

# 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: Claremont Elementary School

Other names/site number: VDHR 125-5013

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: 800 Ridge Avenue

City or town: Pulaski State: VA County: Pulaski

Not For Publication:  N/A Vicinity:  N/A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  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  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  local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A  B  C  D

		<u>10/24/2021</u>
Signature of certifying official/Title:		Date
<u>Virginia Department of Historic Resources</u>		
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government		

In my opinion, the property <input type="checkbox"/> meets <input type="checkbox"/> does not meet the National Register criteria.	
_____	
Signature of commenting official:	Date
_____	
Title :	State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

Claremont Elementary School  
Name of Property

Pulaski County, VA  
County and State

---

#### 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

Claremont Elementary School  
Name of Property

Pulaski County, VA  
County and State

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>2</u>	<u>2</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

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

Claremont Elementary School  
Name of Property

Pulaski County, VA  
County and State

---

## 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

Claremont Elementary School was designed by the Roanoke architecture and engineering firm Smithey and Boynton and erected by Dublin, Virginia-based general contractor Trinkle and Dobyns in conjunction with the Pulaski County Board of Education's 1950s campus improvement campaign. The campus encompasses an educational building, playground equipment, basketball court, and former athletic fields situated upon 8.29 acres in the bucolic southwest Virginia community of Pulaski. The 1952 building and 1953 additions display Modernist tenets in their flat-roofed, angular form and streamlined design. Tall, rectangular, grouped, steel-frame, multi-pane windows illuminate the building, which is characterized by common-bond red-brick-veneered walls with cast-stone accents. Utilitarian, resilient interior finishes include concrete-block and plaster walls, rectangular beige-glazed ceramic tile wainscot, plaster ceilings, and terrazzo and vinyl-composition, quarry, and ceramic tile floors. The campus possesses high integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association, while integrity of design, materials, and workmanship have been reduced due to renovations undertaken circa 2007.

---

#### Resource Summary

Claremont Elementary School, 1952, 1953, contributing building

Claremont Elementary School  
Name of Property

Pulaski County, VA  
County and State

Playground, 1952, contributing site  
Athletic Fields, 1952, noncontributing site  
Basketball Court, late-twentieth century, noncontributing site

## Narrative Description

### Setting

Claremont Elementary School is located on a ridge in a residential area northeast of the town of Pulaski's central business district and governmental center. The county seat is situated in the New River Valley on Draper Mountain's north slope in western Pulaski County, which is predominantly rural in character, with rolling topography and densely wooded areas. Modest homes line Newbern Road and the intersecting streets that surround the school. Commercial development is concentrated near Virginia Highway 99 to the south and US Highway 11 to the west.

The school faces north in the north portion of an 8.29-acre parcel. Although the campus is on Ridge Avenue's east side, the tract also encompasses a grassy lawn on the street's west side. The wider C-shaped section of the road leading to the entrance accommodated school traffic. Concrete-paved sidewalks border Ridge Avenue and lead to the north and west entrances. Five late-twentieth-century backless wood benches line the west sidewalk. A tall aluminum flagpole rises from the front lawn, which is punctuated by a few tall deciduous trees. Limited parking is available in the asphalt-paved area west of the auditorium/cafeteria/gymnasium. An access drive extends from Ridge Avenue to the parking lot south of the building. A chain-link fence separates the west portion of the parking lot from steel playground equipment and former athletic fields to the south. The school occupies the site's highest ground. Three clusters of additional playground equipment stand at lower elevations. The southeast portion of the parcel is characterized by undulating grassy fields that gradually decline in elevation to wooded areas. The small concrete-paved basketball court east of the school was added in the late twentieth century. Claremont Elementary School functioned as a public school until 2004, and the Pulaski County School Board leased the property to a private entity between 2007 and 2011 for use as a private school. The property has seen little use since 2011.

### Claremont Elementary School, 1952, 1953, contributing building

A modest example of the International Style, the school has an expansive L-shaped footprint, with a two-story fifteen-bay-wide main block erected in 1952 and twenty-four-bay-long rear wing. An addition comprised of eight classrooms at the wing's south end and the one-story auditorium/cafeteria/gymnasium that extends from the building's southwest corner was erected in 1953. The school is characterized by a flat-roofed angular form; horizontal massing; tall, rectangular, steel-frame, multi-pane windows with hoppers; and cast-stone window sills, coping, and stair tower accents. Concrete-block walls are veneered with red brick laid in a distinctive

Claremont Elementary School  
Name of Property

Pulaski County, VA  
County and State

common bond pattern comprising five courses of stretchers followed by a course of alternating stretchers and headers.

*The following description begins with the school's front (north) elevation and proceeds clockwise around the building.*

The slightly recessed west three bays of the fifteen-bay north elevation contain larger window openings than the rest of the façade. Stair tower entrances fill the bay east of the offset section as well as the main block's easternmost bay. At both entrances, cast-stone surrounds frame double-leaf steel doors and the cast-stone spandrels and tall window openings above them. A shallow, flat, concrete canopy shelters the doors. Two wide concrete steps rise to each concrete landing. The blind wall east of the east entrance is slightly recessed.

Steel-frame multi-pane sash are intact on the second story throughout the building, but the first-story and stair tower windows were removed circa 2007. Each opening is filled with vinyl siding around a high diamond-shaped single-pane window. The steel sash configuration varies with window size, but most have twelve panes including central four-pane hoppers. The large tripartite eighteen-pane sash in the main block's west bays have wider central sections containing a four-pane central hopper and a single-pane base hopper. All openings feature slightly projecting cast-stone sills. Long continuous sills link tall rectangular classroom window openings on the north and east elevations.

Twenty-four bays of windows punctuate the east elevation. The wing's south end is blind with the exception of a central, wide, tripartite, twelve-pane, second-story sash with a single-pane hopper at the center section's base. The double-leaf steel door beneath the window is topped with a flat wood canopy. Wide concrete steps with tubular steel railings and a concrete accessibility ramp with slender steel railings lead to the concrete landing at the corridor entrance. The wing's west elevation contains fourteen bays of window openings and a stair tower entrance in the southernmost bay. A pyramidal-hip-roofed frame canopy shelters the double-leaf steel door, accessed via a concrete step and landing.

Six bays of wide windows pierce the main block's south elevation. A flat-roofed metal canopy supported by a slender steel post covers concrete steps leading to the single-leaf steel kitchen door. The metal roof extends above the projecting basement stair entrance vestibule, which has a single-leaf steel door.

The auditorium/cafeteria/gymnasium has three tall rectangular window openings on the east elevation, seven matching openings on the south elevation, two small rectangular openings on the west elevation, and a single tall rectangular opening on the north elevation. As in the main block and wing, original sash were removed and openings filled with vinyl siding around high diamond-shaped single-pane windows circa 2007. At the south elevation's west end, single- and double-leaf steel doors provide stage entrance vestibule and auditorium egress. Brick walls with cast-stone caps flank wide concrete steps with a central tubular steel railing. The steel frame of a flat canopy remains above the entrances.

Claremont Elementary School  
Name of Property

Pulaski County, VA  
County and State

In the south bay of the main block's west elevation, a double-leaf steel door sheltered by a flat wood canopy supplies east-west corridor egress. A brick wall with a cast-stone cap rises at the north end of the wide concrete steps. The circa 2007 wood accessibility ramp with a wood railing that covers the south section of the stairs extends the width of the auditorium/cafeteria/gymnasium's north wall. Two small rectangular sash pierce the first story north of the entrance, while two large rectangular openings illuminate the second story.

## Interior

The 1952 school and 1953 classroom addition have double-loaded corridor plans. On the first floor, the primary entrance vestibule at the 1952 building's west end and two stair halls abutting the north elevation open into the long east-west corridor. The administrative suite, comprising a central reception area flanked by the principal's office and a clinic, restroom, and storage room that initially housed items including school supplies for student purchase, is east of the vestibule on the corridor's north side, opposite the entrance to the combination auditorium/cafeteria. By the late 1960s, that expansive room also functioned as a gymnasium. The main block's first floor also encompasses six classrooms, the kitchen, a teacher's lounge, and two restrooms. The north-south corridor leads to four classrooms, the southwest corner stair, and the south entrance in the 1953 addition. Steel and concrete staircases with solid-panel steel railings and tubular steel handrails fill the 1952 and 1953 stair towers.

The 1952 building's second floor contains seven classrooms, a special activities room, a teacher's lounge, two storage rooms, two restrooms, and a library with an office and work room at the building's northwest corner. The platform that spans most of the northeast classroom's north wall was originally used to elevate a piano. The 1953 addition encompasses four classrooms and the southwest corner stair.

Simple finishes were specified to maximize durability. In most areas other than classrooms, concrete-block walls are parged above rectangular beige-glazed ceramic tile wainscot. Corridors feature plaster ceilings, inset display cabinets, wood-frame blackboards and bulletin boards, and white porcelain water fountains. First-story corridors have terrazzo floors with the exception of the engineered wood floor in the 1953 west entrance corridor. Second-story corridor floors are covered with vinyl composition tile. Blonde-wood shelves line the library storage and work room walls. White porcelain pedestal sinks, toilets, and urinals; enameled-steel stall dividers with wood doors; and small, variegated-brown, patterned ceramic tile floors remain in the restrooms.

Single-leaf blonde-wood flat-panel classroom doors have two vertical-pane upper sections, while the double-leaf west entrance vestibule door has three vertical-pane upper sections. Single-leaf blonde-wood flat-panel doors remain at storage and restroom entrances. Single- and double-leaf steel doors secure auditorium/cafeteria/gymnasium, stair tower, and exterior entrances. All doors hang in simple steel frames and many retain original hardware.

Claremont Elementary School  
Name of Property

Pulaski County, VA  
County and State

Plaster walls and ceilings, wood chair rails, metal baseboards, and vinyl-composition-tile floors were initially ubiquitous in the classrooms. Original eight-inch-square vinyl-composition tile is variegated-tan with a red border. Commercial-grade carpeting or replacement larger square ivory vinyl-composition-tile floors have been installed in some rooms. Each classroom initially had a built-in wood cabinet with a multi-pane double-leaf door, storage cabinets with solid doors, or shelves, cubbies, or steel lockers inset in the corridor wall. Most original built-ins, including all glazed-door cabinets and many lockers, have been removed. Simple painted-wood shelving has been installed in some openings. Wood-frame blackboards and bulletin boards are mounted on the walls. Classrooms for younger students in the first floor's rear wing have small corner restrooms with terrazzo floors and wainscot and white porcelain toilets. Wall-mounted white porcelain sinks remain outside the restrooms. In first-floor classrooms where diamond-shaped windows were installed circa 2007, walls are sheathed with painted gypsum board. Steel radiators were replaced with mini-split HVAC units at the same time. Ceiling-mounted linear fluorescent or track lighting has been added in some rooms. Two first-floor classrooms in the rear wing were subdivided circa 2007, in one case to create a full bathroom and office. The other partitioned classroom now contains one large and two small rooms. Faux wood paneling sheathes the window wall of one second-floor classroom. Roof leaks in classrooms, the library, and the administrative suite have resulted in ceiling collapse, plaster failure, floor damage, and fungal growth.

The 1953 auditorium/cafeteria has a wood floor and a high ceiling covered with Celotex acoustical tiles. The original wall finish—painted-concrete-block walls above rectangular beige-glazed ceramic-tile wainscot—remains except for the south wall and portions of the east and north walls where diamond-shaped windows and gypsum-board were installed circa 2007. Likely at the same time, the stage kneewall was covered with rough-sawn horizontal boards. Wood steps at the north and south ends of the stage and the hardwood stage flooring are intact. Plywood fills most of the stage's wide proscenium opening. A small storage room is north of the stage, while an entrance vestibule and the rear stage stair are to the south. Steel trusses and metal roof decking are exposed above the stage.

The north portion of the auditorium/cafeteria's east wall contains a single-leaf door leading to the kitchen flanked by a wide opening that served as the cafeteria serving line and a smaller tray return opening. The kitchen has parged concrete-block walls above rectangular beige-glazed ceramic tile wainscot, a quarry tile floor, and a plaster ceiling. A storage room and a restroom are located at the kitchen's east end. The large stainless-steel hood that vented the central stoves hangs from the ceiling. Stainless-steel sinks line the south wall. The door at the kitchen's southeast corner provides exterior egress.

A winding steel stair leads from the exterior basement entrance vestibule on the main block's south elevation to the landing of the concrete stair with a tubular steel railing at the boiler room's southeast corner. Poured-concrete floors and concrete-block and parged walls provide resilient finishes in the mechanical, storage, and utility rooms. Mechanical systems are exposed and surface-mounted conduit has been installed. On the boiler room's south elevation, a single-leaf door provides access to a light well covered with a steel grate. The four-pane steel transom above



Claremont Elementary School  
Name of Property

Pulaski County, VA  
County and State

the door and the adjacent pair of ten-pane steel sash with central four-pane hoppers illuminate the basement. Concrete steps with a tubular steel railing rise to the elevated concrete walkway that spans the boiler room's west wall. The walkway leads to an enclosed concrete stair.

### *Secondary Resources*

#### **Playground, 1952, contributing site**

A chain-link fence separates the west portion of the parking lot from nearby steel playground swing sets. Three clusters of additional equipment including climbing bars stand at lower elevations. The playground originally included a no-longer-extant sandbox. Built at the same time as the school, the playground is a contributing site.

#### **Athletic Fields, 1952, noncontributing site**

The southeast portion of the parcel is characterized by undulating grassy fields that gradually decline in elevation to wooded areas. As the baseball/softball diamond is no longer extant and no other features such as fencing and dugouts are present, the athletic fields are noncontributing due to loss of integrity. Students also played volleyball and kickball in this area.

#### **Basketball Court, late-twentieth century, noncontributing site**

The small concrete-paved basketball court east of the school was added in the late twentieth century and postdates the property's period of significance.

### **Integrity Analysis**

Claremont Elementary School has integrity of location and setting as it continues to occupy its original location and the acreage associated with the property has remained constant since 1952. The large expanses of open space and mown lawn on the campus are typical of mid-twentieth century school campuses. Inclusion of ample space allowed room for accommodating more bus traffic, provision of additional parking, expansion of the school itself, and other features as needed. The school's integrity of design is fair, due largely to removal of the character-defining multi-pane steel sash from the 1952 block's first story windows and the main level of the 1953 classroom wing's windows. Infill of the openings with contrasting vinyl siding and diamond-shaped windows has preserved a sense of the original fenestration pattern, but this alteration is not sympathetic to the school's International Style design. Removal of the sash occurred circa 2007 during the school's brief use as a private school. Integrity of materials and workmanship are similarly affected by removal of original sash and related interior remodeling that changed some wall finishes. Other interior finishes, notably built-in cabinets and lockers, also have been removed. The principal palette of materials, however, is largely intact, from the exterior's brick-veneered concrete block walls, metal doors and pipe railings, and concrete steps and sidewalks to the interior's tile flooring, beige tile wainscot, plaster ceilings, restroom fixtures, and classroom doors are largely intact. The auditorium/cafeteria has minor alterations that are reversible, such as the plywood currently infilling much of the proscenium. Claremont Elementary School has

Claremont Elementary School  
Name of Property

Pulaski County, VA  
County and State

high integrity of feeling as a mid-twentieth-century school campus due to its sizable campus and use of the ornamentally restrained International Style, which became the favored choice for numerous types of public buildings during the 1950s. Modern Movement architecture was well suited to use of newer construction materials that were based on rapid mass production and to construction methods that required a lower level of expertise than traditional stone- and brickwork and carpentry trades of earlier periods. The property's integrity of association is present through the property's overall physical characteristics as well as its documented use as a public elementary school between 1952 and 2004.

Claremont Elementary School  
Name of Property

Pulaski County, VA  
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

Claremont Elementary School  
Name of Property

Pulaski County, VA  
County and State

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION

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

**Period of Significance**

1952-1971

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

**Significant Dates**

1952

1953

\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

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

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

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

**Architect/Builder**

Smithey and Boynton, architect, both phases

Trinkle and Dobyns, builder, both phases

\_\_\_\_\_

Claremont Elementary School  
Name of Property

Pulaski County, VA  
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.)

Claremont Elementary School possesses significance at the local level under Criterion A for Education. The two-story brick 1952 school and 1953 additions, erected in conjunction with the Pulaski County Board of Education's 1950s campus improvement campaign, alleviated overcrowding in Pulaski's elementary schools and facilitated implementation of progressive pedagogy. The campus served as a community gathering place throughout its operation. The Roanoke, Virginia, architecture and engineering firm Smithey and Boynton designed the austere building erected by Dublin, Virginia-based general contractor Trinkle and Dobyms in an economical manner that allowed for rapid construction, flexible use, and future expansion. Claremont Elementary School, which exemplifies the Virginia Department of Education's initiative to supply students with spacious, well-ventilated, and amply lit instructional areas, is one of the county's most intact 1950s educational buildings. Modernist characteristics include the flat-roofed, angular form, horizontal massing, and tall, rectangular, steel-frame, multi-pane windows. Utilitarian, resilient finishes such as concrete-block and plaster walls, rectangular beige-glazed ceramic tile wainscot, plaster ceilings, and terrazzo and vinyl-composition, quarry, and ceramic tile floors remain. The classrooms, special activities room, and library accommodated changing educational curricula and increased enrollment. The kitchen supplied sanitary food service facilities, while the auditorium/cafeteria/gymnasium provided a spacious venue for meals and academic, athletic, and civic events. The period of significance begins with the school's 1952 construction and ends in 1971, based on the traditional fifty-year end date for properties where similar activities continued into the more recent past. Although the campus continued to serve Pulaski's elementary-grade students until spring 2004, its function after 1971 is not of exceptional significance.

---

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

### **Pulaski County Education Context, 1870-1971, and Claremont Elementary School Historical Background**

Virginia youth were afforded limited educational opportunities until the Virginia General Assembly, mandated by the state's 1869 constitution to provide free public education for all children, enacted in July 1870 a uniform education law that established a statewide school system headed by a superintendent of public instruction and state and county boards of education. State funding based on population was insufficient, requiring municipalities to assess supplementary taxes to cover costs. As schools were racially segregated, black students typically received inferior buildings and supplies, shorter terms, and fewer instructors.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> J. L. Blair Buck, *The Development of Public Schools in Virginia, 1607-1952* (Richmond: State Board of Education), 65, 69-71.

Claremont Elementary School  
Name of Property

Pulaski County, VA  
County and State

Virginia's first state-subsidized public schools opened in November 1870. During the 1870-1871 term, the system served approximately twenty-four percent of the state's black children and almost thirty-eight percent of white youth. In Pulaski County, located in the southwestern part of the state, 184 African American and 634 white students were instructed by two black and fourteen white teachers in three black and thirteen white public schools in 1871. However, only 131 African American and 334 white students regularly attended classes in modest one- or two-room weatherboarded buildings.<sup>2</sup> In most cases physical school locations for these early facilities have not been determined.

Two public schools operated in the Town of Pulaski, incorporated in 1886, during the 1890s. A two-and-a-half-story, brick, eight-room school for white youth designed by the Lynchburg, Virginia, architecture firm W. P. Tinsley and Company was erected in 1890 on Randolph Avenue at a cost of \$12,500. A one-room weatherboarded school on Water Street served African American children from 1888 until a four-room brick school was completed on West Main Street in late 1894. Students began the January 1895 term in the new building.<sup>3</sup>

During the twentieth century's first decade, the Virginia general assembly designated capital for extensive public school system improvements. As mandated by the state's 1902 constitution, county boards of education implemented more stringent teacher qualification and compulsory attendance standards, undertook building renovation and construction, and consolidated smaller schools. African American school appropriations declined after the constitution disenfranchised black voters, perpetuating the problem of inadequate and overcrowded facilities.<sup>4</sup>

Pulaski County public school enrollment gradually increased during the early twentieth century. In 1901, 672 black and 2,398 white students attended twelve African American and sixty white schools for an average of 111 days that year. In September 1902, Pulaski Institute, a private academy for white children, began holding classes in a newly erected two-story, hip-roofed building with a stone first story and wood-shingled second-story on Sixth Street. In 1906, the building became the public high school for white youth. By 1907, Pulaski County's school-age population numbered 4,380 children, 1,692 of whom resided in the Pulaski District. In 1914, thirty-three teachers instructed 1,958 students at the district's schools. During the next two years, the district consolidated and improved campuses, investing \$33,563 in land acquisition and building construction and \$1,000 in architect's fees in 1915 and expending \$26,969 on the same items and \$1,377 on architect's fees in 1916. The Pulaski District operated twelve schools in 1916-1917. Roanoke general contractor Barbour and Company completed a school for white children in Pulaski in summer 1916. Elementary classes were held in the new building during the 1916-1917 academic year, but ninth- through twelfth-grade students remained in the 1902 school

---

<sup>2</sup> State Board of Education, *First Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1871* (Richmond: Superintendent of Public Printing, 1871), 169.

<sup>3</sup> G. T. Swaim, *A History of the Town of Pulaski* (Pulaski, VA: 1911).

<sup>4</sup> Buck, *The Development of Public Schools in Virginia*, 126-139; Rand Dotson, "Progressive Movement in Virginia," *Encyclopedia Virginia*, Virginia Foundation for the Humanities, 2012, <https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org> (accessed October 2020).

Claremont Elementary School  
Name of Property

Pulaski County, VA  
County and State

until the following term.<sup>5</sup> The Classical Revival-style 1916 Pulaski School featured a full-height pedimented tetrastyle portico with massive Doric columns, a robust modillion cornice, and a multi-pane lunette at the pediment's center. A matching cornice wrapped around the building above tall, multi-pane, double-hung, wood sash.

By 1922, when 2,289 of Pulaski County's 5,219 students were enrolled in the Pulaski District, overcrowded classrooms and outdated facilities precipitated another school improvement campaign. At that time, the county's forty-two white and six African-American schools included twenty-seven one-room and seven two-room buildings utilized by white students and four one-room and one two-room schools attended by black students.<sup>6</sup> In order to subsidize new building construction, the Pulaski County School Board (PCSB) requested financing from the State Literary Fund. The Virginia Board of Education assisted by developing standard plans and specifications for educational buildings to reduce cost and ensure an optimal learning environment. On November 8, 1923, the PCSB approved a \$75,000 bond issuance to erect and furnish Jefferson Elementary School in south Pulaski. The twenty-room edifice, completed in 1924, initially served first- through third-grade white students. Three rooms were added to accommodate fifth grade youth in 1928.<sup>7</sup>

The economic challenges that ensued from the Great Depression limited school construction during the 1930s. However, in November 1936 the PCSB commissioned Fowler-Jones Construction Company of Winston-Salem to erect Pico Terrace Elementary School to replace East Pulaski School. The State Literary Fund and a federal Works Progress Administration grant subsidized the two-story, brick, twelve-classroom building's approximately \$82,000 cost. Due to construction delays, about 450 white students began the fall 1937 term at other campuses and moved to Pico Terrace Elementary School on October 18<sup>th</sup>.<sup>8</sup>

Pulaski's African American children received instruction at temporary quarters following the November 11, 1938, fire that destroyed Calfee Training School, which then served approximately 250 students. The one-story, brick, Colonial Revival-style, eight-room building erected on West Main Street opposite the demolished school site's opposite side was finished in fall 1939.<sup>9</sup> Elementary grades were housed in the building, while, in response to a petition from the black community to provide school facilities and teacher salaries equivalent to those at white

<sup>5</sup> State Board of Education, *Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1899-1901* (Richmond: Superintendent of Public Printing, 1901), 106, 110; "Contract is Awarded," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, February 7, 1915, p. 3; Pulaski County School Board – Board of Education Meeting Minutes, Pulaski County Public Schools Central Office, Pulaski, Virginia (hereafter abbreviated PCSBMM), December 1, 1907, June 31, 1914, November 28, 1914, January 15 and 26, 1915, June 30, 1915, March 7, 1916, May 24, 1916; Swaim, *A History of the Town of Pulaski*.

<sup>6</sup> PCSBMM, June 1922; State Board of Education, *Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the Commonwealth of Virginia, 1920-21* (Richmond: Superintendent of Public Printing, 1922), 115, 130.

<sup>7</sup> PCSBMM, November 1923.

<sup>8</sup> "Pico Terrace School Ready," *ST*, October 18, 1936, pp. 1 and 4; "Supervisors Put Stamp of Approval on State Literary Fund," *ST*, October 18, 1936, p. 1; "Carolina Firm Gets Contract," *ST*, November 19, 1936, pp. 1 and 6; "Council Holds Busy Meeting," *ST*, December 9, 1936, p. 1; "Pico Terrace School Opens," *ST*, October 18, 1937, p. 1.

<sup>9</sup> Mary M. Baker, "Black History of Pulaski County," undated manuscript in Pulaski Public Library vertical file.

Claremont Elementary School

Name of Property

Pulaski County, VA

County and State

high schools, the PCSB began busing upperclassmen to Christiansburg Institute in neighboring Montgomery County. The Christiansburg campus, which had evolved from Hill School, an 1866 Freedmen's Bureau endeavor to educate emancipated Americans, was subsidized after 1870 by the Friends' Freedmen Association and renamed in 1896 to reflect Tuskegee Institute founder Booker T. Washington's involvement as an advisor. Although the high school was accredited, the bus ride between Pulaski and Christiansburg was onerous and the buildings dilapidated.<sup>10</sup>

In 1939, PCSB engaged the Roanoke architecture and engineering firm Smithey and Boynton to guide heating and sanitation improvements at the Pulaski and Dublin high schools for white children. That year, 4,522 Pulaski County students attended forty-one schools, twenty of which were one-room buildings. School construction ceased as World War II escalated in the early 1940s and Pulaski County residents were impacted by austerity measures. Although building material and labor shortages persisted after World War II, further impeding new construction projects, the campaign to improve facilities and alleviate overcrowding on all Pulaski County campuses continued. In 1947 Smithey and Boynton rendered plans for elementary schools in North Pulaski and Fairlawn. The buildings, erected by Trinkle and Dobyms of Dublin, Virginia, were completed and furnished at a cost of approximately \$331,500. In May 1949, the newly completed North Pulaski campus was named Northwood and the Fairlawn campus called Riverlawn, as it served students from the New River and Fairlawn communities.<sup>11</sup>

On June 17, 1949, the PCSB issued a long-range school building program proposing projects on fourteen campuses. Smithey and Boynton was engaged to provide project estimation and drawing execution services. Although building materials shortages and increased cost during the Korean War slowed construction, by 1951 the firm had rendered plans for new buildings and/or additions or renovations at Belspring, Claremont, Draper, Hiawassee, Newbern, Northwood, Riverlawn, Snowville, and William Gresham elementary schools; Pulaski and Dublin high schools; Calfee Training School; and Christiansburg Institute. The first construction phase was funded by a \$2,500,000 bond issue and \$417,730 state appropriation in 1950. The PCSB subsequently received an \$831,000 state subsidy, and, as Pulaski was in a federally designated war impacted area, the building program qualified for a \$643,000 federal grant.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> PCSBMM, March 15, 1939, May 25, 1939. The disparity between educational opportunities for Pulaski County's white and African American youth was litigated in 1947, when Dr. P. C. Corbin sued the PCSB on behalf of his son, Mahatma Corbin, who was among the students bused to Christiansburg Institute. African American attorneys Oliver Hill and Spottswood Robinson, supported by the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, lost the Virginia federal court case, but Baltimore's U.S. Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in Corbin's favor in November 1949. However, the PCSB declined the directive to equalize educational facilities. "Corbin v. Pulaski," U. S. District Court, Eastern District of Virginia, Roanoke Division, RG 21, National Archives Mid-Atlantic Region.

<sup>11</sup> PCSBMM, July 11, 1939, April 12 and 19, 1948, March 3, 1949, May 3 and 5, 1949; "Smithey & Boynton, Architects & Engineers Records, 1922-1985," Ms1992-027, Special Collections, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Virginia; Eva Vaughn, "History of Education in Pulaski County," July 1963, p. 7, Folder 5, Box 3, Virginia Education Association Histories, Library of Virginia, Richmond.

<sup>12</sup> PCSBMM, April 27, 1950, May 4, 1950, July 12, 1950, August 25, 1950; "Smithey & Boynton, Architects & Engineers Records, 1922-1985," Ms1992-027, Special Collections, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Virginia; "School Building Program Makes Progress in 1951," *ST*, December 31, 1951, p. 4; Vaughn, "History of Education in Pulaski County," p. 8.



Claremont Elementary School

Name of Property

Pulaski County, VA

County and State

Trinkle and Dobyms commenced erecting Claremont Elementary School, named after the surrounding neighborhood, in June 1951. In addition to eighteen classrooms, the building as initially proposed encompassed an administrative office suite, clinic, library, special activities room, kitchen, combination auditorium/cafeteria, and restrooms. Classrooms featured blackboards, bulletin boards, and built-in cabinets. Due to insufficient funding, four classrooms and the auditorium/cafeteria were eliminated from the initial construction phase. The school, completed at cost of \$319,646, was placed into service in September. As classroom space was insufficient for the planned transfer of all first- through seventh-grade students from Pico Terrace Elementary School, one fifth-grade class and all sixth- and seventh-grade classes remained at Pico Terrace. Principal Ralph E. Holtz supervised the sixteen teachers who instructed approximately five hundred students at Claremont Elementary School.<sup>13</sup>

In late September 1952, the PCSB instructed Smithey and Boynton to solicit bids for an eight-classroom and auditorium/cafeteria addition as soon as plans were available. The second construction phase began after the county received a \$146,000 federal appropriation in 1953 that subsidized most of the project's \$156,300 cost. Flowers School Equipment, Southern Desk, and Virginia School Equipment companies supplied the furnishings. The additions were in use and complete with the exception of lighting and lockers in classrooms and a few minor items in the auditorium/cafeteria by early November 1953. In order to accommodate approximately 850 first-through seventh-grade youth that fall, around six hundred students had half-day schedules until late October.<sup>14</sup>

Children who lived nearby walked to school and many returned home daily for lunch. Enrollment increased steadily as developers divided agricultural tracts in the surrounding area to create residential subdivisions. The community actively supported the school and its faculty, soon establishing a Parent-Teachers Association to facilitate fundraising and assist with student programs and annual events such as holiday celebrations and talent contests. Claremont Elementary School's playground included swing sets, climbing bars, a sandbox, and expansive fields, a portion of which served as a softball and baseball diamond. Students played kickball and volleyball, jumped rope, and enjoyed apples from trees on the property and picnics on the lawn. The Pulaski Recreation Department sponsored marble tournaments and operated summer day camps offering crafts and outdoor activities. Some students joined Brownie and Cub Scout troops organized by Pulaski's Girl and Boy Scout councils.<sup>15</sup> In November 1953, the recreation

---

<sup>13</sup> PCSBMM, May 3 and 16, 1951, July 5, 1951, March 6, 1952, June 5, 1952; "Claremont Name Given to East Pulaski School," *ST*, April 7, 1950, p. 1; "School Plan to be Given," *ST*, May 13, 1951, p. 1; "New Buildings to Ease School Congestion," *ST*, August 17, 1952, p. 3; "School Board Hears Report on Buildings," *ST*, January 11, 1953, p. 1.

<sup>14</sup> PCSBMM, September 23, 1952, January 29, 1953, February 5, 1953, May 7, 1953, October 8, 1953, November 5, 1953, January 12, 1954, March 4, 1954, April 8, 1954, September 9, 1954; "Building projects at Pico, Claremont Affect Schedules," *ST*, August 30, 1953, p. 6; "Claremont Elementary Pupils Attend Classes in New Unit," *ST*, October 23, 1953, p. 1; "Building Progress Reported," *ST*, November 6, 1953, p. 1.

<sup>15</sup> Janis Carter, Claremont Elementary School student (1952-1958) and teacher (1966-1970), and Joyce Covey, Joyce Covey, Claremont Elementary School student (1955-1961) and teacher (1985-1986), telephone conversations with Heather Fearnbach, October 27, 2020; "Scout Council is Planning Group Events," *ST*, March 5, 1955, p. 3;

Claremont Elementary School

Name of Property

Pulaski County, VA

County and State

department inaugurated a basketball program for approximately five hundred elementary school students. The girls' division included sixth- and seventh-grade youth from Pico Terrace and Claremont Elementary School, while the boys' league involved fifth- through seventh-grade pupils from Claremont, Jefferson, and Northwood Elementary Schools. Games were played in the Pulaski High School gymnasium and at the Monticello Club, a recreational building erected by the Virginia Maid Hosiery Mills Employees' Association in 1935. Beginning in fall 1954, a beginners' band composed of fifth- through-seventh-grade Claremont and Central Elementary School students practiced at Central Elementary School.<sup>16</sup>

During the 1954-1955 academic year, 384 black and 5,054 white students enrolled in Pulaski County's elementary schools and 118 black and 1,614 white youth attended secondary schools. African American elementary pupils attended the rebuilt Calfee Training School, the three-classroom William Gresham School in New River, and Rich Hill School, a one-room frame building in Allisonia. African American upperclassmen continued to be bused to Christiansburg Institute. The PCSB moved seventh-grade classes from Claremont to Central Elementary School in fall 1958 when enrollment rose to more than eight hundred in order to accommodate more sixth-grade white students.<sup>17</sup>

Claremont Elementary School served only white youth until fall 1967, as Virginia public schools remained segregated despite the U. S. Supreme Court's 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision that mandated school integration. The Virginia 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.<sup>18</sup>

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.<sup>19</sup>

---

"Town Recreation Notes," *ST*, May 26, 1957, p. 2, and August 24, 1958, p. 2; "Claremont Ends Summer Program with Picnic Event," *ST*, August 15, 1958, p. 1.

<sup>16</sup> C. E. Dyer Jr., "New Clubhouse to Open Saturday," *ST*, August 2, 1935, pp. 1 and 4; 500 Pulaski Youths to Take Part in Town Recreation Basketball," *ST*, November 20, 1953, p. 2; "Elementary Schools Plan Band Training," *ST*, September 23, 1954, p. 1.

<sup>17</sup> State Board of Education, *Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the Commonwealth of Virginia, 19954-1955* (Richmond: Superintendent of Public Printing, 1955), 256-257; Bill Akers, "More than 7,000 in County Schools," *ST*, August 31, 1958, p. 3; "Teachers Listed in Four of Pulaski's Elementary Schools," *ST*, September 7, 1958, p. 12.

<sup>18</sup> James H. Hershman Jr., "Massive Resistance," *Encyclopedia Virginia*, Virginia Foundation for the Humanities, 2011, <https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org> (accessed October 2020).

<sup>19</sup> Hershman Jr., "Massive Resistance."

Claremont Elementary School  
Name of Property

Pulaski County, VA  
County and State

In Pulaski County, six black residents had requested in 1956 that their children be allowed to attend the school closest to their home. The PCSB deferred to the State of Virginia's Pupil Placement Board, which denied the petition and subsequent requests for eighteen Christiansburg Institute students to enroll at Pulaski High School. The latter decision resulted in a lawsuit, filed in Federal court, where the judge ruled on April 21, 1960, that fourteen of the eighteen students should be permitted transfer to Pulaski High School in September, and that the other four youth, as well as any other Pulaski County students at Christiansburg Institute, could transfer in 1961 and thereafter. Although thirteen students successfully enrolled at Pulaski High School during the 1960-1961 term, Pulaski County campuses remained predominately segregated. The school system served a large population that year, when attendance averaged 442 African American and 5,828 white youth and the PCSB employed 12 black elementary, 143 white elementary, and 98 white high school teachers. In March 1961, twenty-five African American students requested assignment to Pulaski and Dublin high schools.<sup>20</sup>

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 mandated school integration as a prerequisite for federal funding eligibility. Pulaski County schools were completely desegregated following the closure of Calfee Training School and Christiansburg Institute at the 1965-1966 term's conclusion. During the 1966-1967 academic year, nine black and 139 white teachers instructed 496 African American students and 5,719 white pupils at eleven schools. African American educator Irene Holt Morrison, previously employed at Calfee Training School, joined Claremont Elementary School's faculty. In June 1967, the PCSB announced that a redistricting plan would be implemented on January 1, 1968, creating five new districts: Cloyd, Draper, Ingles, Massie, and Robinson. In fall 1968, 4,589 elementary and 2,553 secondary students enrolled in Pulaski County's schools. Integration was required statewide in 1968 after 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*.<sup>21</sup>

Claremont Elementary School operated until summer 2004, serving approximately four hundred first- through fifth-grade students during its final term. That fall, children from the Claremont and Northwood districts attended the newly completed Pulaski Elementary School. The PCSB retained ownership of the Claremont campus and leased it from 2007 until August 2011 to the private Camelot School, which renovated the building in order to serve special needs students. The PCSB conveyed the property to the Pulaski County Board of Supervisors' Economic Development Authority on July 8, 2019, to facilitate the building's rehabilitation.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>20</sup> PCSBMM, January 1957 through December 1967; Barbara Hawkins, "25 Students Seek Entrance in Area Schools," *ST*, March 16, 1961, pp. 1 and 6; State Board of Education, *Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1960-61* (Richmond: State Board of Education, 1961), 293, 378-379.

<sup>21</sup> PCSBMM, May 31, 1967; Archie G. Richardson, *The Development of Negro Education in Virginia, 1831-1970* (Richmond, Virginia: Richmond Chapter Phi Delta Kappa, 1976), 110; State Board of Education, *Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1968-1969* (Richmond: State Board of Education, 1969), 278; Hershman, "Massive Resistance;" Brooke J. Wood, "Local educator to be celebrated on 90<sup>th</sup> birthday," *ST*, December 23, 2016, p. 3.

<sup>22</sup> Katelyn Polantz, "Pulaski's Camelot School for special needs closes," *Roanoke Times*, August 12, 2011; Pulaski County Deed Book 2018, p. 3782; Deed Book 2019, p. 2051.

Claremont Elementary School  
Name of Property

Pulaski County, VA  
County and State

## Mid-twentieth-century Educational Architecture

Modernism dominated mid-twentieth-century educational architecture as architects and engineers employed materials such as brick, concrete, glass, aluminum, and steel in pioneering ways that broke with tradition and evoked the era's progressive mindset. Modernist principles such as simplicity, efficiency, flexibility, affordability, and intrinsic material expression were inherently applicable to educational buildings, which typically display a functionalist approach in their form, horizontal massing, articulated structures, spare detailing, and fenestration that is dictated by spatial use rather than symmetry. Large steel-frame windows facilitated visual connectivity between interior and exterior spaces and provide large, well-ventilated, and amply lit instructional areas. Steel and precast-, formed-, and slab-concrete structural systems, often exposed on the interior, allow for expansive, open spaces such as auditoriums, gymnasiums, and cafeterias. Concrete floors and wall panels, available in a wide variety of colors, textures, and finishes, were pragmatic and durable. Concrete block was often a less expensive alternative for structural walls than brick.

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." Campuses were regarded as extensions of the home, and were thus erected at a more domestic scale, with plans intended to promote creative, active learning. 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. Winnetka school superintendent Carleton Washburne guided the architect selection process, awarding the contract to a diverse team: Lawrence B. Perkins, Todd Wheeler, and Philip Will Jr., a young and relatively inexperienced firm; and the internationally-renowned Finnish architect and Cranbrook Academy for the Arts professor Eliel Saarinen and his son Eero Saarinen, who had joined his father's firm in 1938. Their successful collaboration resulted in an innovative child-centered building with a low profile, bands of steel-framed windows, exterior courtyards for each L-shaped classroom, numerous playgrounds, and landscaping intended to create a park-like setting. Crow Island School's design was widely emulated as Perkins, Wheeler, and Will's public relations agent Hal Burnett promoted the project nationally, gaining the firm, which later became Perkins and Will, over five hundred school commissions throughout the country. Endeavors such as the Museum of Modern Art in New York's "Modern Architecture for the Modern School" traveling exhibition, hosted by educational institutions throughout the United States from 1942 until 1946, also generated widespread interest in Modernist school design.<sup>23</sup>

As public school enrollment burgeoned after World War II, many educational buildings were deficient in size and functionality. The schools that replaced them, regardless of architectural

---

<sup>23</sup> 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; Amy F. Ogata, "Building for Learning in Postwar American Elementary Schools," *Journal of Architectural Historians*, Vol. 67, No. 4, December 2008, 564-567.

Claremont Elementary School  
Name of Property

Pulaski County, VA  
County and State

style, were designed in an economical manner that facilitated rapid construction with limited resources and implementation of progressive pedagogy. Raleigh, North Carolina, architect Edward W. Waugh called the new approach to school design “organic” in the sense that both the physical and psychological needs of children at different ages were considered. In keeping with the Crow Island School model, he recommended centrally locating communal spaces such as the administrative offices, library, cafeteria, and auditorium-gym and arranging classrooms in outlying wings as “a series of beads strung on a main string of circulation.” Acknowledging that learning does not solely take place indoors, he suggested that each classroom should have an exterior door to facilitate connectivity with the “outside classroom.” Schools were to be well-integrated into their sites and allow for flexible use and future expansion.<sup>24</sup> Virginia public schools erected from the late 1940s through the early 1960s, including Claremont Elementary School, manifest this philosophy.

### **Pulaski County Board of Education’s Mid-twentieth-century Campus Improvement Campaign**

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 escalated expense. The agency thus encouraged counties to delay all but the most critical building projects.<sup>25</sup> 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 of racially segregated schools by ensuring that all campuses, although racially segregated, had comparable modern, safe, and hygienic facilities.<sup>26</sup> Although facilities for black students were upgraded, inequities in funding, curriculum offerings, instructional equipment, and physical space persisted until school segregation finally was eliminated during the 1960s.

Pulaski 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, gymnasiums 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. 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

---

<sup>24</sup> Waugh, Edward, and Elizabeth Waugh. *The South Builds: New Architecture in the Old South*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1960, 43-44.

<sup>25</sup> State Board of Education, *Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1945-46* (Richmond: Division of Purchase and Printing, 1946), 173.

<sup>26</sup> Hershman, “Massive Resistance.”

Claremont Elementary School  
Name of Property

Pulaski County, VA  
County and State

architecture. However, the Department of Education embraced Modernism during the 1950s, revising its building planning manuals to encourage design devoid of expensive “extraneous” ornament.<sup>27</sup>

The Roanoke architecture and engineering firm Smithey and Boynton rendered plans for Pulaski County’s mid-twentieth-century educational buildings. The schools and additions completed from the 1940s through the 1960s have austere, brick-veneered, flat-roofed forms illuminated by 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 allowed for wide, open interior spaces.

Smithey and Boynton’s economical and pragmatic design for Claremont Elementary School is an excellent example of mid-twentieth-century educational architecture. The double-loaded corridor plan is typical, as are the tall, rectangular, grouped, aluminum-frame, multi-pane windows that light classrooms. The original wall, ceiling, and floor finishes; wood-frame blackboards and bulletin boards; and steel-frame wood and steel doors are remarkably intact. Utilitarian, resilient finishes such as concrete-block and plaster walls, rectangular beige-glazed ceramic tile wainscot, plaster ceilings, and terrazzo and vinyl-composition, quarry, and ceramic tile floors remain. The auditorium/cafeteria/gymnasium provided a much-needed venue for meals and academic, athletic, and civic events conveniently located adjacent to the kitchen. As the large open room served many purposes, it did not have fixed seating. The hardwood-floored stage spans the entire west wall. The building allowed for greatly increased enrollment capacity and flexible use, and manifests the Department of Education’s initiative to supply students with spacious, well-ventilated, and amply lit instructional areas.

Smithey and Boynton’s other Pulaski County commissions included new buildings and/or additions or renovations at Belspring, Draper, Hiawasse, Newbern, Northwood, Riverlawn, Snowville, and William Gresham elementary schools; Pulaski and Dublin high schools; and Calfee Training School. Most have been replaced or sold. The school system currently operates seven campuses: Critzer (in Pulaski; 1974, 1999), Dublin (1968, 2016), Pulaski (2004), Riverlawn (in Fairlawn; 2009), and Snowville (in Hiawasse: 1953, 1999, 2014) elementary schools; Pulaski County Middle School (2020); and Pulaski County High School (in Dublin, 1974, 2014). Pulaski County’s mid-twentieth-century schools have not been included in architectural surveys and the status of all educational buildings designed by Smithey and Boynton has not been determined.

On three campuses, mid-twentieth-century Smithey and Boynton-designed buildings and additions were modified during renovations and expansions. The architect of the 1937 Pico Terrace Elementary School has not been identified. Smithey and Boynton rendered plans for the

---

<sup>27</sup> 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.

Claremont Elementary School  
Name of Property

Pulaski County, VA  
County and State

three-story, brick, twenty-nine-classroom, 1954 addition and a 1960 addition in order for the campus to accommodate Pulaski High School.<sup>28</sup> Following Pulaski County High School's 1974 completion, the building served as Pulaski Middle School until summer 2020, when Pulaski County Middle School, which consolidated students from Pulaski and Dublin Middle Schools, was finished. Smithey and Boynton also designed Northwood Elementary School in Pulaski, completed in summer 1950, which served its original function through spring 2004. Since 2006, the building has housed Southwest Virginia Governor's School for Mathematics, Science, and Technology, established in 1990. The program was initially based in a six-classroom building on the Pulaski County High School campus. The one-story, flat-roofed, Modernist, red brick building Snowville Elementary School in Hiawassee, completed in 1953, was altered during 1999 and 2014 additions and renovations.

### Smithey and Boynton

Louis Phillippe Smithey (1890-1966) and Henry Bradley Boynton (1899-1991) partnered in 1935 to form the Roanoke architecture and engineering firm Smithey and Boynton. Smithey, a Marengo, Virginia, native, earned bachelor's and master's degrees at Randolph-Macon College in Ashland, Virginia, in five years. He increased his knowledge of architecture and engineering as a student and instructor from 1910 until 1914 at Virginia Polytechnic Institute (VPI) in Blacksburg, and then enrolled at Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge during the 1914-1915 term. Smithey gained experience as a draftsman at Lewis F. Shoemaker and Company's Pottstown, Pennsylvania, office from June 1915 until January 1916. His tenure as a draftsman and contracting engineer at Virginia Bridge and Iron Company in Roanoke (February 1916 to May 1918 and June 1919 to February 1920) was interrupted by six-month 1918 service in the U. S. Army Coast Artillery Corps as well as work as a draftsman for Mobile Shipbuilding Company in Mobile, Alabama, from December 1918 until June 1919. Smithey opened an architectural practice in Roanoke on February 1, 1920, headed Smithey and Tardy with Matthews H. Tardy from 1922 until 1927, and then again operated a namesake firm, garnering numerous commercial, ecclesiastical, educational, institutional, and residential commissions throughout Virginia. During the 1920s and 1930s, Smithey employed draftsmen and designers including Henry Boynton, Rudolph Frantz, E. Paul Hayes, and Walter Jones. Boynton, a Chicago native, joined the practice in 1928 after obtaining bachelor's degrees in agricultural engineering (1921) and civil engineering (1923) from VPI, studying architecture and engineering (1923-1924) at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign, and gaining experience as a draftsmen at the Richmond architecture and engineering firm Carneal and Johnston (1924-1928).<sup>29</sup>

<sup>28</sup> "Pulaski High School Construction Goes Well," *ST*, January 13, 1954, p. 1; "Pulaski County Schools Begin Class Sessions," *ST*, September 2, 1954, p. 1.

<sup>29</sup> "Louis Phillippe Smithey," and "Henry Bradley Boynton," AIA membership file and correspondence, AIA Archives, Washington, D. C.; "Smithey and Boynton," Architects' Roster Questionnaire, 1946, AIA Archives, Washington, D. C.; George S. Koyl, ed., *American Architects Directory* (New York: R. R. Bowker, 1956), 57, 522; George S. Koyl, ed., *American Architects Directory*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: R. R. Bowker, 1962), 72, 658; George S. Koyl, ed., *American Architects Directory*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (New York: R. R. Bowker, 1970), 94; World War I enlistment records.

Claremont Elementary School

Name of Property

Pulaski County, VA

County and State

The firm's early projects included the Sutherland Residence on Prospect Avenue in Pulaski, the Roanoke Country Club Clubhouse, Bedford City Baptist Church and Sunday school building, and an addition and Sunday school building for Bedford Presbyterian Church, all in 1923. The firm designed many Roanoke buildings, ranging from sophisticated residences to the American Theater, Lyric Theater, and South Roanoke Fire Station (all in 1928); First Presbyterian Church and the E. M. Boley Apartment Building (1929); the Montgomery Ward and Company Store Building and the Elks Club Building (1930); and the Richardson-Wayland Electrical Corporation Building (1931).<sup>30</sup>

Smithey headed his namesake firm until January 1, 1935, when he elevated Boynton to partnership, creating Smithey and Boynton. Smithey was licensed to practice architecture and engineering in Virginia (1927) and West Virginia (1929), became a member of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) in 1929, and was elected president of the Virginia chapter of the AIA in 1940. Boynton, a registered architect in Virginia since 1930, gradually attained architecture and engineering licensure in North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia. He joined the AIA in 1938. The office closed from July 1942 until May 1945, while Smithey served as a Lieutenant Colonel in the U. S. Army Coast Artillery Corps and Boynton enlisted in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, attaining the rank of Colonel prior to his discharge.<sup>31</sup>

By October 1946, Smithey and Boynton employed four junior partners—Frank B. Cox, William G. Chester, Landon E. Smith, and Robert L. Brown—and nine draftsmen. The firm was then in the process of designing numerous schools for the Buchanan, Pulaski, Roanoke, and Wythe County Boards of Education. Educational building contracts had dominated the firm's oeuvre since its founding and continued to do so, with almost 150 commissions for ten city and nineteen county Virginia school systems between 1945 and 1953. Many buildings manifested the Modernist style. Projects through the 1950s included Covington High School (1939); Covington Armory (1940); a Blacksburg armory (n. d.); Victory Stadium (1942, demolished), Huntington Court Methodist Church (1948), and Shenandoah Life Insurance Building (1949) in Roanoke; John Puhl Products Chemical Plant in Salem (1953); Pulaski High School (1954); South Roanoke Methodist Church (1954); and a group of dormitories (1955) and the biochemical and animal nutrition laboratory (1958) on the VPI campus. Smithey served on the Governor's Research Committee on School Buildings from 1950 until 1956.<sup>32</sup>

Smithey died three years after his 1963 retirement. Boynton retained the firm's name and practiced until 1988. He was elected vice president of the Virginia chapter of the AIA in 1954 and president in 1955. Boynton was appointed by Virginia governor Albertis Harrison to the State Registration Board for Architects, Professional Engineers, and Land Surveyors in 1962 and served until 1972. In addition to teaching courses in VPI's engineering department (1921-1923,

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.; John E. Wells and Robert E. Dalton, *The Virginia Architects, 1835-1955* (Richmond, Virginia: New South Architectural Press, 1997), 40, 421-423.

<sup>31</sup> "Louis Phillippe Smithey," AIA membership file and correspondence, AIA Archives, Washington, D. C.; "Smithey and Boynton," Architects' Roster Questionnaire, 1946, AIA Archives, Washington, D. C.; World War II enlistment records.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.; Wells and Dalton, *The Virginia Architects*, 40, 421-423.



Claremont Elementary School  
Name of Property

Pulaski County, VA  
County and State

1930), Boynton was a director on the institution's alumni association (1969 to 1979) and education foundation (1978 to 1982) boards. His twenty-four-year tenure on the Roanoke Planning Commission ended in 1984.<sup>33</sup>

---

<sup>33</sup> Koyl, ed., *American Architects Directory*, 1956, 57; Koyl, ed., *American Architects Directory*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 1962, 72; Koyl, ed., *American Architects Directory*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 1970, 94; "Henry B. Boynton," and "Roanoke Planner, architect Henry Boynton, 92, dies," *Roanoke Times and World News*, September 14-15, 1991; "Louis P. Smithey, Architect, Dies," *Roanoke Times and World News*, August 19, 1966; "The Life and Architecture of Smithey and Boynton," Virginia Tech Special Collections and University Archives, June 14, 2019, blog post, <https://vtspecialcollections.wordpress.com/2019/06/14/the-life-and-architecture-of-smithey-and-boynton/> (accessed October 2020).

Claremont Elementary School  
Name of Property

Pulaski County, VA  
County and State

---

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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

Baker, Mary M. "Black History of Pulaski County." Undated manuscript in Pulaski Public Library vertical file.

"Boynton, Henry Bradley." AIA membership file and correspondence, AIA Archives, Washington, D. C.

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

"Corbin v. Pulaski." U. S, District Court, Eastern District of Virginia, Roanoke Division, RG 21, National Archives Mid-Atlantic Region.

Dotson, Rand. "Progressive Movement in Virginia." *Encyclopedia Virginia*, Virginia Foundation for the Humanities, 2012, <https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org> (accessed October 2020).

Koyl, George S., ed. *American Architects Directory*. New York: R. R. Bowker, 1956.

\_\_\_\_\_. *American Architects Directory*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. New York: R. R. Bowker, 1962.

\_\_\_\_\_. *American Architects Directory*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. New York: R. R. Bowker, 1970.

Hershman, James H., Jr. "Massive Resistance." *Encyclopedia Virginia*, Virginia Foundation for the Humanities, 2011, <https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org> (accessed October 2020).

"The Life and Architecture of Smithey and Boynton." Virginia Tech Special Collections and University Archives, June 14, 2019, blog post, <https://vtspecialcollections.wordpress.com/2019/06/14/the-life-and-architecture-of-smithey-and-boynton/> (accessed October 2020).

Ogata, Amy F. "Building for Learning in Postwar American Elementary Schools." *Journal of Architectural Historians*, Vol. 67, No. 4, December 2008.

Pulaski County School Board – Board of Education Meeting Minutes, 1870-1969. Pulaski County Public Schools Central Office, Pulaski, Virginia. (abbreviated PCSBMM after first mention in notes)

Claremont Elementary School  
Name of Property

Pulaski County, VA  
County and State

Pulaski County Deed and Plat Books. Pulaski County Circuit Court Clerk's Office, Pulaski, Virginia.

Richardson, Archie G. *The Development of Negro Education in Virginia, 1831-1970*. Richmond, Virginia: Richmond Chapter Phi Delta Kappa, 1976.

*Richmond Times-Dispatch*

Rifkind, Carol. *A Field Guide to Contemporary American Architecture*. New York, Penguin Putnam, Inc., 1998.

*Roanoke Times*

"Smithey, Louis Phillippe." AIA membership file and correspondence, AIA Archives, Washington, D. C.;

"Smithey and Boynton." American Institute of Architects (AIA) membership file, correspondence, and Architects' Roster Questionnaire, 1953, AIA Archives, Washington, D.C.

"Smithey & Boynton, Architects & Engineers Records, 1922-1985." Ms1992-027, Special Collections, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Virginia.

*Southwest Times* (Pulaski)

State Board of Education. *Annual Reports of the Superintendent of Public Instruction*. Richmond: State Board of Education, 1917-1961.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Annual and Biennial Reports of the Superintendent of Public Instruction*. Richmond: Superintendent of Public Printing, 1871-1901.

\_\_\_\_\_. *State Planning Manual*, vol. 37, no. 7, 1954, p. 11.

Swaim, G. T. *A History of the Town of Pulaski*. Pulaski, VA, 1911.

Tubergen, Janice E. "Crow Island School, Winnetka, Illinois." National Historic Landmark Nomination, 1989.

U. S. Census, population schedules, 1900-1940.

Vaughn, Eva. "History of Education in Pulaski County," July 1963. Folder 5, Box 3, Virginia Education Association Histories, Library of Virginia, Richmond.

Claremont Elementary School  
Name of Property

Pulaski County, VA  
County and State

Waugh, Edward, and Elizabeth Waugh. *The South Builds: New Architecture in the Old South*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1960.

Wells, John E., and Robert E. Dalton. *The Virginia Architects, 1835-1955*. Richmond, Virginia: New South Architectural Press, 1997.

World War II enlistment records.

---

**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: Pulaski County Public Schools Central Office, Pulaski, Virginia  
Special Collections, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Virginia

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** VDHR 125-5013

---

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 8.29 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: 37.050860      Longitude: -80.759392

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

The true and correct historic boundary is coterminous with the 8.29-acre Pulaski County tax parcel #072-92-7 as shown on the attached Parcel Map. The historic boundary also is

Claremont Elementary School  
Name of Property

Pulaski County, VA  
County and State

indicated by the heavy solid line on the enclosed Location Map and the latitude and longitude coordinates listed above. The Location Map scale is one inch equals approximately 100 feet.

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

The historic boundary, which encompasses the educational building as well as playground equipment, a basketball court, athletic fields, and the adjacent access drives, parking areas, and front lawn, captures the historic setting for Claremont Elementary School and all known associated historic resources.

---

**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 18, 2021

**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.

Claremont Elementary School  
Name of Property

Pulaski County, VA  
County and State

## Photo Log

Name of Property: Claremont Elementary School  
City or Vicinity: Pulaski  
County: Pulaski State: Virginia  
Photographer: Heather Fearnbach, Fearnbach History Services, Inc.  
Date Photographed: October 15, 2020

- 1 of 18: North elevation
- 2 of 18: Northeast oblique
- 3 of 18: Southwest oblique
- 4 of 18: West elevation
- 5 of 18: Northwest oblique
- 6 of 18: Athletic fields, looking southeast
- 7 of 18: Basketball court, looking north
- 8 of 18: First-floor classroom, looking west
- 9 of 18: First-floor classroom, looking east
- 10 of 18: Cafeteria/auditorium/gymnasium looking west
- 11 of 18: Cafeteria/auditorium/gymnasium looking southeast
- 12 of 18: First-floor east-west corridor, east entrance, looking west
- 13 of 18: First-floor east-west corridor, east entrance, looking east
- 14 of 18: Second-floor classroom, looking south
- 15 of 18: Second-floor classroom, looking north
- 16 of 18: Second-floor east-west corridor, looking east
- 17 of 18: Second-floor classroom, entrance, looking northwest
- 18 of 18: Second-floor classroom, looking southeast

**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.



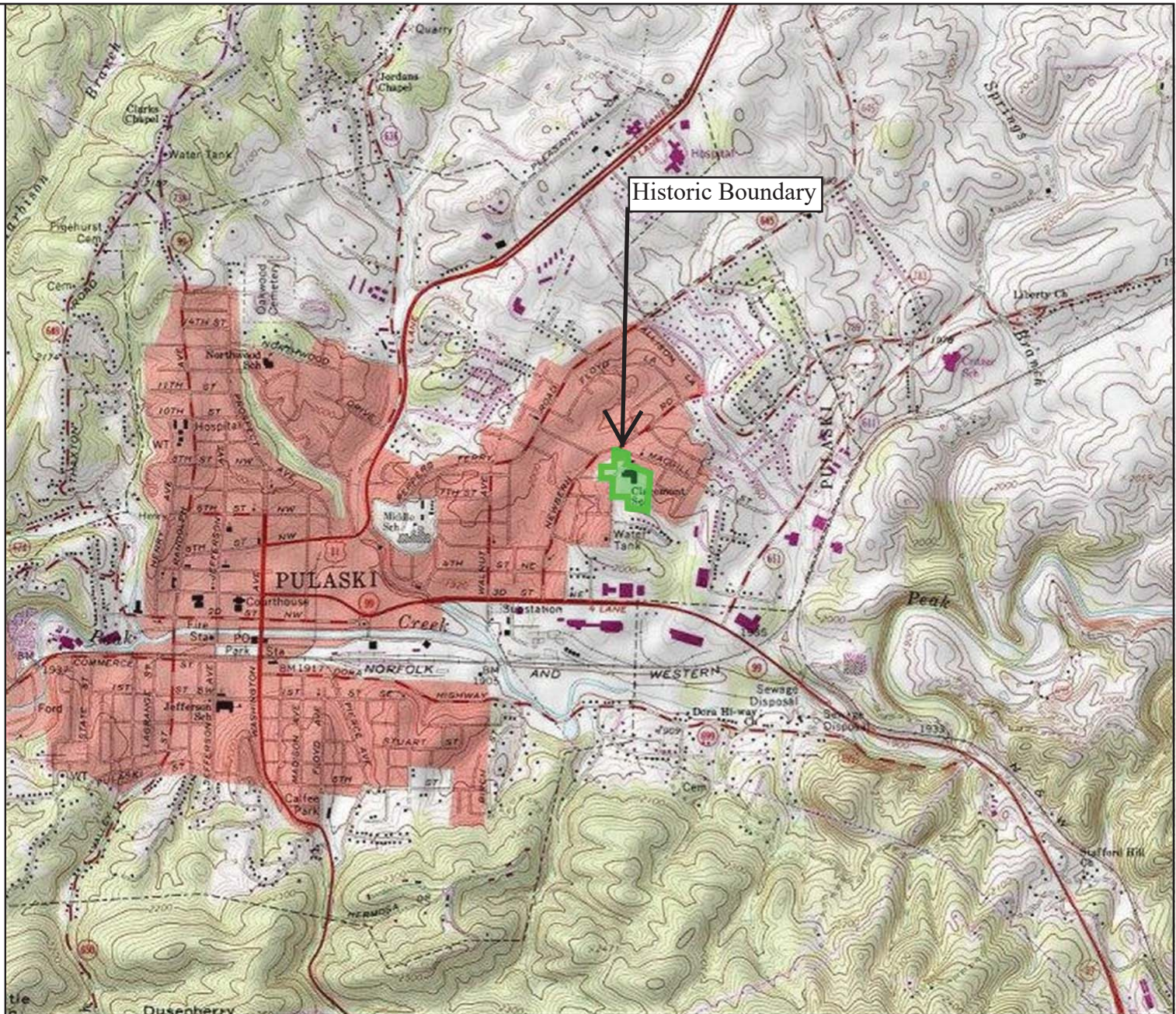


**TOPOGRAPHIC MAP**

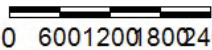
Claremont Elementary School

Pulaski County, VA

DHR No. 125-5013



Feet



1:36,112 / 1"=3,009 Feet

**Title:**

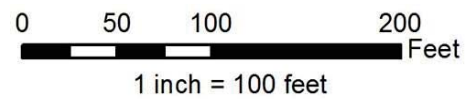
**Date:** 7/8/2021

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

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



**Claremont Elementary School, Location and Boundary Map  
VDHR #125-5013, 800 Ridge Avenue, Pulaski, Pulaski County, Virginia**





**SKETCH MAP**

Claremont Elementary School

Pulaski County, VA

DHR No. 125-5013



**LIST OF RESOURCES**

- 1. School, contributing building
- 2. Playground, contributing site
- 3. Athletic Fields, noncontributing site
- 4. Basketball Court, noncontributing site

**EXISTING SITE PLAN 1/128"**

SCALE: 1/128" = 1'-0"

PLAN  
NORTH



CLAREMONT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

800 RIDGE AVENUE  
PULASKI, PULASKI COUNTY, VIRGINIA  
SITE PLAN

11/2/2020

**CJMW**  
ARCHITECTURE

# PHOTO KEY/ FLOOR PLAN (1 of 2)

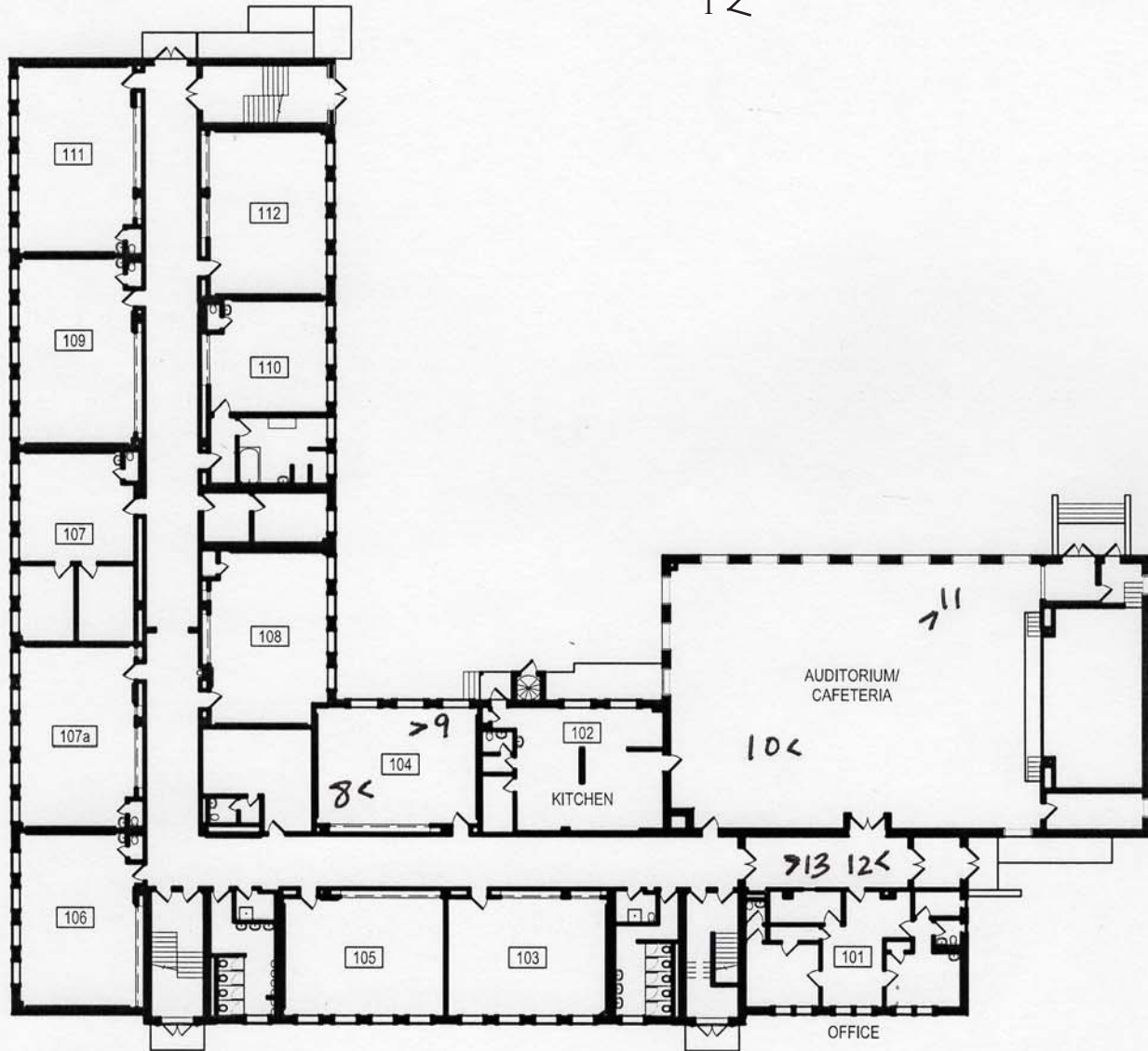
Claremont Elementary School

Pulaski County, VA

DHR No. 125-5013

Photo Locations

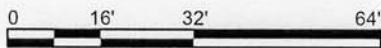
1 <



## FIRST FLOOR

SCALE: 1/32" = 1'-0"

PLAN  
NORTH



CLAREMONT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

800 RIDGE AVENUE

PULASKI, PULASKI COUNTY, VIRGINIA

FIRST FLOOR PLAN

11/2/2020

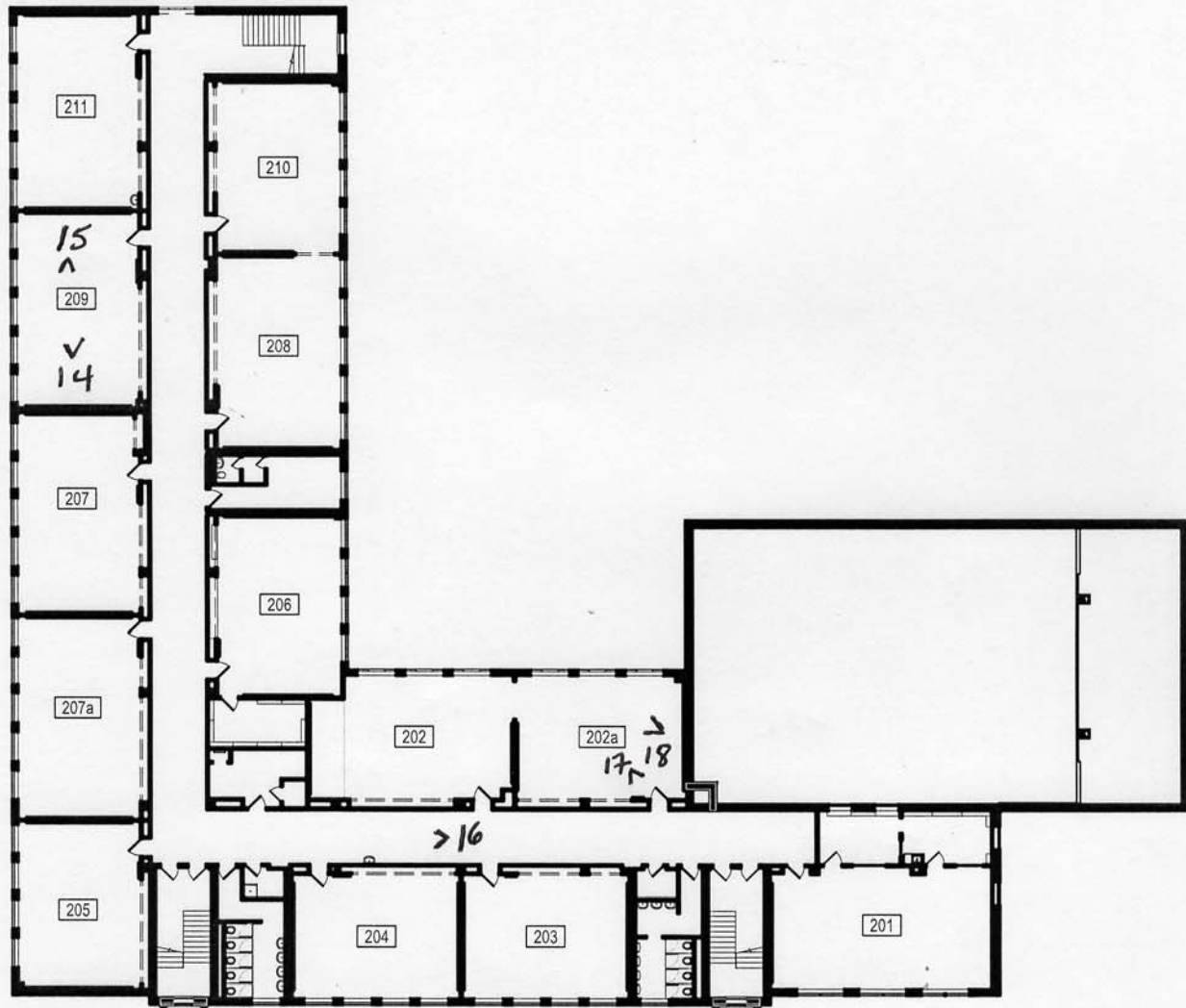
**CJMW**  
ARCHITECTURE

# PHOTO KEY/ FLOOR PLAN (2 of 2)

Claremont Elementary School

Pulaski County, VA

DHR No. 125-5013



## SECOND FLOOR

SCALE: 1/32" = 1'-0"

PLAN  
NORTH



CLAREMONT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

800 RIDGE AVENUE

PULASKI, PULASKI COUNTY, VIRGINIA

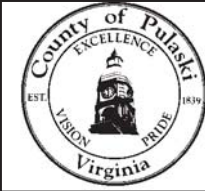
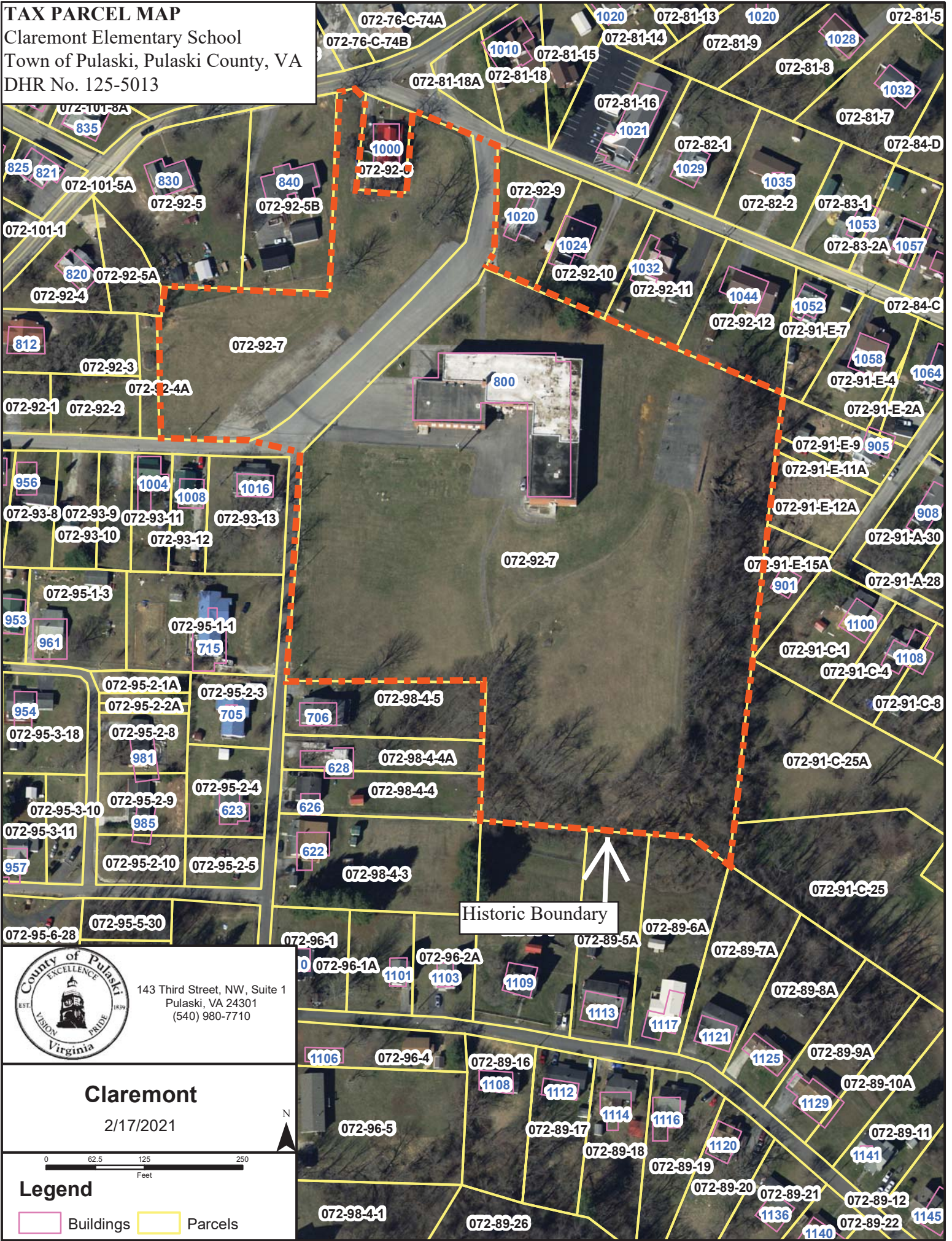
SECOND FLOOR PLAN

11/2/2020

**CJMW**  
ARCHITECTURE



**TAX PARCEL MAP**  
 Claremont Elementary School  
 Town of Pulaski, Pulaski County, VA  
 DHR No. 125-5013



143 Third Street, NW, Suite 1  
 Pulaski, VA 24301  
 (540) 980-7710

**Claremont**

2/17/2021



**Legend**

- Buildings
- Parcels