and Katherine Pemberton. "W. Gresham Meggett High and Elementary School." National Register Nomination Form. Accepted February 20, 2018.

Forsi, Tricia. "Mid-Century School Design and its Role in the Pursuit of Education." *PMA Findings*. <https://pmapdx.com/blog-pmafindings/14344/mid-century-school-design-and-its-role-in-the-pursuit-of-education> (accessed 10 November 2023).

Lowe, Stephen H. *The Slow Undoing: The Federal Courts and the Long Struggle for Civil Rights in South Carolina.* Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2022.

Richardson, Katherine H. "African-American Primary and Secondary Public School Buildings in South Carolina, ca. 1895-1954". National Register Multiple Property Nomination Form. Accepted March 7<sup>th</sup>, 1996.

Latimer High and Elementary School  
Name of Property

Dillon Co., South Carolina  
County and State

Thomas, June. *Struggling to Learn: An Intimate History of School Desegregation in South Carolina*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2022.

Vertical file collection, "Latimer School", Historic Records Room, Dillon County Library.

Vertical file collection, "Latta School", Historic Records Room, Dillon County Library.

Weyeneth, Robert R. "The Architecture of Racial Segregation: The Challenges of Preserving the Problematic Past." *The Public Historian* 27, no. 4 (Fall 2005): 11-44.

Wilson, Caroline. "Dillon Graded School and Dillon Public School." National Register Nomination Form. Accepted August 15, 2014.

---

**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: \_\_\_\_\_

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** \_\_\_\_\_



Latimer High and Elementary School  
Name of Property

Dillon Co., South Carolina  
County and State

---

## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** 13.04

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: 34° 19.964'N | Longitude: 79° 25.542'W |
| 2. Latitude: 34° 19.910'N | Longitude: 79° 25.469'W |
| 3. Latitude: 34° 19.876'N | Longitude: 79° 25.478'W |
| 4. Latitude: 34° 19.800'N | Longitude: 79° 25.614'W |
| 5. Latitude: 34° 19.848'N | Longitude: 79° 25.672'W |

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

Latimer High and Elementary School is situated on a 13.04 acre parcel identified by Dillon County as Tax Map Parcel number 105-13-06-018. The property is bounded on the east/northeast by East Leitner Street/ State Road S-17-160, on the north/northwest by Latimer Street, on the west/southwest by Mace Court, and on the south by a large partially wooded and partially cleared privately owned parcel known as Tax Map Parcel 119-00-00-001. The physical address is 122 Latimer Street. For further clarification, please see the attached boundary map.

Latimer High and Elementary School  
Name of Property

Dillon Co., South Carolina  
County and State

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary includes the historic school building, its noncontributing and contributing outbuildings, parking lots, playground area, yard, and immediate surroundings. Boundaries are taken from the legal description in the Dillon County deeds for the parcel. The boundaries and acreage remain the same as when Dillon County School District 3 purchased the land to build Latimer High and Elementary School in 1954.

---

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Christina R. Butler  
organization: Butler Preservation L.C.  
street & number: 6 Hampden Court  
city or town: Charleston state: SC zip code: 29403  
e-mail: c.rae.butler@gmail.com  
telephone: 843-469-9623  
date: 27 January 2024

---

**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**

Latimer High and Elementary School  
Name of Property

Dillon Co., South Carolina  
County and State

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: Latimer High and Elementary School

City or Vicinity: Latta

County: Dillon

State: South Carolina

Photographer: Christina R. Butler

Date Photographed: September 29, 2023 and January 20, 2024.

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

1 of \_\_\_\_.

Photo 1: façade (north face) of high school gymnasium and easternmost section of high school classrooms facing south

photo 2: exterior doors on high school façade leading into classroom hallway, facing south

photo 3: high school façade facing northeast, with gymnasium roof visible. The single window bays illuminate the administration unit while the multi-bay windows are for the classrooms.

photo 4: high school and cafeteria facade (which projects forward) facing southwest.

photo 5: the mowed yard with the trees along the southern property line to the south of the high school building, facing south.

photo 6: entry into high school administrative area, facing south.

photo 7: perspective view of cafeteria and kitchen facing east.

photo 8: Western elevation of cafeteria and kitchen units facing southeast in perspective view.

photo 9: western elevation of the cafeteria and kitchen units facing southeast, showing original exterior doors, the 1968 addition to the cafeteria, and the 1992 rearmost/southern classroom addition in perspective view.

photo 10: southern elevation of the 1992 classroom addition, high school building, facing north.

photo 11: The agricultural building with the covered walkway connecting to the classrooms unit, facing east.

photo 12: egress doors on the rear (south) elevation gymnasium and easternmost classroom unit, facing north.

photo 13: perspective view of the gymnasium and technology/music wing, facing northwest.

Latimer High and Elementary School  
Name of Property

Dillon Co., South Carolina  
County and State

- photo 14: the high school gymnasium, facing east toward the stage.
- photo 15: the gym as viewed from the stage, facing west toward the classroom hallway.
- photo 16: perspective view of gym stage facing northwest.
- photo 17: rolling chair storage below the auditorium stage.
- photo 18: the physical plant, facing west toward the 1954 Fitzgibbons Boiler Co. steam boiler that heated the buildings.
- photo 19: the physical plant, facing northwest in perspective view toward the mechanical systems and steam tank.
- photo 20: storage space (formerly band room) in easternmost high school unit behind the gymnasium stage
- photo 21: hallway leading to classroom spaces in the easternmost high school unit
- photo 22: the technology classroom, with original windows and furniture.
- photo 23: the original wooden laminate door leading to the technology classroom.
- photo 24: cafeteria door viewed from administrative vestibule, facing west.
- photo 25: the cafeteria with 1960s tables and pipe railings, facing east to the administrative vestibule.
- Photo 26: 1966 cafeteria wing additions on the western elevation of the high school, facing south.
- photo 27: cafeteria looking south toward the lunch counter and the western-projecting kitchen.
- photo 28: The rear/southern yard facing east toward the non-contributing picnic pavilion.
- photo 29: kitchen sink and concession window facing east.
- photo 30: hallway to southern cafeteria egress facing south, with concession window visible.
- photo 31: 1954 high school construction plaque in entry vestibule.
- photo 32: entry vestibule looking southeast into the administrative officers and classroom hallway.
- photo 33: classroom hall looking north to the vestibule.
- photo 34: high school unit hallway standing near vestibule facing east.
- photo 35: the eastern end of the high school unit hallway facing east into the gymnasium era.
- photo 36: An example of the original painted metal door jambs and wooden laminate doors in the administrative area facing south.
- photo 37: an administrative or faculty office as viewed from the classroom unit hallway facing north (room 112).
- photo 38: classroom 106, representative of the classrooms found in the 1954 high school, facing east toward the classroom storage.
- photo 39: classroom 106, facing west toward the teacher's area.
- photo 40: egress doors in the high school hallway leading to the rear/southern courtyard area.
- photo 41: science classroom looking east towards the lab stations.
- photo 42: science classroom looking west toward the storage units.
- photo 43: the 1992 classroom addition hallway facing north to the original high school.
- photo 44: 1992 construction plaque.
- photo 45: representative classroom (number 118) in the 1992 addition, facing north.
- Photo 46: north elevation of the agricultural building and non-contributing garage building, facing southwest
- Photo 47: the northern elevation of the agricultural building in perspective view, facing southeast.

Latimer High and Elementary School  
Name of Property

Dillon Co., South Carolina  
County and State

Photo 48: the rear/south elevation of the gym, a covered walkway, and the north elevation of the agricultural building facing west.

Image 49: communication tower to the south of the elementary school in the rear courtyard.

Image 50: non contributed wood frame storage building to the south of the rear driveway, facing southwest from East Leitner Street (Google Street view, July 2023).

Photo 51: noncontributing entry pavilion in front of the high school's façade, facing south.

Photo 52: southern elevation of the agricultural building facing northwest.

Photo 53: connecting walkway facing west toward the high school.

Photo 54: connecting walkway connection facing east toward the elementary school.

Image 55: façade of the connecting walkway facing south.

Photo 56: covered walkway between the high school and elementary school facing north.

Photo 57: entrance to the elementary school facing south.

Photo 58: Latimer Elementary School construction plaque, located to the east of the entrance to the school.

Photo 59: perspective view of the elementary school entrance and non-contributing entry pavilion, facing northwest.

Photo 60: the elementary school façade, facing south.

Photo 61: secondary entrance to elementary east corner facing south.

Photo 62: perspective of the rear/southern elevation of the high school and its 1992 addition, facing northwest.

Photo 63: east elevation of elementary school in perspective view facing north, showing the original fenestration.

Photo 64: perspective view of the eastern elevation of the elementary school addition, facing south.

Photo 65: rear/southern and side/western elevation in perspective view, facing northeast.

Photo 66: Eastern elevation of elementary school and addition facing north.

Photo 67: Southern elevation of the elementary school, school addition, and library, facing north.

Photo 68: The rear egress doors and fenestration on the southern elevation of the elementary school leading to the administrative area, facing north.

Photo 69: perspective of the southern/rear elevation of the elementary school, noncontributing garage, gymnasium, technology/music wing, and agricultural building, facing northwest.

Photo 70: western elevation of the elementary school in perspective view, facing northeast.

Photo 71: the western elevation of the library addition, facing east from the rear courtyard. The 1970 addition can be seen in the background.

Photo 72: the western elevation of the elementary school ell, viewed from the library connecting hallway facing east.

Photo 73: rear elevation of Latimer high school classroom wing, facing north.

Photo 74: elementary school hallway facing east from administrative area.

Photo 75: the eastern end of the elementary school hallway, with hopper windows for the classrooms on each side.

Photo 76: original classroom door in the elementary school hallway

Photo 77: original administrative office facing north from the elementary school hallway

Photo 78: front office to the east of the entry area, facing east.

Photo 79: an elementary school room reused as a fitness center, facing west.

Latimer High and Elementary School  
Name of Property

Dillon Co., South Carolina  
County and State

- Photo 80: eastern end of elementary school hallway, with door leading to the ell and classroom addition, and a hallway leading to the library.
- Photo 81: library hallway facing south.
- Photo 82: the interior doors to the library.
- Photo 83: library egress doors facing south.
- Photo 84: original partition wall between the study spaces and the library facing southeast.
- Photo 85: library facing east to the reading nooks, with the office partition wall to the left.
- Photo 86: the library check out counter, facing west.
- Photo 87: original built in library work desk behind the check out area.
- Photo 88: egress doors to the Latimer Elementary school façade, facing north in the ell.
- Photo 89: elementary school hall in the easterly ell, facing south into the 1970 addition.
- Photo 90: egress doors to the rear courtyard, facing west.
- Photo 91: 1970 plaque for the elementary school addition.
- Photo 92: representative cubbies in classroom 106 in the 1956 elementary school ell.
- Photo 93: the partially enclosed windows, entry door, and blackboard in classroom 106.
- Photo 94: representative classroom in the 1970 addition, with built in cubbies.
- Photo 95: bus parking lot, formerly baseball fields, facing south.
- Photo 96: west elevation of agricultural building and covered walkway connecting to the high school in perspective view facing northeast.
- Photo 97: the west elevation of the gymnasium where it engages with the high school classroom unit, facing west.
- Photo 98: the east elevation of the high school, which houses the technology unit and physical plant, facing southwest.
- Photo 99: the rear/southern yard facing southwest toward Shed #2 (noncontributing).
- Photo 100: agricultural building classroom looking east from western entry.
- Photo 101: agricultural building classroom looking southeast from western entry.
- Photo 102: central classroom of agricultural building looking east to rear/easternmost room.
- Photo 103: central classroom of agricultural building in perspective, facing southeast.
- Photo 104: rear/easternmost classroom of agricultural building, facing south.
- Photo 105: agricultural building bathroom, facing north from central classroom.

### **Index of Figures**

- Figure 1: Undated (circa 1954) newspaper clipping showing the newly completed Latimer High School. Vertical files, "Latimer School", Dillon County Public Library.
- Figure 2: Historical summary and circa 1974 photograph of Latimer High School after the cafeteria had been constructed. Submitted by Isaiah Collington and appearing in *A History of Latta Schools, Latta, SC*.
- Figure 3: The subdivision plat of Milton Berry's estate. Parcels 1 through 6 are the Latimer School campus parcel. Plat annexed to Dillon County Deed Book 58, pg. 600
- Figure 4: A 1992 aerial view of the Latimer School campus, after the final classroom addition had been added to the rear of the high school behind the cafeteria. Provided by Ms. Carolyn McDaniel, alumnus.
- Figure 5: A facsimile of a page from the 1963 Latimer High School Yearbook showing students at a school parade.

Latimer High and Elementary School  
Name of Property

Dillon Co., South Carolina  
County and State

Figure 6: The basketball team plays in the gym circa 1960s. Photograph from DCT/Latimer School Alumni Reunion Book, 2009, pg. 11.

Figure 7: The flag corps poses for the school yearbook, circa 1965. Reproduced in the DCT/Latimer School Alumni Reunion Book, 2009, pg. 9.

Figure 8: The elementary school principal (Mr. McBryde) and secretary (not named) in the school offices circa 1960s. Photograph from DCT/Latimer School Alumni Reunion Book, 2009, pg. 9.

Figure 9: First graduating class of Latimer High School, 1955. Reproduced Photograph from DCT/Latimer School Alumni Reunion Book, 2007, pg. 5.

Figure 10: Ideal layout for a cafeteria and lunchroom, from Donovan, *School Architecture: Its Principles and Practices*, pg. 516.

Figure 11: An approximate floor plan of Latimer High School showing fire evacuation points. The plan is simplified and does not correctly reflect the interior layout of the classroom unit to the east of the gym, nor projections on the elevations.

Figure 12: Approximate floor plan of Latimer Elementary School, showing the current health clinic uses of the historic classroom and administrative areas.

Figure 13: Google Earth image showing the floorplans and spatial arrangement of Latta Middle School, Latta Elementary School, and Ellis Performing Arts Center.

Figure 14: August 2023 Google Street view of the 1954 portion of Latta Middle School's façade, facing east from East Academy Street.

Figure 15: August 2023 Google Street view of 1997 entrance on the façade of Latta Middle School, facing north from East Academy Street.

Figure 16: August 2023 Google Street view of the façade of Latta High School, facing west from US 301.

Figure 17: March 2023 Google Street view of the Ellis Performing Arts Center façade, facing west from US 301.

Figure 18: A framed perspective aerial rendering of Latta High School, with Latta Elementary School (now Middle School) in the background, by James, DuRant, James & Mathews, architects.

**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

Latimer High and Elementary School  
Name of Property

Dillon Co., South Carolina  
County and State

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.

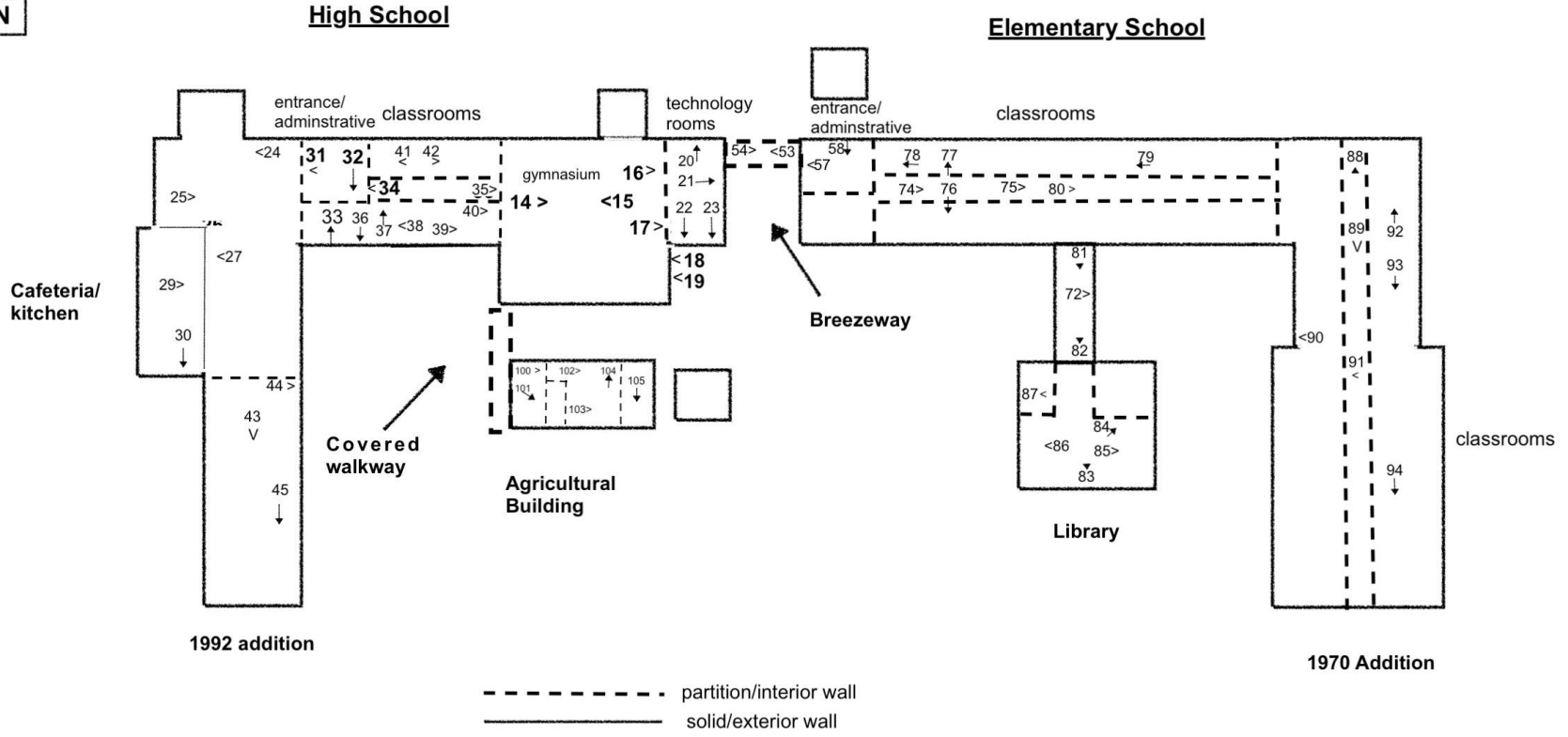
DRAFT





Exterior image Key:  
Latimer High School and  
Elementary School

Google



**Not to Scale**

Interior image key.

# Latimer High and Elementary School

## Site Map & Construction Phases

1954

1956

1966

1968

1970

Post-1970

\* = noncontributing



Google

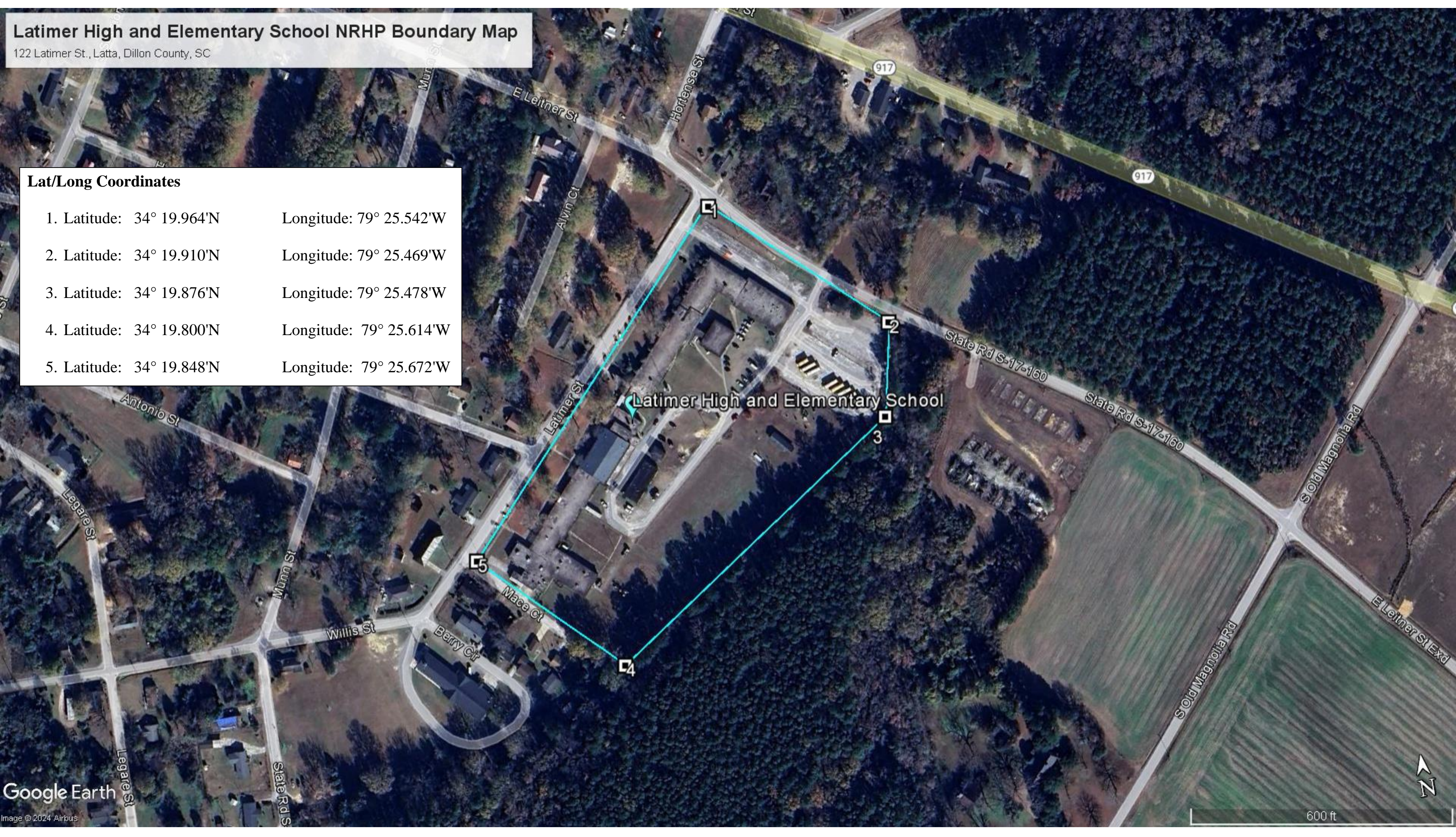


# Latimer High and Elementary School NRHP Boundary Map

122 Latimer St., Latta, Dillon County, SC

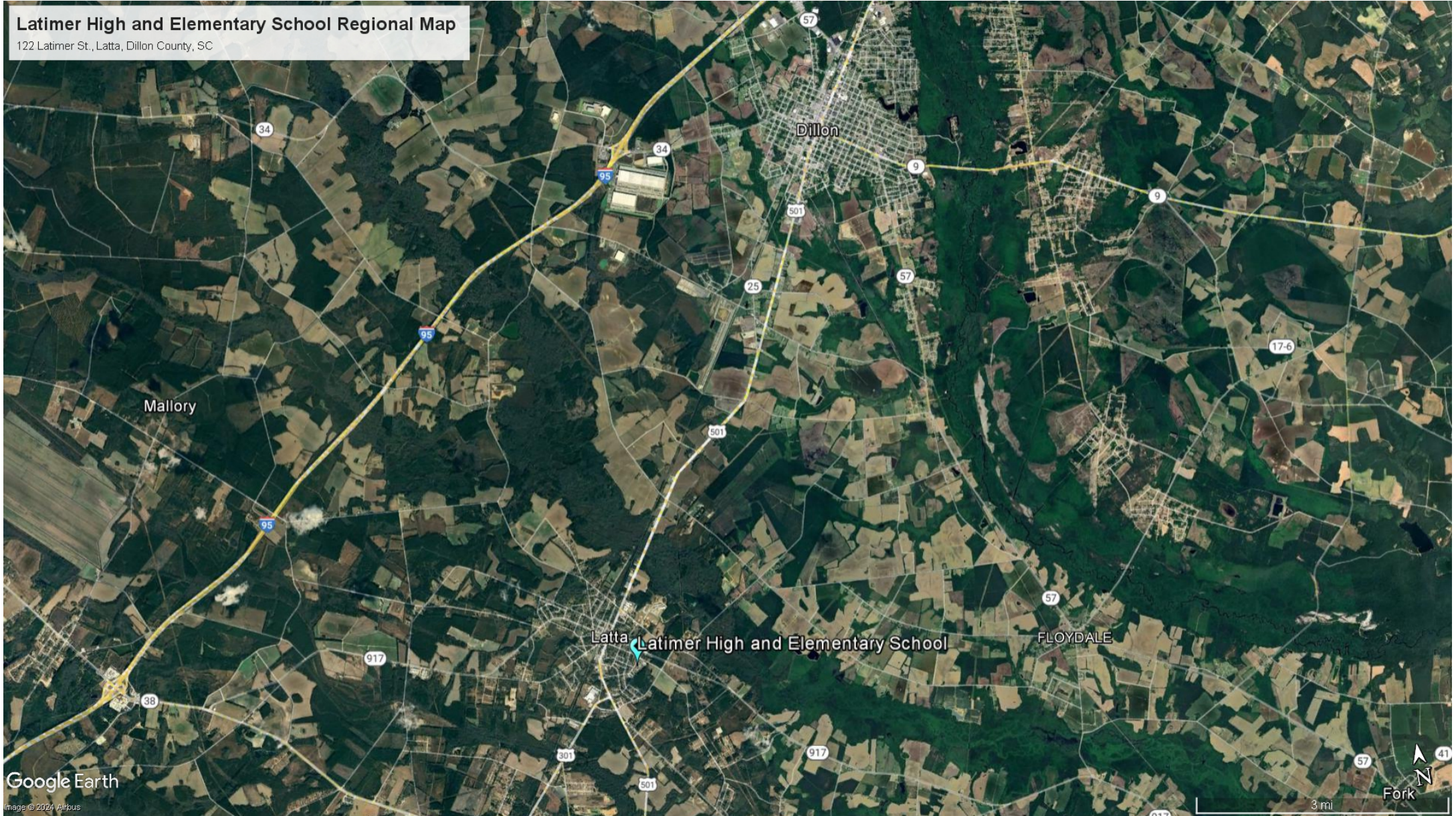
## Lat/Long Coordinates

- |                           |                         |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 34° 19.964'N | Longitude: 79° 25.542'W |
| 2. Latitude: 34° 19.910'N | Longitude: 79° 25.469'W |
| 3. Latitude: 34° 19.876'N | Longitude: 79° 25.478'W |
| 4. Latitude: 34° 19.800'N | Longitude: 79° 25.614'W |
| 5. Latitude: 34° 19.848'N | Longitude: 79° 25.672'W |



# Latimer High and Elementary School Regional Map

122 Latimer St., Latta, Dillon County, SC



Google Earth

Image © 2024 Airbus

3 mi

Fork

Photo 1



Photo 2



Photo 3





Photo 4



Photo 5



Photo 6



Photo 7



Photo 8



Photo 9



Photo 10



Photo 11





Photo 12



Photo 13



Photo 14



Photo 15

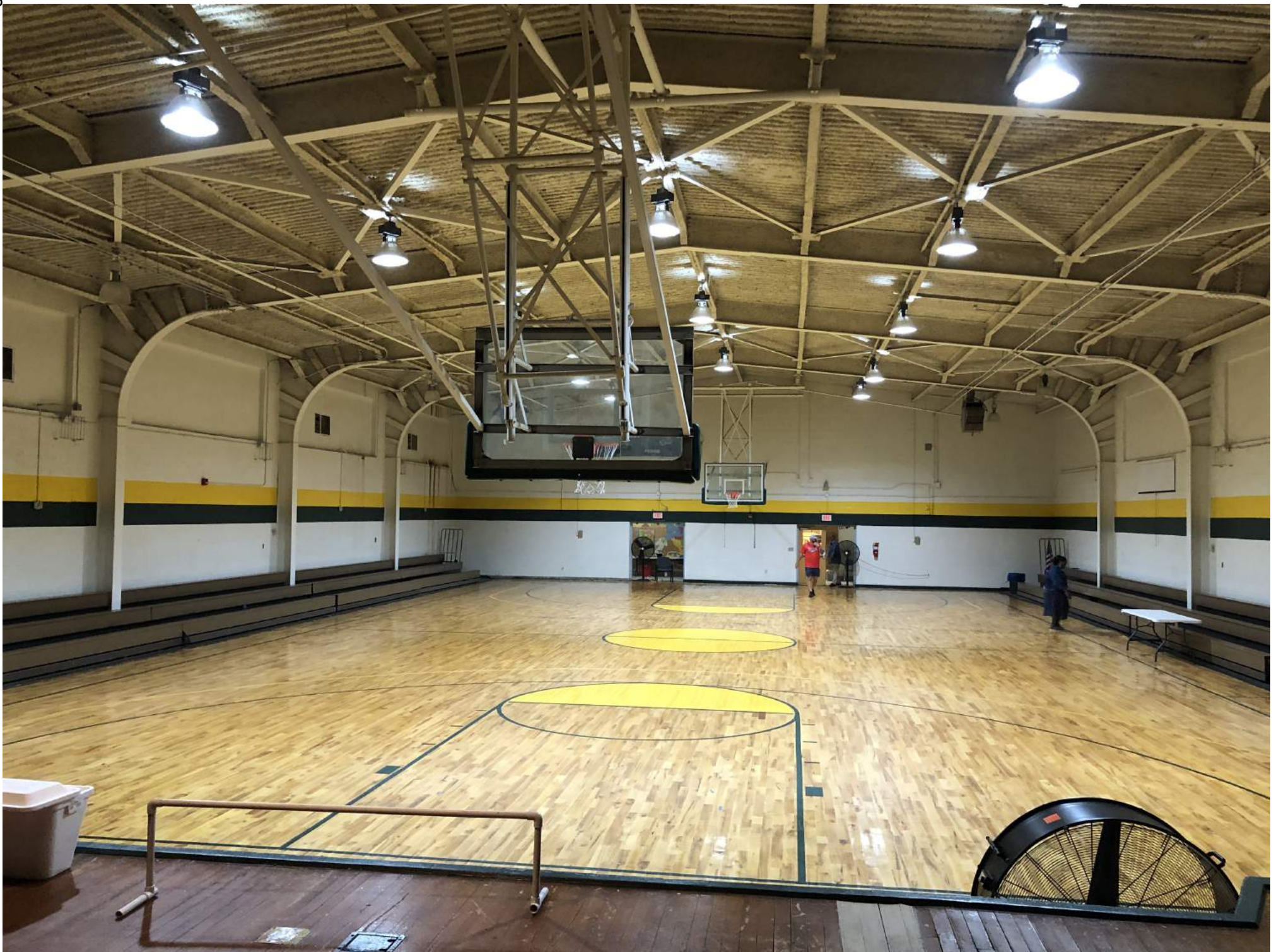


Photo 16



Photo 17



Photo 18



FITZGIBBONS  
BOILER CO., INC.  
NEW YORK - N.

FITZGIBBONS  
BOILER CO., INC.  
Y. - OSWEGO



Photo 19





Photo 20



Photo 21

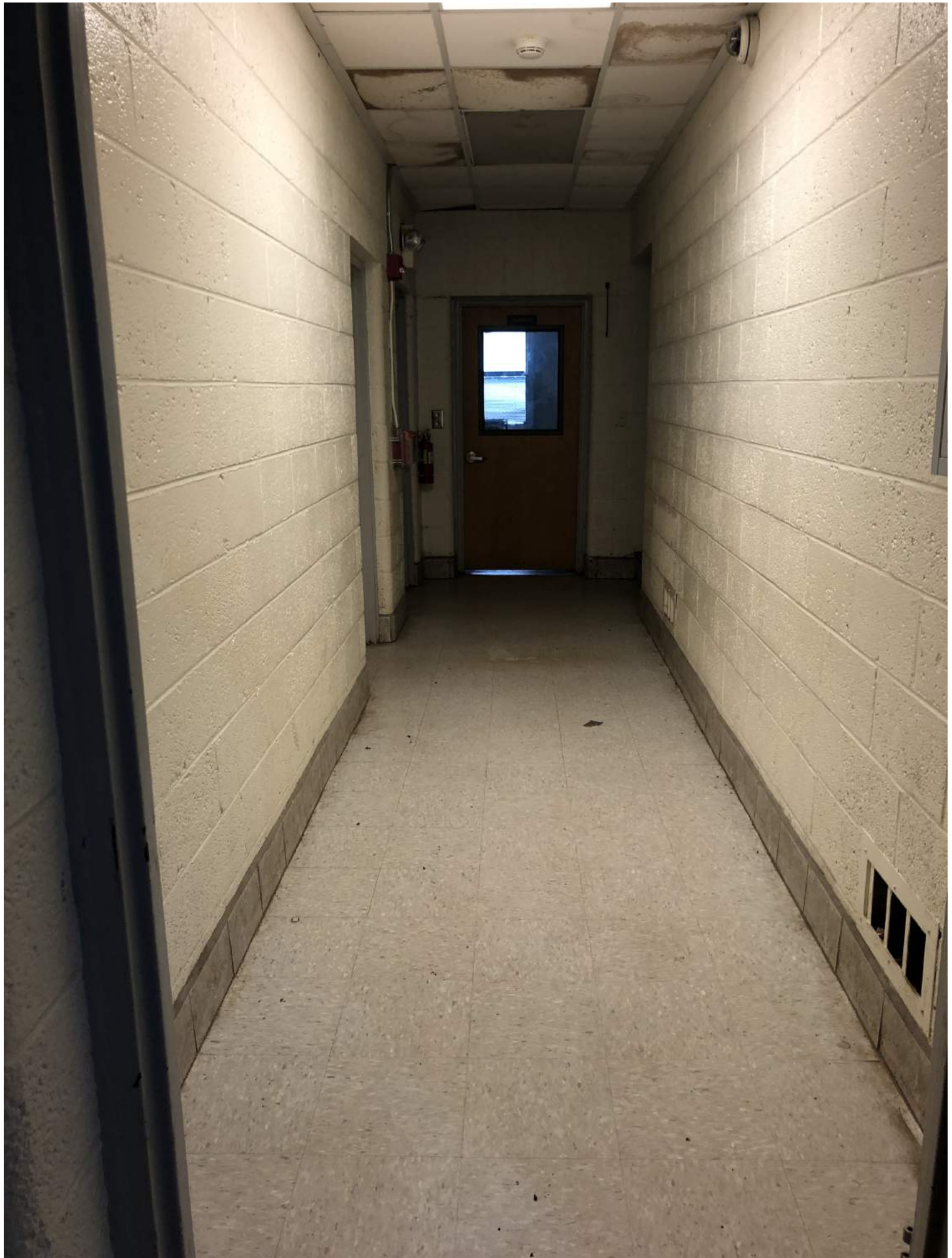


Photo 22



Photo 23



Photo 24



Photo 25

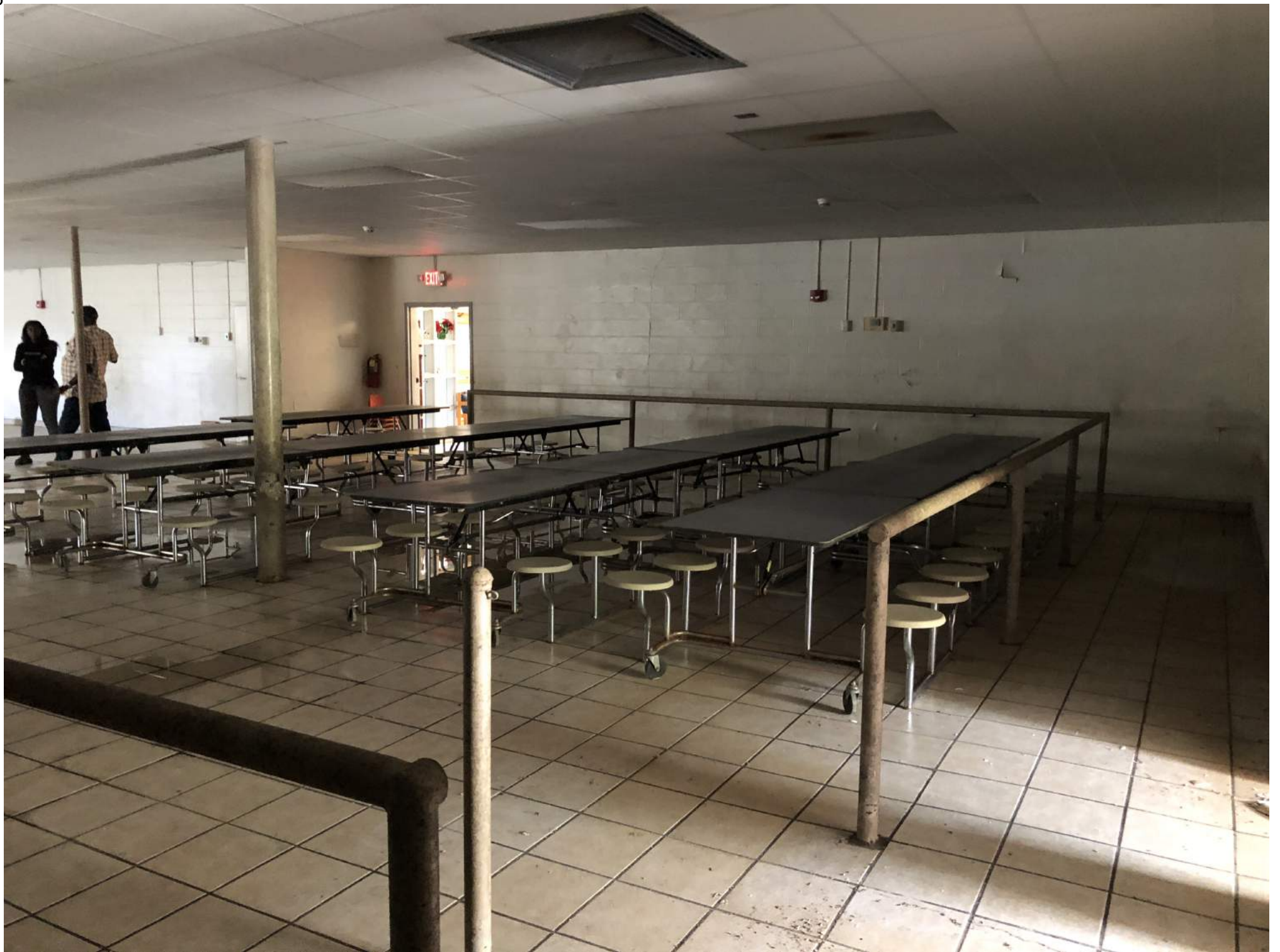


Photo 26



Photo 27





Photo 28



Photo 29



Photo 30





...CH SCHOOL

...A, S. C.  
ERECTED 1954

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

- T. F. FINKLEA, CHAIRMAN
- S. NORWOOD GASQUE
- H. E. FORE
- J. C. ALLEN
- J. S. WOOD

DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT

B. F. CARMICHAEL

JAMES AND DURANT A.L.A.

R. S. JAMES, A.L.A. ASSOCIATE

ARCHITECTS

SUMTER, S. C.

RUSCON CONSTRUCTION COMPANY  
CHARLESTON, S. C.

BUILDERS

Photo 32



Photo 33



Photo 34

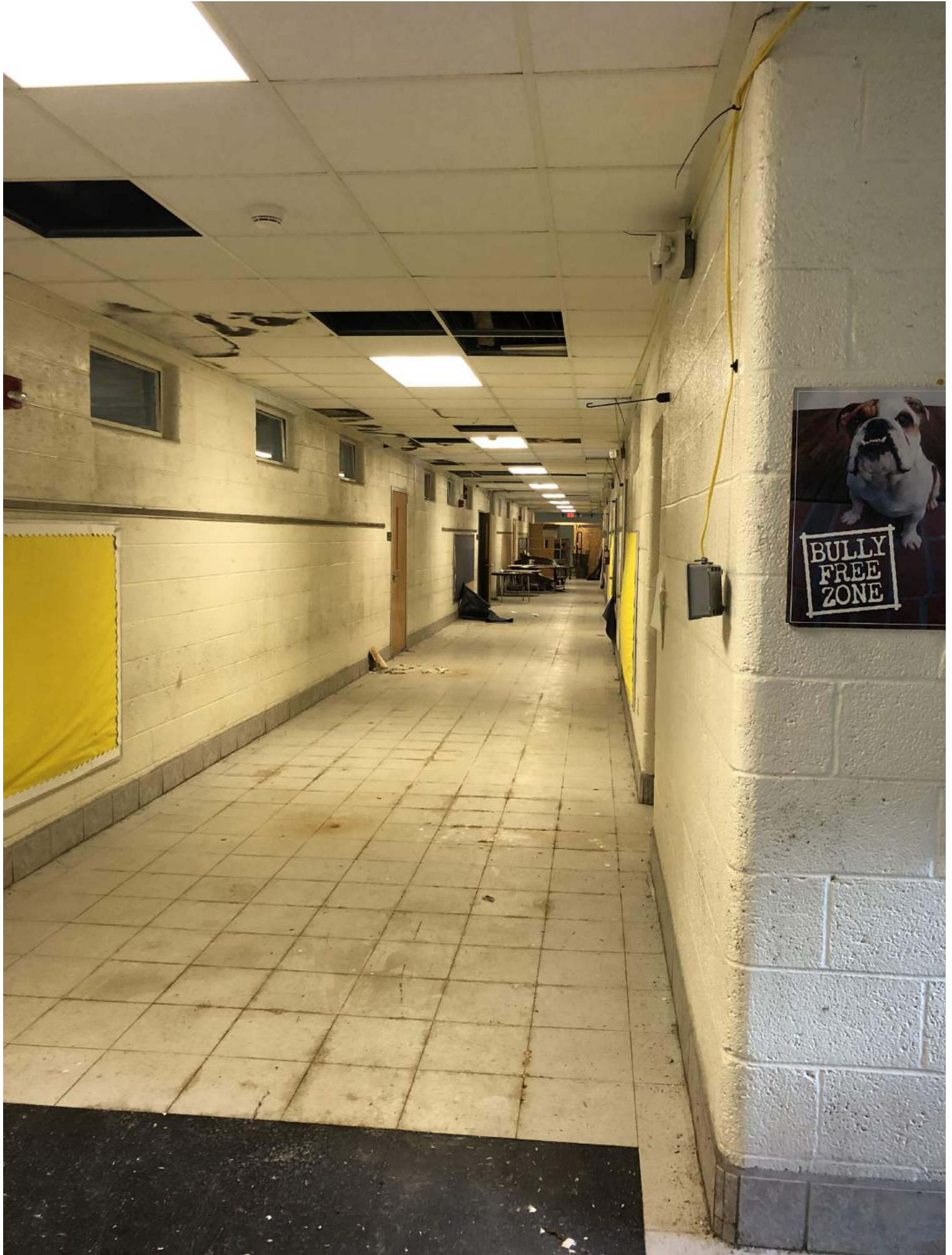


Photo 35





Photo 36



Photo 37



Photo 38



Photo 39

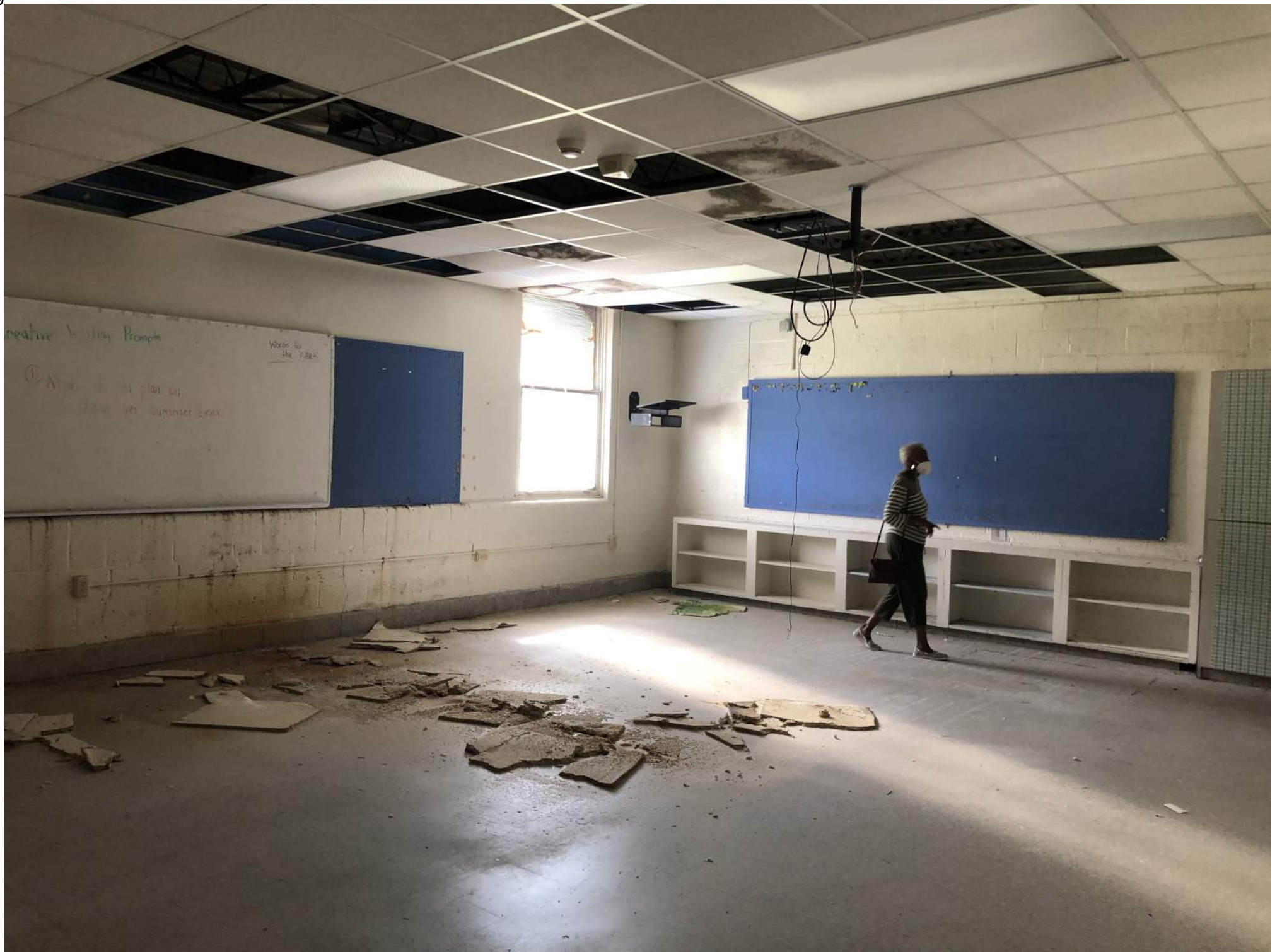


Photo 40



Photo 41

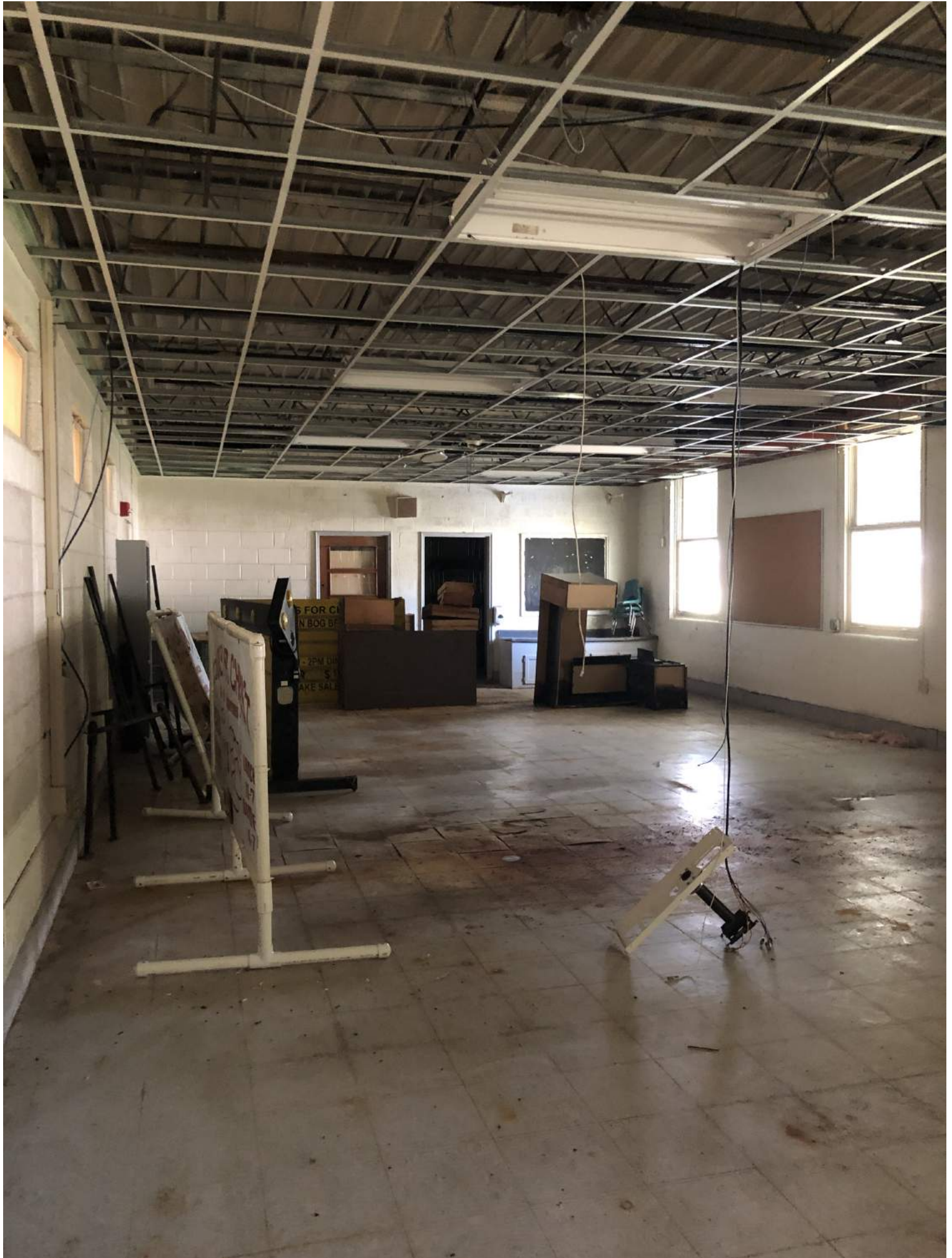


Photo 42

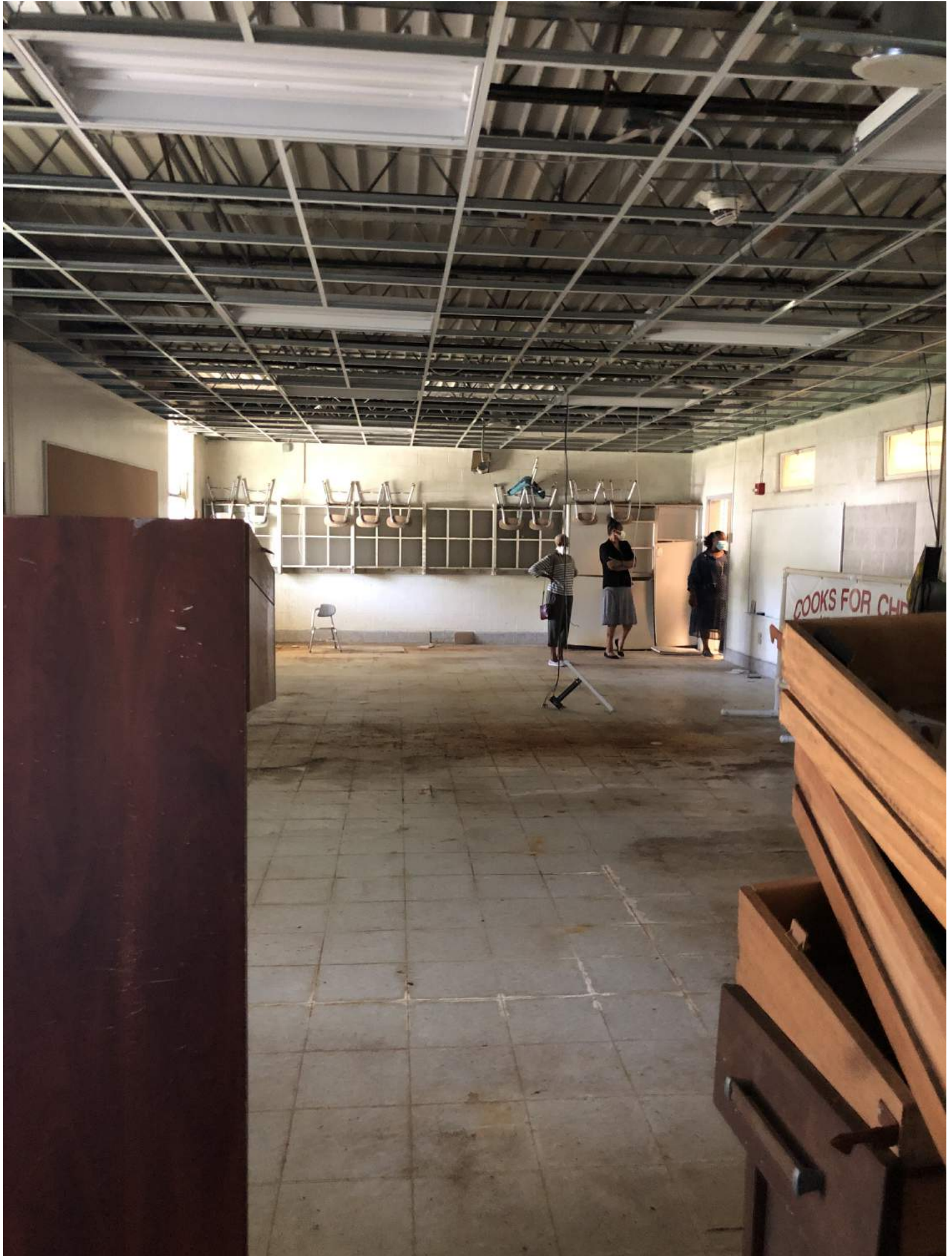


Photo 43





**LATTA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
RENOVATIONS & ADDITIONS**

**LATTA, SOUTH CAROLINA**

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**A. LAFON LEGETTE, JR., CHAIRMAN  
LOU ELLEN BETHEA, VICE-CHAIRMAN  
KEITH ALLEN  
LARRY COX  
ARNOLD F. KINNEY  
O.C. LANE, JR.  
LARRY D. LEGETTE**

**DR. JOHN M. KIRBY, SUPERINTENDENT**

**COUNTY TRUSTEES**

**NANCY G. FINKLEA  
JAMES C. McRAE  
JOSEPH L. POWELL**

**JAMES, DuRANT, MATTHEWS & SHELLEY, INC.  
W. DANIEL SHELLEY AIA, ASID-ARCHITECT  
SUMTER, SOUTH CAROLINA**

**C.B. ASKINS & COMPANY  
F. DAVID ASKINS - GENERAL CONTRACTOR  
LAKE CITY, SOUTH CAROLINA**

**ERECTED 1992**

Photo 45



Photo 46



Photo 47



Photo 48



Photo 49



Photo 50



Photo 51





Photo 52



Photo 53



Photo 54



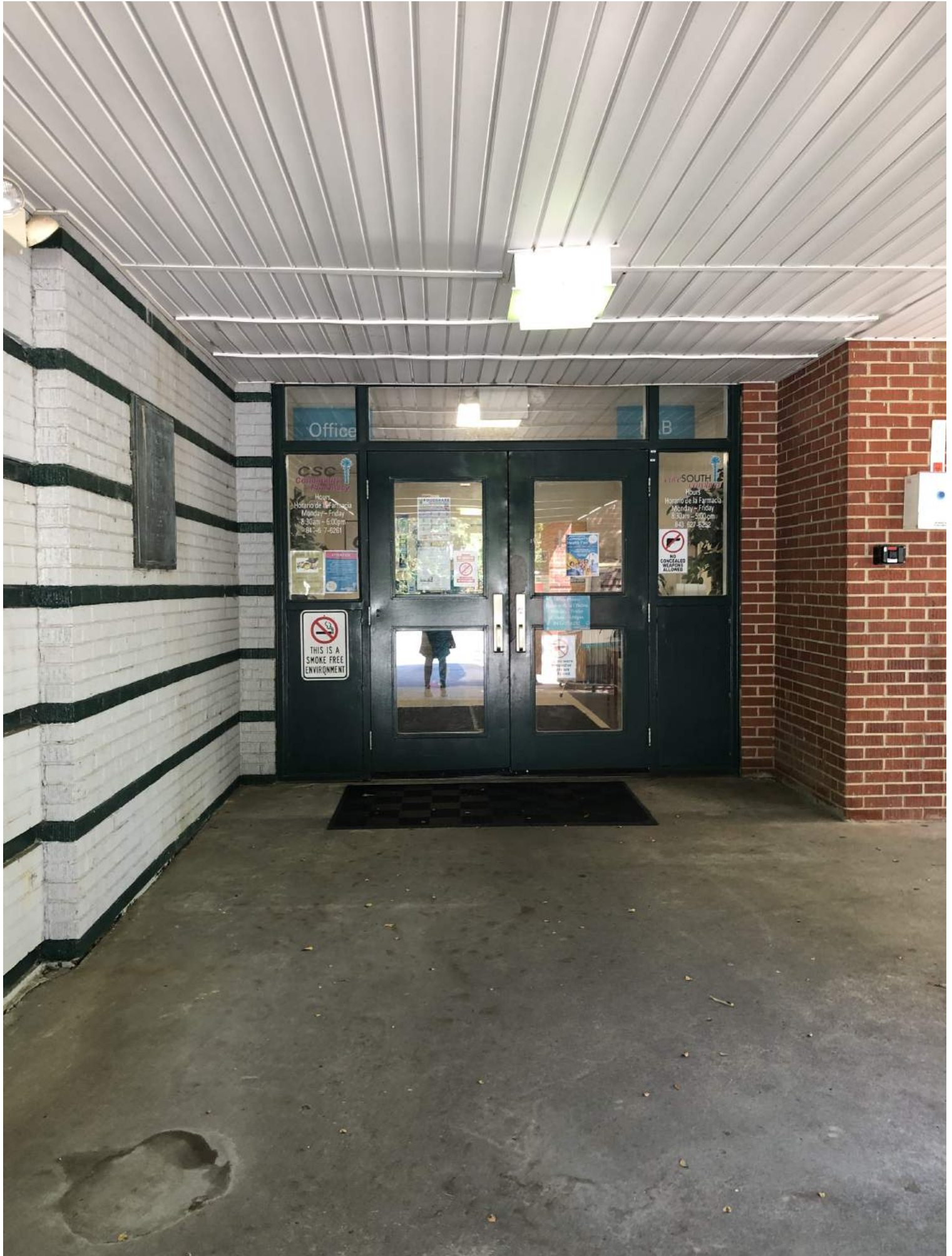
Photo 55



Photo 56



Photo 57



**LATIMER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

LATTA, S. C.

ERECTED 1956

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

J. C. ALLEN, CHAIRMAN

S. N. GASQUE

H. E. FORE

C. D. POWELL

W. C. PARHAM, JR.

**DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT**

D. F. CARMICHAEL

**JAMES & DURANT, A.I.A., ARCHITECTS**

R. S. JAMES, A.I.A.

ASSOCIATE

SUMTER, S. C.

**E. C. B. CONSTRUCTION COMPANY**

SUMTER, S. C.

BUILDERS

Photo 59





Photo 60



Photo 61



Photo 62



Photo 63



Photo 64



Photo 65



Photo 66



Photo 67





Photo 68





Photo 70



Photo 71



Photo 72

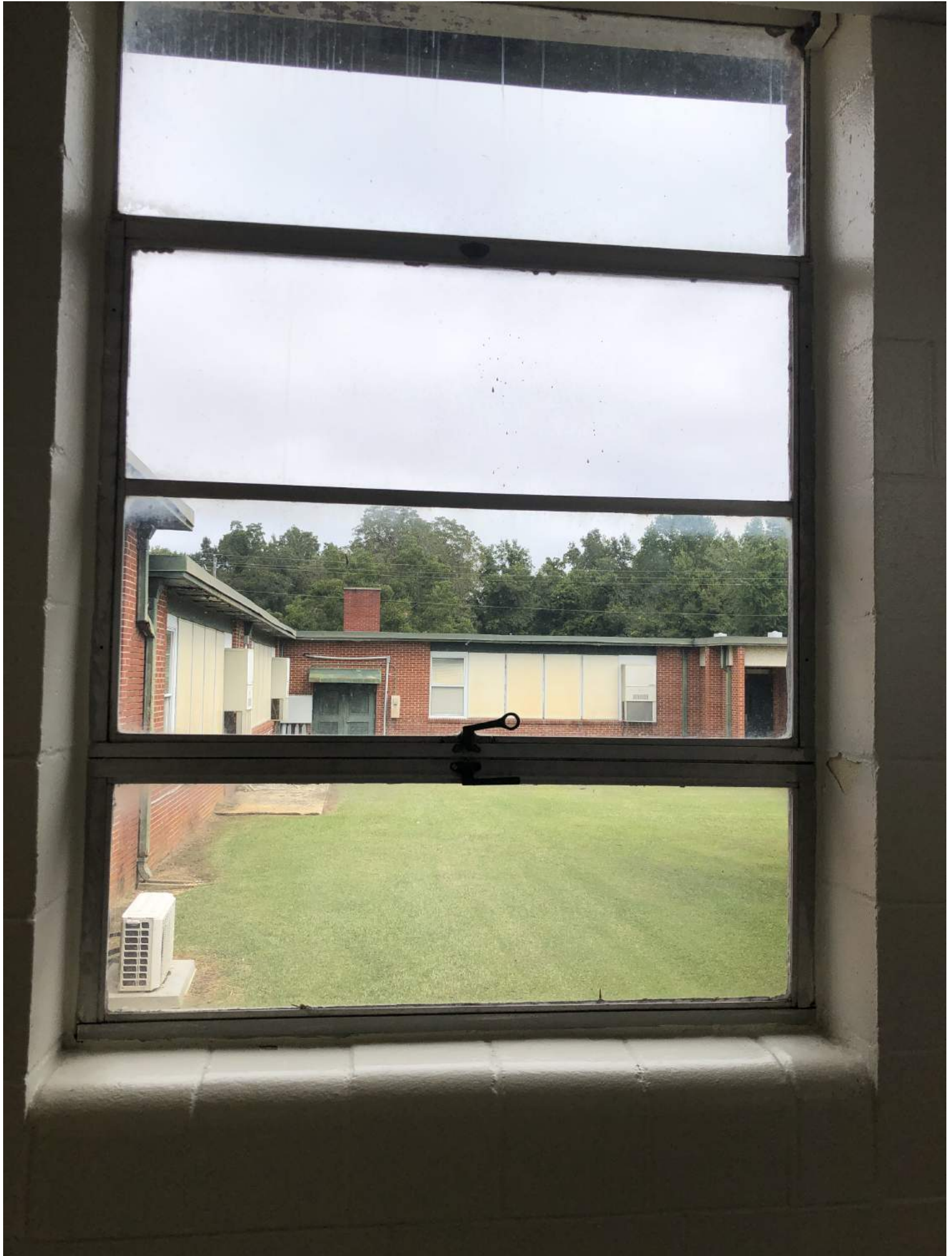


Photo 73



Photo 74

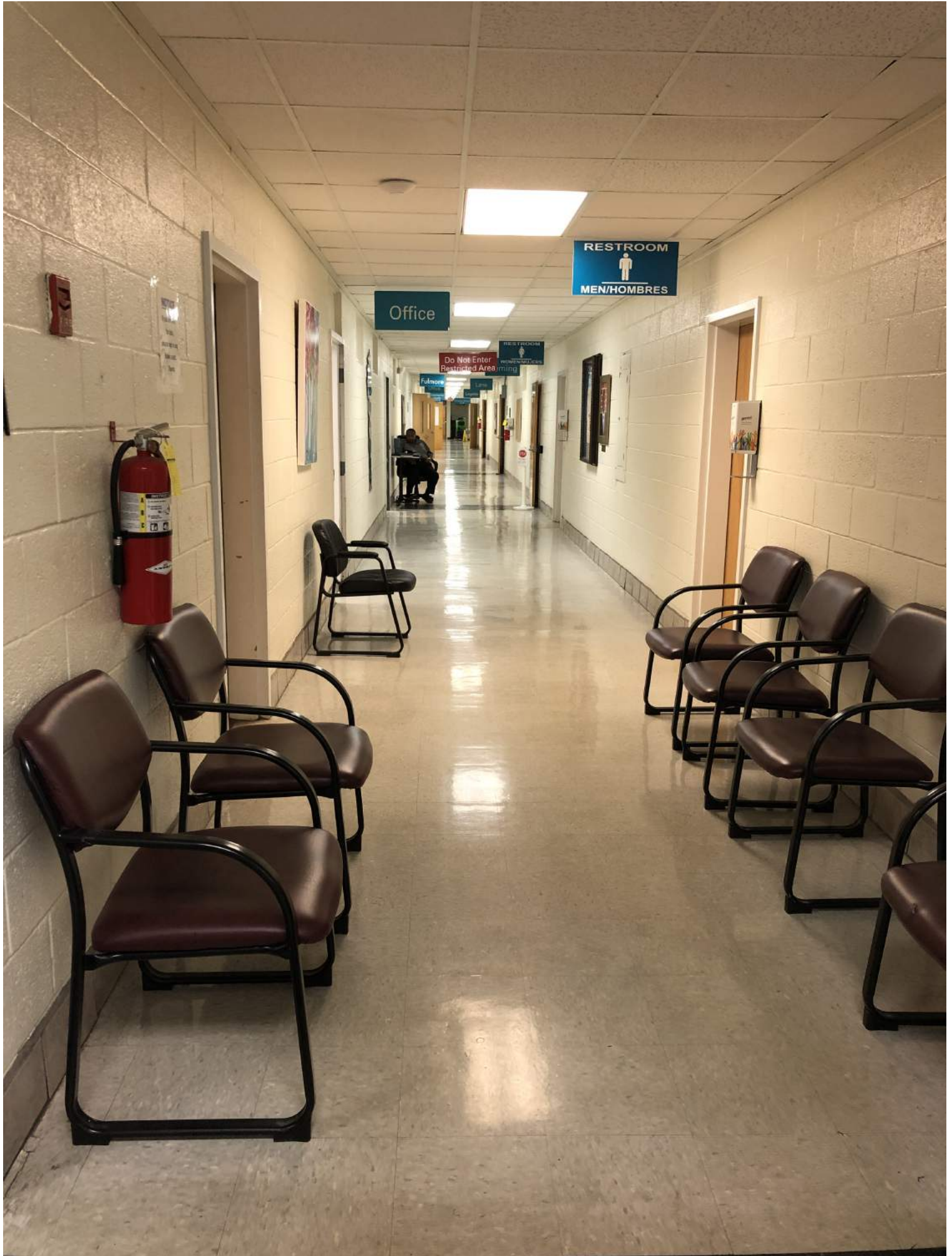


Photo 75





Photo 76



Photo 77



Photo 78

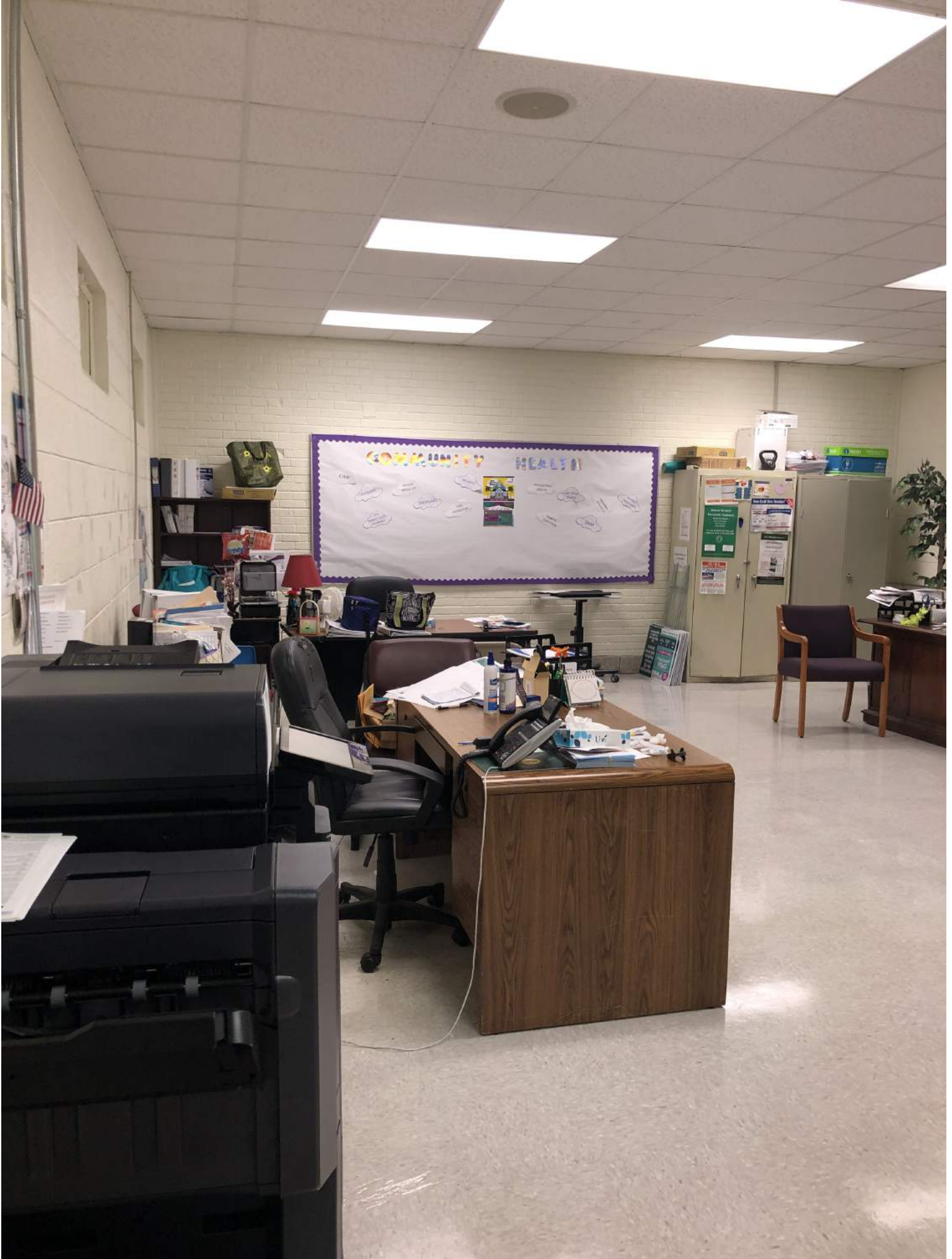


Photo 79



Photo 80



Photo 81



Photo 82







Photo 84



Photo 85



Photo 86



Photo 87



Photo 88



Photo 89

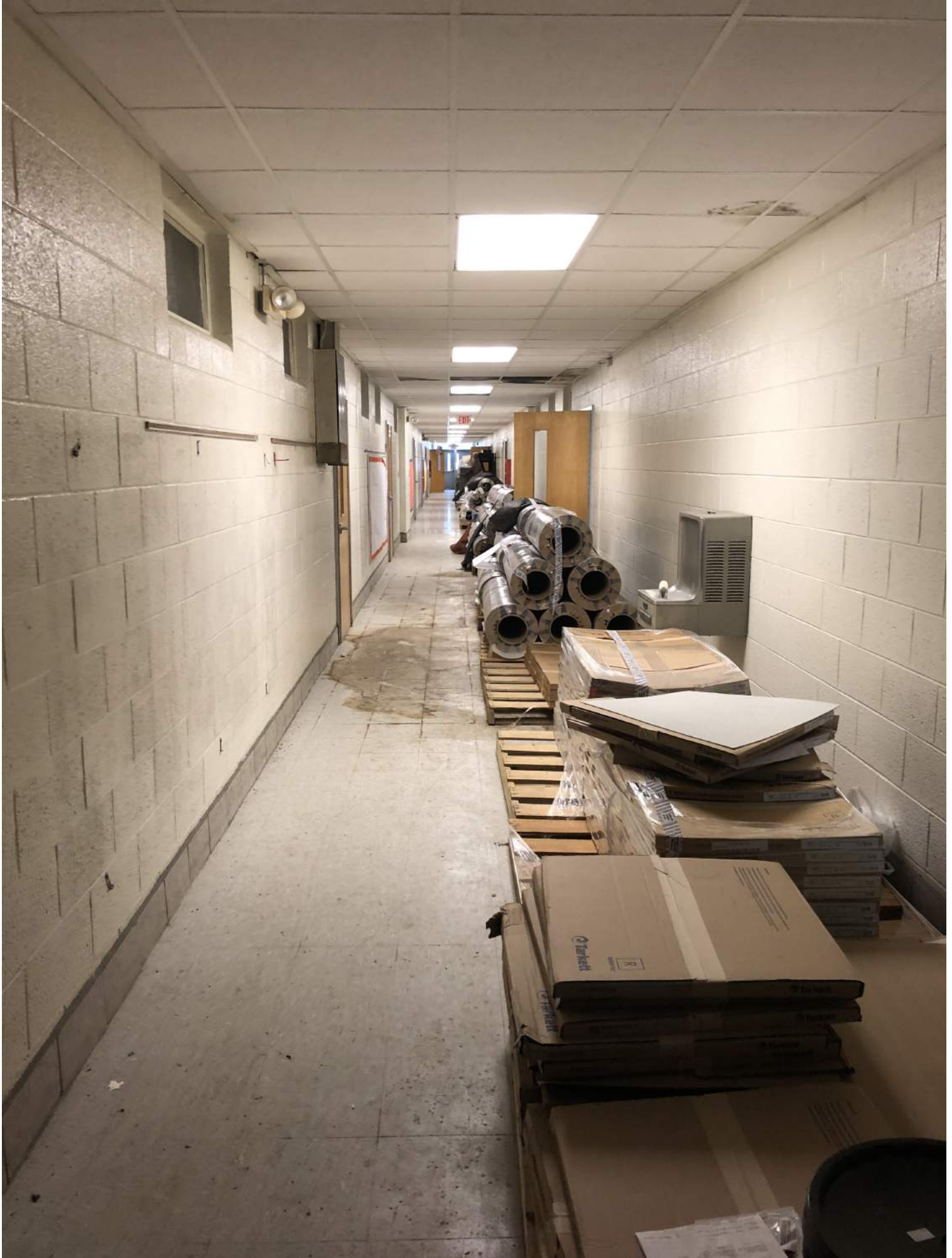


Photo 90



ADDITION TO  
LATIMER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
LATTA AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 3

LATTA, S. C.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

S. NORWOOD GASQUE, CHAIRMAN

A. MARION FINKLEA

HARVEY D. COX

HENRY L. BETHEA

DAN F. MOORER, M. D.

W. M. MOODY, SUPERINTENDENT

---

JAMES & DURANT, INC., & ASSOCIATES, A. I. A.  
ARCHITECTS

SUMTER, S. C.

---

BOOZER & WHARTON, INC.

CONTRACTORS

SUMTER, S. C.

---

ERECTED 1970



Photo 92



Photo 93

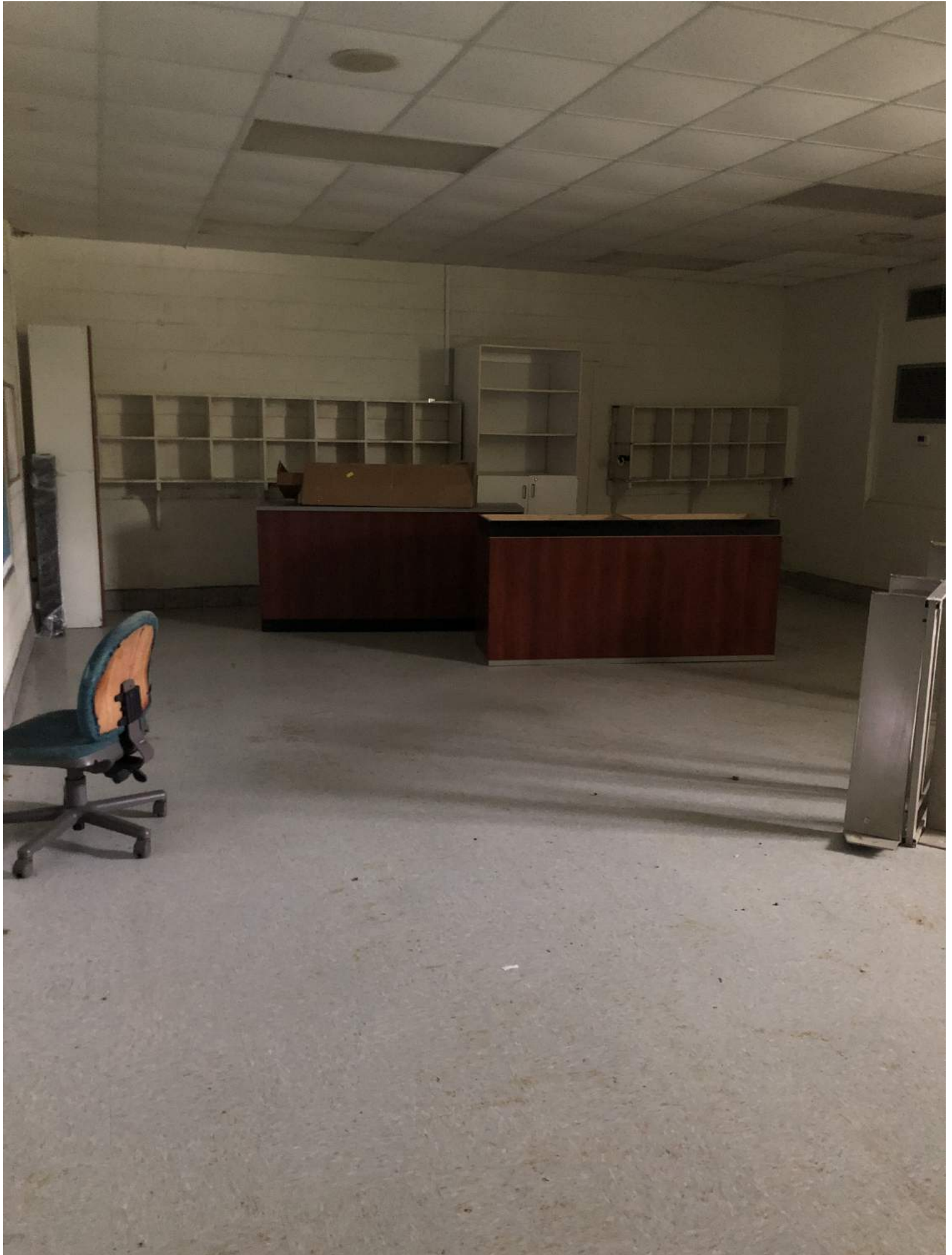


Photo 94



Photo 95



Photo 96



Photo 97





Photo 99





Photo 100



Photo 101



Photo 102



Photo 103



Photo 104



Photo 105



5



## Contract Let For New Latta Colored Elementary School

Board Chairman J. C. Allen of School District No. 3, has announced awarding of a contract for construction for a new elementary school for Negro pupils in Latta.

Work is to begin at once on the modern six-classroom building to be known as Lattimer Elementary school.

The contract, awarded to the low bidder, the E. C. Brown Construction Co. of Sumter, will cost \$88,200 overall and is to be completed in 150 working days.

The building, centrally heated, will include, besides the six classrooms, an administrative office, bookroom and healthroom.



## History of the Dillon County / Latimer Schools

Information for compiling this report came from several sources -- namely: "History of the Dillon County Schools," found in the Latta Library; "A History of Latta," compiled by Mr. Chris Bethea; The Dillon Herald dated Wednesday, August 11, 1948; personal conference with Mr. Joseph Johnson; and a two-hundred percent cooperation from Ms. Carolyn Mace who is employed at the Latta Public Library. Several persons were asked questions about their experience with the Dillon County Training / Latimer School. I would like to thank all persons that volunteered information. I am very thankful for the many years that I had the opportunity to work at the Latimer School. But, by some means, I have a void. I believe that void is there because as a young lad from the Latta area, I chose to go to school some place other than my hometown.

The history of the Dillon County Training School / Latimer School marks an era of more than 100 years. In 1889 the first school for colored children in Latta was opened in the Odd Fellow's Hall on the site directly behind the present Jackson and McGill Funeral Home on Washington Street. Its first teacher was Cardinfield Chapelle. In the fall of 1898 A.R. Bethea took over and served until 1902. By this time the school had outgrown the Odd Fellow's Hall, so the location on Willis Street was purchased and two-room building was erected.

In 1915 another room was added to the two-room structure and the term was lengthened from five months to six months. The school was known as Latta Colored Grade School -- ninth grade being the Senior Class.

Between 1915 and 1917, while A.W. Bethea, Jr. was principal the old, three-room building was remodeled and made into two stories with five classrooms on the first floor and a future auditorium and classroom on the second. In 1925 this two-story building was completed and the name was changed to Dillon County Training School. A manual training building was erected at this time and home economics and agriculture were introduced. The school term was now seven months and the faculty consisted of eight instructors. Between 1917 and 1925 Mr. Bartel and Mr. Bacoats served as principals. From 1928 to 1937 Mr. J.A. Holman served as principal of the Dillon County Training School. Under his administration many new improvements were made. A new grammar school was erected with eight classrooms and an auditorium -- the only such building for colored children in Dillon County at that time. After Mr. Holman, Mr. R.M. Wilkinson became principal and served for several years. The school made many great strides under his administration.

Following Mr. Wilkinson was Mr. J.H. Guiles. Under his administration a large segment of the present Latta Elementary School was erected. When this building was erected, it was given the name Latimer. The class of 1955 was the first graduating class from the Latimer High School. Mr. Robert L. McBryde became principal of the Latimer High School in 1958 and remained in that position until long after the schools were integrated. Mr. McBryde made many strides in the academic program of the schools.

The Dillon County Training School and the Latimer School had a long list of successes in basketball and baseball. The era of the Dillon County Training School and Latimer was phased out in 1992 when the name of the Latimer School was changed to Latta Elementary School.

As the curtain closed on the era of the Dillon County Training School / Latimer School, there is not physical evidence to remind the future generations where their foreparents attended school. But, there are thousands of persons that attended these schools representing all possible professions and careers. You can take away physical evidence but you cannot take away memory. When individuals that attended The Dillon County Training School / Latimer School come together, it's hard to try and summarize their feelings. They laugh, they talk, and they reminisce. The words of William Cowper could better explain when he said, "What peaceful hours I once enjoyed, how sweet the memory still, but they have left an aching void, the world can never fill."

Submitted by Isaiah Collington



Figure 3

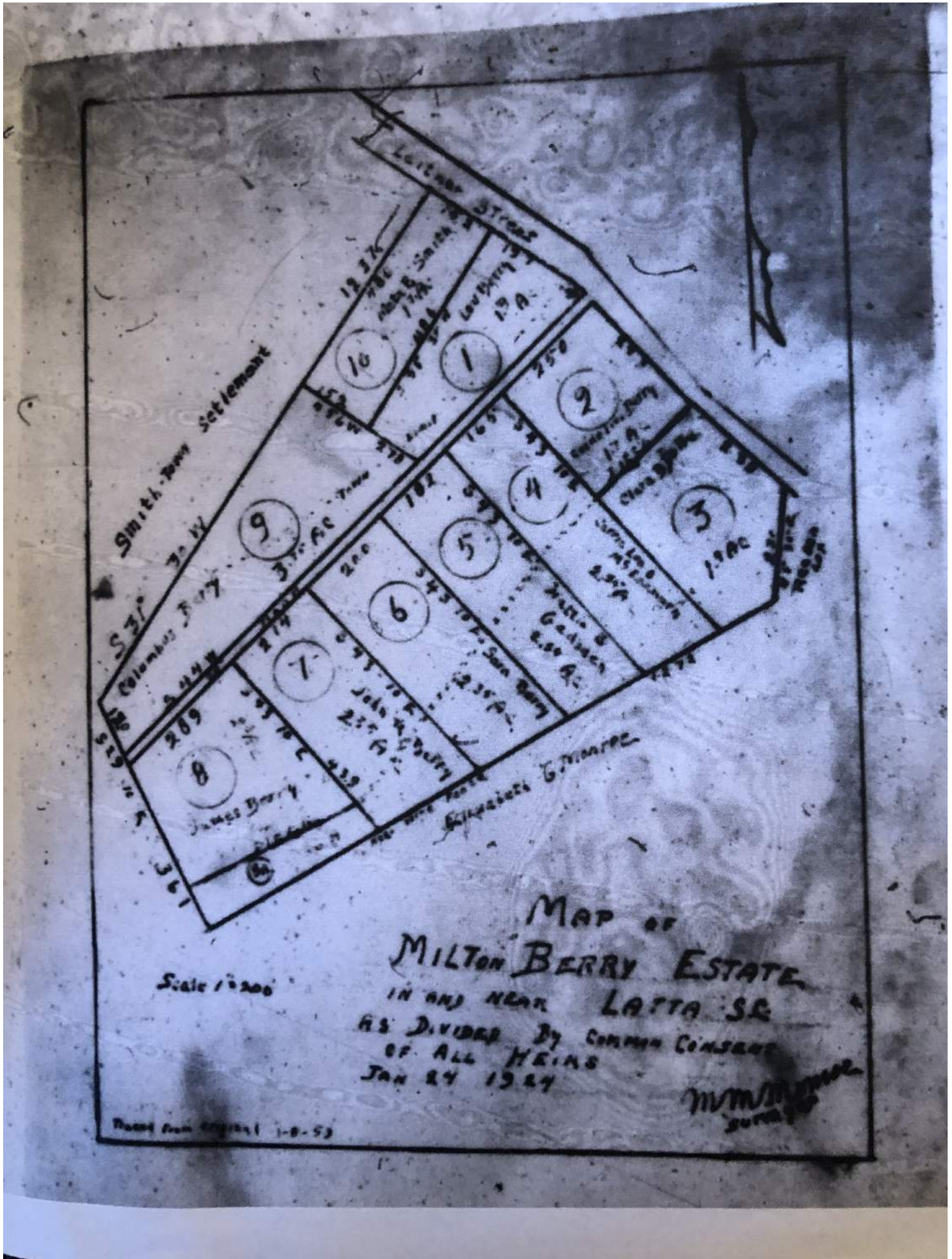


Figure 4



1963



**MISS SENIOR AND ATTENDANTS**  
HAZELTEEN BETHEA, JURLEASE BETHEA, MARGARET R. DUDLEY



**MISS JUNIOR**  
JANICE WOODBURY

Figure 6



Figure 7





ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL AND SECRETARY

# PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

# Class of 1955



Charlie Bethea, Jr.

Curtis Bethea

Earnest Bethea

Loue E. Moultrie Bethea

Willena Wade Bethea

Jean Hall Burrell (dec)

James Davis

Mary E. Green

Mae C. Moultrie Hall

Bertha Hodges

Arra Johnson

Frank Kelly

Willie Mae Lane (dec)

Ruth Mary McKay

Gardie Moses

Ann Fore Rodriquez

Druesila Stewart

Elise Temoney

Zedith Vinson

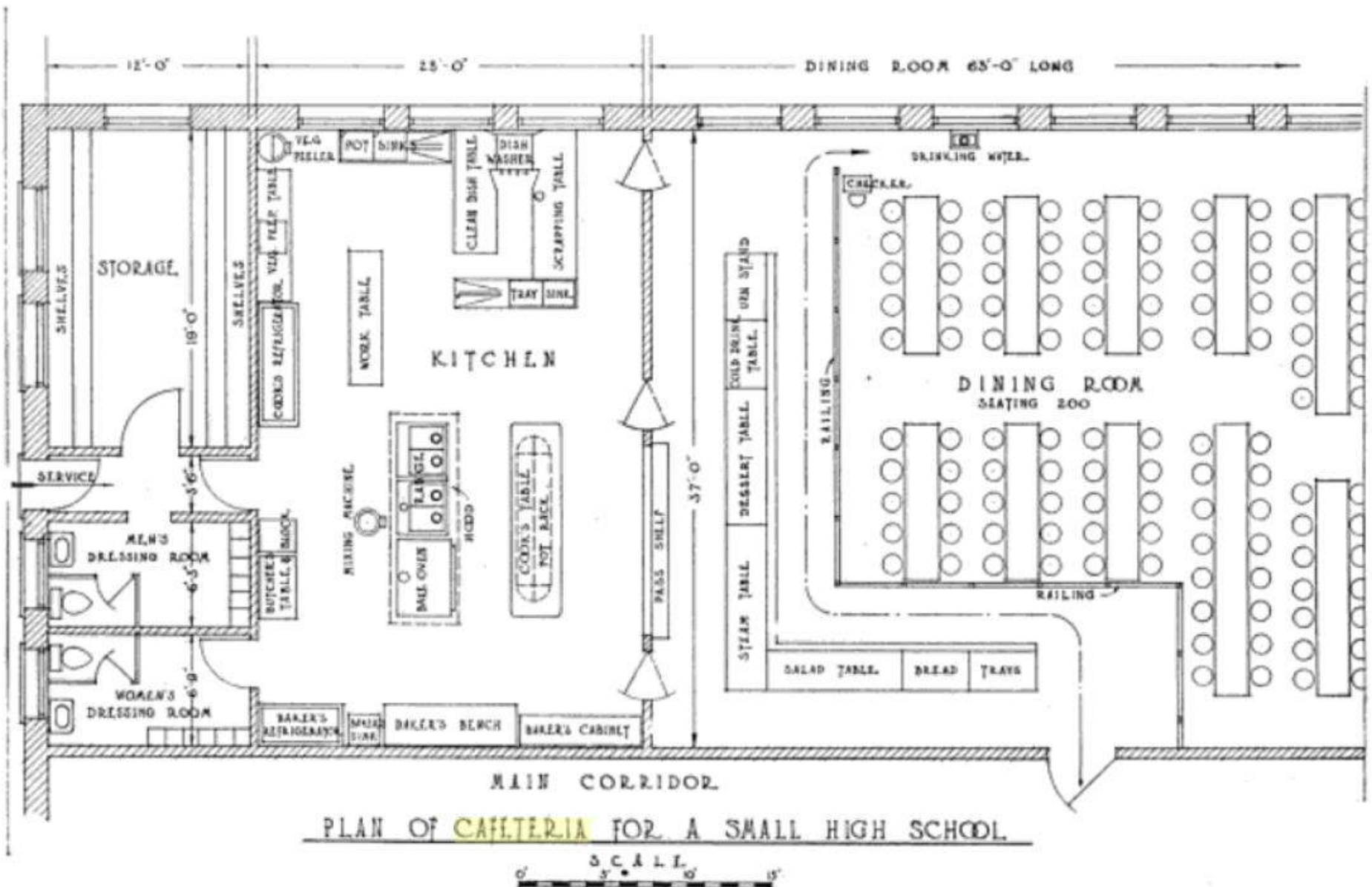
Cinda Mae Watson

Hazel Jones Williams

Mildred Williams

Ollie White

Figure 10

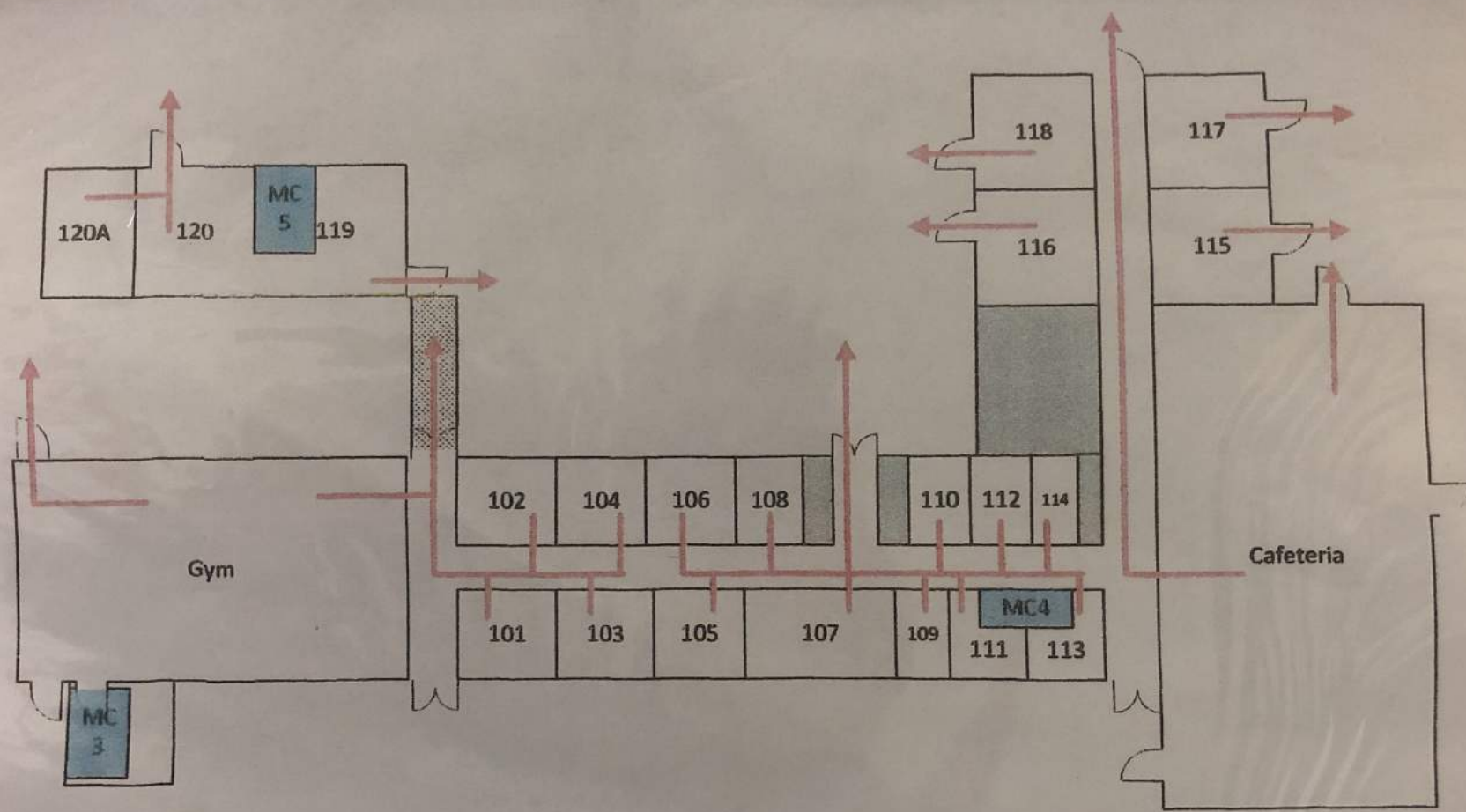


PLAN OF CATERIA FOR A SMALL HIGH SCHOOL

FIG. 439.



Figure 11



Fire Evacuation Routes

Figure 12

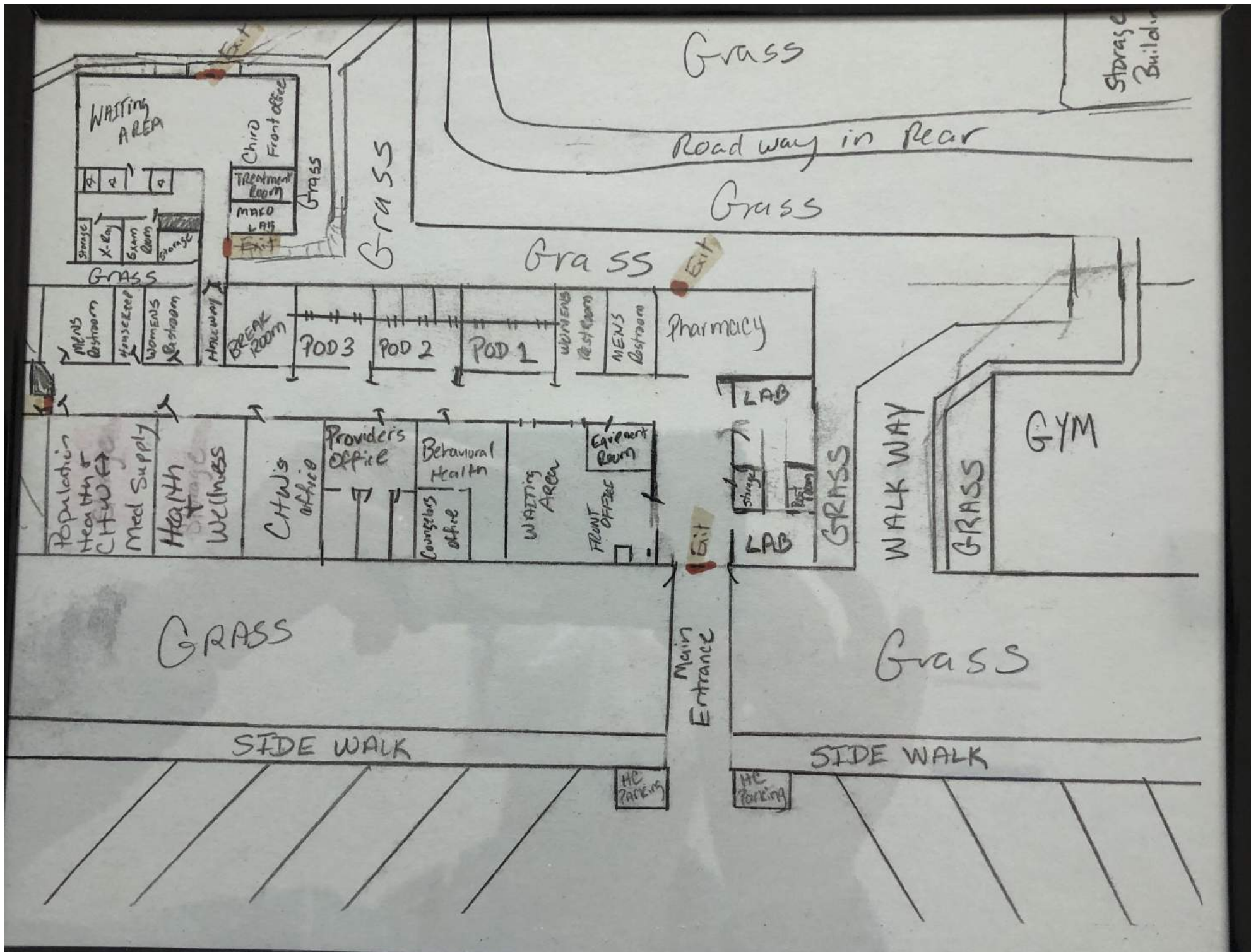


Figure 13



Figure 14



Figure 15



Figure 16



Figure 17



Figure 18



LATTA HIGH SCHOOL  
LATTA , SOUTH CAROLINA

JAMES , DURANT , JAMES , & MATTHEWS  
SUMTER , S. C.  
A.I.A. ARCHITECTS

