

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: Pulaski High SchoolOther names/site number: Pico Terrace Elementary School; Pulaski Middle School  
VDHR 125-0063Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

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

**2. Location**Street & number: 500 Pico TerraceCity or town: Pulaski State: VA County: PulaskiNot 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:\_\_\_\_\_  
DateVirginia Department of Historic Resources

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting official:\_\_\_\_\_  
Date\_\_\_\_\_  
Title :\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency/bureau  
or Tribal Government

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#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

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

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Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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#### 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>3</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>5</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.)

LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS: Georgian Revival

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

Principal exterior materials of the property: BRICK, CONCRETE, METAL, GLASS,  
WOOD, STONE: Slate, SYNTHETICS

### 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.)

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### Summary Paragraph

Pulaski High School is located in the Town of Pulaski, Virginia, within a small residential area just off US Route 11, which is a key corridor through the town and surrounding county, and just northeast of downtown. The first building to be constructed on site was the elementary school in 1937. The T-shaped building consisted of a classical, nine-bay, two-story, rectangular section, with a central cupola and capped by a chimney and brick parapet at each end, and a small perpendicular rear wing. In 1954, three additions were added onto the building as a result of its conversion to a high school. These include the large, two-story, rectangular gym addition at the west end, the large, two-story, L-shaped auditorium and classroom addition at the east end, and the expansion of the cafeteria onto the rear wing of the elementary school building. In 1957, an additional two-story classroom wing was added at the north end of the 1954 auditorium and classroom addition. The 1937 elementary school reads as the focal point of the building, with all of the later additions extending out from secondary elevations of the main building. Each addition features differentiated exterior design elements and interior architectural features, distinguishing them from the original school. Overall, the building remains in good condition with some limited deterioration as a result of deferred maintenance and recent abandonment, and retains a high degree of architectural integrity associated with its period of significance. In the

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1950s and 1960s, two accessory buildings were constructed on the property to serve the expanded needs of the high school, including the Industrial Arts Building and the Workshop which remain today. All three buildings are contributing resources, a ca. 1960 running track is a contributing site, and a ca. 1960 flagpole is a contributing object; the property has no noncontributing resources. The property has high integrity of location, setting, design, workmanship, materials, feeling, and association.

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## **Narrative Description**

### **Setting**

Oriented along Pico Terrace, the property is roughly bounded by Peppers Ferry Road and 7<sup>th</sup> Street Northeast to the north, Franklin Avenue to the east, and Pico Terrace to the south and west. While originally constructed as a small, rectangular elementary school, today the school is a large, two-story brick building with expansive additions spreading across the southern end of the lot. A large asphalt parking lot is located immediately adjacent to the school along the north side. Situated on an elevated site, multiple concrete pathways and steps connect and provide access to the various entrances and sections of the building. The rear of the site largely consists of two sections of expansive grass lawns separated by an asphalt driveway leading from Peppers Ferry Road to the rear parking area behind the school. An asphalt track/walking path encircles the open, raised lawn to the west, while the east lawn remains largely open with two outbuildings located along the eastern rear edge of the property. Other site features include moderately-sloped hills, a few large trees, and additional sidewalks connecting to the rear outbuildings. A thick border of trees provides privacy and separates the school from the busier Route 11 to the west and northwest.

### **A. Pulaski High School Main Building, 1937-1957, Contributing Building**

Pulaski High School is an evolved resource, originally constructed in 1937 as a smaller elementary school. During the 1950s, several additions were constructed to the main building to support the conversion to a high school and to accommodate the expanded student population and services. Each section of the main building is described below.

#### 1937 Elementary School

This two-story, nine-bay, T-shaped, Georgian Revival elementary school building was constructed in 1937. It has a five-bay central projecting block and a two-bay wing on each side of the central block, as well as a one-story wing off the rear elevation of the central block. It has a concrete foundation and five-course Flemish variant bond brick exterior walls with brick quoins at each end of the central block and side wings. The roof is slate shingles with a steeply-pitched side-gable roof imitating a hipped roof on the central block by having the appearance of a hipped roof at the front but that meets a gable in the back, a steeply-pitched side-gable roof on each of the side wings, and a flat roof on the rear wing. The front rectangular section has a parapet on each gabled roof end, each with stone coping and a brick chimney. The central block

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also has an entablature with a modillion cornice. The east and west side wings have a simple cornice and frieze, while the rear wing just has simple stone coping. The building is characterized by its Georgian Revival central wooden cupola, with arched windows and a standing-seam metal bell-shaped roof.

The focal point of the façade, or south elevation, is the ornate Georgian Revival door surround with paneled wall insets and an inset wood-paneled-and-glass double-door entry with a seven-light transom window. Additionally, the door surround has a segmentally arched pediment and a full entablature with dentils and two fluted Doric pilasters flanking the entry. A stone stoop, flanked by brick half-walls, connects to the front concrete sidewalk and steps leading to Pico Terrace Road. The remainder of the façade is covered with paired twelve-over-twelve double-hung, wood-sash windows with concrete sills, jack arches and keystones. Openings along the rear elevation are primarily twelve-over-twelve double-hung, wood-sash with concrete sills, but there are also a few single-hung four-over-two and six-over-three wood-sash windows with concrete sills. The original two-bay-long portion of the rear wing features windows on the east and west elevations separated by an engaged brick buttress. First-floor windows include multi-light steel jalousie windows, while second-floor windows include multi-light steel windows with a semicircular arched light, brick arch, and keystone.

The interior retains its original T-shaped layout including hallways and classrooms with most historic architectural details and features intact as well. The hallways have ceramic tile wainscoting with textured plaster walls, a dropped acoustical tile ceiling, and concrete floors where asbestos-vinyl-tiles have been removed and abated. Classrooms largely retain their original historic wood floors, plaster walls and ceilings, and historic blackboards with elaborate wood trim intact. Additionally, built-in bookshelves, cabinetry, and closets largely remain intact. Closets and storage areas include ten-light French doors and two-paneled wood doors. Entries to classrooms feature historic doors with a single lower wood panel topped by nine lights and include three-light transoms. Some classrooms are separated by partition walls with faux wood paneling.

### 1954 Rear Wing Addition

As a result of the 1954 high school expansion, an additional two-story, two-bay section and one-story, four-bay section were added onto the existing rear wing in order to expand the cafeteria and accommodate a larger library. The two-story section of the expansion matches the original rear section with its concrete foundation, Flemish variant bond brick walls, and flat membrane roof. Furthermore, the window configuration, with the first-floor multi-light steel jalousie windows and second-floor multi-light steel windows with a semicircular arched light, brick arch, and keystone, match the existing configuration on the east and west elevations. The rear, or north, elevation of the two-story section features four multi-light steel jalousie windows with concrete sills. A rear entrance, which features double-leaf wood-paneled-and-glass doors covered by a standing-seam metal awning, is accessed by a concrete stoop along the east elevation. A below-grade access to the basement, along with a large brick smokestack, is located on the west elevation. The four-bay, one-story addition also has a concrete foundation, Flemish variant bond

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brick walls, and a flat membrane roof. The east and west elevations are lined with windows, while the rear elevation features a low concrete-block loading dock and an attached metal freezer enclosure. Windows along the east elevation match the configuration of the multi-light steel jalousie windows along the remainder of the elevation, while the west elevation includes two different sizes and configurations of multi-light steel windows. Two single-leaf pedestrian entrances, including the primary wood-and-glass door with a flat overhang, provide access to the cafeteria from the loading dock. In addition to a large multi-light steel window, there are two smaller three-light fixed steel windows on the rear elevation.

The first-floor interior consists of the cafeteria, which includes the large, open dining area, and the kitchen/prep area in the rear/one-story section of the addition. Square columns span the center of the room. Finishes include square quarry-tile flooring, a dropped acoustical tile ceiling, and a combination of plaster and painted concrete-block walls with rectangular ceramic-tile wainscoting. The second-floor interior includes the open library room with carpeted floors, plaster walls with historic wood trim, and a full-height acoustic tile ceiling. A central beam and three square columns mark the division between the original rear wing and addition.

### 1954 Gym Addition

One of three additions constructed as a result of the high school expansion, this large, two-story, eleven-bay, rectangular gym addition was appended to the west end of the original elementary school section. A more modern addition, this section has a brick foundation, Flemish variant bond brick walls with a concrete belt course, and a flat membrane roof with a slight parapet and metal coping. The easternmost section of the façade, which features the one-story, three-bay entrance, lines up with the elementary school section but is setback from the gym. The one-story entrance, which abuts the east wall of the gym, has brick walls and a flat membrane roof and is accessed by wide concrete steps connecting to the primary sidewalk. It has three sets of double-leaf wood doors, each with nine lights of upper glazing, and three sets of fourteen-light transom windows. The remainder of this section of the façade features symmetrically-placed twelve-over-twelve, double-hung, wood-sash windows, with concrete sills, situated above and to the east of the one-story vestibule. The remainder of the façade encompasses the gym and includes four, symmetrically placed, two-story tall, multi-light, steel-frame windows at the first-floor level and additional multi-light steel-frame windows below the belt course at the basement level. Five-light, steel-frame windows with concrete sills line the basement-level of the gym's west elevation below the belt course, while the upper wall remains devoid of any openings beyond a vent. A five-bay surface-mounted steel grid separates the window bays along the west wall. The rear elevation of the gym features similar multi-light, steel-frame windows at the second-floor level. The remainder of the rear elevation, including the one-story classroom section, features asymmetrically-placed multi-light, steel windows of varying sizes. Multiple entrances, with double-leaf wood-and-glass doors, provide access to the gym addition along both the west and rear (north) elevations.

On the interior, the gym is connected to the original elementary school building with a continuing corridor at the west end of the original central corridor. The main portion of the

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addition includes a large, two-story-tall, rectangular gym. The smaller section to the east serves as the bridge between the elementary school building and the gym and includes its own primary entrance. Accessed via a one-story vestibule, it opens to a large lobby from which the gym and additional classrooms branch. A staircase was added at the northeast corner of the addition to serve as one of two primary staircases accessing the first and second floors. Additional classrooms are located off a corridor along the rear of the addition, and a smaller two-story staircase wing is located at the southwest corner of the addition.

The vestibule and lobby each have terrazzo floors, plaster walls with faux wood-paneled wainscoting, and dropped acoustical-tile ceilings. Three sets of double-leaf wood doors, with six-light transoms, separate the vestibule and lobby. The corridors and stairwells also have terrazzo flooring, while classrooms have concrete floors where vinyl-asbestos-tiles have been removed and abated. Locker room spaces, as well as the basement, includes concrete floors, while bathrooms have ceramic-tile floors. With the exception of the westernmost stairwells and former locker room spaces, which feature exposed concrete-block walls, walls in corridors and other primarily spaces, as well as classrooms, largely include plaster walls with rectangular ceramic-tile wainscoting. The gym, which is in excellent condition, has pristine wood floors, exposed concrete-block walls with ceramic-tile wainscoting, and an exposed ceiling, as opposed to the finished ceilings in the classrooms and most of the other areas. Interior doors largely include a combination of single-leaf, flush wood door and single-leaf wood doors with upper glazing.

#### 1954 Auditorium and Classroom Addition

Constructed at the same time as the gym addition, this large, two-story, eleven-bay, L-shaped addition has a brick foundation, Flemish variant bond brick walls with a concrete belt course, and a flat membrane roof with a slight parapet and metal coping. Appended to the east end of the original elementary school section, it features the same design elements as the gym addition. Additionally, the layout of the façade, including the one-story vestibule and fenestration pattern, mirrors the façade of the gym addition with one exception: instead of windows at the basement level beneath the auditorium, there is a double-leaf entrance at the far eastern end. The east elevation features numerous asymmetrically placed multi-light steel windows of varying sizes and configurations, while the west elevation is lined with symmetrically placed windows. Similar to the west elevation of the gym, the east elevation of the auditorium features few openings above the basement level, and also has a five-bay surface-mounted steel grid, which separates the basement-level window bays. The rear elevation of the classroom section north of the auditorium has symmetrically placed multi-light steel-frame windows. Multiple entrances, with double-leaf wood-and-glass doors, provide access to the auditorium addition along both the east and rear (north) elevations.

Additionally, a portion of the floor plan largely mirrors that of the gym addition. The main portion of the addition includes a large, two-story, rectangular auditorium. Similar to the gym addition, the smaller section to the west serves as the bridge between the elementary school building and the auditorium. The one-story vestibule also opens to a large lobby from which the auditorium and the rear classroom wing branch. The staircase at the northwest corner serves as



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the second primary staircase accessing the first and second floors. Unique to this addition, the connecting corridor from the elementary school section to the lobby and classroom corridor of this addition is curved and features a raised platform, clad in faux wood paneling, in the lobby. Additional classrooms are located off a long corridor branching off to the north, as well as along the rear side of the auditorium. The section branching to the north also features several recessed locker alcoves. Interior finishes are similar to the gym addition. The vestibule and lobby each have terrazzo floors, plaster walls with faux wood-paneled wainscoting, and dropped acoustical-tile ceilings. Additionally, corridors and stairwells also have terrazzo flooring, while classrooms have concrete floors where vinyl-asbestos-tiles have been removed and abated. Walls in corridors and other primary spaces, as well as classrooms, largely include plaster walls with rectangular ceramic-tile wainscoting. Ceilings are a combination of plaster and full-height acoustical tile. Classrooms largely retain their original historic blackboards with simple wood trim intact. Additionally, the limited number of built-in bookshelves, cabinetry, and closets remain intact in many areas. The auditorium is comprised of the large, open, sloped seating area and the stage at the east end. Two center-side aisles lead from the lobby entrance to the stage. Double-leaf casied openings lead to the offstage wings to the left and right (north and south) of the stage. The auditorium space has a full-height acoustical-tile ceiling and exposed concrete-block walls with a decorative brick band running along the wall above the doors and below the windows. The sloped floor is concrete and all of the seating has been removed. The wooden stage is accessed from the front of the auditorium via wooden steps at each side. The stage walls, as well as the offstage wings, are concrete block.

#### 1957 Classroom Addition

In 1957, a two-story, four-bay classroom addition was added at the north end of the eastern 1954 auditorium and classroom addition. The division between the two sections is seamless, as the new addition matches the rest of the 1954 addition with its brick foundation, Flemish variant bond brick walls, and flat membrane roof with a slight parapet and metal coping. Additionally, the fenestration pattern along the east and west elevations, consisting of multi-light, steel-frame windows, continues. In contrast, the north elevation features a single multi-light steel-frame window and one double-leaf entrance accessed via a concrete stoop and ramp connecting to the rear sidewalk and parking lot.

On the interior, it is connected to the 1954 addition with a continuing corridor at the north end and consists of additional classrooms flanking the central corridor. The same finishes continue throughout the new addition, including terrazzo flooring, a plaster ceiling, and plaster walls with rectangular ceramic-tile wainscoting in the corridor. Additionally, classrooms feature concrete floors (where vinyl-asbestos-tiles have been removed and abated) with plaster walls and ceilings and largely retain their original historic blackboards and simple wood trim. Additionally, the historic built-in bookshelves, cabinetry, and closets remain intact.

#### **B. Industrial Arts Building, c. 1954, Contributing Building**

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This one-story, rectangular, Industrial Arts building is located at the far northeast corner of the site. Constructed in 1954, it consists of two rectangular sections of different roof heights. It has a brick foundation, Flemish variant bond brick walls, and a flat membrane roof with ribbed metal coping. The façade, which is otherwise devoid of openings, features a central double-leaf entry, with hollow-core metal doors with three lights of upper glazing, accessed by a concrete ramp and stoop. The east and west elevations are lined with large, asymmetrically-placed multi-light, steel-frame windows with concrete sills. There are also a few smaller multi-light, steel-frame windows. The rear, or north elevation, includes a large sectional garage door and large multi-light, steel-frame window flanking a single-leaf pedestrian entrance with a hollow-core metal door with three lights of upper glazing and a flat canopy. Another single-leaf entrance, with a hollow-core metal door with a thin vision panel, is located on the west elevation.

On the interior, the front layout consists of classrooms flanking a central corridor. Storage rooms and restrooms separate the front from the rear open workshop space, which includes a small mezzanine level at the south end. Similar to the style of the main building, the corridor has carpet and quarry tile floors and exposed concrete-block walls with rectangular ceramic-tile wainscoting. Classrooms feature a combination of carpet and concrete flooring, exposed concrete-block walls, and plaster ceilings. They largely retain their original historic blackboards and simple wood trim, as well as the historic built-in bookshelves and cabinetry. The restrooms have quarry tile flooring, while the storage rooms have a combination of concrete and carpet flooring, exposed concrete-block walls, and plaster ceilings, as well as some limited trim. Interior doors primarily include single-leaf wood doors with upper glazing. The rear workshop is an open space with concrete floors, exposed concrete-block walls, and an exposed ceiling, as opposed to the finished ceiling found in the classrooms and most of the other areas. The mezzanine level, which is located at the south end of the open workshop, is accessed by a central, open concrete staircase. The east end of the mezzanine has a small enclosed one-room office, while the western portion remains open to the floor below.

### **C. Workshop, ca. 1960, Contributing Building**

The workshop was constructed ca. 1960 and consists of four major sections, including a flat-roofed concrete block section at the south end, a central gable-roofed section, and two flat-roofed sections at the north end, all of which form a long one-story, rectangular building. Overall, the building is in relatively poor condition due to neglect. The southernmost concrete block section is rectangular with a flat roof and ribbed metal coping. A single-leaf wood door, with two lights of upper glazing, serves as the only opening on the façade/west elevation. The five-bay south elevation is lined with one-over-one, wood-sash, double-hung windows with concrete sills. Several are broken and have been boarded up. Additional multi-light aluminum windows are located on the east elevation. The interior is largely open, except for a small enclosure in the northeast corner. Finishes include concrete floors and exposed concrete-block walls.

The central section is a long, rectangular, side-gable section with a lean-to addition at the northeast corner. It has vertical-board walls and a standing-seam metal roof. The façade, or west elevation, has two single-leaf wood doors with two lower panels and three lights of upper

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glazing. On the interior, it is divided into two rooms, each accessed separately by the doors on the façade. The east elevation of the south room, as well as the lean-to of the north room, is lined with multi-light, steel-frame windows. Finishes in the open-plan south room include concrete floors, a combination of parged and exposed concrete-block walls, and a dropped acoustical-tile ceiling. The north room is open with the exception of a small bathroom enclosure at the southeast corner. Doors accessing the two bathroom enclosure stalls are narrow, single-leaf, two-paneled wood doors. Finishes include concrete floors, parged and plywood walls, and a dropped acoustical-tile ceiling.

The last two sections, at the north end of the building, are separate on the interior but appear to be under one unifying flat metal roof. The section immediately adjacent to the north is a low-height, rectangular section with plywood walls and no openings along the facade. Due to inaccessibility, the interior conditions are unknown. The northernmost section of the building is a low-height rectangular section with metal siding and a modern, sectional garage door opening on the façade. Finishes appear to include a concrete floor, a combination of metal and exposed insulated walls, and exposed insulated ceiling; although the interior is largely inaccessible due to a partial roof collapse.

#### **D. Track, ca. 1960, Contributing Site**

The northwest quadrant of the property is taken up by a track which is grass with an asphalt loop. This track appears in photographs dating to as far back as 1960 and is considered a contributing site.

#### **E. Flagpole, ca. 1960, Contributing Object**

Centered in the main entry sidewalk at the front of the school is a metal flagpole with a metal base and metal ball top. The flagpole appears in photographs dating to at least 1960 and is considered a contributing object.

#### **Integrity Analysis**

The architectural integrity of Pulaski High School is strong, with the historic floorplan intact and most interior features and decorative elements retained. The exterior retains all of its historic materials, features, and decorative elements highlighting the Georgian Revival design. In most cases the historic windows have been retained. Additionally, the fenestration pattern is unchanged and all of the window features (sills, opening size, arches) are all intact. Therefore, Pulaski High School retains integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. These facts demonstrate a design, materials and workmanship. Additionally, the integrity of setting and location are seen in the large, elevated open parcel, with the original acreage for athletic fields and the site unchanged since the school's construction. The additions and separate buildings also have strong architectural integrity and tell the story of the development of the only high school to serve the Town of Pulaski for two decades and house the Pulaski Middle School for another twenty-five years. This is a monumental building which dominates the historic neighborhoods

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which surround it. The visual elements, the setting, the historical association and feeling all point to a building which retains the historic integrity to relate the story of such an important resource for the Town of Pulaski. Lastly, the property retains integrity of feeling and association with a mid-twentieth century, evolved, state-funded-and-designed school.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

### Criteria Considerations

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

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

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**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

EDUCATION

ETHNIC HERITAGE: African American

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

**Period of Significance**

1937-1974

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

**Significant Dates**

1954

1960

1974

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

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

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

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

**Architect/Builder**

Bishop, L. W., architect with the office of the state director of school buildings, headed by R. V. Long (1937 Pico Terrace Elementary School)

Smithey & Boynton, Architects and Engineers, Roanoke, VA (1954 and 1957 additions)

Fowler-Jones Construction Company, Winston-Salem, NC, builder (1937 Pico Terrace Elementary School)

J.M. Turner and Co., Roanoke, builder (1954 addition)

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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.)

Pulaski High School is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criterion A in the area of Education. The property represents the development of public, racially segregated education within the Town of Pulaski for several generations, as well as being an excellent example of the school consolidation movement in Virginia during the early-to-mid twentieth century. Additionally, Pulaski High School is eligible under Criterion A in the area of Ethnic Heritage: African American for its role in the history of African American education in Pulaski County, including being the first school in the county to be integrated. Finally, Pulaski High School is also eligible under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as an excellent example of an evolved early-to-mid-twentieth century, large-scale, evolved Georgian Revival building. The school and secondary buildings retain their historic floorplans and most of their interior and exterior decorative elements. The period of significance stretches from the school's initial construction in 1937 as an elementary school, through its expansion into a high school in 1954, and ends in 1974 when its role changed to being Pulaski Middle School. Included in this period is the successful 1960 push by African American families of Pulaski to force the integration of Pulaski High School, the first school in the county to integrate.

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

### **History and development of Pulaski High School**

The Town of Pulaski has its origins in the development of the *Virginia & Tennessee Railroad* in 1854. Much of the current town was formerly part of the land holdings of Robert Martin, Jr. When the railroad line was constructed, a stop was created at Peak's Creek to serve as a water refilling station for the engines. This stop, and the small town which grew up around it, was commonly called "Martin's Tank." In 1870 a post office was built at the stop and the community was then named Martin's Station. The name changed to Pulaski Station in 1884, to Pulaski City in 1886 and to simply Pulaski in 1905. For the first few years the railroad served the local agricultural economy with the industrial economy being limited.<sup>1</sup>

For the next several decades Pulaski became a hub of industrialization, beginning with the Altoona Coal Company in 1877. The Bertha Mineral Company, focusing on zinc, soon followed in 1880. Finally, the Pulaski Iron Company in 1888 and the Dora Furnace in 1890 established Pulaski as a regional leader in iron production. After a few generations, most of the town's heavy industries had run their course by the early twentieth century. The Bertha Zinc Works closed in 1910, followed by the Dora Furnace in 1920 and the Pulaski Iron Company Furnace failed in the

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<sup>1</sup> Conway Howard Smith, *The Land That Is Pulaski County* (Pulaski, Virginia: The Pulaski County Library Board, 1981), 229; 328-31.

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Great Depression.<sup>2</sup> However, while these industries eventually failed, their decades-long dominance of the local economy supported the establishment and substantial growth of the community.

In 1886, "Pulaski City" was officially incorporated but land companies, led by Pulaski Land and Improvement Company, began platting the town focused on Valley Street, above the current downtown which was then considered too marshy for development. The company planned out both residential and commercial development and eventually filled in the marshlands to support further development in what is now downtown. The first town newspaper, *The Pulaski News*, began the same year as the town incorporation. The first bank, Pulaski Loan and Trust Company, opened on Valley Street in 1887; a second bank, Pulaski National Bank, followed in 1889. The Pulaski Opera House was completed in 1890 and the Hotel Pulaski was established in 1891. The Maple Shade Inn was constructed by the Norfolk & Western Railway Company in 1884 and served as a regional attraction for visitors until the mid-twentieth century.<sup>3</sup> In just a few years the town had grown from a small train stop to a community with numerous businesses and hundreds of permanent residents. The town of Pulaski that emerged from this period of strong growth was in many ways recognizable to the developed Town of Pulaski today.

As the early heavy industries faded away, new industries emerged to take their place and continue to provide economic support to the town. The first textile business was Paul Knitting Mills, chartered in 1916; this industry employed predominantly women, which was a first for the town. The Dobson-Miller Corporation opened a hosiery mill in 1927 which operated into the second half of the twentieth century. Additional textile mills opened regularly through the 1920s and 1930s.<sup>4</sup> The Pulaski business community, organized by Mayor E. W. Calfee, raised private funds to purchase a large parcel of land between Third and Fifth Streets which was then given to what became the Coleman-Vaughn Furniture Company in 1923. This was quickly followed by the Pulaski Mirror Company, the Pulaski Furniture Corporation and the Pulaski Veneer Corporation, all by 1926.<sup>5</sup> These companies became the foundation of the new Pulaski economy well into the twentieth century.

As the Town of Pulaski grew and diversified, so did the need for schools. Virginia established its public school system in 1870. By 1880 there were fifty-four public school buildings in Pulaski County, almost entirely wood frame one-to-two room schools, and all segregated. These small schools were located across the county so as to be walkable for local students. As was true throughout the state, the facilities and level of education available always lagged significantly for African American students. Private education was available for the wealthy white students. The

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<sup>2</sup> Smith, *The Land That is Pulaski*, 319-22.

<sup>3</sup> R. Lloyd Mathews, *Pulaski County, Virginia, An Historical & Descriptive Sketch, 1907-2007* (Pulaski, Virginia: The Pulaski County Jamestown 2007 Planning Committee, 2007), 23-34; Smith, *The Land That is Pulaski*, 334-36; 79.

<sup>4</sup> Mathews, *Pulaski County*, 92-94; Smith, *The Land That is Pulaski*, 434-35.

<sup>5</sup> Mathews, *Pulaski County*, 94-95; Smith, *The Land That is Pulaski*, 436-37.



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public school system took over many private schools in the early 1900s and these were used to provide high schools for all white students.<sup>6</sup>

The evolution of Pulaski schools matched that seen in the rest of rural Virginia at the time. One analysis suggests a general evolution of schools from one room (1870-1910), to two-to-three room schools (1880-1910) to the consolidated four-or-more room schools (1900-1940).<sup>7</sup> After 1920 consolidated schools in southwest Virginia often took the form of brick, two-story buildings, rather than the uniformly one-story schools seen previously. These new, consolidated schools might include classrooms flanking central hallways arranged around a central meeting space or auditorium, and would feature popular revival style exterior decorative elements.<sup>8</sup> The initial two-story 1937 Georgian Revival Pico (short for Pulaski Iron Co.) Terrace Elementary School fits well into this category.

The construction of the Pico Elementary School and auditorium was first approved at a special board of supervisors meeting on July 25, 1936. At that time, the school was estimated to cost \$40,000 and would relieve overcrowding in East Pulaski. The school would be paid for half with federal funds, through the Public Works Administration (PWA), and the rest by an increase in the property tax rate. The board also committed to acquire the area of land known as Pico Terrace which would be large enough to accommodate the school and multiple potential future expansions. The cost of the land was \$4,650.<sup>9</sup>

Beginning in June of 1933, the PWA was part of the larger federal effort to rebuild the national economy and reinvigorate employment through the largest individual public works construction program in history to that date. The focus of the PWA was to fund local construction projects in partnership with local governments including states, counties and cities. Typical projects included most anything not typically financed by private business: highways, bridges, dams, waterworks, courthouses, airports, city halls, subways, hospitals and, of course, schools. Even before the Great Depression, there had been a backlog of school construction and the collapse of the economy had resulted in very few new school projects for several years. Between July 1933 and March 1937, the PWA subsidized the funding of 70% of education construction in the United States. By 1939 the PWA had aided the addition of 60,000 classrooms, 4,300 auditoriums, 3,500 gymnasiums, 1,800 libraries, 1,350 shops and 890 cafeterias for roughly 2,500,000 students.<sup>10</sup>

A special session of the Pulaski County school board met on Friday September 25, 1936 to accept the PWA offer to pay for forty-five percent of the construction costs for the new Pico Terrace Elementary School. The PWA funding parameters required an ambitious construction

<sup>6</sup> Smith, *The Land That is Pulaski*, 387-88; Mathews, *Pulaski County*, 215-16.

<sup>7</sup> John Kern, "Thematic Evaluation of County Public School Buildings in Southwest Virginia," *Virginia Department of Historic Resources* (October 2000), 5.

<sup>8</sup> John Kern, "Thematic Evaluation," 7

<sup>9</sup> "Board Rejects Costly County Building Plan," *The Southwest Times*, vol.31, no.132, July 26, 1936, 1, 8; "School Board Funds Settled," *The Southwest Times*, vol.32, no.119, July 11, 1937, 1.

<sup>10</sup> Public Works Administration, *America Builds: The Record of the PWA* (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1939), v, 2, 7-8, 127-28, 132.

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schedule with a contract by November 15<sup>th</sup> 1936, construction started by December 15<sup>th</sup>, substantial progress by March 15, 1937, and completion by November 1, 1937. Once complete the plan for the school was to include fourteen classrooms serving roughly 500 students. The building would be brick construction and feature an auditorium, cafeteria, library and principal's office. A typographical map of the site was completed by county engineer E. H. Millirons for use by the "director of school buildings in Richmond" to design the building to fit the existing terrain. Plans were to be complete within thirty days and returned for county approval.<sup>11</sup> To facilitate the quick turnaround, R. V. Long, state director of school buildings, visited Pulaski to evaluate the school site and construction conditions in advance of completing the plans.<sup>12</sup> The State Board of Education approved a request by Pulaski County for a twenty-year loan from the literary fund to address construction costs not covered by the PWA funds.<sup>13</sup>

The Pico Terrace School project moved forward quickly. The plans were completed by architect L. W. Bishop from the office of the state director of school buildings. Bishop stated that, once complete, the school would be one of the most modern in the state and that the plan was one of the best his office had produced. Construction was set to begin November 23<sup>rd</sup> with completion only a year later. The building was planned with a two-story façade and a one-story rear auditorium. The final building would fit into the contours of the land, include landscaping, terracing and paved driveways around the structure for access. Completion of the school was planned to have a cascading effect on enrollment with seventh and eighth grade students leaving the high school to attend the Jefferson school, and the resulting lower school student overflow moving from Jefferson to the new Pico Terrace School, which would in turn replace the old East Pulaski school. Seven contractors from Virginia and neighboring states submitted bids for the project. Bids were opened on Thursday, November 19<sup>th</sup> at the office of school superintendent Haynes H. Bruce, and a bid of \$78,400 (the highest bid was \$97,750) was accepted for construction of the new Pico Terrace School. The bid was submitted by the Fowler-Jones Construction Company from Winston-Salem, N.C. Fowler-Jones committed to finish construction within three hundred days, with a goal of having the school completed by September 1937 in time for the beginning of the school year.<sup>14</sup>

Construction of the Pico Terrace School came at a time of growth for Pulaski. Recently the historic foundries had been slated for demolition. However, in short order the town saw construction of a silk hosiery mill and a plant focusing on furniture. Housing construction set a record in 1936 and multiple local businesses, hotels and cafes underwent refurbishments. With this economic expansion came additional workers and families moving to the area, adding to the need for the construction of a new school.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>11</sup> "School Board Accepts Offer," *The Southwest Times*, vol.31, no.185, September 25, 1936, 1, 4.

<sup>12</sup> "School Director Expected Tuesday To Plan Building," *The Southwest Times*, vol.31, no.187, September 29, 1936, 1.

<sup>13</sup> "Board Grants Loan Request," *The Southwest Times*, vol.31, no.210, October, 25, 1936, 1.

<sup>14</sup> "Bidders Asked On New School," *The Southwest Times*, vol.31, no.218, November 3, 1936, 1, 6; "Building Bids To Be Opened," *The Southwest Times*, vol.31, no.231, November 18, 1936, 1,2; "Carolina Firm Gets Contract," *The Southwest Times*, vol.31, no.232, November 19, 1936, 1, 6; "Plans Of School Lauded By State Architect's Aide," *The Southwest Times*, vol.32, no.96, June 13, 1937, 1.

<sup>15</sup> "Pulaski Shows Growth Signs," *The Southwest Times, Christmas Shopper Edition*, December 13, 1936, 8.

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In late May it was announced that Lillian Smith, a former grade department member at Pulaski high school, would be the principal at Pico Terrace School. She held a Master of Arts, Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science degrees; she also had a diploma from the Teacher's College at Columbia University in elementary school supervision. Additionally, she was a past president of the Pulaski County education association and the president of the Virginia Education Association of Elementary Teachers. She had experience teaching all elementary school grades.<sup>16</sup>

Given the tight construction schedule and the need to monitor progress, the school board had a construction representative, G. R. Ragan, on site, and there was a resident PWA engineer inspector: F. L. McGiffin. The school was well underway by April of 1937; the site work and foundation were complete, and the brick laying was far along. The veneer of the building was planned to be a traditional Flemish bond with quoins at the corners.<sup>17</sup> However, the final veneer featured a Flemish variant, which was popular with public schools of that period. By the end of July the roof was complete and the front, back and side steps had been installed. The interior plaster work was just beginning, but the goal of completion by the beginning of school was still expected.<sup>18</sup> The following companies were awarded contracts for furnishing the new school: J. H. Pence Co. (Roanoke); Flowers School Equipment Co. (Richmond); Southern Desk Co.; Heywood-Wakefield Co.<sup>19</sup>

By September 2, 1937 it was announced that the new Pico Terrace school would not be completed in time for the start of the new school year. Until its completion, students in grades one through seven would continue to attend some combination of East Pulaski school, Jefferson school, or taking classes at the current high school. Once completed, students who had reached the age of six-and-a-half by September could enroll at Pico Terrace.<sup>20</sup> The semi-final inspection of the school was completed on Tuesday, October 12<sup>th</sup> and the rest of the week was spent installing fixtures and furniture. The final inspection was completed over the weekend, and the Pico Terrace Elementary School opened on Monday, October 17<sup>th</sup>.<sup>21</sup>

The new, fire-proof Pico Terrace School was constructed at a final cost of approximately \$82,000, which was partially funded by a \$36,900 PWA grant. The final finishes included mastic asphalt tile and sand finished plaster walls in the corridors, offices, and library. The restroom floors and walls were finished with red and tan tiles respectively. Classroom floors featured maple boards, and the walls and ceilings were finished plaster. Acoustic tile was used on the auditorium and cafeteria ceilings. The school opened with 450 students and nine teachers. Located on one of the highest points in the town, and visible across the town from the south, the school became an immediate focal point for the community. Pico Terrace Road, which now

<sup>16</sup> "Lillian Smith Heads School," *The Southwest Times*, vol.32, no.81, May 26, 1937, 1.

<sup>17</sup> "Work Progresses On Pico School; Bricks Are Laid," *The Southwest Times*, vol.32, no.40, April 8, 1937, 6.

<sup>18</sup> "Work Progresses," *The Southwest Times*, vol.32, no.133, July 27, 1937, 6.

<sup>19</sup> "Contracts Let For Furniture," *The Southwest Times*, vol.32, no.147, August 27, 1937, 1.

<sup>20</sup> "New Building To Open Late," *The Southwest Times*, vol.32, no.165, September 2, 1937, 1, 5.

<sup>21</sup> "Final Inspection Of School Slated After Furnishing," *The Southwest Times*, vol.32, no.196, October 8, 1937, 1; "Expect Occupancy Of Pico Terrace School Monday," *The Southwest Times*, vol.32, no.201, October, 14, 1937, 1;

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curves below the front of the school to the south, was not constructed by the town until after the school had opened.<sup>22</sup>

After the completion of Pico Terrace Elementary School, the total enrollment in Pulaski County schools was about 5,000 students, with only 500 being African American. There were two large elementary schools at this time: Jefferson, with 1,000 students, and Pico Terrace with 500 students. There were thirty-six elementary schools separate from the large, consolidated all white schools.<sup>23</sup> By the mid-1940s the county was already looking to solve the problem of an increasingly overcrowded student body at several local high schools. At the end of 1945 the county school board voted for “a long range, comprehensive school modernization program for town and county and estimated to cost \$1,250,000” over several years.<sup>24</sup> This program, led by school superintendent Frank J. Critzer, was the genesis of a what would lead to the conversion and significant expansion of the Pico Terrace Elementary School into Pulaski High School almost a decade later.

An editorial supporting the plan laid out the numerous benefits and also summarized the state of Pulaski schools: generally overcrowded and lacking modern features and facilities. The program plan included “two large comprehensive high schools” at Pico Terrace and Dublin. Multiple modern elementary schools would be constructed across the county. Additionally, the plan stated that “present buildings used by the colored children would be renovated and improved.”

However, the Calfee Training School of Pulaski (DHR ID 125-0034, NR listing 3/2/2022) was declared to be “the newest and most modern building in the county.” And overall, the county was stated to be in a strong financial position to take on the ambitious school building program.<sup>25</sup> By 1950, the plan was still moving through approvals and the cost had reached \$2,500,000 for the modernizing of schools county wide. In 1939, the number of school children in Pulaski County was 4,896, by 1950 the total was 6,007, and the total county school enrollment was expected to reach 7,500 by 1957.<sup>26</sup>

The difficult process involved in the construction of the new Calfee Training School in 1939, as opposed to the orderly and non-confrontational process of funding and construction for the Pico Elementary School, was indicative of the dramatic racial disparities in education at the time. The existing Calfee Training School was considered inadequate, both in capacity and functionality, and a new eight-room building was planned as well as a remodeling of the existing school to incorporate an auditorium and additional classroom space. However, on November 11, 1938 the original Calfee Training School was destroyed by a fire. The Pulaski County School Board initially refused to address the huge resulting gap in school facilities and planned to only build the new eight-room school building without any compensation towards the loss of what would

<sup>22</sup> “Pico Terrace School Ready,” *The Southwest Times*, vol.32, no.203, October 17, 1937, 1, 4; “Pico Terrace School Opens,” *The Southwest Times*, vol.32, no.204, October 18, 1937, 1.

<sup>23</sup> “Present School System,” *Pulaski Southwest Times*, August 13, 1939, 5.

<sup>24</sup> “New Town, County Buildings Proposed; Two High Schools Would Serve Entire Section,” *Pulaski Southwest Times*, December 2, 1945, vol.40, no.289, 1.

<sup>25</sup> “A Real Program,” *Pulaski Southwest Times*, December 6, 1945, 4.

<sup>26</sup> “Bond Election Is Absolutely Necessary To Provide Adequate School Facilities,” *Pulaski Southwest Times*, April 23, 1950, 4.

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have been a new auditorium and additional classrooms carved out of the old school facility. It was only after months of letters to the editor and support from the *Southwest Pulaski Times* and several local white religious organizations that the school board relented. The concession offered by the Pulaski School Board was a plan to use the \$5,200 insurance money from the loss of the original Calfee Training School, the old brick from that school, and free labor from the National Youth Administration program to construct an auditorium and two additional classrooms. Unsatisfied with the process and the results, local African American leaders, such as Calfee Training School principal Chauncey Harmon, continued the fight for equalization.<sup>27</sup>

The new Pulaski High School building project finally began to move forward in 1953. In January the town council approved the building permit for an estimated cost of \$800,000. As previously discussed, the new high school would be built around and incorporate the existing 1937 Pico Terrace Elementary school building, while the existing high school would be renovated into the new elementary school. The new school would have twenty-eight classrooms, an auditorium, a gymnasium, and a shop facility constructed as a separate building.<sup>28</sup> Twelve contractors bid on the construction of the new high school, and the winning low bid of \$1,007,000 was awarded to J.M. Turner and Co., of Roanoke.<sup>29</sup> Work began almost immediately after the contract was awarded, with a tight schedule for completion of the new high school. First the entire fourteen-acre site had to be cleared and graded. Then the existing school building was first renovated for one more year of use by the elementary students. While the elementary school was being renovated, the addition for the high school off the back was being constructed as well as footings being laid for the rest of the expansion. The new school was planned for 800-1,200 students and would include football and baseball fields and the most advanced industrial arts shop in the county.<sup>30</sup> By the summer of 1954 the elementary students had let out of the school for the final time and the contractors were racing to make the penalty enforced completion date of September. The transition from the elementary school to a high school resulted in the width of the façade increasing from 148 feet to 501 feet, while the number of classrooms increased from twelve to thirty-one. The new gymnasium could seat 1,000-1,200 while the huge auditorium could accommodate approximately 1,000 people; the auditorium was viewed as filling a need for the entire community, not just for the high school. In addition to a modern library and cafeteria, the school also featured a dedicated band room.<sup>31</sup> This new high school would transform the town and also serve as a dramatic bookend to the ten-year school building and modernization program for the county.

The new Pulaski High School was officially dedicated on April 24, 1955 with a final cost of \$1,158,836.40, including equipment. University of Virginia president, Colgate W. Darden delivered the leading remarks at the dedication ceremony in the new auditorium and then all in

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<sup>27</sup> Alison Blanton and Kate Kronau. "National Register of Historic Places Nomination: Calfee Training School." Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2022, 18-25.

<sup>28</sup> "High School Building Permit Approved at Council Session," *Pulaski Southwest Times*, January 21, 1953, 2.

<sup>29</sup> "Low Bids On New High School, Claremont Addition Accepted Subject To Federal Approval," *Pulaski Southwest Times*, February 22, 1953, vol.47, no.309, 1.

<sup>30</sup> "Construction Of New High School Building Proceeds At Fast Pace," *Pulaski Southwest Times*, Sunday July 26, 1953, 6.

<sup>31</sup> "New Pulaski High School Holds Surprises For Town's Citizens," *Pulaski Southwest Times*, June 27, 1954, 11.

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attendance took an hour-long tour of the new facility. The event was presided over by school superintendent Frank J. Critzer, who was also the leader of the more than decade long school modernization program, which ultimately cost more than \$4,500,000. The Pulaski High School Chorus sang several songs, including "Bless This House."<sup>32</sup> The music department was considered one of the most notable aspects to the new high school. The seven rooms making up the music department included a rehearsal room, three practice areas, an instrument and robe storage area, a library and an office. The storage space was enough for a one-hundred-piece band. The rehearsal room has tiered, elevated steps for better student vision of the conductor. There was also a broadcast room so that performances could be played to the entire school over the intercom system.<sup>33</sup>

However, even before completion school officials realized that the new high school would need to be expanded almost immediately because of growing enrollment. Between 1939 and 1955 the number of Pulaski high school students increased from 378 to 842, and that number was expected to reach 1,200 within four years. This was directly related to the post-World War II baby boom.<sup>34</sup> In May of 1957 the School Board awarded a contract of \$60,721 to Boone Construction Co. of Radford for the addition of six classrooms to the north (rear) side of the existing high school.<sup>35</sup>

When the 1958 school year opened there were more than 7,000 students in the county school system filling twenty schools and being led by 250 teachers. The two high schools (Pulaski and Dublin) were the largest schools in the county, led by Pulaski.<sup>36</sup> By 1959 the overall number of students was about the same; there were three African American elementary schools, but thirteen white elementary schools. And there were two white high schools, but none for African American students. That same year the county declared that there were no building needs for the school system. However, there remained a one-room school still in use, the Rich Hill Negro Elementary School, which hosted all seven grades and one teacher.<sup>37</sup>

For the final years of the equalization period of segregation in Virginia schools, it was the state led Pupil Placement Board which was the gateway for applications for black students to transfer into white schools. The board was established in 1956 by the General Assembly as part of the state's "massive resistance" to desegregation of Virginia's schools. During 1960, eighteen African American students from thirteen Pulaski families successfully navigated an application to the Pupil Placement Board, through multiple appeals and the courts, to gain access to Pulaski High School in the fall of that year. The students were attending the Christiansburg Institute in neighboring Montgomery County which was a long bus ride away, and which they viewed as a

<sup>32</sup> "Darden Speaks Today At PHS Dedication," *Pulaski Southwest Times*, vol.50, no.52, April 24, 1955, 1.

<sup>33</sup> "Seven Rooms Comprise Music Department, Students Have Well Designed Rehearsal Hall," *Pulaski Southwest Times*, April 24, 1955, 28.

<sup>34</sup> "Pulaski High Will Soon Be Outgrown, Added Space May Be Needed In Four Years," *Pulaski Southwest Times*, April 24, 1955, 15.

<sup>35</sup> "Board Lets School Contracts," *Pulaski Southwest Times*, vol.52, no.71, May 15, 1957, 1.

<sup>36</sup> "More Than 7,000 In County Schools," *Pulaski Southwest Times*, August 31, 1958, 10.

<sup>37</sup> "Pulaski County Schools System Boasts Good Teachers, Facilities," *Pulaski Southwest Times*, February 22, 1959, 30; "No Building Needs Cited For 3 Years," *Pulaski Southwest Times*, vol.54, no.244, December 6, 1959, 1.

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significantly inferior facility as compared to Pulaski High School. By 1960 the Pupil Placement Board had placed over 500,000 students in Virginia schools using a completely segregated system.<sup>38</sup>

The first application to transfer from the Christiansburg Institute to Pulaski High School (filed in October of 1959) was rejected by the Pupil Placement Board on January 12<sup>th</sup>, 1960. Reuben E. Lawson, an attorney for the NAACP, filed an appeal in January 19<sup>th</sup>, which was heard on February 4<sup>th</sup> at a public hearing. This was the first appeal of a Board decision as all previous African American applicants had appealed directly to federal courts.<sup>39</sup> Before issuing its ruling, all three members of the Pupil Placement Board resigned in deference of student school placements being made by local government. The resignations were to be effective on March 1<sup>st</sup>, which was the start of Governor J. Lindsay Almond's new "freedom of choice" programs giving the power to place students to local governments. However, the board promised to rule on the Pulaski High School case before March 1<sup>st</sup>.<sup>40</sup> On the last day of February 1960, a day before all members were to have ended their terms, the Virginia Pupil Placement Board released its ruling to deny the appeal by sixteen African American Pulaski students attempting to gain admission to Pulaski High School. After attempting to enter Pulaski High School for much of the year, the primary reason given for the denial was that it was too late in the year for a transfer.<sup>41</sup>

Having been twice rejected by the Virginia Pupil Placement Board, the students attempting to transfer from the Christiansburg Institute to Pulaski High School took the route of several other groups of Virginia African American students, and filed a motion directly with the Federal District Court in Roanoke requesting the desegregation of the high school. The students continued to be represented by NAACP attorney Reuben E. Lawson, and Judge Roby C. Thompson was scheduled to hear the motion on April 5<sup>th</sup>. The defendants in the case were the Virginia Pupil Placement Board as well as the Pulaski County School Board and superintendent of schools, Frank J. Critzer. This was the fourth desegregation lawsuit which had been filed in western Virginia. A suit filed against Floyd County Schools the previous year had resulted in thirteen African American students being admitted to two previously white only schools.<sup>42</sup>

The suit for immediate desegregation of Pulaski High School was denied on April 20, 1960 by Judge Roby C. Thompson. Thompson did acknowledge that the black students of Pulaski County did not have a high school available to them and must travel to Montgomery County to attend Christiansburg Institute.<sup>43</sup> The next day Judge Thompson announced his decision that (now fourteen) students must be admitted to Pulaski High School in September of 1960. The question as to whether the Pulaski schools should be desegregated for all students who attended the

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<sup>38</sup> "Integration Appeal Set Here Feb. 4<sup>th</sup>," *The Southwest Times*, vol.54, no.281, January 20, 1960, 1.

<sup>39</sup> "Integration Appeal Set Here Feb. 4<sup>th</sup>," 1; "Local Hearing On Integration Set Thursday," *The Southwest Times*, vol.54, no.293, February 3, 1960, 1.

<sup>40</sup> "Placement Board Resigns, Will Rule On Pulaski," *The Southwest Times*, vol.55, no.4, February 25, 1960, 5.

<sup>41</sup> Barbara Brookfield, "Official Board Takes Final Step Yesterday," *The Southwest Times*, vol.55, no.8, March 1, 1960, 1, 2.

<sup>42</sup> "Negro Students File For PHS Desegregation," *The Southwest Times*, vol.55, no.29, March 25, 1960, 1, 6.

<sup>43</sup> "Judge To Rule On PHS Case In Roanoke," *The Southwest Times*, vol.55, no.51, April 20, 1960, 1;

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Christiansburg Institute was still under consideration and was ultimately denied for the fall of 1960.<sup>44</sup>

As schools opened in Virginia for the 1960-61 school year there were over one hundred African American students attending schools which had been segregated the year before. Richmond, Roanoke, Pulaski and Fairfax were newly integrated, following six communities (Charlottesville, Norfolk, Front Royal, Alexandria, Arlington, Floyd County) which had previously desegregated at least some of their schools. Participating in this process was the reconstituted Pupil Placement Board.<sup>45</sup> For the fall of 1960 there were approximately 6,720 students attending seventeen different schools in Pulaski County. Thirteen schools remained for white students only, three schools served African American students, and one school, Pulaski High School, was integrated. A majority of black high school students remained at the Christiansburg Institute which Pulaski County operated in conjunction with Montgomery County and the City of Radford. Pulaski High School had 1,244 students, including the fourteen African American students admitted to the newly integrated school.<sup>46</sup>

Newly integrated Pulaski High School continued as the high school for Pulaski until 1974 when newly opened Pulaski County High School replaced both Pulaski High School and Dublin High School. Both closed high schools were reopened the next year as middle schools. The first Pulaski High School graduating class in 1955 had 125 seniors, but this had expanded to 183 by the final graduation in 1974.<sup>47</sup> After converting to a middle school, the former Pulaski High School building remained open until 2020.

### **Criterion A, Educational development and the corresponding development of school construction**

Pulaski High School is locally significant under Criterion A for Education as an excellent example of the development of schools to reflect the changes in education in Virginia during the period of consolidation. The *Thematic Evaluation of County Public School Buildings in Southwest Virginia*, published by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources and authored by John Kern in 2000, offers an excellent analysis of how Criterion A, representing the development of education in the state from 1870-1950, is a good path for National Register eligibility.<sup>48</sup> The Pulaski High School building, with its evolution from a 1930s elementary school to its expansion and transition into the sole community high school in the 1950s, represents the culmination of school consolidation and evolution in Virginia. The school changed and grew in answer to the educational demands and expectations of the community.

<sup>44</sup> "Pulaski Must Admit 14 Negro Students," *The Southwest Times*, vol.55, no.52, April 21, 1960, 1.

<sup>45</sup> Robert Sasser, United Press International, "100 Negro Students Enter White Schools," *The Southwest Times*, vol.55, no.150, August 16, 1960, 1.

<sup>46</sup> Barbara Brookfield, "County Schools Set For 6,800 Students," *The Southwest Times* (Back To School Section), August 21, 1960, 9; "School Enrollment In County Totals 6,720," *The Southwest Times*, vol.55, no.177, September 18, 1960, 1.

<sup>47</sup> Becky Munroe and J.R. Schrader, "Schools' Proud Histories End With Graduation," *The Southwest Times*, Sect.2, June 9, 1974, 11.

<sup>48</sup> John Kern, "Thematic Evaluation," 13.



Pulaski High School  
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### **Criterion A, Ethnic Heritage: African American**

Pulaski High School is locally significant under Criterion A for Ethnic Heritage (African American) because of its strong links to the fights over equalization and integration during the mid-twentieth century in Virginia. Pulaski High School represents the first step in the last fight for the end of segregation in Pulaski County schools. Several decades of “separate but equal” and “equalization” had failed to deliver equal educational opportunities for African Americans in Pulaski County, and Virginia, including no access to a high school at all. As a result, African American students and their families, supported by the NAACP, pursued direct admission to Pulaski High School, first through the state Pupil Placement Board, and finally succeeding through the federal court system. By the fall of 1960 fourteen students had been granted access to Pulaski High School which was the first school in the county to integrate. It would not be until 1966 that Pulaski County Schools were fully integrated.

### **Criterion C: Architecture**

Pulaski High School is locally significant under Criterion C for Architecture as an excellent example of a mid-twentieth-century state-designed school, with strong integrity, which evolved architecturally to meet the needs of the community. The original Pico Elementary School building is an excellent example of Georgian Revival school architecture. The school was designed by Leon Whiting Bishop, one of the primary architects for the Virginia Department of Education from 1925 until at least 1955. Bishop (1899-1965) was a native of Nagasaki, Japan who graduated from Hampden-Sydney College and the Pratt Institute and never worked in private practice.<sup>49</sup> The state director of school buildings at the time was R.V. Long. The builder for the elementary school was Fowler-Jones Construction Company, Winston-Salem, NC.

The two additions, completed in 1954 and 1975 were typical of mid-twentieth century school construction and were designed by Smithey & Boynton, Architects and Engineers located in Roanoke, Virginia. Louis Philippe Smithey (1890- ca 1955) was a leading architect in Roanoke during the first half of the twentieth century and had multiple draftsmen join his firm over several decades. Henry Bradley Boynton (1899-1991) joined Smithey in 1928 and in 1935 the name of the firm was changed to Smithey & Boynton. Boynton attended Virginia Polytechnic Institute and the University of Illinois. He served as a draftsman for Richmond based Carneal & Johnston 1924-28. Architect William Greene Chester served as a design associate with the firm beginning in 1946, and is often credited with much of the firm’s design work during the 1940s and 1950s. Chester was born in Bellingham, Washington in 1902 and attended the University of Washington and Yale University. During this period the firm’s projects were largely institutional and located in southwest Virginia.<sup>50</sup> The builder for the 1954 and 1957 additions was J.M. Turner and Co. in Roanoke, Virginia.

<sup>49</sup> John E. Wells and Robert E. Dalton, *The Virginia Architects 1835-1955, A Biographical Dictionary* (Richmond: New South Architectural Press, 1997), 32.

<sup>50</sup> Wells and Dalton, *The Virginia Architects*, 40, 83, 421-23: The office records of Smithey & Boynton from 1922 to 1955 are located in the Special Collections Department of the Virginia Tech Libraries in Blacksburg, VA.

Pulaski High School  
Name of Property

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Utilizing the context established in *Thematic Evaluation of County Public School Buildings in Southwest Virginia* we see a strong argument for the architectural integrity of Pulaski High School supporting the National Register eligibility: the resource needs to retain “historic integrity of those features necessary to convey its significance.”<sup>51</sup> Kern argues that the integrity of school buildings should be evaluated using the parameters of location, setting, and architectural design, with eligible schools retaining historic setting, access, and grounds. Original massing, floor plans, surface materials, ornamental detailing, and original fenestration are all important when evaluating integrity.<sup>52</sup> Jack Zehmer is referenced as saying that schools which retain “reasonable architectural integrity should be considered eligible for historic designation” because of their prominent roles as community centers.<sup>53</sup> Kern concludes that county consolidated schools constructed between World War I and World War II which “survive today with reasonable integrity should receive strong consideration as valuable resources eligible for nomination.”<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> John Kern, “Thematic Evaluation,” 13.

<sup>52</sup> John Kern, “Thematic Evaluation,” 14.

<sup>53</sup> John Kern, “Thematic Evaluation,” 14.

<sup>54</sup> John Kern, “Thematic Evaluation,” 16.

Pulaski High School  
Name of Property

Pulaski County, VA  
County and State

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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

Blanton, Alison and Katie Kronau. *National Register of Historic Places Nomination: Calfee Training School*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2022.

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Kern, John. "Thematic Evaluation of County Public School Buildings in Southwest Virginia." *Virginia Department of Historic Resources* (October, 2000).

Mathews, R. Lloyd. *Pulaski County, Virginia, An Historical & Descriptive Sketch, 1907-2007*. Pulaski, Virginia: The Pulaski Jamestown 2007 Planning Committee, 2007.

Munroe, Becky and J.R. Schrader. "Schools' Proud Histories End With Graduation." *Southwest Times*, Sect.2, June 9, 1974.

Public Works Administration. *America Buildings: The Record of PWA*. Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, Washington, DC, 1939.

*Pulaski, VA. Sheet 11* (map). Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps. January, 1927 – August, 1948.

Sasser, Robert, United Press International. "100 Negro Students Enter White Schools." *The Southwest Times*, vol.55, no.150, August, 16, 1960.

Smith, Conway Howard. *The Land That Is Pulaski County*. Pulaski, Virginia: The Pulaski County Library Board, 1981.

*The Southwest Times*, various.

Pulaski High School  
Name of Property

Pulaski County, VA  
County and State

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

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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: Pulaski Library; Virginia Department of Historic Resources,  
Richmond, Virginia

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** DHR No. 125-0063

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**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 14.74

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: 37.053197                      Longitude: -80.773869
2. Latitude: 37.053197                      Longitude: -80.7701
3. Latitude: 37.050631                      Longitude: -80.770098
4. Latitude: 37.050628                      Longitude: -80.773863

Pulaski High School  
Name of Property

Pulaski County, VA  
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**Or**

**UTM References**

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927    or    ☐ NAD 1983

1. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
2. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
3. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
4. Zone:	Easting :	Northing:

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

The historic boundary for the Pulaski High School encompasses all of the original school parcel, which is unchanged from its creation in 1937. It includes all of Parcel # 072-51-247A-18 as recorded by Pulaski County, Virginia. The parcel is also defined as Plat Instrument # 202103335. The historic boundary is depicted on the attached Sketch Map.

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

The boundary includes all 14.74 acres of the original school parcel created in 1937 with the address of 500 Pico Terrace. The parcel size and dimensions have remained unchanged to the present.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Marcus Pollard, Victoria Leonard  
organization: Commonwealth Preservation Group  
street & number: 536 W 35<sup>th</sup> Street  
city or town: Norfolk state: Virginia zip code: 23508  
e-mail: \_marcus@commonwealthpreservationgroup.com  
telephone: 757-651-0494  
date: January 2023

---

**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.

Pulaski High School

Name of Property

Pulaski County, VA

County and State

- **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: Pulaski High School

City or Vicinity: Town of Pulaski

County: Pulaski

State: VA

Photographer: Marcus Pollard

Date Photographed: January 2022

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

Photo Number of 22	Description	Camera Direction	Date	Photographer
1	A. Pulaski High School Main Building, façade/south elevation	N	01/2022	Marcus Pollard
2	A. Pulaski High School Main Building, close up of gym addition, west end of facade	NE	01/2022	Marcus Pollard
3	A. Pulaski High School Main Building, east end of facade	NW	01/2022	Marcus Pollard
4	A. Pulaski High School Main Building, northeast corner of auditorium and classroom addition	SW	01/2022	Marcus Pollard

Pulaski High School

Name of Property

Pulaski County, VA

County and State

Photo Number of 22	Description	Camera Direction	Date	Photographer
5	A. Pulaski High School Main Building, rear/north elevation	S	01/2022	Marcus Pollard
6	A. Pulaski High School Main Building, interior, first floor, gym addition, west entrance/vestibule	NW	01/2022	Marcus Pollard
7	A. Pulaski High School Main Building, interior, first floor, gym addition, gym	W	01/2022	Marcus Pollard
8	A. Pulaski High School Main Building, interior, first floor, central/original elementary school section, classroom	SE	01/2022	Marcus Pollard
9	A. Pulaski High School Main Building, interior, first floor, central/original elementary school section and cafeteria addition, cafeteria	NE	01/2022	Marcus Pollard
10	A. Pulaski High School Main Building, interior, first floor, central/original elementary school section, central entrance/vestibule, view toward hallway	N	01/2022	Marcus Pollard
11	A. Pulaski High School Main Building, interior, first floor, auditorium and classroom addition, east entrance, lobby, curved corridor/platform	NW	01/2022	Marcus Pollard
12	A. Pulaski High School Main Building, interior, first floor, auditorium and classroom addition, east entrance, lobby, view towards auditorium	NE	01/2022	Marcus Pollard
13	A. Pulaski High School Main Building, interior, first floor, auditorium and classroom addition, auditorium	E	01/2022	Marcus Pollard
14	A. Pulaski High School Main Building, interior, first floor, auditorium and classroom addition, east/west corridor, east staircase	E	01/2022	Marcus Pollard
15	A. Pulaski High School Main Building, interior, first floor, 1957 classroom addition/annex, classroom	SW	01/2022	Marcus Pollard
16	A. Pulaski High School Main Building, interior, second floor, central/original elementary school section, classroom	NW	01/2022	Marcus Pollard

Pulaski High School

Name of Property

Pulaski County, VA

County and State

Photo Number of 22	Description	Camera Direction	Date	Photographer
17	A. Pulaski High School Main Building, interior, second floor, auditorium and classroom addition, curved corridor	NE	01/2022	Marcus Pollard
18	D. Track, track site at northwest corner of the main building, view north	N	01/2022	Marcus Pollard
19	Site at northwest corner of the main building, view northeast toward outbuildings	NE	01/2022	Marcus Pollard
20	B. Industrial Arts Building, corner of north and west elevations	SE	01/2022	Marcus Pollard
21	B. Industrial Arts Building, interior, first floor, general/open rear shop room	SW	01/2022	Marcus Pollard
22	C. Workshop, corner of south and west elevations	NE	01/2022	Marcus Pollard

**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.



## Legend

 County Boundaries

## TOPOGRAPHIC MAP

Pulaski High School

Town of Pulaski, Pulaski County,  
VA

DHR No. 125-0064



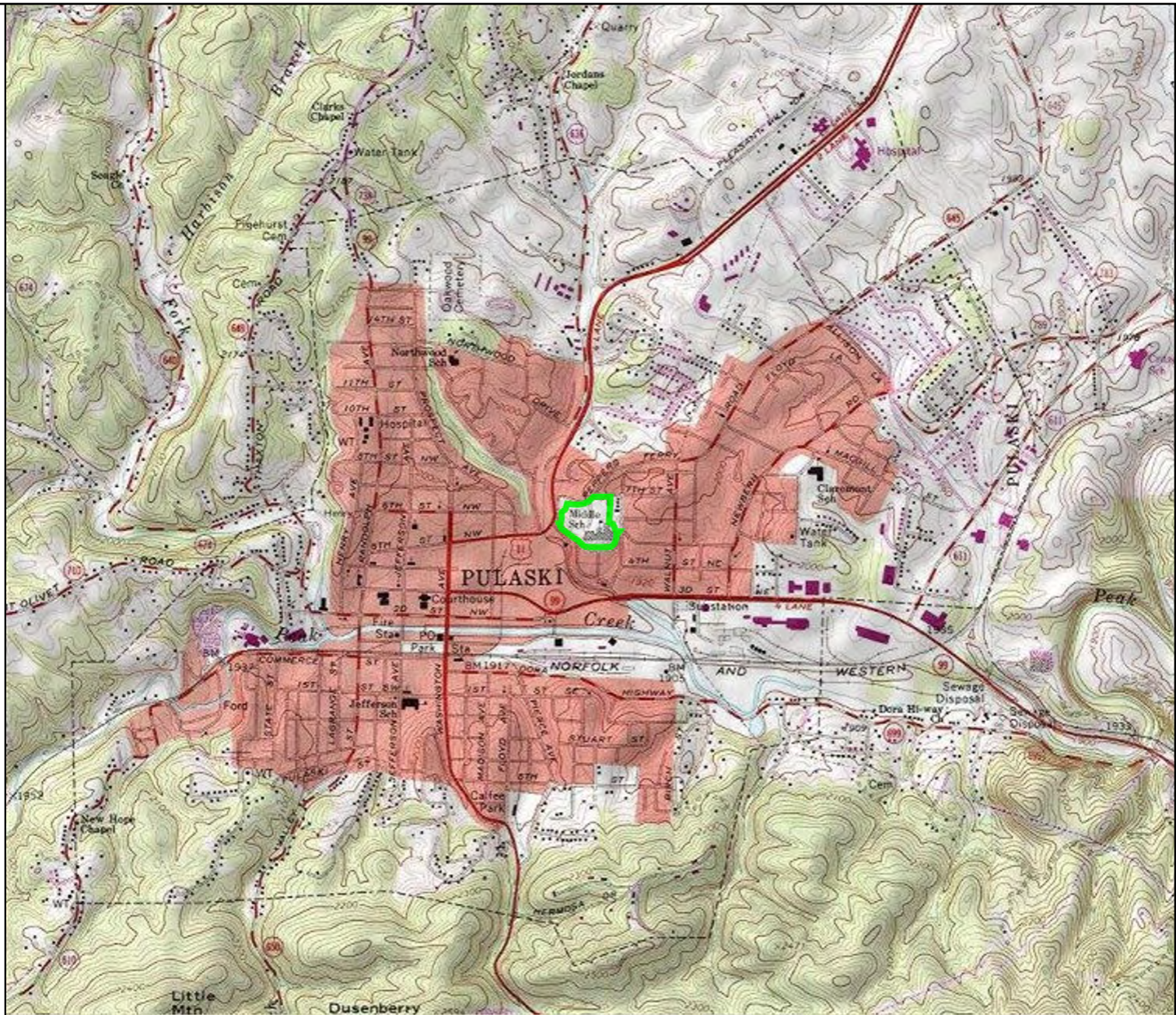
Historic Boundary



Feet

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**Title:**

**Date:** 2/13/2023

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

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





### Legend

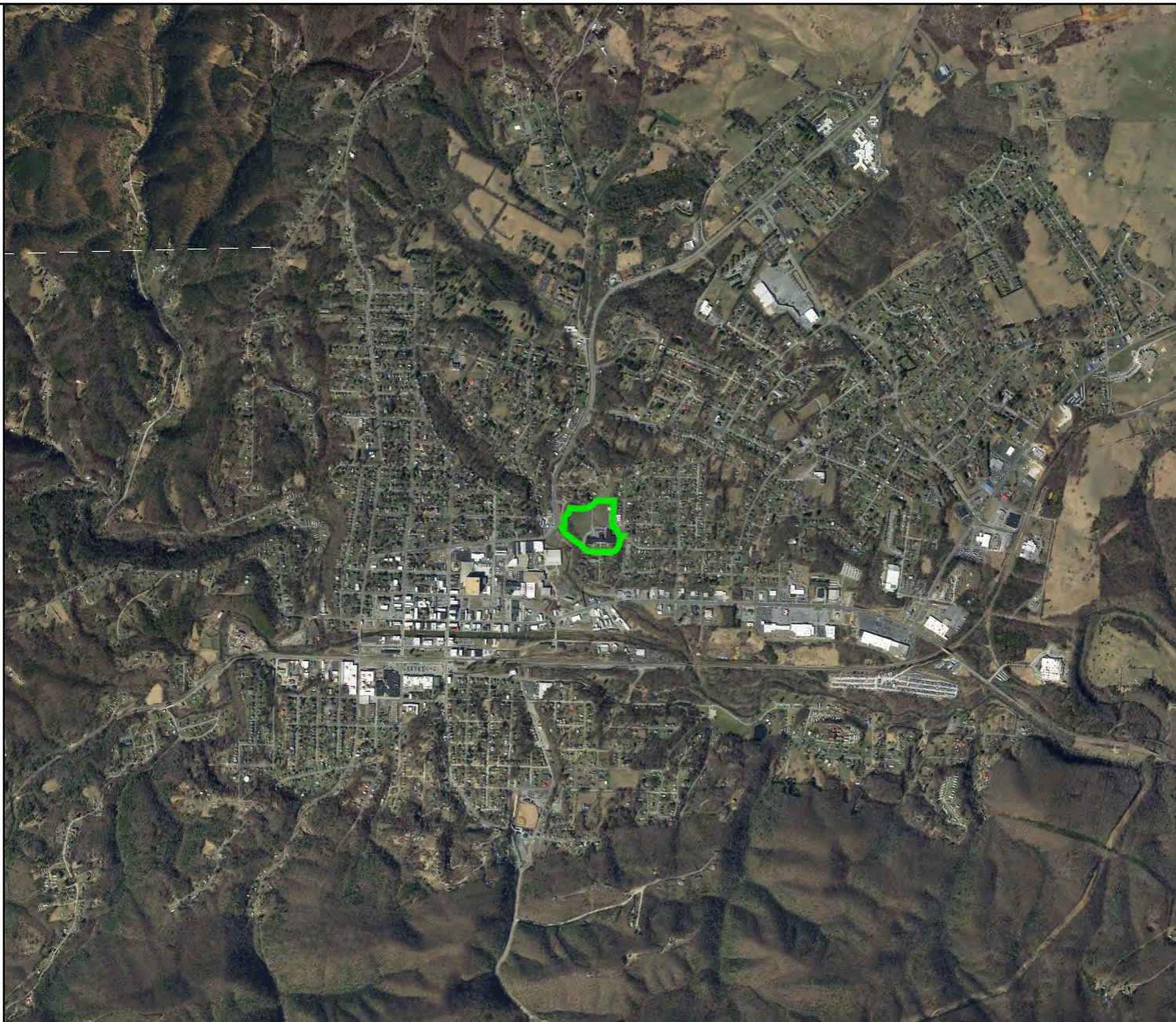
 County Boundaries

### AERIAL VIEW - VICINITY

Pulaski High School

Town of Pulaski, Pulaski County,  
VA

DHR No. 125-0063



Historic Boundary



Feet



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

**Title:**

**Date: 2/13/2023**

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## Legend

County Boundaries

## ROAD MAP

Pulaski High School

Town of Pulaski, Pulaski County,  
VA

DHR No. 125-0063



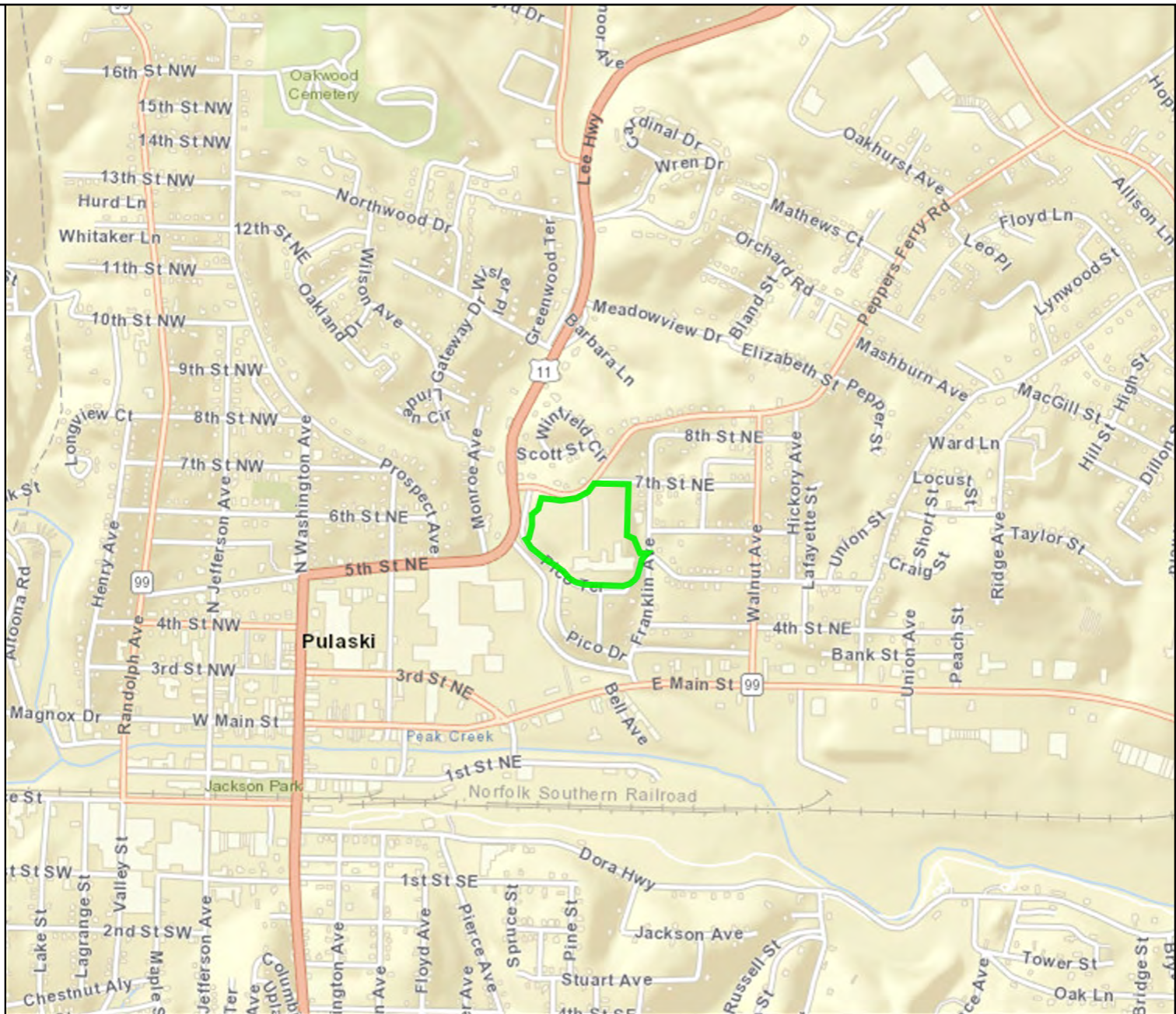
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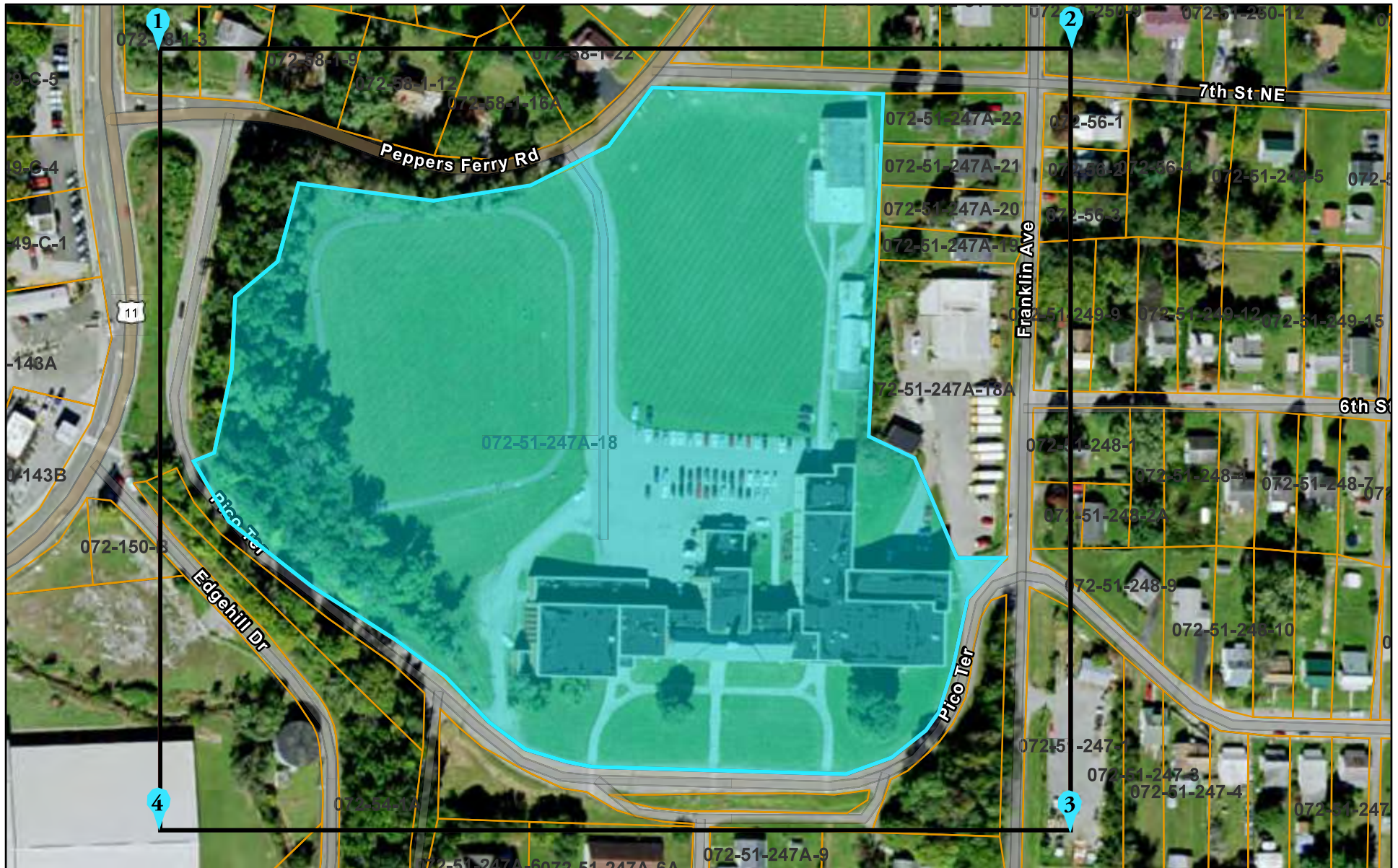
**Date: 2/13/2023**

*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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# Pulaski High School (125-0063) | Location Map

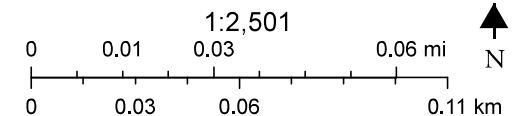


4/11/2022, 1:12:55 PM

- Parcels
- County Boundary
- Property Boundary

**Pulaski High School (125-0063)**  
500 Pico Terrace, Pulaski, VA

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1) Longitude: -80.773869<br>Latitude: 37.053197 | 3) Longitude: -80.770098<br>Latitude: 37.050631 |
| 2) Longitude: -80.7701<br>Latitude: 37.053197   | 4) Longitude: -80.773863<br>Latitude: 37.050628 |



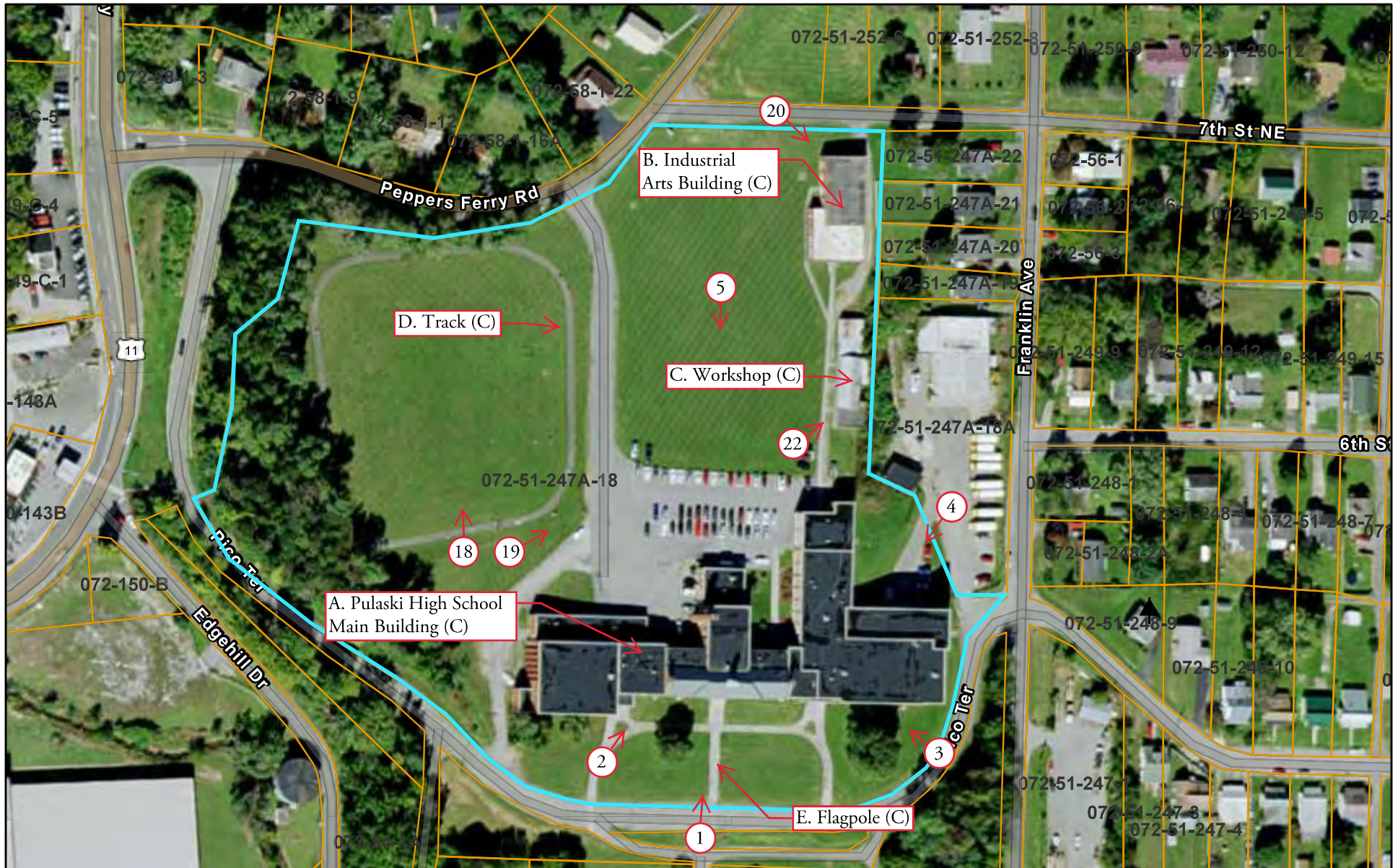
Source: Esri, USDA FSA, Sources: Esri, HERE, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community,

Web AppBuilder for ArcGIS

Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community | Source: Esri, USDA FSA | Esri Community Maps Contributors, VGIN, © OpenStreetMap, Microsoft, Esri, HERE, Garmin,



# Pulaski High School (125-0063) | Sketch Map



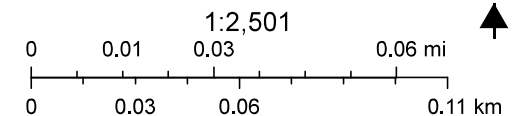
4/11/2022, 1:16:05 PM

Pulaski High School (125-0063) - 500 Pico Terrace, Pulaski, VA

- Parcels
- County Boundary
- Property Boundary

(C) = Contributing Resource

→ = Photo Number and Direction



Source: Esri, USDA FSA, Sources: Esri, HERE, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community,

Web AppBuilder for ArcGIS

Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community | Source: Esri, USDA FSA | Esri Community Maps Contributors, VGIN, © OpenStreetMap, Microsoft, Esri, HERE, Garmin,



## Legend

Architecture Labels

County Boundaries

## 500 Pico Terrace, Pulaski, VA

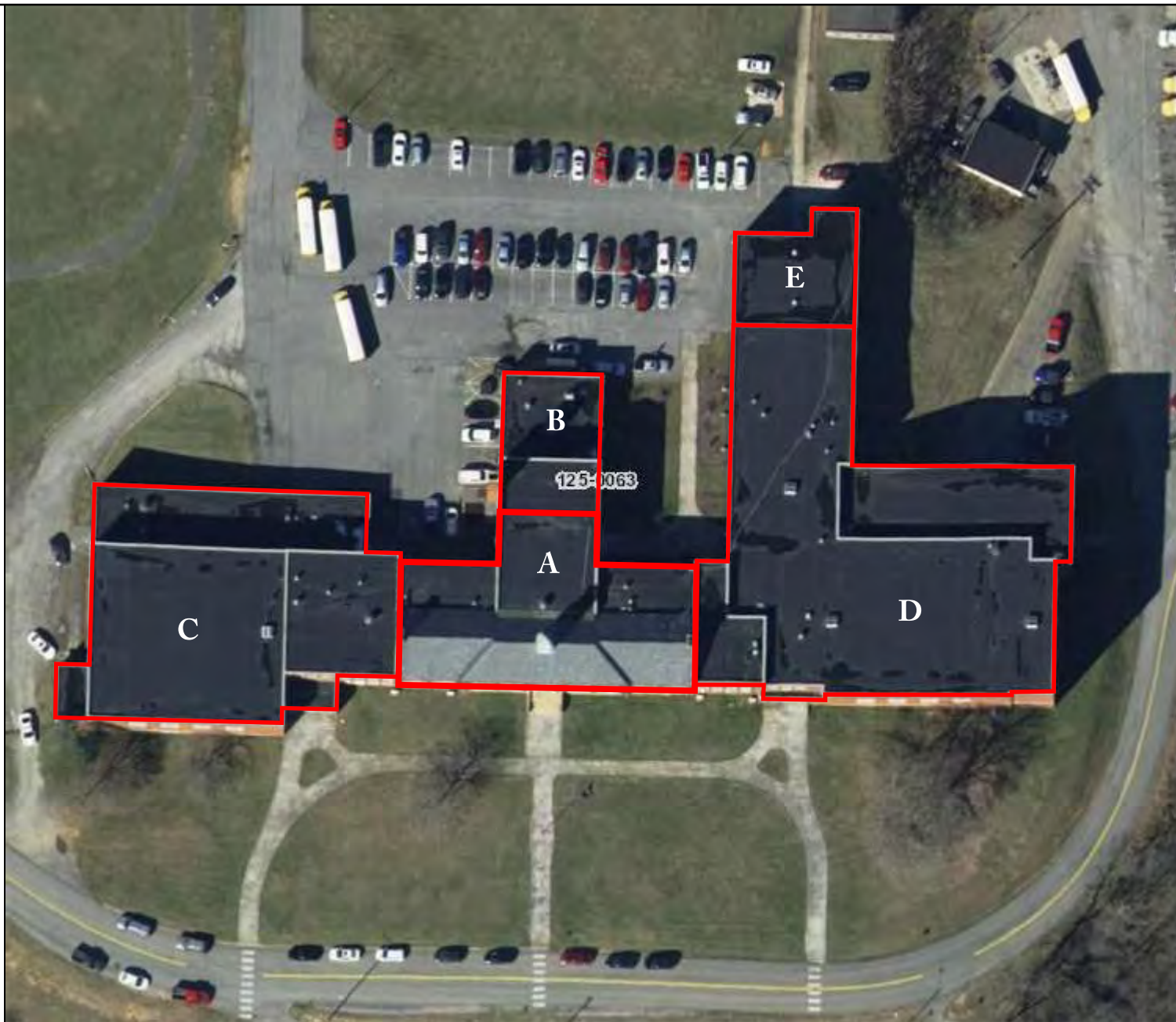
A = 1937 Elementary School

B = 1954 Rear Wing Addition

C = 1954 Gym Addition

D = 1954 Auditorium and  
Classroom Addition

E = 1957 Classroom Addition



Feet

0 20 40 60 80

1:1,122 / 1"=93 Feet

**Title: Development History Map | Pulaski High School (125-0063)**

**Date: 10/3/2022**

*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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