

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Rivermont School

Other names/site number: VDHR #107-5181

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: 1011 North Rockbridge Avenue

City or town: City of Covington State: VA County: Independent City

Not For Publication: N/A Vicinity: N/A

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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


I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

 national statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

 X A B X C D

 Signature of certifying official/Title:	<u>4-5-2022</u> Date
<u>Virginia Department of Historic Resources</u> State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

In my opinion, the property <u> </u> meets <u> </u> 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>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>3</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: Moderne

MODERN MOVEMENT: International Style

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

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

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

Rivermont School occupies a prominent site in a neighborhood of modest residences in the City of Covington, an independent city that also is the location of the Alleghany County seat of government, in far western Virginia. The building is composed of a 1938 two-story main block and one-story auditorium/cafeteria wing; a one-story, two-unit 1960 administrative office, library, and four-classroom south addition; and a one-story, two-classroom 1970 northwest addition, all designed by the Roanoke, Virginia, architecture and engineering firm Smithey and Boynton. All sections of the school are characterized by flat-roofed angular forms, horizontal massing, red-brick-veneered-concrete-block walls, and tall multi-pane window sash. The interior plan, original wall, ceiling, and floor finishes, and doors, cabinets, closets, bookshelves, blackboards, bulletin boards, restrooms, and auditorium stage are remarkably intact. Contributing hardscape structures include two fieldstone retaining walls erected south and west of the school circa 1938 and circa 1970. The property possesses a high degree of architectural integrity and historic significance.

Resource Summary

Rivermont School, 1938, 1960, 1970, contributing building
Stone wall, circa 1938, contributing structure
Stone wall, circa 1970, contributing structure

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Setting

Rivermont School is located on McAllister Hill in a residential area northeast of the city of Covington's central business district and governmental center. The county seat is situated in the Jackson River valley of the Allegheny Mountains in central Alleghany County, which is predominantly rural in character, with rolling topography and densely wooded areas. Modest homes, many of which housed West Virginia Pulp and Paper Company employees, line North Rockbridge and North Pocahontas avenues and the intersecting streets named for tree species that surround the school. Industrial plants border the Jackson River to the west. Commercial development is concentrated to the south near South Alleghany Avenue/Virginia Highway 220 and Interstate 64.

The school faces west toward North Rockbridge Avenue in the south portion of a 3.49-acre tax parcel owned by the City of Covington. Concrete-paved sidewalks border the road and lead to the school's west entrances. The site grade slopes down to the west and north, necessitating low fieldstone retaining walls west and south of the school. A tall aluminum flagpole and two lampposts rise from the grass front lawn. Limited parking is available in the asphalt-paved area east of the building. A short access drive extends from North Pocahontas Avenue, which is at a higher elevation than the school, to the parking lot. A culvert and steep embankments border the parcel's southeast edges along North Pocahontas Avenue and East McAllister Street. The 1960 addition at the base of the embankments is accessible from East McAllister Street via concrete steps with tubular-steel railings. A concrete sidewalk extends from the steps to the south entrance. To the west, a one-and-one-half-story stuccoed bungalow and outbuilding occupy the block's southwest corner. A low fieldstone retaining wall and chain-link fence separate the residential lot from the school property.

The north portion of the parcel, which is excluded from the historic boundary, contains an athletic field, asphalt-paved basketball court, and a playground with circa 1970 swings and a post-1988 slide at a lower grade than the school and parking lot. Concrete steps with tubular-steel railings installed in 1973 ameliorate the elevation decline.¹ Chain-link fences border the lot's west edge and the baseball diamond's northwest sides. The City of Covington Parks and Recreation Department has maintained the playground, basketball court, and athletic field for community use since the school closed in 1988.

Rivermont School, 1938, 1960, 1970, contributing building

1938 School

Exterior

The 1938 school is distinguished by a variety of masonry treatments. First-and second-story walls are laid in a distinctive common bond pattern comprising five courses of stretchers

¹ Covington City School Board Meeting Minutes (hereafter abbreviated *CCSBMM*) Book No. 2, November 12, 1973, p. 363.

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followed by a course of alternating stretchers and headers. Beneath the first-story windows, the walls are traditional three-to-one common bond with slightly projecting courses that create a banded effect common in Moderne-style architecture. The area above the second-story windows is finished in the same manner. Limestone coping caps the parapet.

The twelve-bay primary (west) elevation displays the most decorative masonry. Two vertical stacked-header-course panels separate the wall into three equal sections. Groups of four twelve-over-twelve double-hung wood sash illuminate classrooms. The molded-limestone water table also functions as the first-story window sills. The second-story window groups have continuous molded-limestone sills. At the first story's center, eight-over-eight double-hung wood sash flank the recessed central entrance which is framed by staggered brick courses with rounded interior edges. Curved concrete steps with a central tubular-steel railing rise from the concrete sidewalk to the double-leaf wood door with a two-panel base, glazed upper portion, and geometric-patterned transom. The metal canopy that surmounts the entrance and windows has a curved central projection, another common feature of Moderne style.

The 1960 and 1970 additions obscure the first stories of the main block's north and south elevations. At the center of each wall's second story, a tall three-section window comprising a narrow nine-over-nine double-hung wood central sash flanked by two narrow six-over-six sash lights the adjacent stairwell.

The main block's rear elevation is more simply executed than the primary elevation. A soldier-course beltcourse spans the first-story window openings, which have canted brick sills. The tall square brick chimney between the central and east groups of windows rises above the roof. A late-twentieth-century vertical-board fence encloses the basement entrance stairwell, which has concrete steps and formed-concrete exterior walls topped with a tubular-steel railing.

The one-story 1938 auditorium/cafeteria wing's west elevation is encapsulated within the 1970 classroom addition. The walls are executed in the same manner as the main block's rear elevation, with canted brick sills and a soldier-course beltcourse. The north elevation contains, from east to west, a tall twelve-over-twelve sash, three pairs of nine-over-nine sash, and a six-over-six sash, all double-hung wood. The south elevation is the same minus the six-over-over-six sash. The shorter one-story kitchen that projects from the auditorium/cafeteria's east end was enlarged with a north storage room circa 1970.² The addition has a small high window on its north elevation; its east elevation is blind. An eight-over-eight sash pierces the kitchen's east elevation. The offset entrance vestibule at the kitchen's south end shelters the kitchen and auditorium/cafeteria entrances, each a single-leaf door with a two-panel base and nine-pane

² The north storage room addition does not appear on Smithey and Boynton's February 1969 site plan, but is shown as part of the existing kitchen footprint on the firm's October 27, 1972, drawings for interior kitchen modifications. Dr. Paul D. Linkenhoker does not remember any building expansion after he began teaching at Rivermont School in fall 1970. Smithey and Boynton Architects and Engineers Records, Ms1992-027, Special Collections, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Virginia. Paul D. Linkenhoker, telephone conversation with Heather Fearnbach, October 1, 2021.

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upper section. A four-pane transom surmounts the kitchen door. The vestibule has a concrete floor and ceiling.

Interior

The 1938 school has a double-loaded corridor plan. On the first floor, the central entrance vestibule opens into a short east-west corridor that intersects the north-south corridor. The vestibule's double-leaf interior door has a two-panel base and nine-pane upper section topped by a seven-pane transom facilitates light infiltration. The small room on the short corridor's north side originally served as the library. Four classrooms and two restrooms flank the primary corridor. At each end, steel and concrete staircases with solid-panel painted-steel railings and tubular-steel handrails rise to the second floor. The short corridor east of the north stair leads to the auditorium/cafeteria. The stage is at the room's west end. The kitchen at the east end was enlarged with a north storage room and expanded west into the auditorium/cafeteria footprint in 1973.³ The second floor contains five classrooms and a small room with a restroom that initially functioned as the principal's office and after 1960 served as the teachers' lounge.

Simple finishes were specified to maximize durability. Corridors are characterized by terrazzo floors, plaster ceilings, painted concrete-block walls above rectangular variegated-yellow-glazed ceramic tile wainscot, and schoolhouse-style pendant light fixtures with opaque white globes. Restroom finishes consist of terrazzo floors; plaster ceilings; parged concrete-block walls above rectangular white -glazed ceramic tile wainscot; and white porcelain sinks, toilets, and urinals. The original sinks have Art Deco-style tapered pedestals. Stalls initially had pink marble dividers and paneled-wood doors. Some supplementary enameled-steel stall dividers and doors were added in 1971.⁴

Classrooms retain plaster walls and ceilings; hardwood floors; wood window and door surrounds, baseboards, chair rails, and crown molding; single-leaf corridor doors with three-panel bases and four-pane upper sections; wood-frame blackboards and bulletin boards; and a full wall of built-in cabinets and long, narrow coat and storage closets. In each room, three sets of two-panel double-leaf coat closet doors swivel on top-mounted hinges. Coat closets retain wood shelves and metal coat hooks. The storage cabinets each feature a double-leaf ten-pane upper door and a short paneled double-leaf lower door. Single-leaf two-panel wood doors secure the storage closets. Wood trim and doors have a lacquered finish with the exception of the crown molding, which is painted. Commercial-grade carpeting covers some floors. Ceiling-mounted linear fluorescent lights were installed circa 1970.⁵ Most classrooms are in good condition, but roof leaks in the west classrooms on each floor have resulted in ceiling collapse, plaster failure, floor damage, and fungal growth.

The auditorium/cafeteria has a hardwood floor, painted-concrete-block walls, and a high plaster ceiling. Two short corridors flanking the stage at the room's west end initially provided

³ *CCSBMM* Book No. 2, January 8, 1973, p. 340; February 1, 1973, p. 341; February 14, 1973, p. 343, June 26, 1973, p. 351.

⁴ *CCSBMM* Book No. 2, November 8, 1971, p. 317.

⁵ *CCSBMM* Book 2, October 13, 1969, p. 272.

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auditorium/cafeteria egress. Double-leaf doors with paneled bases and nine-pane upper sections remain at the corridors' east ends. The south corridor connects to the main block's center hall. The north corridor's west door, which supplied exterior egress, was removed and the opening enclosed in conjunction with the 1970 addition's construction. The resulting small room is sheathed in faux-wood paneling. The stage is accessed via single-leaf two-panel wood doors within each corridor that open to short runs of wood steps with tubular steel railings at the stage's north and south ends. The hardwood stage flooring, vertical-board apron sheathing, and molded wood proscenium opening surround are intact. The replacement stage curtains and valance were hung in the 1970s or 1980s. Steel trusses and composite-board roof decking are exposed above the stage.

The kitchen projects east from the auditorium/cafeteria's east end. In summer 1973, the central portion of the wall between the kitchen and auditorium/cafeteria was removed and new walls erected to create a dishwashing room, serving line, and storage room within the auditorium/cafeteria footprint. Acoustical tile ceilings were installed in those areas and the wood floorboards in the dishwashing room and serving line were replaced with square red quarry tile. A restroom was added in the west portion of the circa 1970 storage room north of the kitchen.⁶ The auditorium/cafeteria's east wall contains a north tray return opening and two single-leaf doors in the kitchen and cafeteria serving line entrances. The kitchen and north storage room have painted concrete-block walls, plaster ceilings, and original eight-inch-square red-and-gray-checkerboard-patterned vinyl-composition-tile floors. The door at the kitchen's southwest corner provides exterior egress.

The two-room basement is only accessible from the exterior stairwell on the main block's east elevation. The double-leaf door with a paneled base and six-pane upper section and two-pane transom and a nine-pane steel sash south of the door light the south boiler/mechanical room. Poured-concrete floors and painted formed-concrete walls provide resilient finishes. Mechanical systems are exposed and surface-mounted conduit has been installed. The north coal room floor is at a higher elevation than the boiler/mechanical room floor. The concrete ramp at the north room's entrance facilitated coal storage.

Administrative Suite, Library, and Classroom Addition, 1960

Exterior

The one-story, flat-roofed, red-brick-veneered, concrete-block south addition consists of two hyphen-linked units: a west administrative suite and library connected by a corridor to the 1938 south elevation and four classrooms in the parcel's southeast corner.⁷ The west unit's exterior finish emulates the 1938 building. Walls are common bond with five courses of stretchers followed by a course of alternating stretchers and headers with the exception of the area above

⁶ Smithey and Boynton, "Kitchen Addition to Rivermont School," Sheet 2, October 27, 1972.

⁷ The 1959 drawings illustrate the open breezeway that originally connected the two units. The breezeway had been enclosed by fall 1970. Smithey and Boynton, "Rivermont School, First Addition," Sheet 4, October 14, 1959; Paul D. Linkenhoker, telephone conversation with Heather Fearnbach, October 1, 2021.

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the west corridor entrance and the windows, where traditional three-to-one common bond with slightly projecting courses creates a banded effect. Limestone coping tops the parapet. A group of three steel-frame five-horizontal-pane sash with hoppers and limestone sills and a matching single window pierce the primary (west) elevation, three single windows punctuate the south elevation, and a group of six windows span the east elevation. Original concrete steps and a post-1988 concrete ramp with a tubular steel railing provide egress to the west corridor entrance, where a double-leaf steel replacement door with a two-pane transom is recessed within a shallow vestibule.⁸

The classroom unit and the flat-roofed hyphen between the east and west units are Modernist in character. Both have running-bond red-brick walls capped with aluminum coping. The corridor is illuminated by three two-horizontal-pane steel sash with cast-stone sills on the south elevation and two matching windows and a single-leaf steel door with a glazed upper portion on the north elevation. The classroom unit features four groups of six tall five-horizontal-pane sash with hoppers and cast-stone sills: two on the north elevation and one in the south half of both the east and west elevations. At the blind south elevation's center, the original double-leaf steel door with a two-pane transom is recessed within the shallow vestibule with cementitious ceiling and cornice sheathing.

Interior

The corridor between the main block and the west administrative suite and library has square red-quarry-tile flooring, painted brick walls, and an insulated-panel ceiling supported by reinforced-concrete beams. A few original Modernist pendant lights with opaque white-glass globes are intact; others have broken globes. All rooms in the 1960 addition have painted concrete-block walls, vinyl-composition-tile floors, and the same exposed roof structure as the corridor. Commercial-grade carpeting or sheet vinyl has been installed in some areas. Linear fluorescent lighting hangs from the ceilings.

The administrative suite, comprising a large room that functioned as a reception area/general office flanked by the principal's office and a clinic, restrooms, vault, and storage rooms, is at the addition's west end. A blonde-wood-veneered cabinet and matching low wall with laminate countertops separate the reception area and the general office. The single-leaf blonde-wood flat-panel office, storeroom, and restroom doors hang in simple steel frames. Shelving has been removed from the adjacent library and a restroom erected in its northwest corner. A small conference room and a workroom lined with wood shelves are at the library's west end. Both rooms have single-leaf blonde-wood flat-panel doors with glazed upper sections.

⁸ The double-leaf door with a two-panel base and nine-light upper section originally installed in the corridor's west entrance was moved from the 1938 building's south entrance in conjunction with the addition's construction. A twelve-pane transom surmounted the door. Smithey and Boynton, "Rivermont School, First Addition," Sheets 3 and 4, October 14, 1959.

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An original double-leaf steel door with a two-pane transom remains at the east classroom end of the hyphen between the units, which was originally an open breezeway. The hyphen has a concrete floor. Steel beams and posts support the corrugated-metal roof.

The four-classroom unit has a double-loaded plan with a T-shaped corridor finished with square-red-quarry-tile floors and rectangular beige-glazed ceramic-tile wainscot. A mechanical room is at the east-west corridor's east end. Each classroom features aluminum-trimmed blackboards and bulletin boards, a corner closet, and a corner restroom with white porcelain toilets and wall-mounted sinks. The single-leaf blonde-wood flat-panel classroom doors have two vertical-pane upper sections. The southeast classroom was subdivided after the school closed to create two small rooms and a kitchen for the day care program operated by Alleghany Highlands YMCA.

Classroom Addition, 1970

Exterior

The one-story, flat-roofed, red-brick-veneered-concrete-block, two-classroom addition, executed in a similar manner as the 1960 classroom unit, projects north and west from the 1938 school's north end. The running bond walls are topped with aluminum coping. The hyphen between the 1938 building and the addition is shorter than the classroom portion of the addition and is set back from the north classroom wall plane. Concrete steps lead to the concrete landing adjacent to the hyphen entrance, a double-leaf steel door with glazed upper vertical panes recessed within a shallow vestibule. On the north and south elevations, yellow porcelain-enameled-steel panels sheathe the walls above the doors and windows. Two groups of six tall five-horizontal-pane sash with upper and base hoppers and canted brick sills pierce the north elevation. At that wall's east and west ends, single-leaf steel doors with vertical upper panes are recessed within shallow vestibules with concrete floors and porcelain-enameled-steel-panel-sheathed ceilings. The entrance on the south elevation is identical. East of that entrance, two pairs of smaller five-horizontal-pane sash with upper and base hoppers and canted brick sills light the classrooms. The west elevation is blind.

Interior

The corridor at the addition's east end provides egress to the main block, north entrance, and east classroom.⁹ The corridor has unpainted brick walls, a vinyl-composition-tile floor, and a dropped-acoustical-tile ceiling. The same floor and ceiling finishes were used in the classrooms, which have painted concrete-block walls. Commercial-grade carpeting covers a portion of each classroom floor. Aluminum-trimmed bulletin boards are mounted on the east and west walls. The folding door that separates the classroom features blackboard panels. Radiators span the north wall beneath the windows and the southwest wall. Low built-in blonde-wood cabinets with

⁹ Prior to the addition, this area was the 1938 building's northwest entrance vestibule. Double-leaf doors at the main block corridor's north end and the corridor north of the stage in the auditorium/cafeteria wing provided egress. The main block door was removed, but the opening remains. The auditorium/cafeteria wing door opening was enclosed with brick. Smithey and Boynton, "Rivermont School Elevations," Sheet 6, February 12, 1938.

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yellow-laminate countertops, sinks, and flat-panel doors and drawer faces line the central portion of the south wall. Each room has a small closet with a flat-panel blonde-wood door and a tall blonde-wood built-in bookshelf. Linear fluorescent lights hang from the ceiling. The single-leaf blonde-wood corridor door with a vertical upper pane has a simple steel frame.

Stone retaining wall, circa 1938, contributing structure

The site grade slopes down to the west and north, necessitating low fieldstone retaining walls west and south of the school. The south wall's west end is visible in a 1938 photograph. The wall is built of randomly laid stones of various sizes with thick mortar joints topped with a thin layer of concrete parge. Several sections of the wall are damaged and the concrete is spalling.

Stone retaining wall, circa 1970, contributing structure

The northwest wall was erected after 1947, likely in conjunction with either the 1970 addition's construction or sidewalk installation. Although erected with similar stone as the south wall, the northwest wall's execution differs considerably in that the thick mortar joints are raised and the top of the wall is not parged.

Integrity Statement

Rivermont School possesses integrity of location and setting as it occupies its original site, a sizable parcel that allowed for building expansion. Intact hardscape elements include low fieldstone retaining walls west and south of the school, concrete sidewalks, and concrete steps with tubular-steel railings. The surrounding area remains residential. The level of design, materials, and workmanship integrity is also high. The 1938 school and 1960 and 1970 additions, all designed by Smithey and Boyton, retain character-defining features of Moderne and Modernist mid-twentieth-century institutional architecture such as horizontal massing, banks of tall multi-pane wood and steel sash, wood and steel doors, and common- and running-bond redbrick walls. The interior plan, original wall, ceiling, and floor finishes, and doors, cabinets, closets, bookshelves, blackboards, bulletin boards, restrooms, and auditorium stage are remarkably intact. Rivermont School displays integrity of feeling and association through its physical characteristics as well as its function as a public school from 1938 until 1988.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

Criteria Considerations

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

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

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1938-1973

Significant Dates

1938

1960

1970

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Smithey and Boynton, architect, all phases

C. W. Barger and Sons, builder, 1938

S. Lewis Linebarger, builder, 1960

Hill and Kutz, Inc., builder, 1970

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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.)

Rivermont School possesses significance at the local level under Criterion A in the area of Education and Criterion C for Architecture. The two-story brick 1938 school and 1960 and 1970 additions erected in conjunction with City of Covington Board of Education campus improvement campaigns alleviated overcrowding in Covington's elementary schools and facilitated implementation of progressive pedagogy. The campus served as a community gathering place throughout its operation. Roanoke, Virginia, architecture and engineering firm Smithey and Boynton designed the building in an economical manner that allowed for rapid construction, flexible use, and future expansion. The school exemplifies the Virginia Department of Education's initiative to supply students with spacious, well-ventilated, and amply lit instructional areas and is one of the most intact mid-twentieth-century educational buildings in Covington and Alleghany County. The two-story, brick, 1938 school displays an Art Moderne stylistic influence in its flat-roofed streamlined form, horizontal massing with banks of windows, decorative masonry, and curved metal entrance canopy. The Modernist additions are characterized by flat-roofed angular form, horizontal massing, and tall, rectangular, steel-frame, five-horizontal-pane windows. Utilitarian, resilient finishes such as concrete-block and plaster walls, rectangular beige-glazed ceramic-tile wainscot, plaster ceilings, and hardwood, terrazzo, and vinyl-composition, quarry, and ceramic-tile flooring remain throughout the school. The classroom additions accommodated changing educational curricula and increased enrollment. The kitchen supplied sanitary food service facilities, while the auditorium/cafeteria provided a spacious venue for meals and academic and civic events. The period of significance begins in 1938, when the building was placed into service, and ends in 1973, when the kitchen's interior footprint was expanded. Although the school continued to serve many of Covington's elementary-grade students until June 1988, its function after 1973 is not of exceptional significance.

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

Criterion A: Alleghany County Education Context, 1870-1973, and Rivermont 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 segregated, 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 and Virginia

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Indian students typically received inferior buildings and supplies, shorter terms, and fewer instructors.¹⁰

The 1869 constitution and enabling state legislation created “independent cities” that are politically and administratively separate from counties with which they share borders; such cities are considered to be county-equivalents for various purposes, eventually including operation of local school systems. Virginia is the only state that has independent cities and counties. Covington first was incorporated as a town in 1833 and served as the seat of Alleghany County; it became an independent city by court order in 1952. A county seat of government being located within the corporate limits of an independent city, as is the case with Alleghany County’s seat in the City of Covington, is not out of the ordinary.¹¹

Virginia’s first state-subsidized public schools opened in November 1870. During the 1870-1871 term, the system’s 2,900 schools served approximately twenty-four percent of the state’s Black children and almost thirty-eight percent of white youth. In Alleghany County, located in the northwestern part of the state, 48 African American and 430 white students were instructed by one Black and eleven white teachers in one Black and twelve white public schools. The sole school for African American youth was in Covington; 160 white students enrolled at four schools in the town. However, only 33 African American and 96 white students regularly attended classes.¹²

African American children successively received instruction from William G. Watson in a private home, carpenter shop, and the Old Samaritan Hall on Lexington Street from 1882 until 1887, when a two-room weatherboarded school on Lexington Street was erected. White youth studied in a two-room weatherboarded 1885 school on Locust Street that was soon enlarged with another classroom. During the five-month 1886-1887 term, principal R. L. Barnette and two other teachers taught an average of sixty out of eighty-five enrolled students. The 1885 building was replaced in 1894 with the two-story, hip-roofed, weatherboarded, twelve-room Covington Graded School, distinguished by a three-stage pyramidal-hip-roofed entrance and bell tower, also located on Locust Street.¹³

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, which entrenched Jim Crow segregation in all aspects of state law, county boards of education

¹⁰ J. L. Blair Buck, *The Development of Public Schools in Virginia, 1607-1952* (Richmond: State Board of Education), 65, 69-71.

¹¹ The Hornbook of Virginia History, “Cities of Virginia,” *Encyclopedia Virginia* (Virginia Humanities 07 Dec. 2020, <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/cities-of-virginia/> (accessed March 2022)).

¹² State Board of Education, *First Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1871* (Richmond: Superintendent of Public Printing, 1871), 169.

¹³ State Board of Education, *Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1887* (Richmond: Superintendent of Public Printing, 1887), 10; Gay Arritt, *Historical Sketches* (Covington, VA: Alleghany Historical Society, 1982), 160-161; Horton Beirne and Byron E. Faidley, *Covington* (Charleston, South Carolina: Arcadia Publishing, 2013), 108, 116; Oren F. Morton, *A Centennial History of Alleghany County, Virginia* (Dayton, Virginia: J. K. Ruebush Company, 1923), 76.

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implemented more stringent teacher qualification and compulsory attendance standards, undertook building renovation and construction, and consolidated smaller schools. However, African American school appropriations declined after the constitution disenfranchised black voters, perpetuating the problem of inadequate and overcrowded facilities for students of color.¹⁴

Alleghany County public school enrollment gradually increased as the twentieth century progressed. In 1901, 441 Black and 1,795 white students attended nine African American and forty-seven white schools for an average of 105 days. The Covington District, created by the Virginia General Assembly in 1901, encompassed the schools in the town and outlying areas. In 1902, Covington, which then had approximately 2,950 residents and was a rapidly growing industrial center, became Alleghany County's governmental seat. Twelve teachers instructed almost six hundred Covington Graded School students in 1907. In 1911, fifty-four Alleghany County schools served the school-age population of 1,033 Black and 4,427 white children. In the town of Covington, average attendance was comprised of 162 out of 210 African American students enrolled at four schools and 679 of 781 white pupils at fourteen schools.¹⁵

Covington's population rose approximately forty-four percent between 1900 and 1910, when the town had 4,234 inhabitants. The Covington District consolidated and improved schools during the early 1900s, again placing most of its resources in schools for white students. In 1908, contractor S. E. Pace erected the two-story, hip-roofed, weatherboarded Watson School on Marion Avenue to serve all grades of African American youth. The two-story, brick, hip-roofed, Classical Revival-style, twelve-room Covington High School, which featured a full-height pedimented tetrastyle portico and a modillion cornice, was completed in 1912 at a cost of \$30,000. Numerous local and rural white youth enrolled. The construction of Covington Graded School, also a two-story, brick, Classical Revival-style building, commenced in 1916 on the 1894 school's Locust Street site. The \$47,000 school building was placed into service in September 1918. During the previous term (1917-1918), approximately seventy-two percent of Alleghany County's 4,445 school-age youth—478 Black and 2,706 white—enrolled in public schools. By 1921, 4,771 students attended fifty schools throughout Alleghany County. Forty-four schools, twenty-six of which had one room and eight two rooms, served white youth. African American children attended six (four one-room and two two-room) schools. In Covington, which had grown to 5,623 residents by 1920, 163 white youth studied at Covington High School and 1,140 children attended Covington Graded School in 1923. Following the 1925 construction of an approximately \$20,000 classroom/gymnasium wing by local contractors Stoughton and Mathers, the graded school was named in honor of its former principal and Alleghany County

¹⁴ 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 September 2021).

¹⁵ Morton, *Centennial History of Alleghany County*, 66, 75; State Board of Education, *Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1899-1901* (Richmond: Superintendent of Public Printing, 1901), 104, 108; Chamber of Commerce of Covington, Virginia, *Alleghany County, Virginia: Its Resources and Industries* (Covington: Chamber of Commerce, 1907), 16; State Board of Education, *Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1909-1911* (Richmond: Superintendent of Public Printing, 1911), 415.

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school superintendent James G. Jeter.¹⁶ Privately subsidized educational facilities in the Covington vicinity included the Industrial School and Farm for Mountain Children and Homeless Boys operated by the Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia. The campus encompassed eighteen buildings on a 1,197-acre farm approximately two-and-one-half miles west of Covington. In 1923, around eighteen staff members provided academic and trade training to an average of 111 residents.¹⁷

The economic challenges that ensued from the Great Depression limited construction during the early 1930s. However, by the end of the decade overcrowded classrooms and outdated facilities necessitated a county-wide school improvement campaign. The Covington Chamber of Commerce's Public Works Program Committee, created in July 1933, collaborated with the Alleghany County School Board (ACSB) to secure local funding and New Deal-era federal Public Works Administration (PWA) and Works Progress Administration (WPA) grants for myriad projects. In February 1936, the ACSB allocated \$3,745 to be used in conjunction with a \$13,395 WPA grant to subsidize school repairs throughout the county. The following year, the ACSB announced plans to construct elementary schools for white children in East Covington, on McAllister Hill in north Covington, and in Cliftondale; and new buildings to house Covington High School for white students and Watson School, which served all grades of African American students in Covington.¹⁸

In early 1938, county officials, frustrated by PWA grant application processing delays, secured \$120,000-worth of bonds to subsidize construction of the two Covington elementary schools. The ACSB selected the Roanoke architecture and engineering firm Smithey and Boynton to design the buildings. On March 22, 1938, the board accepted Lexington, Virginia-based C. W. Barger and Sons' \$58,209 bid to erect the two-story brick Rivermont School in north Covington. The expansive building, finished in five months, replaced a two-room weatherboarded school

¹⁶ James G. Jeter began teaching at Covington Graded School in 1887 and served as principal from 1894 until 1909. Enrollment numbers for Covington's African American school are not available. *ACSBMM Book A* (1901-1913), July 6 and 11, 1908, pp. 111-112; April 13, 1910, p. 138; June 18, 1910, p. 149; *ACSBMM Book B* (1913-1922), March 4, 1916, p. 24; January 25, 1917, p. 32; *ACSBMM Minute Book C* (1922-1925), May 16, 1925, p. 150; Alleghany County Public Schools office, Low Moor; State Board of Education, *Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1917-1918* (Richmond: Superintendent of Public Printing, 1919), 67; 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), 113, 117, 129; "Covington," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, September 23, 1923, p. 8; "Work on Jeter School Progressing," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, August 22, 1925, p. 3; "To Receive Bids," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, January 31, 1925, p. 15; "Will Build Addition to Covington School," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, March 26, 1925, p. 7; "Staunton Firm Bidding on Work," *News Leader* (Staunton, VA), April 18, 1925, p. 4; Arritt, *Historical Sketches*, 161; Covington, 116-117, 120.

¹⁷ This school, established by 1911 in conjunction with Grace Mission (founded in 1906 by Reverend G. Floyd Rogers, rector of Emmanuel Episcopal Church in Covington), remains in operation as the Boys Home of Virginia. Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, *Journal of the Fifth Annual Council* (Wytheville, Virginia: Southwest Virginia Enterprise, 1924), 155; Morton, *Centennial History of Alleghany County*, 67; Boys Homes of Virginia, "History," <https://boyshomeofva.org/supportive-environment/history-boys-home/> (accessed September 2021).

¹⁸ *ACSBMM Book 1* (1932-1938), February 18, 1936, p. 298; December 21, 1937, pp. 470, 472; A. L. Bennett (Alleghany County Schools superintendent), "The History of the Development of the Covington Senior High School Building," May 30, 1939, pp. 1-12; Covington Schools vertical file, Alleghany Highland Regional Library, Covington.

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further north. Roanoke contractor J. F. Barbour and Sons constructed East Covington Elementary School at a cost of \$33,905. Both schools were built without federal funding. In June 1938, the ACSB received a PWA grant of \$122,576 for the new Covington High and Watson schools. Taxpayers supported the issuance of \$150,000 in bonds to cover the remaining construction cost. C. W. Barger and Sons commenced erecting the \$53,292 Watson School in late November 1938 and finished in June 1939. Harrisonburg Building and Supply Company was the general contractor for the \$197,078 Covington High School completed in March 1940 after delays due to a contentious site selection process. The completion of the Covington schools facilitated the ongoing process of school consolidation. That year, 463 Black students attended four Alleghany County schools, while 4,615 white youth enrolled at twenty schools.¹⁹

Upon its September 1938 opening, Rivermont School featured nine spacious classrooms characterized by wood-trimmed blackboards, bulletin boards, and built-in cabinets and closets; an administrative office; a combination auditorium/cafeteria, a kitchen, and restrooms. The faculty included principal William Cary McConnaughey and nine female teachers including Harriet F. Thompson, who recorded activities and attendance trends in a scrapbook. The white community supported the school and its faculty by establishing a Parent-Teachers Association to assist with fundraising, student programs, and annual events such as holiday celebrations, talent contests, and music festivals. Frequently held community nights featured local actors, singers, musicians, and refreshments. White children who lived nearby walked to school and some returned home daily for lunch. Others, many of whom received free lunches, ate in the cafeteria. White adults also benefited from courses regularly offered at the school. During the 1939-1940 term, typing, business English and arithmetic, public speaking, home management, gymnastics, and first aid classes were taught on Monday and Wednesday evenings. An April 1940 event celebrated WPA achievements in Virginia. Inclement weather, measles, mumps, chicken pox, and pneumonia annually reduced attendance in the winter and early spring. County Health officers inoculated students at school for the aforementioned diseases and others such as typhoid. During World War II, students and faculty purchased defense stamps and collected donations for the Red Cross, March of Dimes, and Community Chest. In 1942, the ACSB leased a one-acre tract near Rivermont School from the West Virginia Pulp and Paper Company for use as a "Victory Garden" to supply school cafeterias. In addition to teaching fifth grade, Harriet Thompson served as Rivermont School's principal from fall 1942 until her June 1968 retirement.²⁰

¹⁹ ACSBMM Book 1 (1932-1938), March 22, 1938, p. 491; ACSBMM Book 2 (1938-1947), July 5, 1939, p. 93; August 30, 1939, p. 99; March 12, 1940, p. 125; Betty C. Draper, "Public Invited to School Board Meeting Friday," *Covington Virginian*, July 7, 1938, p. 8; "Bond Issue Election," *Covington Virginian*, August 24, 1938, p. 8; Bennett, "The History of the Development of the Covington Senior High School Building," May 30, 1939, pp. 1-12; Beirne and Faidley, *Covington*, 106, 109, 121, 123; State Board of Education, *Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the Commonwealth of Virginia, 1939-1940* (Richmond: Division of Purchase and Printing, 1940), 242-243, 262.

²⁰ Harriet F. Thompson, "Rivermont Log," scrapbook compiled from fall 1938 until 1988 in the collection of the Alleghany Highlands Genealogical Society, Covington; ACSBMM Book 2 (1938-1947), April 1, 1942, p. 214.

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Although forty-five Virginia counties and cities offered twelve grades of public instruction during the 1945-1946 academic year, many high schools offered only ninth- through eleventh grade. That was the case in Alleghany County, where 265 Black and 3,246 white children enrolled in elementary and primary grades and 111 Black and 904 white youth attended high schools. Specific enrollment statistics are not available for most of Covington's campuses. All of the city's African American youth, as well as many students residing in rural Alleghany and Bath counties, were assigned to Watson School. Provision of publicly-funded transportation for Black students was never ensured, ~~a given~~, and Black parents and community leaders routinely had to organize and provide transportation in order for children to get to school. White students from Covington and elsewhere in the county attended East Covington, Edgemont, Jeter, Rivermont, and Covington High schools. Principal Harriet Thompson and eight other female teachers instructed 328 children at Rivermont School during the 1946-1947 term. Enrollment dropped to 284 children in 1949-1950.²¹

In the 1953-1954 academic year, the Covington school system served approximately 2,338 of the 5,143 youth enrolled in Alleghany County schools. Covington had been designated an independent city the year before, and the Supreme Court's *Brown v. School Board of Topeka, Kansas* decision that struck down the "separate but equal" doctrine that allowed racially segregated schools in 1954. Due to intense resistance by whites, however, school desegregation across Virginia was not completed until the early 1970s. The Covington City School Board (CCSB), organized in January 1953, began cooperatively operating the city's six schools with the ACSB in July 1954. During the 1954-1955 term, 344 Black and 3,478 white elementary and primary school-age children and 135 Black and 1,488 white high school-age youth attended Alleghany County schools. By early 1956, approximately 3,620 students were educated in Covington, 390 at Rivermont. In order to accommodate steadily increasing enrollment, the CCSB issued in March 1956 a long-range school building program proposing projects on its campuses. As a temporary measure to alleviate classroom overcrowding, some first- and second-grade classes had alternating half-day schedules, with some students attending in the morning and others in the afternoon. The CCSB assumed independent oversight of the Covington school system on July 1, 1958.²²

Although building materials shortages and increased cost during the Korean War slowed school construction, the Alleghany County and Covington school boards initiated an ambitious campus improvement program in the late 1950s. Smithey and Boynton was engaged to provide project estimation and drawing rendering services for additions at Edgemont, Rivermont, and Watson schools and renovations at East Covington and Jeter schools in Covington, as well as a new Alleghany County High School, additions at Callaghan, Altamont, Sharon, Boiling Spring,

²¹ State Board of Education, *Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the Commonwealth of Virginia, 1945-1946* (Richmond: Division of Purchase and Printing, 1946), 26, 288-289; Thompson, "Rivermont Log."

²² *CCSBMM* Book No. 1, January 7, 1953, p. 1; April 15, 1954, p. 31; April 23, 1954, pp. 34-35; March 6, 1956, p. 109; March 20, 1956, pp. 113-115; December 6, 1956, p. 153; March 6, 1958, p. 196; State Board of Education, *Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the Commonwealth of Virginia, 1954-1955* (Richmond: Division of Purchase and Printing, 1955), 254-255.

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Falling Spring, and Selma schools, and renovations at Central and Selma schools. The first construction phase in Covington—Edgemont, Rivermont, and Watson school additions—was funded in 1959 by a \$750,000 bond issue and state appropriations.²³

In November 1959, the CCSB selected Roanoke general contractor S. Lewis Linebarger to erect the classroom additions at Rivermont and Watson schools at a cost of \$382,500. The CCSB received \$387,863 from the State Board of Education's construction fund to cover design and building expenses. The space was desperately needed to ameliorate overcrowding. The Rivermont addition, which encompasses an administrative suite, a library with a workroom and conference room, and four classrooms with restrooms, was placed into service when classes commenced in September 1960, but minor work continued through December. The Edgemont expansion was finished in February 1961; the Watson addition soon followed. Phase II of the campus improvement program, executed in 1962, encompassed Covington High School's expansion per the design of architect A. Ray Pentecost Jr.²⁴

Rivermont School served only white children until fall 1966, 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 had 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 threats of violence, and many filed lawsuits when their concerns were not addressed.²⁵

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 City of Norfolk schools on February 2. The state legislature rejoined in April with the Perrow Plan, which ostensibly allowed parents "freedom of choice: to decide which schools their children would attend, but effectively maintained segregated school systems as only whites still controlled the selection process."²⁶

²³ CCSBMM Book No. 1, February 17, 1958, pp. 194-195; Alleghany County School Board, "School Building Program," spring 1959 brochure in the collection of the Alleghany Highlands Genealogical Society; "Covington Accepts Bid on Schools," *Richmond Times Dispatch*, November 28, 1959, p. 3.

²⁴ CCSBMM Book No. 2, November 20, 1959, p. 11; April 29, 1960, p. 23; May 17, 1960, p. 26; June 8, 1960, pp. 26-27; November 10, 1960, p. 35; January 9, 1961, p. 39; February 7, 1961, p. 40; "Covington Accepts Bid on Schools," *Richmond Times Dispatch*, November 28, 1959, p. 3; "School Addition Inspected," *Covington Virginian*, November 12, 1962; State Board of Education, *Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the Commonwealth of Virginia, 1960-1961* (Richmond: Division of Purchase and Printing, 1961), 242-243, 380-381.

²⁵ James H. Hershman Jr., "Massive Resistance," *Encyclopedia Virginia*, Virginia Foundation for the Humanities, 2011, <https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org> (accessed September 2021).

²⁶ Hershman Jr., "Massive Resistance."

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The Alleghany County and Covington City school systems implemented a twelve-year curriculum in fall 1961. Enrollment at Covington's six schools during the 1963-1964 academic term totaled 2,559 students at Covington High (725), East Covington (153), Edgemont (341), Jeter (512), Rivermont (316), and Watson (512) schools. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 mandated school integration as a prerequisite for federal funding eligibility. In fall 1964, Covington High School admitted approximately ten African American youth including Kathryn Hubbard, Cecilroy Pettus, Alex White, and siblings Dorothy and Ronald Holloway. Kathryn Hubbard and Cecilroy Pettus became the high school's first Black graduates in June 1966. During the 1966-1967 academic year, thirteen Black and ninety white teachers educated 328 Black and 1,238 white students at Covington's two integrated schools: Jeter-Watson (renamed in fall 1965 following Jeter School's closure at the end of the 1964-1965 school year) and Covington High. In rural Alleghany County, two Black and 16 white teachers instructed 102 African American and 2,649 white pupils at the six schools operated by the ACSB that were completely desegregated in 1966-1967. In 1967-1968, the Rivermont faculty was comprised of principal Harriet Thompson and thirteen female teachers including Rozelia Henry and Susie Townes, both African American. William Fitzgerald began serving as Rivermont School's principal on July 1, 1968. Integration finally 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*.²⁷

Kindergarten-level instruction was first subsidized by the Virginia State Board of Education during the 1968-1969 school year. Twenty-one localities, including Covington, offered kindergarten programs. Although overall enrollment at Covington's four schools had dropped to 1,391 first- through seventh-grade children and 821 eighth- through twelfth-grade youth, increased enrollment due to the introduction of kindergarten classes necessitated more classroom space at Rivermont and Edgemont schools. The CCSB engaged Smithey and Boynton to design two-classroom additions for both campuses and in June 1969 awarded the \$110,590 construction contract to Hill and Kutz, Inc. The CCSB's October 1969 list of campus improvement priorities for Rivermont included lighting upgrades, coal-to-gas boiler conversion, cafeteria and playground equipment installation, parking lot improvement, landscaping, and blackout curtains. The Rivermont and Edgemont additions were finished in early 1970. The CCSB approved in December 1971 the proposed installation of two lampposts on Rivermont's front lawn. Smithey and Boynton rendered plans for the Rivermont kitchen expansion executed by contractor J. S. Smathers in summer 1973 at a cost of \$27,365. In 1972-1973, Rivermont principal William W. Fitzgerald headed a sixteen-teacher faculty that instructed 372 children. Rivermont, Edgemont

²⁷ Jeter School was demolished in 1969. W. R. Beasley, "Seven Pupils Attended During 1857 Term," *Covington Virginian*, August 10, 1964, p. B5; 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;" *CCSBMM* Book No. 2, March 21, 1967, p. 200; March 11, 1968, p. 222; Paul D. Linkenhoker, "A History of Schooling in Alleghany County, Clifton Forge, and Covington, Virginia," dissertation, April 1993, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Virginia, p.275; Paul D. Linkenhoker, telephone conversation with Heather Fearnbach, September 27, 2021.

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(371 students), and Jeter-Watson (702 pupils) schools served kindergarten through seventh-grade youth.²⁸

Paul D. Linkenhoker, a teacher at Rivermont School from 1970 until 1981, remembered that the number of African American pupils gradually increased as the 1970s progressed. Students, many of whom lived on McAllister Hill adjacent to the school or Rivermont Hill on Highway 220's west side above the West Virginia Pulp and Paper Company mill, walked to school. African American faculty during his tenure at Rivermont School included sixth-grade teacher Rozelia Henry and seventh-grade teacher Susie Townes.²⁹

The CCSB transferred sixth- and seventh-grade classes from Rivermont to Jeter-Watson School in fall 1983. Rivermont School operated until June 1988, serving approximately three hundred first- through fifth-grade youth during its final term. Beginning in fall 1988, all Covington kindergarten- through second-grade students attended Edgemont Elementary School, third- through seventh-graders enrolled at Jeter-Watson Elementary School, and eighth- through twelfth-grade pupils were assigned to Covington High School. The Covington School Board conveyed Rivermont School to the City of Covington in August 1988.³⁰ In June 1989, North American Textiles of Richmond began utilizing a portion of Rivermont School to manufacture valances and other window treatments sold at K-Mart, Sears, and Wal-Mart stores. The school subsequently housed the Alleghany Highlands Genealogical Society, a day care program operated by Alleghany Highlands YMCA, and the City of Covington's senior center until spring 2010, when those entities moved to Jeter-Watson School, where they remain. Rivermont School has been vacant since 2010. The City of Covington Parks and Recreation Department has maintained the playground, basketball court, and athletic field for public use since fall 1988.³¹

Due to its direct association with provision of public schooling, starting during the Jim Crow era and continuing through the lengthy desegregation of Virginia's public schools, Rivermont is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of Education. Public schools represent the largest ongoing public investment in educational opportunities for children. Rivermont School, erected in 1938, was enlarged ~~added onto~~ in 1960, 1970, and 1973 to enhance its continuing use as a public school. The building's evolved design that included improved amenities such as an cafeteria/auditorium, administrative space, and additional classrooms with modern finishes are

²⁸ *CCSBMM* Book 2, December 8, 1966, p. 197; March 11, 1968, p. 223; February 10, 1969, p. 248; June 26, 1969, p. 265; October 13, 1969, p. 272; December 16, 1971, p. 318; August 7, 1972, p. 332; January 8, 1973, p. 340; February 14, 1973, p. 343; June 26, 1973, p. 351; State Board of Education, *Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1968-1969* (Richmond: State Board of Education, 1969), 27, 280; Division of Surveys and Field Services, *Alleghany County Public Schools* (Nashville, Tennessee: George Peabody College for Teachers, 1973), 166, 171; Smithey and Boynton, "Kitchen Addition to Rivermont School," Sheet 2, October 27, 1972.

²⁹ Paul D. Linkenhoker, telephone conversation with Heather Fearnbach, September 27, 2021.

³⁰ *CCSBMM* Book 3, December 16, 1987; Darlene G. Lambert, Human Resources Coordinator, Covington City Public Schools, email correspondence with Heather Fearnbach, September–October 2021.

³¹ "North American Textiles Relocates," *News-Leader*, June 11, 1989, p. B1; Beirne and Faidley, *Covington*, 109; Allen Dressler, Director, City of Covington Parks and Recreation Department, email correspondence with Heather Fearnbach, October 6, 2021.

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illustrative of the changing standards established for public schools for white children during the Jim Crow era. Improvements made in 1960 to Rivermont School paralleled those made to Watson School, which solely served Black students, and offer opportunity for comparative analysis of the disparities that occurred in “separate but equal” public schools. The improvements made to Rivermont in 1970 and 1973 represent the first enhancements made following the 1966 integration of student enrollments and faculty members, thus capturing in physical form an important period in educational opportunities in Covington and Alleghany County.

Criterion C: Mid-twentieth-century Educational Architecture Context

As an example of Moderne and Modernist architecture and of the work of a prolific and accomplished firm, Smithey and Boynton, Rivermont School is locally significant under Criterion C in the area of Architecture. The evolved building met pedagogical standards for consolidated schools during the 1930s and grew to include facilities and amenities that became characteristic of mid-twentieth century educational needs. The school’s ~~building’s~~ high levels of integrity of design, materials, and workmanship, character-defining aspects of its style, and its function and use from 1938-1973 are intrinsic to the property’s architectural significance.

Virginia educational buildings were often executed in the Colonial, Georgian, and Classical Revival styles during the mid-twentieth century, perpetuating an early-twentieth-century practice. However, many buildings erected during the 1930s and early 1940s, including the 1938 Rivermont School, display some traditional features, such as symmetrical façades, large multipane windows, and molded water tables, but otherwise are devoid of classical embellishment. Rather, streamlined façades reflect the era’s austerity as well as the growing influence of internationally popular styles such as Art Deco and Art Moderne. This style is sometimes referred to as Depression, Stripped Classical, or PWA/WPA Moderne due to its prevalence in buildings subsidized by Public Works Administration (PWA) or Works Progress Administration (WPA) grants. Between 1933 and 1939, PWA funds were used to erect, enlarge, and remodel 7,282 educational buildings throughout the United States. The resulting substantial, up-to-date facilities dramatically improved learning environments and bolstered public morale as the economy rebounded from the Great Depression.³²

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

³² United States. Public Works Administration. *America Builds: The Record of PWA* (Washington, D.C.: PWA, 1939), 128.

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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.³³

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 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.³⁴ Virginia public

³³ 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.

³⁴ Edward Waugh and Elizabeth Waugh. *The South Builds: New Architecture in the Old South*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1960, 43-44.

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schools erected from the late 1930s through the early 1960s, including Rivermont School, manifest this philosophy, albeit much more so at schools for white children due to the disparities of the Jim Crow era.

During the Great Depression, when financial shortfalls slowed the pace of Virginia school construction, the Department of Education's Division of School Buildings planned for future growth by undertaking facility and population surveys and selecting sites for new schools. The state was thus well prepared when PWA and WPA grants, which covered between thirty and forty-five percent of school construction cost, were available from 1934 until 1941. County and municipal officials enlisted taxpayer support to issue bonds to cover the remaining expense. The infusion of federal, state, and local funds allowed for the closure of twenty-four percent of Virginia's remaining one-teacher schools (which numbered 2,516 in 1935) as consolidated schools were placed into service between 1935 and 1940.³⁵ Students who continued to attend one-room school were disproportionately Black or Virginia Indian.

School construction almost ceased during World War II. In 1946, the Virginia Department of Education reported that the residual effects of the war had resulted in a one-hundred-percent rise 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. 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 had comparable modern, safe, and hygienic facilities. 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.³⁶

System-wide campus improvements from the late 1930s 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 facilities. 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 architecture. However, the Department of

³⁵ Buck, *The Development of Public Schools in Virginia*, 348-350.

³⁶ State Board of Education, *Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1945-46* (Richmond: Division of Purchase and Printing, 1946), 173; Buck, *The Development of Public Schools in Virginia*, 383, 413-417.

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Education embraced Modernism during the 1950s, revising its building planning manuals to encourage design devoid of expensive “extraneous” ornament.³⁷

Alleghany County and City of Covington Board of Educations’ Mid-twentieth-century Campus Improvement Campaigns

The Roanoke architecture and engineering firm Smithey and Boynton rendered plans for most of Alleghany County’s mid-twentieth-century educational buildings. The schools and additions completed from the late 1930s through the 1960s have austere, brick-veneered, flat-roofed forms illuminated by bands of large multi-pane wood, 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. Alleghany 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.

Smithey and Boynton’s economical and pragmatic designs for Rivermont (1938), East Covington (1938), Watson (1939), and Covington High (1940) schools and their mid-twentieth-century additions epitomize the stylistic evolution of mid-twentieth-century educational buildings in keeping with architectural and pedagogical trends. All are executed in a similar manner with slight stylistic variations. The Colonial Revival-style, hip-roofed, brick-veneered, one-story, six-classroom East Covington School at 340 East Walnut Street is the smallest of the sample and the most traditional in style. Gabled wings flank the main block and a small bell tower rises from the roof. A classical arched-pediment surround frames the recessed double-leaf door and transom beneath a decorative roof gable on the south elevation. East Covington School does not have an auditorium or cafeteria. The original flat-roofed, brick-veneered, two-story sections of Rivermont School, Watson School at 515 East Pine Street and Covington High School (NR 2008) at 606 South Lexington Avenue, are streamlined Moderne in style. Smithey and Boynton specified the same masonry technique—slightly projecting brick courses that create a banded effect—to embellish the upper and lower portions of walls at Rivermont, Watson, and Covington High schools. Large twelve-over-twelve sash illuminate the original sections of all four schools.³⁸

East Covington School was never expanded. However, Smithey and Boynton rendered plans for Rivermont School’s 1960 and 1970 additions; Watson/Jeter-Watson School’s 1950, 1961, and

³⁷ 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.

³⁸ Although Smithey and Boynton’s 1937 rendering of Rivermont School’s primary (west) elevation illustrates tall six-horizontal-pane steel sash, which would have been in keeping with the building’s Moderne aesthetic, the 1938 drawings specify the traditional twelve-over-twelve wood sash that were installed. Six-horizontal-pane steel sash were utilized in the 1960 and 1970 additions. “Covington School,” December 1937 rendering in the collection of the Alleghany Highlands Genealogical Society; Smithey and Boynton, “Rivermont School,” February 12, 1938 drawings.

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1969 additions; and Covington High School's 1970 addition. The firm also designed 1961, 1966, and 1970 additions for Edgemont School, built in 1930 and enlarged for the first time in 1934. The one- and two-story, flat-roofed, brick, mid-twentieth-century expansions are all Modernist in character, with large multi-horizontal-pane steel sash.³⁹

The schools have double-loaded corridor plans. At Rivermont School, original wall, ceiling, and floor finishes; wood- and aluminum frame blackboards and bulletin boards; and steel-frame wood and steel doors are remarkably intact. The 1938-1940 classrooms each have a full wall of built-in cabinets and long, narrow coat and storage closets. Utilitarian, resilient finishes such as concrete-block and plaster walls, rectangular yellow- and beige-glazed ceramic tile wainscot, plaster ceilings, and terrazzo and vinyl-composition, quarry, and ceramic tile floors remain. Auditorium and cafeterias provided much-needed venues for meals and academic and civic events conveniently located adjacent to the kitchen. The buildings allowed for greatly increased enrollment capacity, flexible use, and manifest the state Department of Education's initiative to supply students with spacious, well-ventilated, and amply lit instructional areas.

Covington High School at 606 South Lexington Avenue is the only historic campus still utilized as such by the school system. After East Covington School closed, the building served as an annex for Jeter-Watson Elementary School. One Jeter-Watson Elementary School kindergarten class remained during the 1978-1979 term. Otherwise, the Covington City Public Schools administrative offices have occupied the building since September 1975. Rivermont School closed in June 1988. Edgemont and Jeter-Watson schools operated through the 2008-2009 term. Edgemont Primary School at 574 West Indian Valley Road and Jeter-Watson Intermediate School at 560 West Indian Valley Road opened in August 2009.⁴⁰

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

³⁹ The architect of the 1930 Edgemont School and 1934 addition has not been identified. Smithey and Boynton also guided the Loving Funeral Home's 1946 remodeling to serve as Covington High School's Home Economics Building and designed a temporary building for Watson School in 1956. However, the CCSB selected Norfolk architect A. Ray Pentecost Jr., also a prolific school designer, to provide drawings for the 1962 Covington High School addition that encompasses a gymnasium, classrooms, laboratories, and industrial arts workshops. Smithey and Boynton, Architects and Engineers Records; *Alleghany County Public Schools*, 171-174; "Modern Plants Now Serve Covington," *Covington Virginian*, August 10, 1964, p. B5; *CCSBMM* Book No. 2, November 10, 1960, p. 35; November 10, 1969, p. 275.

⁴⁰ *CCSBMM* Book No. 2, June 9, 1975, p. 393; Darlene G. Lambert, Human Resources Coordinator, Covington City Public Schools, email correspondence with Heather Fearnbach, October 2021.

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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 draftsman at the Richmond architecture and engineering firm Carneal and Johnston (1924-1928).⁴¹

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). In Covington, Smithey designed the Covington Theater (1928), James S. Mather residence (1929), W. M. Parker store (1929), Painter and Robertson store (1934), and the N. F. Mefford residence (1934).⁴²

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.⁴³

⁴¹ "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*, 2nd ed. (New York: R. R. Bowker, 1962), 72, 658; George S. Koyl, ed., *American Architects Directory*, 3rd ed. (New York: R. R. Bowker, 1970), 94; World War I enlistment records.

⁴² Ibid.; John E. Wells and Robert E. Dalton, *The Virginia Architects, 1835-1955* (Richmond, Virginia: New South Architectural Press, 1997), 40, 421-423; Smithey and Boynton, Architects and Engineers Records.

⁴³ "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.

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In addition to Covington High, East Covington, Rivermont, and Watson schools, Smithey and Boynton rendered plans for myriad Covington projects between 1935 and 1946. Commissions included a boiler plant for Jeter School (1935), Covington National Bank and jewelry store (1936), Barr-Topham Company Store (1936), C. B. Nelson duplex (1936), P. C. Whitlock residence (1936), Grandberry Memorial Church (1938), H. H. Nettleton residence (1938), James Steger residence (1939), National Guard Armory (1940), Ellis Barr antiques shop alterations (1941), Loving Funeral Home alterations (1941), C. B. Nettleton store (1941), West Virginia Pulp and Paper Company office addition (1941), Industrial Rayon Corporation plant laboratory addition (1945), David Rooklin apartments (1946), Mrs. Crawley residence (1946), and Steger Pharmacy (1946). Their work at the Industrial School and Farm for Mountain Children and Homeless Boys included a chapel (1942) and Rogers Hall (1946).⁴⁴

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 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 1956.⁴⁵

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, 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 1984.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Smithey and Boynton designed many other buildings for the Boys Home: cottage #1, house #4, and staff house (1949), cottage # 2 (1950), cottage # 3 (1951), Watkins cottage and little boys cottages (1952), dining hall (1960), infirmary (1962), administrative building (1964), gymnasium (1965), director's residence (1967), wing cottage (1969), swimming pool (1969), staff house (1972), woodworking shop (1981). Smithey and Boynton, *Architects and Engineers Records*.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*; Wells and Dalton, *The Virginia Architects*, 40, 421-423.

⁴⁶ Koyl, ed., *American Architects Directory*, 1956, 57; Koyl, ed., *American Architects Directory*, 2nd ed., 1962, 72; Koyl, ed., *American Architects Directory*, 3rd 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

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<https://vtspecialcollections.wordpress.com/2019/06/14/the-life-and-architecture-of-smithey-and-boynton/> (accessed
September 2021).

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
 previously listed in the National Register
 previously determined eligible by the National Register
 designated a National Historic Landmark
 recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
 recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
 recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other

Name of repository: Alleghany Highlands Genealogical Society, Covington, Virginia
Special Collections, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Virginia, Covington City Public Schools
Office, Covington, Virginia, Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): VDHR #107-5181

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.59 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: 37.804148 Longitude: -79.988182

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

The nominated 1.59-acre tract consists of the south portion of the 3.49-acre City of Covington tax parcel #06-2-108 as shown on the attached Location Map (scaled at one inch equals approximately 130 feet) and Site Plan/ Sketch Map (scaled at one inch equals approximately 75 feet).

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

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The historic boundary, which encompasses the educational building as well as the adjacent access drive, parking area, lawns, and stone retaining walls, includes the historic setting for Rivermont School and all known associated historic resources. The north portion of the parcel, which is excluded from the National Register boundary, contains an athletic field, asphalt-paved basketball court, and a playground with circa 1970 swings and a post-1988 slide at a lower grade than the school and parking lot. The City of Covington Parks and Recreation Department has maintained the playground, basketball court, and athletic field for community use since the school closed in 1988.

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: December 3, 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.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Rivermont School
City or Vicinity: Covington
County: Alleghany State: Virginia

Rivermont School
Name of Property

City of Covington, VA
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Photographer: Heather Fearnbach, Fearnbach History Services, Inc.
Date Photographed: September 14, 2021

- 1 of 22: 1938 school, west elevation
- 2 of 22: 1938 school and 1960 addition, southwest oblique
- 3 of 22: Northwest oblique, 1970 addition in foreground
- 4 of 22: North elevation
- 5 of 22: East elevation
- 6 of 22: Southeast oblique, 1960 addition in foreground
- 7 of 22: 1960 addition, south elevation
- 8 of 22: 1938 west entrance, looking west
- 9 of 22: 1938 north-south corridor, looking north
- 10 of 22: 1938 auditorium/cafeteria, looking west
- 11 of 22: 1938 first-floor classroom, looking south
- 12 of 22: 1938 first-floor classroom, looking north
- 13 of 22: 1938 second-floor corridor, looking south
- 14 of 22: 1938 second-floor classroom, looking north
- 15 of 22: 1938 second-floor classroom, looking south
- 16 of 22: 1960 addition reception area and office, looking west
- 17 of 22: 1960 addition library, looking west
- 18 of 22: 1960 addition classroom, looking east
- 19 of 22: 1960 addition classroom, looking west
- 20 of 22: 1960 addition east-west corridor, looking west
- 21 of 22: 1970 addition east classroom, looking east
- 22 of 22: 1970 addition east classroom, looking west

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

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

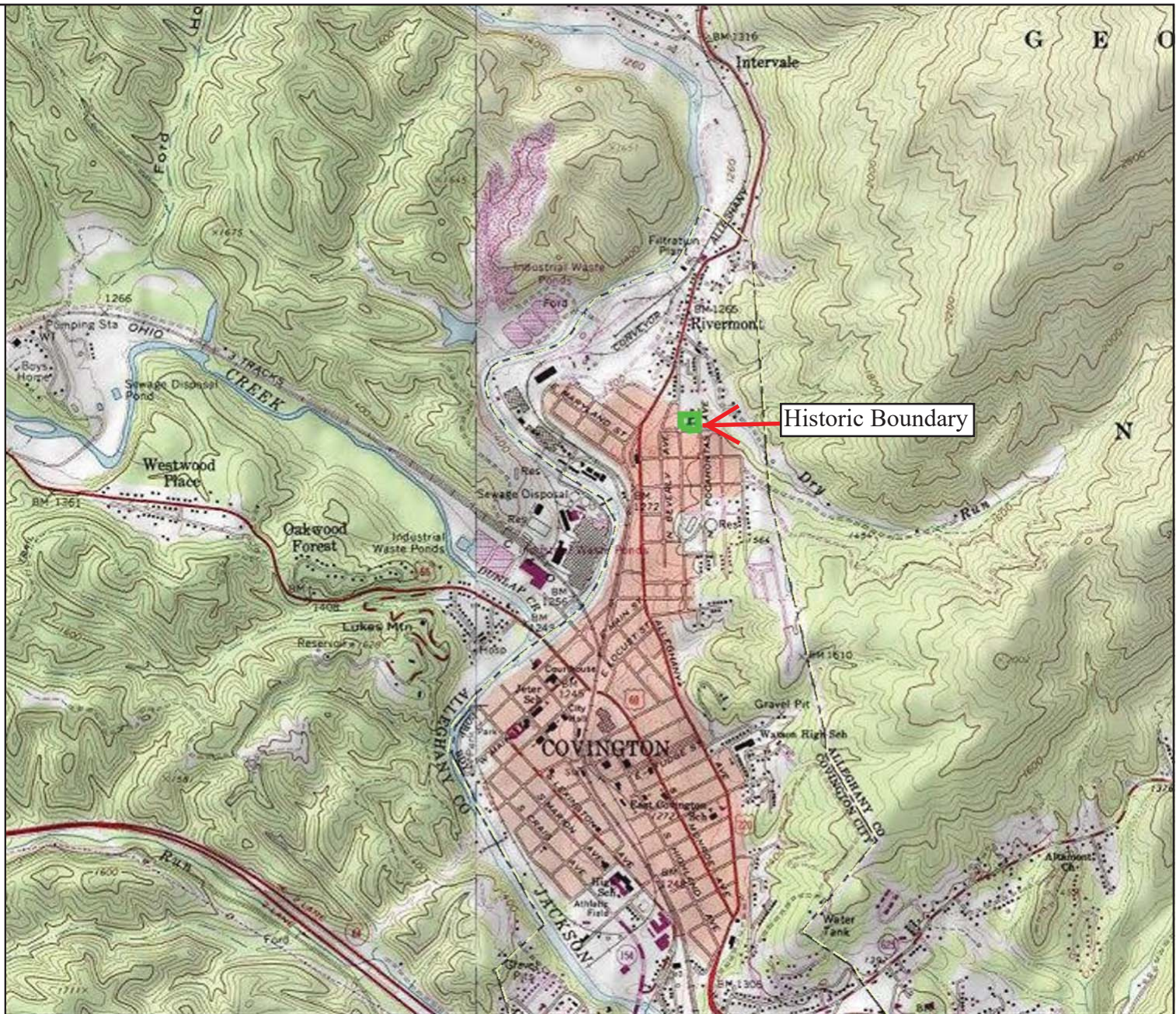
- Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
- Tier 2 – 120 hours
- Tier 3 – 230 hours
- Tier 4 – 280 hours

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



TOPOGRAPHIC MAP

Rivermont School
City of Covington, VA
DHR #107-5181



Feet

0 600 1200 1800 2400

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

Title:

Date: 3/23/2022

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

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

AERIAL VIEW - VICINITY

Rivermont School

City of Covington, VA

DHR #107-5181



Feet

0 200 400 600 800

1:9,028 / 1"=752 Feet

Title:

Date: 3/23/2022

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

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**Rivermont School (VDHR No. 107-5181) Location and National Register Boundary
Map 1011 North Rockbridge Avenue, City of Covington, Virginia; DHR No. 107-5181**



Rivermont School
Latitude: 37.804148
Longitude: -79.988182

Register Historic Boundary



Rivermont School (VDHR No. 107-5181) Site Plan/ Sketch Map
1011 North Rockbridge Avenue, City of Covington, Virginia; DHR #107-5181



Register Historic Boundary
1.59 acres
(south portion of City of Covington
tax parcel #06-2-108)

N Rockbridge Ave

N Pocahontas Ave

E Sycamore St

E Mcallister St

stone retaining wall,
ca. 1970, contributing
structure

Rivermont School,
contributing building
Latitude: 37.804148
Longitude: -79.988182

stone retaining wall,
ca. 1938, contributing
structure

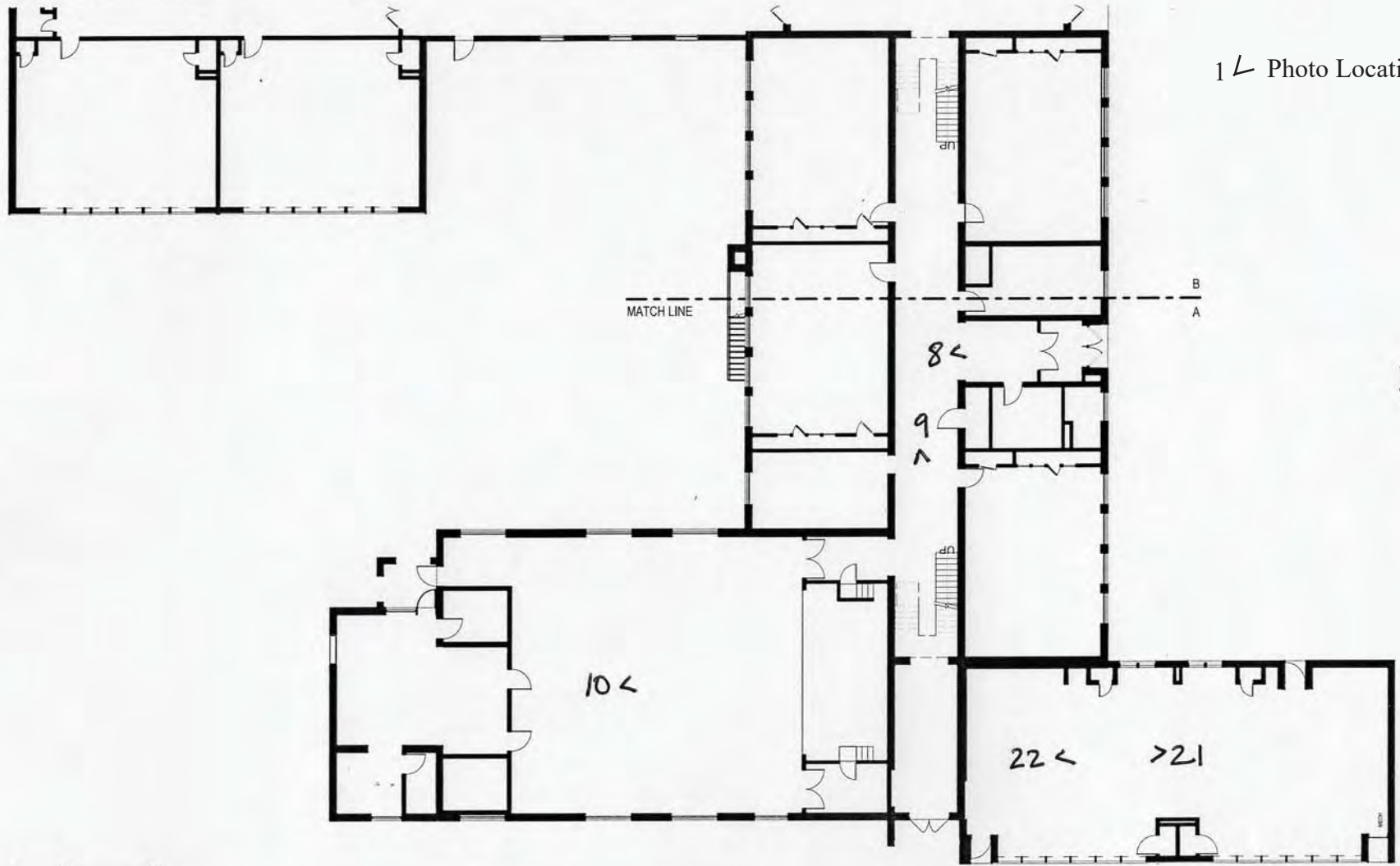
Heather Fearnbach, Fearnbach History Services, Inc. / January 2022
Base 2019 aerial photo courtesy of City of Covington GIS
<https://handp.maps.arcgis.com>

1" = approximately 75 feet



PHOTO KEY / FLOOR PLANS

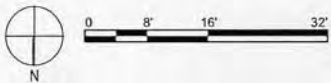
Rivermont School
City of Covington, VA
DHR #107-5181



1 ↙ Photo Locations



5<



10<

8<

9<

22<

>21

>1

Ground Floor, A

>3

SCALE: 1/16" = 1'-0"

CJMW
ARCHITECTURE

Rivermont School
1011 North Rockbridge Avenue
Covington, Virginia
EXISTING FLOOR PLAN

10/12/21

4

6
7

7
8

2
1

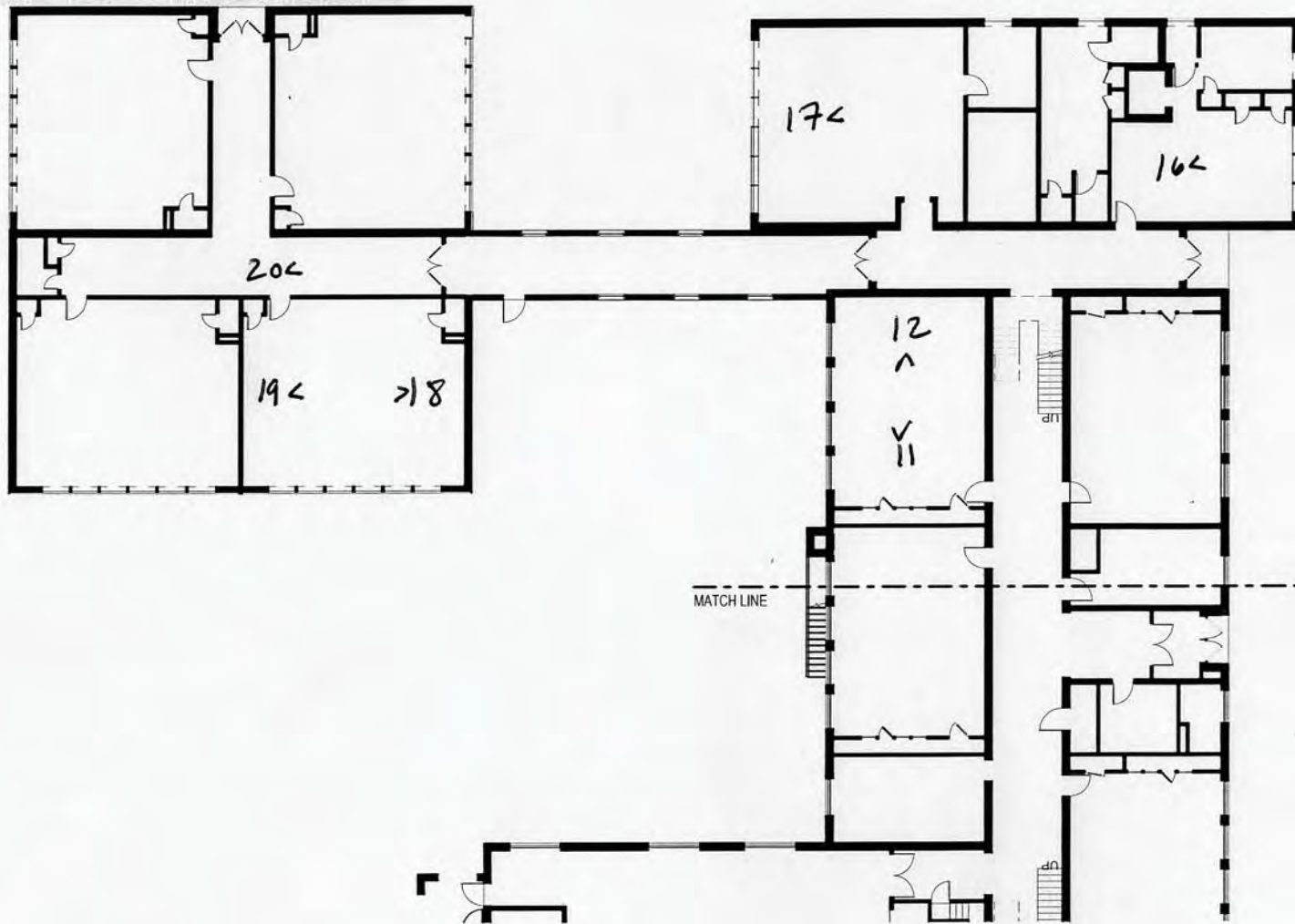


PHOTO KEY / FLOOR PLANS

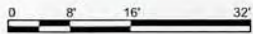
Rivermont School
 City of Covington, VA
 DHR #107-5181

1 Photo Locations



MATCH LINE

B
A

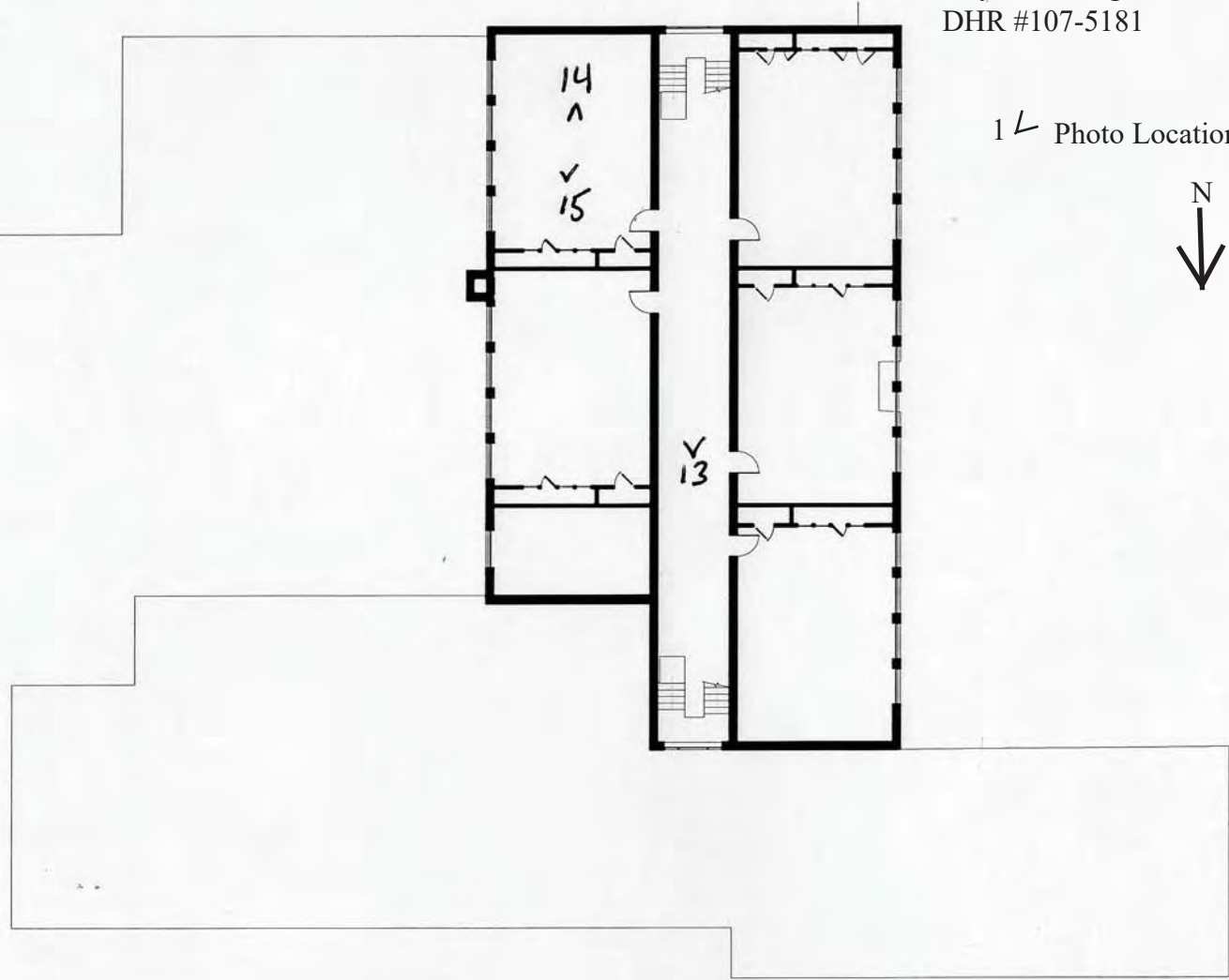


Ground Floor, B

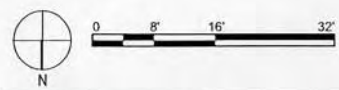
SCALE: 1/16" = 1'-0"

PHOTO KEY / FLOOR PLANS

Rivermont School
City of Covington, VA
DHR #107-5181



1 ↙ Photo Locations



Second Floor

SCALE: 1/16" = 1'-0"