

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.

VLR Listed: 6/18/2020
NRHP Listed: 8/7/2020

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Southside High School
Other names/site number: Blairs Junior High School, Blairs Middle School
DHR #071-5820
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: 200 Blairs Middle School Circle
City or town: Blairs State: VA County: Pittsylvania
Not For Publication: N/A Vicinity: N/A

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national statewide X local
Applicable National Register Criteria:
X A B X C D

Signature of certifying official/Title: Date
Virginia Department of Historic Resources
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.
Signature of commenting official: Date
Title : State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

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

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

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

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

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

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION: school

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT: not in use

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT: International Style

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: BRICK; CONCRETE; SYNTHETICS: rubber;
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

Southside High School faces south toward East Witt Road in Blairs, a southern Pittsylvania County, Virginia, community. Designed by Martinsville, Virginia, architect Joseph Coates Carter and erected by English Construction Company, the complex exemplifies the Modernist aesthetic that dominated mid-twentieth-century educational architecture. The 1953 school has a T-shaped footprint, with an expansive two-story main block and rear wing encompassing classrooms and an auditorium/gymnasium with one-story locker rooms at its north end. A one-story cafeteria and kitchen extends from the building's northeast corner. The 1966 addition north of the cafeteria functioned as a music room when not in use as additional mealtime seating. Seven-bay east and eight-bay west 1962 classroom additions flank the twenty-bay 1953 façade (south elevation). The 1966 auditorium is at the school's west end. The 1953 school, 1962 classroom wings, 1966 auditorium, and freestanding 1953 agriculture and industrial arts building enlarged in 1966 are all characterized by flat-roofed angular forms; tall, rectangular, steel-frame, multi-pane windows with hoppers; and cast-stone foundations, window sills, lintels, and coping. Concrete-block walls are veneered in red brick laid in a distinctive common bond pattern comprising four courses of stretchers followed by a course of alternating stretchers and headers. Doors with two-vertical-rectangular-panel bases and nine-pane upper sections, often with multi-pane transoms, are sheltered by flat-roofed, concrete canopies buttressed with brick pilasters. The school retains integrity of location, setting, feeling, association, design, materials, and workmanship.

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Southside High School is west of US 29 Business on East Witt Road's north side. The buildings are rotated approximately fifteen degrees from true cardinal direction alignment. However, the following narrative is written as if the complex has actual north-south orientation.

Setting

Southside High School is located in Blairs, an unincorporated southern Virginia community approximately ten miles south of Chatham, Pittsylvania County's seat, and four miles north of Danville, the largest nearby municipality. US 29's original alignment, now US 29 Business, and the four-lane US 29 corridor to the east, both heavily trafficked north-south thoroughfares, link the three areas. Despite its proximity to the highways, Blairs retains a predominantly rural character, with rolling topography, densely wooded areas, open fields and pastures. Modest homes line East Witt Road south of the schools. Commercial development is concentrated near the highways.

The school faces south toward East Witt Road in the southwest portion of a 14.89-acre tax parcel. Blairs Middle School Circle, a C-shaped asphalt-paved entrance drive, wraps around the grass lawn, where a "Blairs Middle School, Home of the Rams" sign is mounted on corbelled brick posts and a brick base. A few tall deciduous trees punctuate the lawn and deciduous and evergreen shrubs and planting beds line the lengthy façade. Limited parking is available at the entrance drive's northwest corner. Access drives lead to northeast and west parking areas, the agricultural and industrial arts building, and athletic fields.

The approximately 5.9-acre National Register boundary encompasses the school, agricultural and industrial arts building, access drives, and some parking areas. The Pittsylvania County Board of Supervisors retains ownership of the residual portions of the tract to the north and east, much of which contains athletic facilities that will remain in use by the school system as well as entities such as the Southside Soccer Club. East of the school and a parking area, a late-twentieth-century, two-story, gable-roofed, concrete-block and frame concession and restroom building and four steel-frame bleachers with wood seats overlook a grass soccer field. Just south of the concession and restroom building, a straight run of mid-twentieth-century concrete steps with metal-pipe railings provides access to the field. Wood steps and railings were constructed further south in the late twentieth century. A chain-link fence encircles the field's south end. Football games were played on this site during Southside High School's operation. The small concrete-paved basketball court at the field's north end was added in the late twentieth century. A metal athletic equipment trailer is parked next to the small, gable-roofed, prefabricated, frame shed west of the basketball court. A septic field separates the east athletic field and the expansive soccer field, originally the high school's baseball field, to the west. The field extends west onto the adjacent parcel where Southside Elementary School, erected in 1962, remains in operation.

Southside High School, 1953, 1962, 1966, contributing building

The following description begins with the south elevation and moves counter-clockwise around the building.

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At the 1953 façade's center, a three-bay flat-roofed concrete canopy supported by canted concrete posts shelters the primary entrance, where a twenty-pane transom tops three single-leaf wood doors with two-vertical-rectangular-panel bases and nine-pane upper sections. Concrete steps and a concrete ramp with a metal-pipe railing lead to the entrance. The ramp was added in 1995. The entrances in the brick stair towers that extend south at the 1953 facade's east and west ends feature double-leaf doors with two-vertical-rectangular-panel bases and nine-pane upper sections surmounted by flat-roofed, concrete canopies buttressed with brick pilasters. Doors and the south entrance canopy posts are blue, the school color.

Single and paired steel-frame multi-pane sash illuminate the 1953 buildings and the 1962 and 1966 additions. The 1953 sash configuration varies with window size, but most have twelve panes including central four-pane hoppers. The 1962 and 1966 window openings are typically slightly smaller and have four- to six-pane rectangular-pane sash with central two-pane hoppers. Some taller sash also have a single-pane base hopper. All openings feature slightly projecting cast-stone sills, but the east 1962 addition's façade is distinguished by continuous cast-stone window sills and lintels framing six single classroom windows. Some window sills and lintels have been painted white.

Like the school's earlier sections, the 1966 additions' common-bond-brick walls comprise four courses of stretchers followed by a course of alternating stretchers and headers. However, the brick used to veneer the blind south elevation of the one-story, one-bay deep wing that projects from the auditorium's façade has a bubbled dark-brown glaze. At the wing's east end, a two-bay-wide, flat-roofed, concrete canopy supported by brick pilasters and paired square steel posts on concrete plinths shelters entrances to the auditorium and the 1962 addition to the east. The double-leaf 1962 door has three-vertical-pane upper sections, while the larger 1966 entrance comprises three-single-leaf aluminum-frame doors and transoms. Concrete steps and a concrete ramp with a metal-pipe railings lead to the entrance. The ramp was constructed in 1995.

The sole window opening on the auditorium's west elevation is a paired window with four-pane sash in the south wing. Two high window openings with paired four-pane sash pierce the north elevation. Flat-roofed, concrete canopies supported by slender square steel posts protect entrances in the north elevation's west bay and the east elevation's south section. Concrete steps and a concrete ramp with metal-pipe railings lead to the north entrance. The east entrance, which is at grade, has a rectangular transom.

The two-story main block's north elevation encompasses a ten-bay west section with five-rectangular-pane sash with central two-pane hoppers and a six-bay east section with alternating single and paired twelve-pane sash with central four-pane hoppers. The east section intersects the 1953 auditorium/gymnasium wing, illuminated by tall seven-rectangular-pane sash. The recessed double-leaf wood door north of the auditorium/gymnasium windows has a two-vertical-rectangular-panel base, nine-pane upper sections, and a twelve-pane transom. The matching single-leaf door to the north and its six-pane transom are surmounted by a triangular-bracketed shed-roofed wood hood. Concrete steps and landings provide access to the entrances. Three ten-

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pane sash with central four-pane hoppers pierce the west elevation of the one-story locker room wing at the auditorium/gymnasium's north end. Five matching sash punctuate the locker rooms' north elevation. East of those windows, a double-leaf wood door with a two-vertical-rectangular-panel base, nine-pane upper sections, and a twelve-pane transom provides access to the north-south 1953 corridor. A flat-roofed aluminum breezeway with slender square aluminum posts spans concrete walkways between the locker rooms and the 1953/1966 agriculture and industrial arts building.

Three paired six-vertical-pane sash with central two-pane hoppers and two much smaller four-vertical-pane sash with central two-pane hoppers pierce the north elevation of the one-story 1966 addition at the 1953 cafeteria's north end. The addition's east and west elevations are blind. A single-leaf door with a three-vertical-pane upper section at the west elevation's south end facilitates egress.

On the one-story 1953 kitchen wing's north elevation, a small three-vertical-pane sash with a single-pane hopper lights a restroom and a five-vertical-pane sash with a central two-pane hopper the storage room to the west. The east elevation's fenestration comprises, from south to north, a single five-vertical-pane sash with a central two-pane hopper; a pair of matching sash; a single-leaf door with a two-vertical-rectangular-panel base, nine-pane upper section, and six-pane transom; and a small three-vertical-pane sash. The flat-roofed wood porch at the entrance was originally screened. The dimensional lumber frame remains, but the wall screens and wood-frame screen doors have been removed. Concrete steps lead to the concrete landing. The kitchen's south elevation is blind. The double-leaf door into the cafeteria to the west has a two-vertical-rectangular-panel base, nine-pane upper sections, and a twelve-pane transom. Brick pilasters buttress the flat-roofed concrete canopy. Two paired six-vertical-pane sash with central two-pane hoppers light the cafeteria.

The cafeteria's south elevation intersects the 1953 classroom wing's stair tower. A flat-roofed concrete canopy buttressed with brick pilasters shelters the double-leaf door with a two-vertical-rectangular-panel base and nine-pane upper sections. A tall nine-vertical-pane sash with two central two-pane hoppers illuminates the stair hall. The six bays of alternating single and paired twelve-pane sash with central four-pane hoppers lighting the classrooms are separated by two shorter sash, both initially ten-pane with central four-pane hoppers, at the wall's center. A fifteen-pane-sash with a central nine-pane hopper has been installed in the second-story opening. At the wall's south end, a metal-pipe railing tops the concrete-walled stairwell where a straight run of concrete steps lead to the basement.

The five-bay north elevation of the east section of the 1953 school's main block encompasses four bays of paired twelve-pane sash with central four-pane hoppers separated by a bay with single matching sash. The eight-bay 1962 addition to the east is punctuated by five-rectangular-pane sash with central two-pane hoppers. The addition's east elevation is blind with the exception of a central four-vertical-pane second-story sash with a cast-stone surround. The double-leaf door at the first-story's center has three-vertical-pane upper sections and a rectangular transom. Concrete steps with metal-pipe railings lead to the entrance beneath a flat-

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roofed aluminum canopy with slender square aluminum posts. A matching breezeway extends north to shelter a concrete walkway.

Interior

The 1953 school's main block and 1962 classroom additions have double-loaded corridor plans. On the first floor, the entrance vestibule at the 1953 south elevation's center opens into the long east-west corridor. An office suite with a reception desk is west of the vestibule on the corridor's south side, opposite the entrances to the combination auditorium/gymnasium. The library and storage rooms are east of the vestibule on the corridor's north side. The main block also encompasses six classrooms and a restroom. The north-south corridor separates the auditorium/gymnasium and locker rooms from two classrooms, a restroom, and the cafeteria and kitchen to the east. The east 1962 addition encompasses a large north room that almost doubled the size of the adjacent library and two classrooms on the corridor's south side. The west 1962 addition contains three classrooms and two small offices with a waiting room. Steel and concrete staircases with slender square steel posts and handrails and flat-steel horizontal intermediary railings fill the stair towers at the 1953 building's southwest, southeast, and northeast corners.

On the 1953 building's second floor, two regular classrooms and a business classroom, science laboratory, teachers' lounge, restroom, and storage room line the corridor's south side, while two classrooms are west of the gymnasium/auditorium and a utility room. The home economics classroom and kitchen are to the east, and two classrooms and a restroom are on the north-south corridor's east side. The east 1962 addition provided a second home economics classroom and kitchen and another science classroom. The west 1962 addition contains four classrooms including a northwest chorus room with a stage.

Simple finishes were specified to maximize durability. Dropped-acoustical-tile ceilings and vinyl-composition-tile floors are ubiquitous. In most areas other than classrooms, concrete-block walls are parged above rectangular beige-glazed-ceramic-tile wainscot. Long rows of lockers and display cabinets are inset in corridor walls. Original wall-mounted Simplex clocks remain. Wood-frame blackboards and bulletin boards are mounted on classroom walls, most of which are painted concrete-block with wood baseboards and chair rails. . Most 1953 classrooms have parged walls and feature a built-in wood cabinet with a multi-pane double-leaf upper door and a short double-leaf wood-panel lower door in a corner. Home economics and science classrooms retain painted plywood cabinets and shelves. Simple painted wood shelves line the library walls. White porcelain pedestal sinks and toilets and enameled-steel stall dividers remain in most restrooms. Baseboard radiators heat the building. Ceiling-mounted linear fluorescent lighting and ceiling fans have been added in some areas. Roof leaks in portions of the 1953 school and 1962 additions have resulted in ceiling collapse, plaster and floor damage, and fungal growth in many rooms.

Painted single and double-leaf doors with two-vertical-rectangular-panel bases, nine-pane upper sections, multi-pane transoms, and wood surrounds are intact throughout the 1953 building. Single and double-leaf blonde-wood doors in the 1962 additions have three-vertical-pane upper

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sections, rectangular transoms, and simple steel frames. All retain original hardware. An aluminum-frame glazed curtain wall with a single-leaf aluminum-frame door and transom has been installed in the 1953 building's east-west second-floor corridor at its intersection with the north-south corridor.

The 1953 auditorium/gymnasium features an exposed steel-truss and insulated-panel roof system, parquet floor, and painted concrete-block walls. Collapsible wood bleachers line a portion of the north elevation. The stage and two dressing rooms that originally occupied the room's north end were removed in 1995. The small frame announcer/officials' platform with a metal railing near the east elevation's center was added after that time. The locker rooms have square beige-terra-cotta-tile floors, rectangular beige-glazed-ceramic-tile wainscot on painted concrete-block walls, and parged ceilings. Lockers and backless wood benches line the changing-room walls. The frame equipment closet projecting from the west locker room's west elevation has painted-plywood-sheathed walls with screen upper sections.

The cafeteria remains a large open space with parged concrete-block walls above rectangular beige-glazed-ceramic-tile wainscot, a vinyl-composition-tile floor, and a dropped-acoustical-tile ceiling with fluorescent lighting panels. Two double-leaf doors on the west elevation allow egress from the north-south corridor. The north elevation, originally an exterior wall, retains three original window openings containing single and paired sash, but the double-leaf blonde-wood door with small, square, upper pane was installed in a paired window opening to facilitate access to the auxiliary open dining area and music room added in 1966. The east elevation comprises a single-leaf door leading to the kitchen, a wide opening containing the cafeteria serving line, and a smaller opening for the tray return. The kitchen has the same finishes as the cafeteria with the exception of a parged ceiling. The storage and restrooms at the kitchen's north end and in the 1966 dining area/music room addition have painted concrete block walls. A wood-frame blackboard and bulletin board are mounted on the dining area/music room's east elevation on either side of a single-leaf office door and a corridor flanked by two small storage rooms that leads to a large east storage room. A single-leaf blonde-wood door with three vertical upper-panes at the west elevation's south end provides exterior access.

The 1966 auditorium retains original finishes—painted concrete-block walls, dropped-acoustical-tile ceilings, vinyl-composition-tile floors—and seating. Steel-frame vinyl-upholstered seats with blonde-wood armrests fill a wide central section flanked by two wide aisles and two narrower outer sections. Full-height wood paneling sheathes the walls at the room's north end and the stage's wide proscenium opening and kneewall. Blue velvet curtains hang near the front of the stage. A narrow stair at the stage's southeast corner leads to the north-south corridor east of the auditorium. A straight run of wide steps with metal-pipe railings ameliorates the grade change between the corridor's north and south sections. A double-leaf auditorium entrance, a double-leaf exterior door, and restrooms are at the corridor's north end, while the south section intersects the 1962 addition's central east-west corridor and terminates at the east-west corridor south of the auditorium. Aluminum-frame bulletin boards are mounted on the north-south corridor walls. The original double-leaf blonde-wood auditorium doors, each with a single small, square, upper pane are intact.

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A wide, single-leaf, louvered-steel door secures the basement entrance at the bottom of the exterior stairwell adjacent to the 1953 rear wing's east elevation. Poured-concrete floors and painted concrete-block and parged walls provide resilient finishes in a series of mechanical, storage, and utility rooms. Surface-mounted conduit has been installed.

Agriculture and Industrial Arts Building, 1953, 1966, contributing building

The freestanding one-story, flat-roofed, T-shaped, brick 1953 agriculture building and the 1966 addition at its southwest corner are almost identical in form, execution, and plan. Like the school, concrete-block walls are veneered in common bond red brick with four courses of stretchers followed by a course of alternating stretchers and headers. Metal coping covers the concrete coping.

The 1953 agriculture building encompasses a large open east classroom/workshop and a west wing with two smaller classrooms, two offices, restrooms, and storage room. The 1966 addition originally comprised an open east industrial arts shop and a classroom, drafting room, offices, restrooms, and a storage room in the west wing. In both buildings at the shop's west end, concrete-block walls enclose west wing rooms beneath a mezzanine classroom with a narrow-board floor. A straight run of wood steps leads to the mezzanine. Slender steel columns span the distance between the top of the concrete-block walls and ceiling trusses. Painted two-horizontal-board railings secure the stairwell and mezzanine edges. Painted plywood has been added to the 1966 addition's mezzanine railing. Concrete-block walls enclose a small room at the 1966 addition mezzanine's south end. There is no interior connectivity between the 1953 and 1966 sections. Both have simple, durable interior finishes including painted concrete-block walls and poured-concrete and vinyl-composition-tile floors. Exposed steel trusses support the corrugated-metal roof deck in the shop areas. Rooms and corridors in the west wings have acoustical-tile and painted parged ceilings. Commercial-grade carpeting has been added in the large open west wing rooms; vinyl-composition-tile floors remain elsewhere. Single-leaf blonde-wood doors either had three-vertical-pane upper sections or solid flat panels. All doors hang in simple steel frames and retain original hardware.

The 1953 workshop is illuminated by five bays of paired six-rectangular-pane sash with central two-pane hoppers on its north and south elevations and a single matching sash in the east elevation's south bay. Translucent wired glass was utilized to reduce glare and minimize breakage. An aluminum-breezeway-covered concrete walkway leads from the school's rear entrance to a single-leaf door with a square-panel base and three-pane upper section in the south elevation's west bay. A flat-metal-roofed wood canopy shelters the matching door in the east elevation's north bay. The wide wood-panel roll-up garage door at the east elevation's center features two rows of eight square wood base panels, a central row of glass panes now covered with metal, and two top rows of eight square wood panels.

The north storage room is shorter than the rest of the building. A square window and a single-leaf door with a three-horizontal-panel base and three-pane upper section pierce its east

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elevation. A flat-metal-roofed wood canopy shelters the entrance. The north and west elevations are blind.

The west wing's two-bay-wide east section is narrower and taller than its west section. On the north elevation, two small rectangular windows illuminate restrooms in the east section, while the classroom wall to the west is blind. The west elevation encompasses a north group of four six-rectangular-pane sash with central two-pane hoppers and a cluster of six matching sash south of the central entrance, where a flat-metal-roofed wood canopy surmounts an oriented strand board (OSB)-covered double-leaf door. Some sash have also been covered with OSB. The majority of the wing's south elevation was encapsulated by the 1966 addition, but two three-rectangular-pane sash with central single-pane hoppers on the south and east elevations light the office at the wing's southeast corner.

The 1966 addition's fenestration is very similar, although the workshop has only three bays of paired six-rectangular-pane sash with central two-pane hoppers and clear glass on its north elevation and four matching sash on the south elevation. A flat-metal-roofed wood canopy shelters the single-leaf door with a three-horizontal-panel base and three-pane upper section in the south elevation's west bay. The east elevation encompasses a six-rectangular-pane south sash, a central twenty-panel wood roll-up garage door, and a single-leaf north door with a flat-metal-roofed wood canopy. The small restroom windows on the north elevation and classroom sash on the west elevation are enclosed with OSB. Three concrete steps with slender square metal railings lead to two single-leaf doors with two-horizontal pane upper sections at the west elevation's central entrance. A flat-metal-roofed wood canopy tops the door. The south classroom wall is blind. A two-pane rectangular upper sash and an OSB-covered square lower window pierce the taller wall to the east.

Integrity Statement

Southside High School possesses integrity of location, setting, feeling, association, design, materials, and workmanship. The 1953 school, 1962 classroom wings, 1966 auditorium, and freestanding 1953 agriculture and industrial arts building enlarged in 1966 display character-defining features of mid-twentieth-century educational architecture including flat-roofed angular forms; tall, rectangular, steel-frame, multi-pane windows with hoppers; and cast-stone foundations, window sills, lintels, and coping. Concrete-block walls are veneered in red brick laid in a distinctive common bond pattern comprising four courses of stretchers followed by a course of alternating stretchers and headers. Metal coping covers concrete coping. Doors with two-vertical-rectangular-panel bases and nine-pane upper sections, often with multi-pane transoms, are sheltered by flat-roofed, concrete canopies buttressed with brick pilasters. The double-loaded corridor plan; original wall, ceiling, and floor finishes; and doors, cabinets, closets, bookshelves, blackboards, bulletin boards, and restrooms are intact. The utilitarian finishes are resilient: concrete-block walls, glazed ceramic tile wainscoting, vinyl-composition-tile floors, dropped-acoustical-tile ceilings, and wood- and metal-framed wood and steel doors. Modifications include partition wall construction in some classrooms.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture

Education

Ethnic Heritage: African American

Period of Significance

1953-1969

Significant Dates

1953

1962

1966

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Carter, J. Coates, architect, all phases

English Construction Company, builder, all phases

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

Southside High School possesses significance at the local level under Criterion A in the areas of Education and African American Ethnic Heritage and Criterion C for Architecture. As southern Pittsylvania County's only public secondary school for African American youth from its September 1948 opening on Piney Forest Road through its operation in Blairs from October 1953 until May 1969, the institution offered a wide range of academic and vocational courses to a large student body and enjoyed high graduation rates. Principal William S. Turner and his faculty promoted scholastic excellence and encouraged participation in extracurricular activities. The agriculture department taught subjects including farm administration, crop cultivation, fertilization, erosion control, livestock care, and building maintenance and construction that were critically important in a rural county with an agriculture-based economy. The program's influence was directly demonstrated in higher farm yields, crop diversification, and substantial investment in dairy and beef production. The home economics department equipped young women with household management skills. Community adults benefited from agricultural extension service programs, veterans training, and farm mechanics classes.

Southside High School is also architecturally important as a remarkably intact Modernist complex that manifests the Virginia Department of Education's mid-twentieth-century initiative to supply students with spacious, well-ventilated, and amply lit instructional areas. Martinsville, Virginia-based architect Joseph Coates Carter designed the two-story brick 1953 school, 1962 classroom additions, and 1966 auditorium, as well as the freestanding one-story brick 1953 agriculture and industrial arts building enlarged in 1966. Common Modernist characteristics include flat-roofed, angular forms and tall, rectangular, steel-frame, multi-pane windows. The 1953 school features an auditorium/gymnasium with locker rooms and a cafeteria and kitchen that supplied separate, sanitary food service facilities. The 1962 classroom wings and 1966 music room and agriculture and industrial arts building additions accommodated changing educational curricula and increased enrollment. The 1966 auditorium provided a spacious venue for academic and civic events. The interior plan; original wall, ceiling, and floor finishes; and doors, cabinets, closets, bookshelves, blackboards, bulletin boards, and restrooms are remarkably intact. The period of significance begins with the school's 1953 completion and continues until the Pittsylvania County school system's 1969 integration. The campus served as Blairs Junior High School from fall 1969 through spring 1988, then as Blairs Middle School until spring 2004, and finally as a community center until 2016.

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

Criterion A: African American Education Context and Southside High School Historical Background

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The September 1948 opening of Southside High School's original campus on Piney Forest Road near US 29 south of Blairs followed many years of Pittsylvania County School Board planning and advocacy by African American residents including community leader Irvin C. Burton and the Dan River-Blairs Civic League. The school board had in April 1946 approved the purchase of an approximately five-acre tract near Hollandsville School to serve as the African American high school's site. Martinsville, Virginia, architect J. Coates Carter rendered plans for the expansive two-story-on-basement, flat-roofed, seven-bay-wide, brick edifice with a monumental broken pediment entrance surround as well as a freestanding agricultural building. English Construction Company of Alta Vista, Virginia, selected on the basis of a \$236,740 bid for the school and \$22,287 for the agricultural building, commenced work in September 1947 and finished a year later. A \$275,000 loan from the State Literary Fund subsidized the construction cost. The campus also included an athletic field. Principal William Sherman Turner and thirteen faculty members instructed eighth- through twelfth-grade pupils during the 1948-1949 term. Students published a newspaper called "The Gazette," printed a yearbook, formed a basketball team, and adopted a ram as the school mascot. The campus was initially known as Southside Training School, but the seventeen-member senior class of 1949 successfully campaigned for a name change to Southside High School.¹

High enrollment soon led to overcrowding, precipitating discussions by 1950 about the necessity of a larger Southside campus as well as a comparable facility for Northside High School in Gretna. Southside's immediately positive impact on the community was emphasized in a 1951 report that noted a significant number of older students who had dropped out returned to take advantage of expanded course offerings at the new school. Class rosters encompassed 558 youth in December 1951. Pupils organized New Farmers of America and New Homemakers of America chapters, a student council, and creative dance and choral groups. Graduation rates steadily increased, with 110 matriculating seniors in May 1952. Adult learners also utilized the agriculture building, attending evening classes on subjects such as farm machinery repair.²

After Southside High School's July 1, 1951, annexation into Danville's municipal limits, the Pittsylvania County School Board authorized J. Coates Carter to design a new complex to be erected just north of Blairs. Due to building materials shortages during the Korean War, the school board had to obtain authorization to commence construction from the U. S. Department of Commerce's National Production Authority in summer 1952. English Construction Company of Alta Vista, Virginia, was awarded a \$433,869 contract for the Modernist campus in October 1952. Work began immediately and was completed a year later. In addition to sixteen classrooms, Southside High School encompassed a library, home economics department with a kitchen, science laboratory, combination auditorium/gymnasium with locker rooms, a cafeteria

¹ *PCSBMM*, April 3, 1946; March 5, 1947; September 17, 1947; February 4, 1948; April 7, 1948; September 1, 1948; Southside High School 1999 Alumni Reunion Souvenir Book Committee, *A Golden Past, A Heritage to Build On, 1949-1969* (Danville: McCain Printing Company, Inc., 1999), 7, 10, 35.

² *Ibid.*, 41; "School Bids Are Accepted in Pittsylvania," *Bee* (Danville), June 8, 1950, p. 14; Secondary Division of the Virginia State Department of Education, Visiting Committee Report, "The Evaluation of Southside High School, Pittsylvania County, Virginia, May 7, 8, 9, 1951," p. 5; "County Names New Principals," *Bee*, May 31, 1952, pp. 1 and 8; "Classes for Negro Farmers to Be Held," *Bee*, January 17, 1952, p. 2.

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and kitchen, offices, a teachers' lounge, and restrooms. Classrooms featured blackboards, bulletin boards, and built-in cabinets. Flowers Equipment Company supplied furnishings and the lockers that lined the halls and John G. Kolbe Company provided kitchen equipment. Amenities included a wall-mounted Simplex clock system distributed by International Business Machines. A one-story brick agriculture building with a large shop, offices, and classrooms stood behind the school. The open house on Sunday, October 18, 1953, was a landmark event, celebrated the afternoon before the school was placed into service. Eight new teachers joined the faculty that fall.³

The 1948 and 1953 Southside High Schools were constructed in conjunction with a Pittsylvania County school consolidation campaign subsidized by the Literary and Battle Funds that between 1945 and 1955 reduced the number of schools from 108 to 61.⁴ Progress was slow, however, and sixty-three buildings including the three-teacher Blairs School had no central heat, plumbing, or inside restrooms in 1952. Citizens petitioned for improvements, but the school board denied most requests to update inadequate facilities with the justification that new campuses were being erected as quickly as possible.⁵

During the 1950s, Southside High School's vocational agriculture department faculty provided instruction to Korean War veterans who owned or leased farms. The Veterans Administration's Industrial On-Farm Training program entailed two hundred hours of classes and one hundred hours of site-specific practical instruction per year on each student's farm.⁶ Participants in the program based at Southside High School won awards for their achievements at the October 1955 Danville Fair, as did members of New Farmers of America and New Homemakers of America.⁷ Southside's New Farmers of America chapter attended workshops on topics such as forest fire-fighting techniques. However, all training was held independently of that for white Future Farmers of America chapters.⁸

Virginia campuses remained segregated despite the U. S. Supreme Court's 1954 mandate for school integration. The General Assembly responded with the passage of the 1956 Stanley Plan, which afforded local school districts complete latitude in delineating student placement, thus perpetuating racially based school assignments. Politicians dubbed this effort to oppose desegregation "massive resistance." African American parents who attempted to enroll their children in white schools endured harassment, and many filed lawsuits when their concerns were not addressed.⁹

³ *PCSBMM*, December 5, 1951; September 3, 1952; October 1, 1952; May 6, 1953; "Southside Negro High School," U. S. Department of Commerce, National Production Authority form, June 20, 1952, Pittsylvania County School Board Records, Chatham, Virginia; "English to Build New Blairs School," *Bee*, September 24, 1952, p. 18; "Open House Set for New School," *Bee*, October 17, 1953, p. 2.

⁴ *PCSBMM*, February 2, 1960.

⁵ *PCSBMM*, September 3, 1952.

⁶ "Farm Training Still Available to Negro Vets," *Bee*, March 29, 1954, p. 12.

⁷ "Prize Winners of 1955 Fair Are Announced," *Bee*, October 12, 1955, pp. 1 and 2.

⁸ "FFA Members Attend Classes in Fire-Fighting," *Bee*, October 18, 1954, p. 2.

⁹ James H. Hershman Jr., "Massive Resistance," *Encyclopedia Virginia*, Virginia Foundation for the Humanities, 2011, <https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org> (accessed May 2017).

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The Pittsylvania County School Board appointed separate African American and white citizens' steering committees to discuss the volatile situation and held a series of public meetings. Black constituents demanded immediate desegregation, while white residents opposed integration in any form. The school board affirmed the latter approach, stating that the county's campuses would remain completely segregated as permitted by state law.¹⁰

Following a series of fall 1958 Virginia school closings in order to avoid integration, federal and state courts intervened with January 19, 1959, rulings that deemed the closures unconstitutional. Consequently, four African American students enrolled in white Arlington County schools and seventeen black youth desegregated Norfolk schools on February 2. The state legislature rejoined in April with the Perrow Plan, which ostensibly allowed parents to choose which schools their children would attend, but effectively maintained segregated school systems.¹¹

Southside High School enrollment grew to 760 in 1957 and further increased as south Pittsylvania County's African American population burgeoned. Graduation rates remained high, with 96 seniors completing coursework in spring 1960.¹² In order to accommodate such growth and provide equitable facilities at all campuses, voters approved a \$7,500,000 school bond referendum in spring 1961 to subsidize a phased construction campaign. The scope included five new African American elementary schools at which youth from forty rural schools would be consolidated, additions and building updates at Northside and Central Elementary Schools, and Northside and Southside High School expansions. Architect J. Coates Carter rendered plans for the aforementioned projects, all of which were Modernist in character.¹³

English Construction Company commenced work on the Southside High School additions as well as the twenty-two-classroom Southside Elementary School located on contiguous property to the west in August 1961 and finished both a year later. At the high school, two new wings extended from the 1953 edifice's east and west elevations. The east addition's first floor encompasses a large north room that almost doubled the size of the adjacent library and two classrooms on the corridor's south side. The upper floor provides a second home economics classroom and kitchen, another science classroom, and a small medical clinic. The west wing's first floor contains three classrooms and two small offices with a waiting room, while the second floor has four classrooms including a northwest chorus room with a stage. Southside Elementary School's completion allowed for the closure of seven small African American schools. The facility, which had an eight-hundred-pupil capacity, also welcomed 150 students from the overcrowded Kentuck Elementary School when classes began in September 1962. The inaugural faculty included former Danville principal Clarence D. Peebles, twenty educators from closed

¹⁰ *PCSBMM*, November 2, 1956.

¹¹ Hershman Jr., "Massive Resistance."

¹² "Southside High School," Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools interim application form, September 1957; "96 Graduate at Southside High School," *Bee*, June 4, 1960, p. 10.

¹³ There were 3 white and 37 African American elementary schools without modern facilities in 1962; 12 one-room, 12 two-room, and 16 larger schools. "September 27 Set for County's Bond Vote," *Bee*, June 15, 1960, p. 10; *PCSBMM*, January 16, 1962.

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schools, and three transfers from other Pittsylvania County campuses. Newly finished sections of the four-lane U. S. 29 east of the original alignment facilitated access to the campuses.¹⁴

In 1962, Southside High School administrators issued a statement delineating the institution's goals, which ranged from instilling a sense of civic duty to developing critical thinking proficiency, providing personal and community health guidance, and teaching "the proper use of leisure time." The importance of the agriculture, home economics, and industrial arts programs was stressed, as "family-type" farming was not only a lifestyle in the rural community, but a business. Operating a successful farm required mastery of myriad academic and vocational skills. Students were also prepared to pursue further secondary education and careers in urban areas.¹⁵

The curriculum included a full complement of academic, business, agriculture, home economics, industrial arts, health, physical education, music, art, Spanish, and French classes. Youth participated in band, chorus, drill team, student government, and honor society; literary, journalism, drama, science, math, and history clubs; future farmers, homemakers, and teachers associations; and published a newspaper. Cheerleaders encouraged the basketball and baseball teams.¹⁶ Faculty felt that extracurricular programs provided much more than recreation. Such activities built leadership and teamwork skills and exposed students to opportunities beyond their rural community.

The school enrolled 984 eighth- through twelfth-grade students in September 1962 and gained nine teachers, resulting in a twenty-five-member faculty, all of whom held advanced degrees. Principal Turner encouraged staff and students to engage in ongoing educational opportunities such as conference and workshop attendance and graduate-level coursework. Many of the 145 May 1962 graduates complied, with forty youth entering college, six business school, two nursing school, one technical school, and eighty-two finding jobs by September.¹⁷

Southside High School's enrollment increased to almost 1,169 students in 1965, taxing the campus's capacity. J. Coates Carter designed a six-hundred-seat auditorium to supplement the inadequate combination auditorium/gymnasium, but construction was delayed due to a funding shortfall. The school board had allocated \$122,000 for the project, which also involved existing building upgrades and an addition north of the cafeteria that would provide additional cafeteria seating and serve as a music room. As contractor John W. Daniel and Company's low bid of \$154,475 was much higher than expected, the disparity halted work until spring 1966. However, construction commenced as soon as funds were allocated in March and the auditorium was

¹⁴ *PCSBMM*, November 4 and 25, 1960; June, 22, 1961; January 16, 1962; March 9, 1962; "Thirteen More Rooms for County Students Under Construction," *Bee*, August 25, 1961, p. B9; "Teaching Positions Filled at all Pittsylvania Schools," *Bee*, August 25, 1961, p. B5; "Southside High School Additions Are Started," *Bee*, August 25, 1961, p. B10; "School Board Recommends Quickening of County School Building Program," *Register* (Danville), January 17, 1962, p. 3; "Ribbon Cutting Set Thursday for Four-Laned 29 South," *Register*, July 8, 1962, p. 10; "91 New and Transfer Teachers Set for Pittsylvania Schools," *Bee*, August 23, 1962, p. C2; "Many Changes are Evident in County," *Bee*, August 24, 1962, p. 1.

¹⁵ "Southside High School," Southern Association of Colleges and Schools application, September 1962.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

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substantially complete by October 1966.¹⁸ During the same period, the school system supplemented county contributions with federal and state funds in order to erect industrial arts buildings at Southside and Northside High Schools. Contracts were awarded in March 1966. The project, with a total value of \$924,333, was partially subsidized by federal funds made available by the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The work at Southside comprised a shop, classroom, and drafting room addition at the 1953 agriculture building's west end.¹⁹

Although the Civil Rights Act of 1964 mandated school integration as a prerequisite for federal funding eligibility, little headway was made in Virginia until 1968, when the U.S. Supreme Court rejected freedom of choice policies as a means of achieving desegregation in *Green et al. v. County School Board of New Kent County, Virginia*.²⁰ Pittsylvania County adopted a freedom of choice plan in May 1965. Annual integration reports submitted to the U. S. Department of Education's Civil Rights Division document incremental progress. The county operated twenty-five public schools (seven black and thirteen white elementary schools and four white and two black high schools) with approximately seven thousand African American and nine thousand white students in 1964-1965. That year, only one black student attended a formerly all-white high school. The county's 577 teachers (360 white and 217 black) also remained racially segregated. Sixty-four African American students exercised their option to enroll in predominantly white schools in 1965-1966. That number increased to 469 (240 at rural campuses with a collective 6,898 pupils) in 1966-1967, but only three white students attended chiefly black schools. Twenty-two black teachers and five aides and six white teachers then worked on desegregated campuses. Federal reviewers deemed that improvement insufficient.²¹

Student organizations also integrated in response to court decrees. The Pittsylvania County chapters of the Federation of Future Farmers of America admitted African American members in fall 1965 per court direction that dissolved the New Farmers of America's Southside and Northside chapters.²² Like many of his fellow students, 1966 Southside alumnus Edward Hairston worked on his family's farm, growing crops including hay, corn, wheat, barley, and tobacco throughout high school. He assisted his father with produce, wood, and tobacco sales in Danville. Hairston also drove a school bus during his last two years at Southside, putting his skills garnered driving farm trucks to good use. He remembers learning much relevant information regarding agricultural techniques and animal husbandry at Southside, and traveling with NFA to participate in livestock competitions. Other popular extracurricular groups included the Y-Teens Club and National Honor Society. The homecoming football game was one of the largest annual events. The close-knit community demonstrated support by attending student

¹⁸ "South School Project Funds Being Sought," *Bee*, December 2, 1965, p. B3; "Anderson Given Contract for School Bus Garage," *Register*, October 14, 1966, p. B4.

¹⁹ *PCSBMM*, "Pittsylvania County Schools," August 13, 1965; September 14, 1965; October 14 and 21, 1965; "County School Board Approves Construction Jobs," *Register*, March 12, 1966, p. 3.

²⁰ Hershman, "Massive Resistance."

²¹ Pittsylvania County School Board, "Statement of Policies and Plans for Compliance Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964," May 10, 1965; "School Desegregation Plan in County Turned Down With a 'No Progress' Report," *Register*, December 10, 1966, p. 3.

²² "Integrated FFA Starts New Year in County," *Register*, September 16, 1965, p. C1.

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plays, gospel choir performances, and agricultural competitions. Hairston credits the faculty with encouraging him to attend college, which he did after military service.²³

Southside High School continued to achieve the county's highest graduation rate during the late 1960s, with 185 seniors slated to matriculate in June 1967.²⁴ Following a series of lawsuits, a U. S. Western District Court approved Pittsylvania County's junior and senior high school integration plan, implemented in fall 1969. The two African American high schools—Southside and Northside—respectively became Blairs and Gretna junior high schools, each serving eighth- and ninth-grade pupils. Southside's older students were assigned to Chatham and Tunstall high schools and Dan River School. Approximately 5,498 eighth- through twelfth-grade youth attended classes on fully desegregated campuses that fall. Elementary schools were integrated during the 1970-1971 term.²⁵

A June 7, 1969, fire that originated in a Southside High School agricultural and vocational building office resulted in partial roof collapse, but much of the equipment was saved and the structure quickly repaired.²⁶ The campus parking lots were paved later that summer in preparation for Blairs Junior High School's September 1969 opening. When that institution was accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools in December, principal Gerald C. Adams and a fifty-four-person faculty instructed 1,040 eighth- and ninth-grade students. Most youth resided in neighboring communities including Glenwood, Mt. Hermon, Westover Hills, and the "Corridor" (along US 29), but eighth-grade pupils were also bused from a broader area encompassing Tunstall and Dan River Magisterial Districts, which spanned Pittsylvania County's full width and extended north to White Oak Mountain.²⁷ Blairs Junior High School's vocational agriculture department continued to host evening farm mechanics courses for area adults. Instructional topics included blueprint reading, farm equipment repair, welding, woodworking, and electric and gas line installation.²⁸

Blairs Junior High School became Blairs Middle School in 1988. SFCS, a Roanoke, Virginia, architecture, engineering, planning, and interiors firm, rendered plans for accessibility improvements including ramps at the primary south, north, and auditorium entrances; concrete walkways; auditorium and gymnasium door hardware updates; the creation of wheelchair seating areas in the auditorium; and restroom and locker room renovations executed in 1995.²⁹ After Blairs Middle School closed in spring 2004, the campus functioned as a community center until 2016. The Pittsylvania County Board of Supervisors has owned the property since July 2005.³⁰

²³ Edward Hairston, conversation with Heather Fearnbach in Danville, Virginia, June 17, 2019.

²⁴ "Pittsylvania High Schools to Graduate 780 This Year," *Register*, May 31, 1967, p. 3.

²⁵ "County Starts Unitary System in High Schools," *Register*, September 9, 1969, p. B1; "History Southside High School, Blairs, Virginia," plaque at the Pittsylvania County School Board conference room in Chatham, Virginia.

²⁶ "Southside High Damaged By Fire," *Register*, June 8, 1969, p. B1.

²⁷ "Blairs Junior High School is Accredited," *Register*, December 20, 1969, p. B1.

²⁸ "Nine County Adult Classes in Farm Mechanics Offered," *Register*, January 15, 1970, p. 10; "Mechanics Class," *Bee*, December 12, 1974, p. B1.

²⁹ SFCS, "Blairs Middle School, Pittsylvania County, Virginia," April 18, 1995.

³⁰ Pittsylvania County Deed Book 1503, p. 580.

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Criterion C: Mid-twentieth-century Educational Building Architecture Context

In 1946, the Virginia Department of Education reported that the residual effects of World War II had resulted in a one-hundred-percent increase in school construction cost since 1940. Sharp inflation and building material and labor shortages resulting from dramatic increases in housing and commercial construction demand fueled the expense escalation. The agency thus encouraged counties to delay all but the most critical building projects.³¹ However, as soon as the economy stabilized, the General Assembly authorized a series of multi-million-dollar appropriations to Virginia's Literary Fund to subsidize the construction of "equalization" schools. These projects were intended to validate the state's "separate but equal" policy by ensuring that all campuses, although racially segregated, had comparable modern, safe, and hygienic facilities.³²

Pittsylvania County's agenda for system-wide campus improvements from the late 1940s through the 1960s included demolishing many early-twentieth-century educational buildings, constructing new schools, and renovating and expanding existing buildings. Classrooms, cafeterias, auditoriums, and vocational buildings were erected to remedy overcrowded conditions and replace inadequate structures. Improvements were typically executed in phases. In order to ensure the most efficient and economical approach, the Department of Education's School Buildings Service issued planning manuals, provided guidance during the design development process, and reviewed all drawings and specifications.

Late 1940s Virginia educational buildings often reflected Colonial, Georgian, and Classical Revival stylistic influences, perpetuating an aesthetic commonly seen in early-twentieth-century consolidated schools. Such buildings feature symmetrical facades, large multi-pane windows, and classical embellishment. The Modern movement was slow to gain widespread acceptance in Virginia, despite the fact that those involved in the building trades promoted the style as an economical, up-to-date alternative to period revival architecture. However, the Department of Education embraced Modernism during the 1950s, revising its building planning manuals to encourage design devoid of expensive "extraneous" ornament.³³ Architects and engineers employed materials such as masonry, glass, aluminum, and steel in pioneering ways that broke with tradition and evoked the era's progressive mindset. Innovative design precepts enhanced connectivity between interior and exterior spaces. Architecture critic Lewis Mumford approved of Modernist campus design, characterizing the period's educational buildings as "schools for human beings," a complete departure from the 1930s schools he deemed "self-important WPA barracks."³⁴

³¹ State Board of Education, *Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1945-46* (Richmond: Division of Purchase and Printing, 1946), 173.

³² Hershman, "Massive Resistance."

³³ State Board of Education, *Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1949-50* (Richmond: Division of Purchase and Printing, 1950), 168 State Board of Education, *State Planning Manual*, vol. 37, no. 7, 1954, p. 11.

³⁴ Crow Island School, erected in Winnetka, Illinois, in 1939-1940, is widely regarded as being the first public campus to use Modernist design principles to embody progressive education philosophies. Janice E. Tubergen, "Crow Island School, Winnetka, Illinois," National Historic Landmark Nomination, 1989, 7.2-3, 8.2, 6-9; Carole Rifkind, *A Field Guide to Contemporary American Architecture* (New York, Penguin Putnam, Inc., 1998), 230.

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Southside High School architect J. Coates Carter was well-versed in traditional and Modernist educational building design. The Modernist 1953 school, 1962 classroom wings, 1966 auditorium, and freestanding 1953 agriculture and industrial arts building enlarged in 1966 are characterized by flat-roofed angular forms; tall, rectangular, steel-frame, multi-pane windows with hoppers; and cast-stone foundations, window sills, lintels, and coping. Concrete-block walls are veneered in red brick laid in a distinctive common bond pattern comprising four courses of stretchers followed by a course of alternating stretchers and headers. Doors with two-vertical-rectangular-panel bases and nine-pane upper sections, often with multi-pane transoms, are sheltered by flat-roofed, concrete canopies buttressed with brick pilasters. The double-loaded corridor plan; original wall, ceiling, and floor finishes; and doors, cabinets, closets, bookshelves, blackboards, bulletin boards, and restrooms are intact. The utilitarian finishes are resilient: concrete-block walls, glazed ceramic tile wainscoting, vinyl-composition-tile floors, dropped-acoustical-tile ceilings, and wood- and metal-framed wood and steel doors. The building's expansion allowed for greatly increased enrollment capacity and manifests the Department of Education's initiative to supply students with spacious, well-ventilated, and amply lit instructional areas.

Carter rendered plans for most of Pittsylvania County's public schools erected in the 1950s and 1960s. In spring 1961, he received commissions for a series of projects intended to provide equitable facilities for African American youth: five new elementary schools (Southside, Kentuck, Stony Mill, Mt. Airy, and Union Hall) that would consolidate forty rural schools, additions and building updates at Northside and Central Elementary Schools, and Northside and Southside High School expansions. Construction was executed in three phases through 1964.³⁵ All of the resulting buildings were austere, brick-veneered, flat-roofed, Modernist forms with bands of large steel- or aluminum-framed windows. The floor plans are efficiently arranged, usually around double-loaded corridors in order to take full advantage of natural light and air circulation. Auditoriums and gymnasiums are similarly streamlined and often flat roofed, although in some cases arched roofs add interest. Steel trusses allow for wide, open interior spaces.

The one-story, flat-roofed, Modernist, redbrick Southside Elementary School, located on contiguous property west of Southside High School, exemplifies this approach. Carter specified functional and durable exterior and interior finishes like those at Southside High School. Concrete bands surround groups of five-horizontal-pane aluminum-frame sash. The U-shaped facility at 440 East Witt Road, which was placed into service in September 1962, initially had twenty-two-classrooms and an eight-hundred-pupil capacity. It has been expanded several times

³⁵ There were 3 white and 37 African American elementary schools without modern facilities in 1962; 12 one-room, 12 two-room, and 16 larger schools. "September 27 Set for County's Bond Vote," *Bee*, June 15, 1960, p. 10; *PCSBMM*, November 4 and 25, 1960; June, 22, 1961; January 16, 1962; March 9, 1962; "Thirteen More Rooms for County Students Under Construction," *Bee*, August 25, 1961, p. B9; "Southside High School Additions Are Started," *Bee*, August 25, 1961, p. B10; "School Board Recommends Quickening of County School Building Program," *Register* (Danville), January 17, 1962, p. 3; "County School Construction Gets Go-Ahead," *Bee*, February 7, 1962, pp. 1-2; "Completion of School Construction By '65 Authorized," *Register*, February 8, 1962, p. 4-B.

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and remains in use.³⁶ Kentuck (1963; 100 Kentuck Elementary Circle, Ringgold), Stony Mill (1963; 100 Stony Mill Elementary Circle, Danville), Mt. Airy (1964; 100 Mt. Airy Elementary Circle, Gretna), and Union Hall (1964; 100 Union Hall Elementary Circle, Chatham) elementary schools were executed in the same manner and continue to serve Pittsylvania County youth.³⁷ Although the school system, which currently operates twenty-one campuses, regularly updates facilities, the aforementioned 1960s buildings are substantially intact.

Joseph Coates Carter, architect

Danville, Virginia, native Joseph Coates Carter (1904-1972), known as “Coates,” benefited from a wide-ranging academic experience and mentoring by prominent architects. He attended the University of Virginia in Charlottesville during the 1921-1922 term, the Carnegie Institute of Technology in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, for the next two years, and then moved to New York City, where he studied for a year at the New School for Social Research, founded in 1919 by a consortium of progressive educators including former Columbia University professors Charles Beard, John Dewey, James Harvey Robinson, and Thorstein Veblen. Carter spent the following year honing his design skills in Columbia University School of Architecture’s atelier, an intensive workshop, lecture, and travel program. During summer breaks from 1920 (when he graduated from Danville High School) until 1927, he was a draftsman in architects Heard and Chesterman’s Danville office. After three years in North Carolina at Carolina Power and Light Company in Raleigh (1927-1928) and architect Harry Barton’s Greensboro office (1928-1929), he returned to New York and became an associate architect in Shreve, Lamb, and Herman’s practice (1929-1932). In 1936, Carter established a namesake firm in Martinsville, Virginia, which he headed until his death, employing a series of assistants including Conrad M. Knight. He was licensed to practice architecture in Maryland, North Carolina, and Virginia. Carter became a member of the American Institute of Architects in January 1938 and was elected to the Virginia chapter’s board of directors (1959-1961). He served on Martinsville’s City Planning and Zoning commission for many years.³⁸

Carter’s diverse oeuvre encompasses Colonial Revival residences and Modernist schools, banks, offices, and municipal buildings. His firm enjoyed steady work in Martinsville, with educational commissions such as Druid Hills, Clearview, and Patrick Henry elementary schools, additions at Joseph Martin and East Martinsville schools, and a high school gymnasium (1960) on Cleveland Avenue. Carter was associate architect for Martinsville High School’s 1954 and 1968 (with NY architects Sharp and Handren) buildings. The firm designed an edifice at Du Pont Golf Club (1948), Memorial Public Library (with consulting architect J. Russell Bailey), the health

³⁶ “Many Changes are Evident in County,” *Bee*, August 24, 1962, p. 1.

³⁷ “New Dan River High and Kentuck,” *Register*, May 23, 1962, p. 9; “New Classrooms Ready in City, County,” *Bee*, August 22, 1963, p. 19.

³⁸ Joseph Coates Carter, AIA membership file and correspondence, AIA Archives, Washington, D. C. George S. Koyl, ed., *American Architects Directory* (New York: R. R. Bowker, 1956), 85; George S. Koyl, ed., *American Architects Directory*, 2nd ed. (New York: R. R. Bowker, 1962), 107; George S. Koyl, ed., *American Architects Directory*, 3rd ed. (New York: R. R. Bowker, 1970), 141; *PCSBMM*, June, 22, 1961.

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department on Armory Road, a YMCA building, city shops and warehouses, a Virginia Employment Commission office, Hedgecock Florists, two fire stations, Bassett Library, Piedmont Trust Bank (1957), Rives Shopping Center at Druid Hills, Globman's Department Store (1961), and the Martinsville Municipal Building (1968). Ecclesiastical work included sanctuaries for Calvary Christian, Forest Hills Presbyterian (1952), and Holy Trinity Lutheran churches and a First United Methodist Church addition.³⁹ In 1946, Carter remodeled the carriage house and garage at 15 Scuffle Hill (originally associated with his wife Dell Pannill's parents' home, Scuffle Hill), to serve as his personal residence. His firm designed at least twenty other Martinsville homes.⁴⁰

Carter's work elsewhere in Virginia also reflects his proficiency in both classical and cutting-edge design. In addition to First National Bank's Martinsville main office, Carter's firm rendered plans for the concern's branch banks in Southside, Druid Hills, Bassett, and Collinsville. Likewise, they designed Bassett Industries offices in Martinsville (1961) and Bassett (the later with consulting architects Smithey and Boynton). Educational buildings represent a substantial portion of the firm's identified oeuvre: Drewry Mason High School in Ridgeway (1952), Stanleytown Elementary School, Mary Hunter Elementary School, John Redd Smith School in Collinsville, Patrick Henry College (1969), a Stratford College dormitory addition in Danville (1969), and Botetourt, Floyd, Franklin, Patrick, Pittsylvania, and Wythe county schools. Other commissions include Henry County Medical Center (1954), Bassett Library (1954), and a Christian Church in Galax (1954).⁴¹

³⁹ Ibid.; "Gold Ticket Tour to Honor 50th Anniversary of Virginia A. I. A. Chapter," *Martinsville Bulletin*, April 12, 1964, p. 12.

⁴⁰ Helen Black, "Coats Carter Left Legacy of Beauty," *Martinsville Bulletin*, July 11, 1971, p. 1B.

⁴¹ Ibid., George S. Koyl, ed., *American Architects Directory* (New York: R. R. Bowker, 1956), 85; George S. Koyl, ed., *American Architects Directory*, 2nd ed. (New York: R. R. Bowker, 1962), 107; George S. Koyl, ed., *American Architects Directory*, 3rd ed. (New York: R. R. Bowker, 1970), 141.

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Martinsville Bulletin

Pittsylvania County School Board. Meeting minutes, 1946-1965, Chatham, Virginia.
(abbreviated *PCSBMM* after first citation)

Pittsylvania County School Board Records, Chatham, Virginia.

Pittsylvania County School Board. "Statement of Policies and Plans for Compliance Under
Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964," May 10, 1965, Chatham, Virginia.

Register (Danville)

Secondary Division of the Virginia State Department of Education. Visiting Committee
Report. "The Evaluation of Southside High School, Pittsylvania County, Virginia,
May 7, 8, 9, 1951." Pittsylvania County School Board Records, Chatham, Virginia.

Southside High School 1999 Alumni Reunion Souvenir Book Committee. *A Golden Past, A
Heritage to Build On, 1949-1969*. Danville: McCain Printing Company, Inc., 1999.

Southside High School
Name of Property

Pittsylvania County, VA
County and State

“Southside High School,” Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools interim application form, September 1957, Pittsylvania County School Board Records, Chatham, Virginia.

U. S. Department of Commerce, “Southside Negro High School,” National Production Authority form, June 20, 1952, Pittsylvania County School Board Records, Chatham, Virginia.

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: Pittsylvania County School Board, Chatham, Virginia

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): DHR #071-5820

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 5.9 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 36.689099 Longitude: -79.371303

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

Southside High School
Name of Property

Pittsylvania County, VA
County and State

The nominated property consists of approximately 5.9 acres of Pittsylvania County tax parcel #2421-71-5701 as indicated by the heavy solid line on the enclosed Location Map and the latitude and longitude coordinates above. Scale: one inch equals approximately 125 feet.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The nominated tract, which encompasses Southside High School and the adjacent access drives, parking areas, and front lawn, provides an appropriate setting. The Pittsylvania County Board of Supervisors retains ownership of the residual portion of the parcel, much of which contains athletic facilities that will remain in use by the school system as well as entities such as the Southside Soccer Club.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Heather Fearnbach
organization: Fearnbach History Services, Inc.
street & number: 3334 Nottingham Road
city or town: Winston-Salem state: NC zip code: 27104
e-mail heatherfearnbach@bellsouth.net
telephone: 336-765-2661
date: January 30, 2020

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

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

Photographs

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

Southside High School
Name of Property

Pittsylvania County, VA
County and State

Photo Log

Name of Property: Southside High School
City or Vicinity: Blairs
County: Pittsylvania State: Virginia
Photographer: Heather Fearnbach, Fearnbach History Services, Inc.
Date Photographed: 6-17-2019

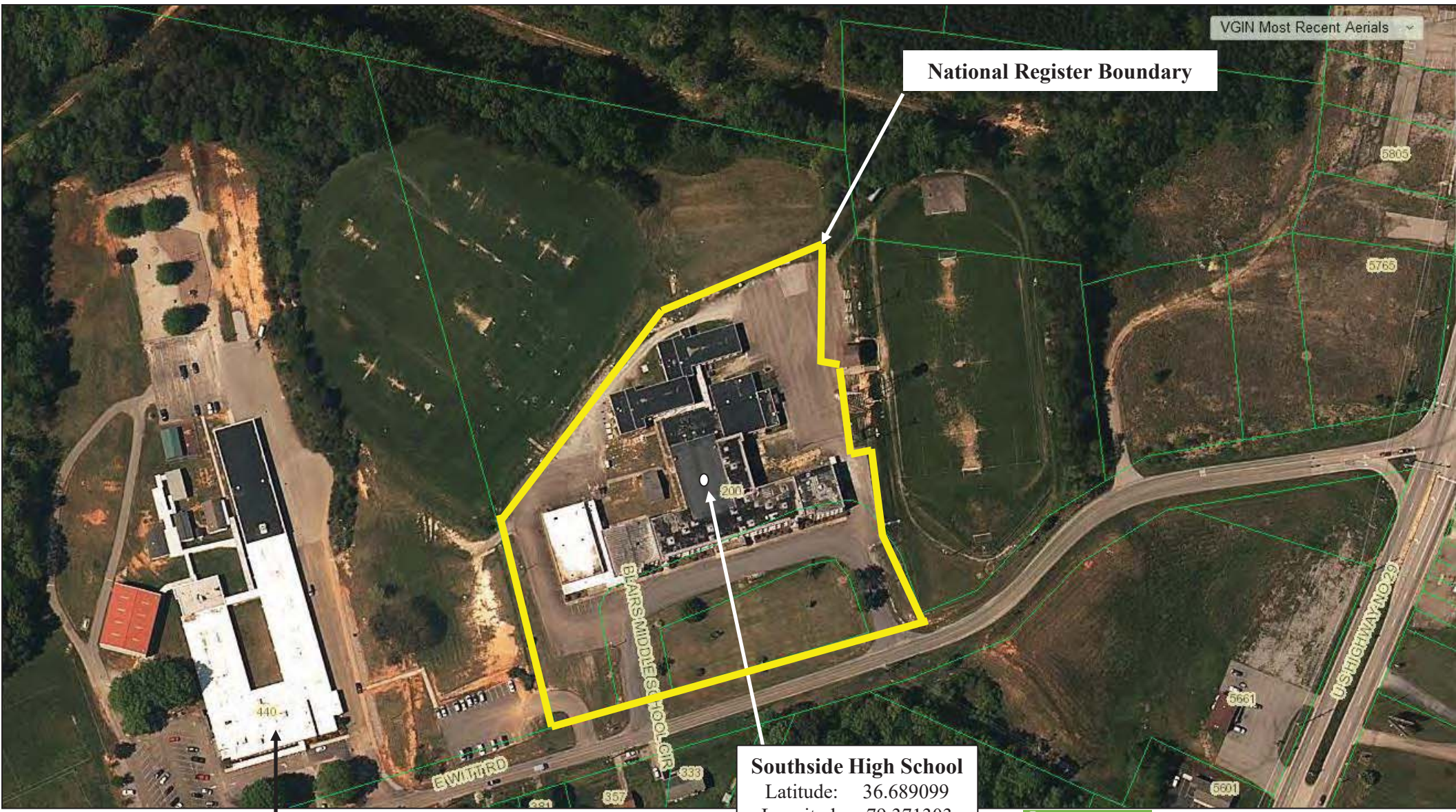
Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 23: Southwest oblique, 1966 auditorium in foreground, looking northeast
- 2 of 23: 1953 façade (south elevation), looking north
- 3 of 23: 1953 central entrance (south elevation), looking north
- 4 of 23: Southeast oblique, east 1962 classroom wing in foreground, looking northwest
- 5 of 23: North elevation, looking southwest at 1953 school, west 1962 classroom wing, 1966 auditorium
- 6 of 23: West elevation, 1966 agriculture and industrial arts building addition and 1953 school, looking east
- 7 of 23: 1953 agriculture and industrial arts building in foreground, 1953 cafeteria/kitchen with 1966 addition, 1953 school, east 1962 classroom wing, looking southwest
- 8 of 23: 1953/1966 agriculture and industrial arts building, southeast oblique, looking west
- 9 of 23: 1953 cafeteria/kitchen with 1966 addition, northeast oblique, looking southwest
- 10 of 23: Late-twentieth-century concession and restroom building, northwest oblique, looking southeast – will be excluded from National Register tract
- 11 of 23: Athletic field, looking south – will be excluded from National Register tract
- 12 of 23: 1953 school, office, looking south
- 13 of 23: 1953 auditorium/gymnasium, looking north
- 14 of 23: 1953 west locker room, looking east
- 15 of 23: 1953 north/south corridor, north end, looking north
- 16 of 23: 1953 cafeteria, looking west
- 17 of 23: 1966 auditorium, looking north
- 18 of 23: Second-floor east-west corridor, looking east
- 19 of 23: Second-floor, science laboratory, east room, looking south
- 20 of 23: Second-floor classroom, west wing, south of corridor, looking west
- 21 of 23: Second-floor classroom, west wing, south of corridor, looking southeast
- 22 of 23: Second-floor classroom, west wing, south of corridor, looking west
- 23 of 23: Second-floor classroom, west wing, south of corridor, looking east

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Southside High School (VDHR 071-5820) Location Map
200 Blairs Middle School Circle, Blairs, Pittsylvania County, Virginia



VGIN Most Recent Aerials

National Register Boundary

Southside High School
Latitude: 36.689099
Longitude: -79.371303

125 ft Scale 1" = approximately 125'

Southside Elementary School



Southside High School (VDHR 071-5820) Site Plan
200 Blairs Middle School Circle, Blairs, Pittsylvania County, Virginia

VGIN Most Recent Aerials

Agriculture and Industrial Arts Building, 1953, 1966, contributing building

dining/music room

1953

kitchen

1966

1966

cafeteria

1953

1953

locker rooms

auditorium/gymnasium

1953

200

Southside High School
1953, 1962, and 1966
contributing building

auditorium

1966

1962

1962 classroom wings

BLAIRS MIDDLE SCHOOL CIR

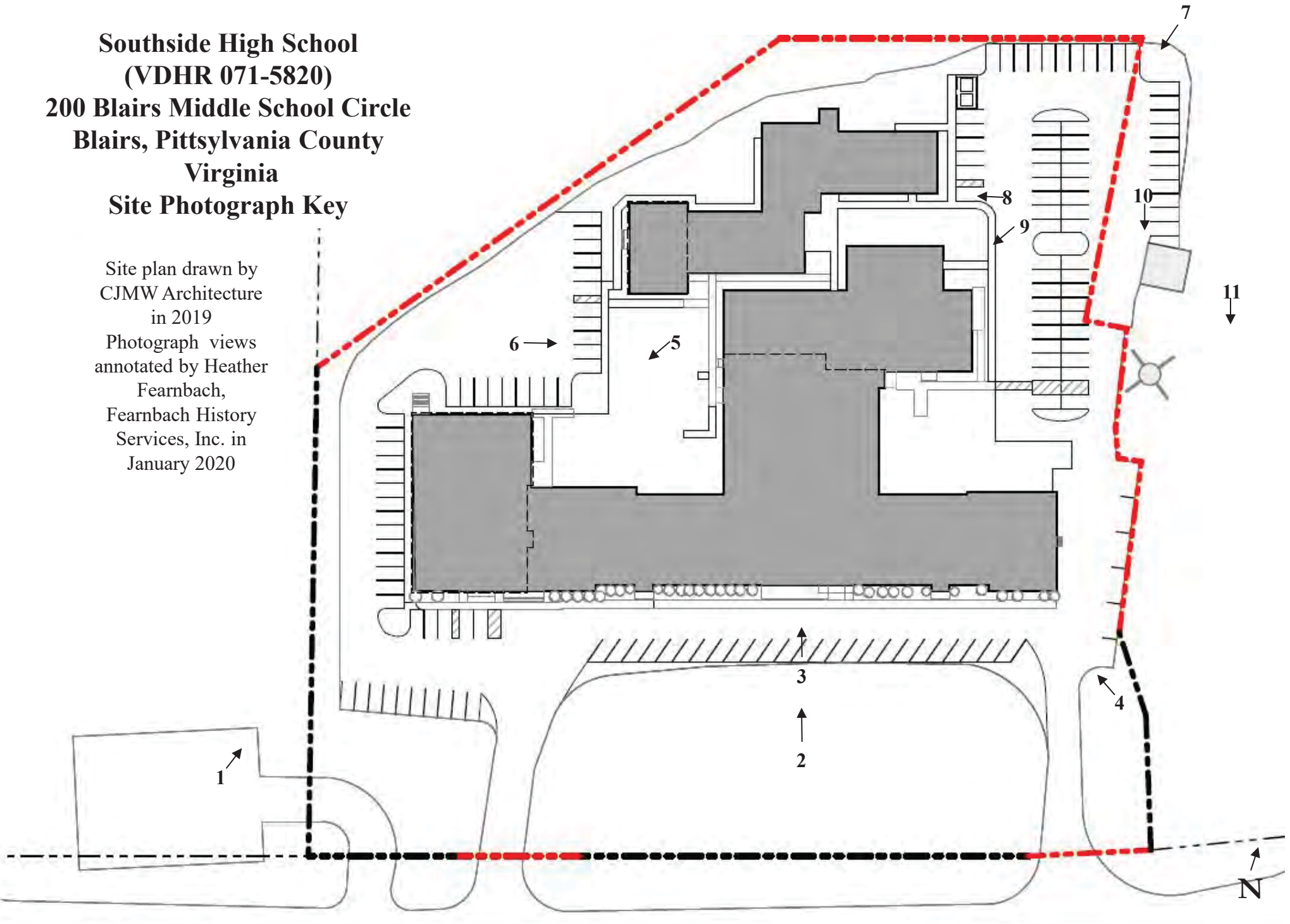
EWING RD

62.5 ft Scale 1" = approximately 62.5'



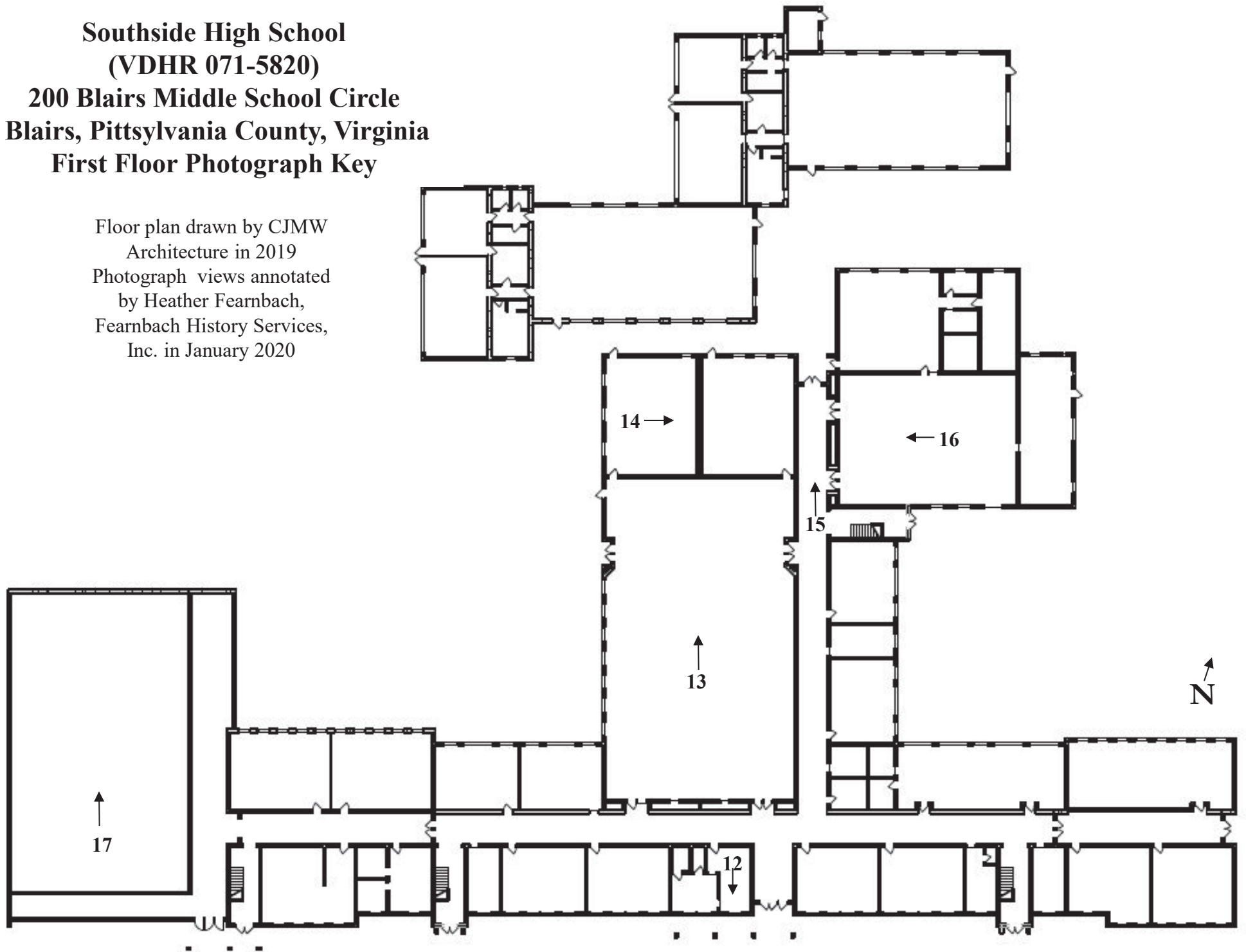
**Southside High School
(VDHR 071-5820)
200 Blairs Middle School Circle
Blairs, Pittsylvania County
Virginia
Site Photograph Key**

Site plan drawn by
CJMW Architecture
in 2019
Photograph views
annotated by Heather
Fearnbach,
Fearnbach History
Services, Inc. in
January 2020

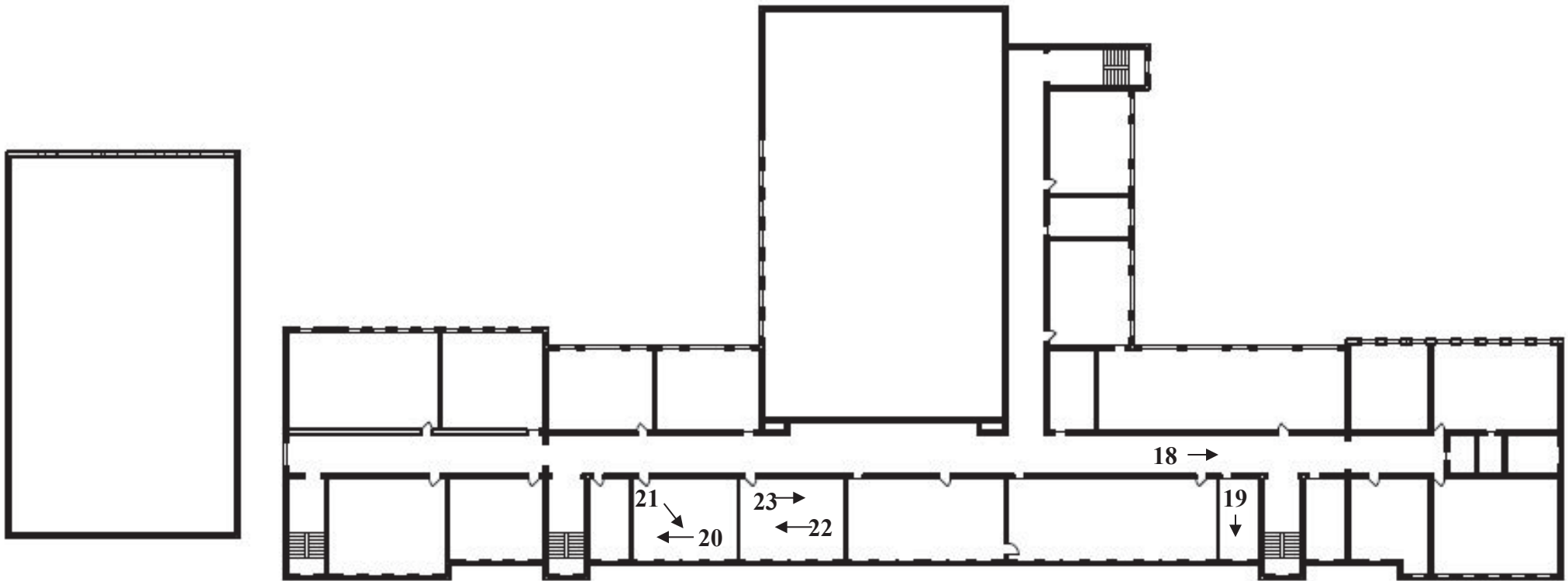


**Southside High School
(VDHR 071-5820)
200 Blairs Middle School Circle
Blairs, Pittsylvania County, Virginia
First Floor Photograph Key**

Floor plan drawn by CJMW
Architecture in 2019
Photograph views annotated
by Heather Fearnbach,
Fearnbach History Services,
Inc. in January 2020



**Southside High School
(VDHR 071-5820)
200 Blairs Middle School Circle, Blairs, Pittsylvania County, Virginia
Second Floor Photograph Key**



Floor plan drawn by CJMW Architecture in 2019

Photograph views annotated by Heather Fearnbach, Fearnbach History Services, Inc. in January 2020



Southside High School (VDHR 071-5820) PIN Map
200 Blairs Middle School Circle, Blairs, Pittsylvania County, Virginia



Scale 1" = approximately 250'

