

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 PropertyHistoric name: Parry McCluer High SchoolOther names/site number: Parry McCluer Middle School; DHR ID# 103-5194

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

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

2. LocationStreet & number: 2329 Chestnut AvenueCity or town: Buena Vista State: VA County: Independent CityNot 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 ___ C ___ D
Signature of certifying official/Title:11-17-25
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:) _____

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>1</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>1</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

RECREATION AND CULTURE: sports facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION: school

EDUCATION: education-related

RECREATION AND CULTURE: sports facility

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS: Classical Revival
MODERN MOVEMENT

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: BRICK; WOOD; CONCRETE; METAL

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

Parry McCluer High School, located at 2329 Chestnut Avenue in the City of Buena Vista, Virginia, is a 1923-24 Classical Revival brick building with 1947-48 Classical Revival and 1955 Modernist additions. The east-facing 1923-24 section is the southeast part of the current building, the 1947-48 addition is the northeast part, and the 1955 addition extends the 1947-48 section to the west and wraps partway across the rear west elevation of the 1923-24 section. The one- and two-story building has a parapet flat roof except over the 1923-24 auditorium where the roof is hipped. The 1923-24 section is of load-bearing 4:1 common-bond brick construction and features a Doric portico, decorative brickwork, and original steel-framed windows. The 1947-48 addition added a library with a corner entry in a classical surround and round-arched windows. The 1955 addition has a blocky, planar, Modernist appearance and a gymnasium. The 1947-48 and 1955 additions are 5:1 common-bond brick veneer over concrete block. The building stands at the elevated east side of the approximately 5.5-acre rectangular school grounds (the nominated area), the remainder of which is occupied by an athletic field known as the Louis V. Schreiner Field. The athletic field is surrounded by a concrete block wall built in 1939.

The property is defined on the east side by Chestnut Avenue, on the west by Magnolia Avenue, on the south by 23rd Street, and on the north by 24th Street. Large and small trees, mostly

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deciduous, stand in the narrow lawn area between the school and Chestnut Avenue and a few trees also stand between the school and 23rd and 24th Streets. Concrete walkways connect various school entrances with surrounding sidewalks. A low revetment of dark stone lines the sidewalk on the south side of the school. Adjacent city blocks are largely residential in character, occupied mostly by houses dating from ca. 1900 to the mid-twentieth century. Magnolia Avenue, which serves as downtown Buena Vista's principal commercial street, is more mixed in character, with houses, a church, and commercial buildings near the school property. The historic Hotel Buena Vista, the main building of Southern Virginia University, is visible to the north. The property stands at between 800 and 850 feet above sea level. Surface water drains to the Maury River, a tributary of the James River, a few blocks to the west. The Blue Ridge Mountains rise above the school and the rest of Buena Vista to the east.

Narrative Description

Inventory

1. Parry McCluer High School. 1923-24, 1947-48, 1955. Contributing building.
2. Louis V. Schreiner Field. 1910s; 1939. Contributing site.
3. Concrete block wall. 1939. Contributing structure.

School Exterior

Many of Parry McCluer's architectural features are visible on its 1923-24 Classical Revival front or east elevation, which has a symmetrical tripartite composition dominated by a Doric portico consisting of eight round masonry columns. The columns, which have entasis and smooth shafts, support a relatively plain entablature, above which is a stepped brick parapet. The parapet is ornamented with brick lozenge accents and a narrow center panel bordered with stretcher-bond bricks that frames the name Parry McCluer School in projecting serif letters. The panel has square concrete or cast-stone blocks at the corners. The portico projects slightly relative to the rest of the façade and the section of wall inside it is recessed. The main entry at the center of the recessed wall has four door leaves with windows in their upper halves under tall transoms. Over the transoms are brick lozenge accents and a cruciform center ornament. A modern concrete and metal wheelchair ramp connects the front walkway to the leftmost door. The portico has a matchboard ceiling from which hangs a light fixture of coach lamp appearance.

The portico projects from the center section of the façade which itself projects. Flanking the projecting section of façade are two slightly setback wings, each with a secondary entry. Each entry has double-leaf doors with translucent glass panels in their upper halves and tall transoms similar to those over the portico entries. The secondary entries are framed by Doric columns like those of the main portico but smaller, with hip roofs above. The north secondary entry opens flush with ground level but the south secondary entry has concrete steps and cheeks. The parapet steps up over the entries and has several pierlike projections along its length, for example at the outer corners and where the center section of the façade and the wings meet. The parapet is

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ornamented with brick lozenge accents like those over the portico. The building's floor level is elevated above ground level, and this is most apparent in the wings which have tall concrete foundations capped by soldier brick courses. On top of these soldier courses the brickwork steps in. The façade is articulated by brick wall piers with concrete or cast-stone caps that visually support a cornice below the parapet. At the building's southeast corner is a marble cornerstone inscribed Class [of] 1920 on its south face and Buena Vista High School 1908-1923 on its east face. Soldier brick courses also run under the cornices near the top of the walls.

The building's south elevation has wall piers, soldier brick courses with inward stepping brickwork above and/or below, a cornice, and a parapet with pierlike projections and brick lozenge accents. The presence of a basement story makes the elevation two stories on this side, a treatment that continues to the west or rear elevation and to two large lightwells between the outer rear wings and the center auditorium projection. In one of these lightwells stands a modern picnic shelter with wooden structure and a metal-sheathed gable roof. It is to the rear that the 1923-24 section's auditorium is most visible. The auditorium walls consist of brick wall piers that are thick at the first-floor level and thinner above. The spaces between the piers were originally occupied by large windows framed with brickwork on the first story. White-painted material (probably wood siding) with clerestory windows infilled above. Currently, the spaces between the piers are infilled with a modern stucco-like material with sets of small windows at the top of the first story and decorative lozenge motifs above. The hipped auditorium roof is sheathed with large shingles that form a diapered pattern. A tall square brick boiler stack rises near the auditorium's southwest corner.

The salient feature of the 1947-48 Classical Revival addition is the library at its northwest corner. The library has an angled corner entry consisting of double-leaf doors with glass panes in their upper halves below a round-arched fanlight with radial muntins. The fanlight glass is clear except for the semicircular center pane which is translucent. The fanlight arch is defined by soldier bricks with a cast-stone keystone and soldier-brick imposts. All this is framed by Doric pilasters that visually support an entablature and pediment with horizontal and raking dentil moldings. In front of the entry is a concrete landing with steps and a wheelchair ramp.

To left and right of the library entry are three-bay sections of wall that project from the rest of the addition. The bays consist of double nine-over-nine wood-sash windows under fanlights similar to that over the entry. The cast-stone fanlight keystones touch a cornice which is an extension of the entry pediment cornice and which continues across the setback elevations of the addition to tie into (on the east elevation) the 1923-24 section cornice. Above the cornice is a flat brick parapet with a few brick lozenge accents. The setback elevations have metal-framed windows like those of the 1923-24 section (the library extends partway into these setback areas). Soldier-brick courses cap the concrete foundation and run under the cornice (except not under the cornice above the window fanlights). The north elevation has a basement story that creates a two-story height.

The two-story 1955 Modernist addition extends from the west end of the 1947-48 addition and covers part of the rear of the 1923-24 section. The classroom wings of the 1955 addition are

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similar in appearance to those of the 1947-48 addition, though the 1955 addition dispenses with the soldier courses and, true to its Modernist character, has no ornamentation in its parapets. The addition's dominant feature is the gymnasium, which has a blocky two-story form with wall piers on the west elevation; the words Parry McCluer in sans-serif letters at the top of the north side, near the gymnasium's public entrance; and large windows on the north and south sides.

One-story wings project from the gymnasium on its north, west, and south sides. Entries near the gymnasium's southwest and northeast corners are sheltered by flat-roofed porches with single pole supports at their corners. A similar but longer porch formerly extended across the south wing. A similar porch at the south end of the 1955 addition connects to a covered concrete stair which rises to the rear of the auditorium. Bubble skylights are mounted on the roof of the north wing (the west wing also has skylights but they are not visible at close quarters). Several entries are contained in simple rectangular recesses. The addition's steel-framed windows have more of a stack-pane appearance than the windows in earlier sections.

School Interior

The interior spaces of the 1923-24 section are arranged around an H-plan network of corridors. A north-south corridor, the crossbar of the H, connects the north and south rear classroom ranges to a lobby inside the main entrance. The lobby, which provides a gathering area in front of the doors to the auditorium, has steps and a wheelchair lift. The two stems of the H connect the secondary entries on the front of the building to the rear classroom wings. The corridors have vertical beaded tongue-and-groove wainscots and doorways with simple surrounds, mostly stack-panel doors, and transoms. The classrooms have storage/coat closets with stack-panel doors. The auditorium, which is the most modernized space in the building, has a stage with a proscenium arch framed by outward-stepping flat moldings that create the appearance of fluting.

The interior spaces of the 1947-48 addition are arranged around an L-shaped corridor which connects to the 1923-24 corridor. The corridor has a high wainscot of slightly variegated buff-colored glazed tile block. The tile block is rounded at corners. Above the tile block is painted concrete block. The floor tiles are white- and red-flecked brown with a black border. Lockers are present in some corridors. Classroom doorways have transoms and their doors have windows above single panels. Some of the classroom storage closets have glass fronts.

At the turn of the L-shaped corridor is the inside entrance to the library, with double-leaf doors and double transoms. The library's exterior entrance has a small vestibule with (on the inside side) double-leaf doors with double transoms. The high library ceiling has its original acoustic tiles and pendant Moderne fluorescent light fixtures. Across from the library's inside entrance is a round-arched water fountain alcove with a concrete-block keystone and concrete-block voussiors. Down the corridor is a square-headed water fountain alcove (the water fountains in these two alcoves are missing). Mounted on the wall near the library entrance is a bronze plaque titled "1948 Addition/Parry McCluer High School" and listing school board members, the superintendent, the architect, and the contractor.

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The corridors of the 1955 addition are similar in character to those of the 1947-48 addition, with glazed tile block wainscots and painted concrete block above, though the classroom doorways do not have transoms. Some have doors with windows above single panels; at least one has double-leaf birch plywood doors with flush panels (one per leaf) defined by dark grooves. The addition has two stairs with metal railings. Floor finishes vary: wood in the gymnasium, concrete in the woodshop, and a modern rubberized finish in the lower-level corridors. The gymnasium is spanned by large steel roof trusses. The woodshop roof structure consists of webbed steel girders which support what looks like aluminum decking. A row of rectangular skylights runs down the ceiling. Other details of the 1955 addition interior include a manhole fabricated by the Dabney Foundry Machine Works in Lynchburg; boxed radiators (as opposed to the exposed vane radiators in earlier parts of the building); and retractable bleachers in the gym.

Schreiner Field

The middle and west parts of the property are occupied by the Louis V. Schreiner Field, which rises slightly near the school building at the east end but is otherwise almost flat. The field is defined on the south, west, and north sides by a concrete-block wall set on a poured concrete foundation and capped by poured concrete coping blocks with a gabled section to shed water. The wall, which retains the eight-foot height described in an account of its construction in 1939, has several openings with wire mesh gates. The wall steps in response to level changes on the outer sidewalk/street side. Black-painted laser-cut steel plaques with the field's name are mounted on the wall at the northwest and southwest corners and a Parry McCluer Middle School sign with changeable lettering is mounted at the northwest corner. The sign has the blue and white school colors and features the Yosemite Sam-based "Fighting Blues" school mascot (the middle school and high school have the same colors and mascot).

The field has several secondary features. In the northwest corner is a baseball backstop with a low brick and concrete wall that supports a slender steel superstructure which has lost its wire mesh. Near the middle of the west wall is a concrete-block shed with a poured concrete pad foundation, a low-pitched shed roof, and a mostly open north side with wire mesh doors. Extending between the shed and the backstop are remnants of a batting cage with overhead wires supported by the shed at the south end and wood poles at the north end. In the southeast corner of the field, near the south end of the school, is an asphalt parking lot on which stands a modern prefabricated metal shed.

Integrity Statement

Parry McCluer High School (former) possesses high overall integrity. The building retains principal character-defining exterior features from its original 1923-24 construction and 1947-48 and 1955 additions such as a Doric portico, decorative brickwork, classically ornamented secondary entrances, round-arched library windows and corner entry, and original steel-framed windows. The interior retains its historic-period plan; plaster, beaded tongue-and-groove, glazed tile block, and painted concrete-block wall finishes; tile flooring in the 1947-48 and 1955 additions; auditorium and gymnasium spaces; and classroom features such as transom entries,

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storage/coat closets; and (in some spaces) original fluorescent light fixtures. Relatively minor post-historic-period alterations include the closing of the auditorium windows, carpeting in some spaces, and drop ceilings. The property's only other enumerated resource, the contributing Louis V. Schreiner Field, retains its open character, 1939 concrete-block wall, and historic-period backstop, though it has lost its dugouts and 1939 grandstand. The property's contributing resources therefore possess overall integrity of design, workmanship, and materials. The property's residential setting is virtually unchanged from the character it achieved during the period of significance. The property conveys a sense of the period of time during which it developed, contributing to integrity of feeling, and it possesses integrity of association in that it is directly linked to the historical developments that formed it.

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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

Period of Significance

1924-1975

Significant Dates

1924

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Long, Raymond V. (architect)

Hinnant, Clarence Henry (architect)

Charles W. Barger and Son (builder)

W. L. English Construction Company (builder)

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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.)

Parry McCluer High School served as the principal public school for the White high school and grade school students of Buena Vista, Virginia, beginning in 1924, and for African American students as well following integration in the mid-1960s. The 1923-24 Classical Revival brick building features a Doric portico, decorative brickwork, and original steel-framed windows. The library with its round-arched corner entry and windows was added in 1947-48 and a Modernist gymnasium and classroom/industrial arts wings were added in 1955. The school library also served as the Buena Vista Public Library from 1948 to ca. 1971. The athletic field behind the school, known as the Louis V. Schreiner Field, is enclosed by a high concrete-block wall constructed by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in 1939. The high school program moved out of the school building in 2001, but the building remains in use as the Parry McCluer Middle School and school board offices. Parry McCluer High School is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of Education as the principal public school for the City of Buena Vista during much of the historic period of the city's existence and secondarily as the home of the Buena Vista Public Library for much of the period. The period of significance extends from the school's opening in 1924 until the end of the historic period in 1975 and embraces desegregation in the mid-1960s.

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

Historic Overview and Education Area of Significance Context

Buena Vista is representative of the many boom towns that developed in western Virginia during the late nineteenth century. A "prospectus for the city of Buena Vista" was drafted in December 1888, followed by the laying out of the town beside the Maury River in eastern Rockbridge County in February 1889. In February 1890 the president of the city's development company reported: "Buildings are rapidly going up, two churches are finished, and a large number of dwellings and stores being constructed. The population is increasing rapidly, and the small village of fifty inhabitants of twelve months ago has grown to a town of over 1,000 people." Buena Vista incorporated as a city in 1892.¹

Public schooling at Buena Vista's location predates the 1889-90 boom. In 1885 a German Baptist Brethren (Dunkard) congregation built a log church in Green Forest, a preexisting village

¹ Pezzoni, "Buena Vista Downtown Historic District," 26-28. A number of individuals contributed to the preparation of this report, foremost among them Dr. Tony Francis, Superintendent of Buena Vista City Schools, and Tom Roberts, Director of Buena Vista Planning, Zoning & Community Development. Assistance was also provided by Buena Vista City Schools facilities manager Jimmy Mason and Michael Pulice and Austin Walker with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources. The report makes extensive use of the work of Buena Vista historian Francis W. Lynn,

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which was absorbed into Buena Vista in 1889. The whitewashed log building was used for worship by other congregations as well and doubled as a public schoolhouse with T. Frank Amole as its principal/teacher and Amelia Waesche as a second teacher. In November 1889 a one-story, two-room, frame schoolhouse opened near where the gymnasium wing of the current school was later constructed (a second story was later added to the building). In May 1890 the town council voted \$5,000 for the construction of a two-story, four-room, brick school next to the frame school. Completed in October 1890, the brick school was an austere building with a low-pitched hip roof and banks of tall, square-headed, classroom windows. The 1889-90 buildings served the community's white school population; African American students attended a school constructed in 1891 and later a 1914 brick school enlarged in 1926. The 1914/1926 school survives and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.²

In September 1890 local educator John Parry McCluer (1849-1924) was elected principal of the white school and in 1892 he was appointed city school superintendent, a post he held until his death. The high school program was added to the school in 1908, according to the building's cornerstone. By the 1910s a new facility for the city's white students was deemed essential. Bond referendums in 1921 and 1922 secured funding and Raymond V. Long, working in his capacity as architect for the state Board of Education, submitted plans in March 1923. A "picture of the building," presumably an architect's rendering, was displayed in a downtown shopwindow. Parry McCluer is similar to other Virginia public schools designed for white students during the period. For example, the Southwest Virginia town of Pulaski's Jefferson School, built in 1924, shares with Parry McCluer a symmetrical tripartite composition with an eight-column Doric portico flanked by small two-column Doric porticos for secondary entrances, and a parapet with stepped sections and brick lozenge accents. Minor differences include the material of the accents (concrete or cast stone instead of brick) and the continuous character of the parapet coping (the Parry McCluer parapet coping breaks at each step). Jefferson School, like Parry McCluer, was designed by Raymond V. Long. Long also designed the former Lexington High School, a Classical Revival brick building built in 1927 but torn down in recent years.³

On March 23, 1923, the *Buena Vista News* reported:

[The new school] will be made entirely of brick and the construction 246 feet in length and 128 feet in width. The building will be only one story in height, with twenty class rooms, with an auditorium that will have a seating capacity of seven hundred . . . There

² Lynn, *Buena Vista: The Bud Not Yet Blossomed*, 21-24; Lynn, "Fessier" McCluer, 16; Lynn, "Buena Vista Colored School," 4; Sanborn maps. The four lots on which the 1889 and 1890 school buildings were constructed were sold to the Town of Buena Vista by the Buena Vista Company on July 1, 1891, a date that suggests a prior arrangement for use of the property by the Town (Buena Vista Deed Book 1, p. 109).

³ Lynn, *Buena Vista: The Bud Not Yet Blossomed*, 22-23; Lynn, "Fessier" McCluer, 28, 30-31; Pezzoni, *Architecture of Historic Rockbridge*, 121; *Southwest Times*, April 18, 1924. Public schools for Virginia's African American population were often designed in accordance with plans disseminated by the Rosenwald Fund. Jefferson School's similarity to Parry McCluer was brought to the author's attention by Mike Pulice.

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will be several rooms in the basement which will be left vacant and which will in the future be fitted up for vocational training and domestic science. The old frame building which is now in use will be torn down and the brick building now in use will be completely renovated and will continue in use. All of these rooms as well as the new building will be steam heated.

The cornerstone of what was provisionally known as “Parry McCluer High School”—though originally the building housed lower grades as well as a high school program—was placed on July 4, 1923, accompanied by a parade and festivities that included speeches, band music, a baseball game, a bicycle race, and a “greasy pig race.” The Parent-Teacher Association and Welfare League provided refreshments.⁴

Photographs in the collections of the Buena Vista school board show the building under construction. The exterior shell was mostly completed before the end of October. Students moved into the building in January 1924. Historian Francis Lynn, a Parry McCluer alumnus, writes about the students’ delight in their new modern quarters: “There was going to be *indoor* plumbing! That meant water fountains and no more everyone drinking from a common bucket from a common dipper! And most of all, it meant no more bundling up to run outside to ‘be excused!’” Students assisted with tree planting and landscaping in March 1924. A negative aspect of the school’s opening year was the realization that the building cost more than planned. Students were charged a \$20 yearly tuition to pay off the building, a measure that remained in place until 1930. A ca. 1928 community profile reported a “teaching and official force” of seventeen, a high school student body of 160, and a primary grades student body of 640.⁵

In 1899 the City purchased four lots between the 1889 and 1890 school buildings and Chestnut Avenue, presumably for recreation use in the near term and physical plant expansion in the long term. This is likely an early indication of outdoor sports activity. Additional lots were purchased in 1916, 1917, and 1920, creating more space for recreation. A baseball field existed on the school grounds in 1922, the year an athletic association was formed to improve sporting facilities. In 1923 the association had committees for baseball, basketball (boys and girls), track, tennis, playgrounds, and cheering. The first boys basketball game, an away game against Glasgow High School, was November 1923 (Parry McCluer won). In 1939 the Buena Vista city council “agreed to borrow \$3,500 . . . for the erection of a concrete block fence around the Parry McCluer Athletic grounds.” According to a period report: “The wall will be of concrete blocks, to be manufactured by WPA [Works Progress Administration] labor here in the city, and will be eight feet high and extend entirely around the athletic field, joining the rear of the school building on each side.” In May 1940 the *Lexington Gazette* reported city council approval for the “installation of lights at the new grandstand on the athletic grounds.” In 1952 the *Buena Vista News* reported that the grandstand was built in 1939. The grandstand, which no longer survives, stood against the west wall of the athletic grounds. Period photos show it to have been of simple frame construction with a shed roof. It faced eastward, ideal for spectators viewing afternoon or

⁴ Lynn, “Fesser” McCluer, 31-36; *Buena Vista News*, March 23, 1923.

⁵ Lynn, “Fesser” McCluer, 41-42, 46. Spotswood, “Buena Vista’s [Key] to Industrial Possibilities,” 12.

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evening games. A dugout stood against the north wall ca. 1940; another presumably stood somewhere near the west wall. The high school's football team received its current name, the Fighting Blues, in 1945.⁶

An addition to the 1923-24 building was contemplated as early as 1939, but World War II intervened and it was not until March 1947 that construction began on a new library and classroom wing. The wing was completed in January 1948. The corridors were described as having asphalt tile floors, glazed tile brick wainscots, painted cinder block walls above the wainscots, and plaster ceilings. The library's floor was asphalt tile and its ceiling was described as "acoustically treated" (it retains its original acoustic tiles) and "well lighted with the latest fluorescent fixtures." The library also served as the Buena Vista Public Library from its opening in 1948 until the library moved to its current quarters in the Buena Vista Company Building ca. 1971. The public was "cordially invited to use the school library and all of its facilities" in January 1948. The invitation was repeated in 1961 when local residents "were permitted use of these facilities during the winter months and the school makes this service available to the public during the summer months as well." The 1947-48 addition was designed by Lynchburg architect Clarence Henry Hinnant and built by Charles W. Barger and Son general contractors of Lynchburg.⁷

A December 1952 newspaper report described plans for another addition to include ten classrooms, a gymnasium with boys' and girls' showers and locker rooms, two laboratories, a home economics department, a commercial department where typing, shorthand, and bookkeeping would be taught, an all-purpose/lunch room, and a clinic. The authorities chose C. H. Hinnant and Son as the architect, and the firm produced a Modernist design with planar brick veneer walls, flat-roofed blocky massing, and ribbon windows. As built in 1955, the addition differed somewhat from the 1952 design but it preserved the original Modernist character. On September 1, 1955, the *Buena Vista News* ran an aerial photo of the completed addition, which was built by the W. L. English Construction Company of Rocky Mount for \$500,000.⁸

When Parry McCluer High School opened in 1924 and for decades after the Buena Vista school system was segregated. A new elementary school for African American students—Park Avenue Elementary School—opened in 1957, and though it represented an improvement over the 1914/1926 Buena Vista Colored School it did not include a high school curriculum. High school-aged African American students were sent to Lylburn Downing High School in Lexington. But

⁶ Buena Vista Deed Book 4, p. 506, Deed Book 14, pp. 26, 31 and 118; and Deed Book 19, p. 334; Lynn, "Fesser" McCluer, 52-53, A25; *Buena Vista News*, August 18, 1939, and March 20, 1952; *Lexington Gazette*, May 17, 1940; Lynn, *Buena Vista: The Bud Not Yet Blossomed*, 54, 56-58. The 1939 wall was also referred to in period sources as the Athletic Field Fence (Lynn, *Great Depression Visits Buena Vista*, 18).

⁷ *Rockbridge County News*, January 15, 1948; *Lexington Gazette*, June 14, 1961; Peters and Coat, "Old Courthouse," sections 9 and 8 page 1. A bronze plaque in the 1947-48 addition identifies the architect as Hinnant & Wickline.

⁸ *Buena Vista News*, December 4 and 11, 1952, and September 1, 1955; *Rockbridge County News*, December 11, 1952.

Parry McCluer High School

Name of Property

City of Buena Vista, VA

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in 1954 the US Supreme Court *Brown v. Board of Education* decision set the stage for desegregation in Buena Vista and nationwide. According to historian Charles Bodie, Buena Vista was at the forefront of desegregation in the Rockbridge County area:

In 1960 [the Buena Vista school board] adopted a plan drawn up by F. L. Kling Jr., the division superintendent. He called for integration of two grades each year, beginning in 1962-1963. Believing that the state's Pupil Placement Board was not in compliance with the Civil Rights Act, the school board the next year passed a resolution removing itself from that agency. Henceforth, the schools of the city were open to all pupils of Buena Vista. As a result, the city closed its all-black Park Avenue School. By 1965, all fifty-six of the city's African American students attended formerly all-white schools.

A September 1963 school assignment notice suggests the initial phase of Kling's plan may have been delayed somewhat, as it implies African American students in grades one through seven continued to attend Park Avenue Elementary School. This was despite the opening of the city's new Enderly Heights Elementary School in 1963, which moved white elementary school students to the new facility. The 1966 Parry McCluer High School *Parrimac* yearbook shows African American students in the classes of 1968, 1969 and 1970, indicating integration had occurred by the end of the 1965-66 school year.⁹

In 2001 the high school program was moved to the current Parry McCluer High School located at 100 Bradford Drive in Buena Vista. The 1923-24 building then became known as the Parry McCluer Middle School. Buena Vista school board offices also occupy the building. The athletic field has been named Louis V. Schreiner Field after former Parry McCluer coach and director of athletics Louis V. "Nubby" Schreiner. Under Schreiner's leadership the Fighting Blues baseball team experienced an unbroken winning streak in the early 1950s credited to "the usual Schreiner success formula—good pitching backed by strong hitting."¹⁰

⁹ Bodie, *Remarkable Rockbridge*, 312, 314, 316; Lynn, *Buena Vista: The Bud Not Yet Blossomed*, 26; Lynn, "Buena Vista Colored School," 9; *Buena Vista News*, August 22, 1963; *Parrimac* (1966), 32, 34-38. The 1963 Enderly Heights Elementary School remains in operation. Buena Vista's other current elementary school, F. W. Kling, Jr. Elementary School, opened in 1976 (Lynn, *Buena Vista: The Bud Not Yet Blossomed*, 27).

¹⁰ *Rockbridge County News*, March 23, 1939, May 26 and June 12, 1952, and December 2, 1954.

Parry McCluer High School
Name of Property

City of Buena Vista, VA
County and State

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

Bodie, Charles A. *Remarkable Rockbridge: The Story of Rockbridge County, Virginia*.
Lexington, Va.: Rockbridge Historical Society, 2011.

Buena Vista deed records. Buena Vista City Hall, Buena Vista, Va.

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News-Gazette, 1992.

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News-Gazette (Lexington, Va.).

Parrimac (Buena Vista, Va.).

Parry McCluer High School yearbooks (various names until 1946 when *The Parrimac*
was adopted).

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(<https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3884b.pm009530/>).

Peters, Margaret T., and Richard C. Coates. "Old Courthouse." National Register of Historic
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Pezzoni, J. Daniel. "Buena Vista Downtown Historic District." National Register of Historic
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Parry McCluer High School
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 . *The Architecture of Historic Rockbridge*. Lexington, Va.: Historic Lexington Foundation, 2015.

Rockbridge County News (Lexington, Va.).

Sanborn maps of Buena Vista, 1894, 1921.

Spectrum Design. "Program Report: Parry McCluer Middle School." 2008.

Spotswood, Dandridge. "Buena Vista's [Key] to Industrial Possibilities." Report, ca. 1928.

Southwest Times (Pulaski, Va.).

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

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:

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

Name of repository: Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, Va.

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): DHR ID# 103-5194

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property approximately 5.5 acres

Parry McCluer High School
Name of Property

City of Buena Vista, VA
County and State

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: N/A

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 37.736915 Longitude: -79.351694

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

The nominated area corresponds to modern Buena Vista Geographic Information System (GIS) Parcel No. 2329. The parcel was created from City of Buena Vista Block 39 Section 5, Block 42 Section 5, and the vacated section of Forest Avenue between the two blocks.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The nominated area corresponds to the Parry McCluer High School property during the period of significance.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: J. Daniel Pezzoni
organization: Landmark Preservation Associates
street & number: 6 Houston Street
city or town: Lexington state: Virginia zip code: 24450
e-mail: gilespezzoni@rockbridge.net
telephone: (540) 464-5315
date: May 14, 2025

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.)

Parry McCluer High School

Name of Property

City of Buena Vista, VA

County and State

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: Parry McCluer High School (former)

City or Vicinity: Buena Vista County: N/A State: Virginia

Photographer: J. Daniel Pezzoni Date Photographed: January 2025

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

1 of 17

Portico, east (front) elevation of 1924 building, view looking southwest.

2 of 17

Northeast corner of school showing 1947-48 and 1955 additions, view looking southwest.

3 of 17

Northeast corner of school showing library entrance, view looking southwest.

4 of 17

South side of 1924 building with 1939 wall to the left and stone revetment in the right foreground, view looking northwest.

5 of 17

West (rear) elevation, view looking north.

6 of 17

Wall at corner of Magnolia Avenue and 23rd Street with west (rear) elevation, view looking northeast.

7 of 17

Wall at corner of Magnolia Avenue and 23rd Street, view looking northeast.

8 of 17

Louis V. Schreiner Field with its south and west walls, view looking west.

Parry McCluer High School

Name of Property

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9 of 17

Louis V. Schreiner Field backstop, view looking northwest.

10 of 17

Lobby.

11 of 17

Corridor with library entrance.

12 of 17

Library.

13 of 17

Typical classroom interior.

14 of 17

Auditorium.

15 of 17

Gymnasium.

16 of 17

Wood shop.

17 of 17

Typical stairwell.

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.

LOCATION MAP

Parry McCluer High School
City of Buena Vista, VA
DHR ID# 103-5194

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates
37.736915, -79.351694

 Nominated Boundary

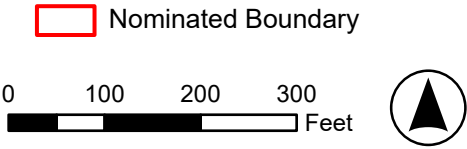
0 100 200 300
 Feet

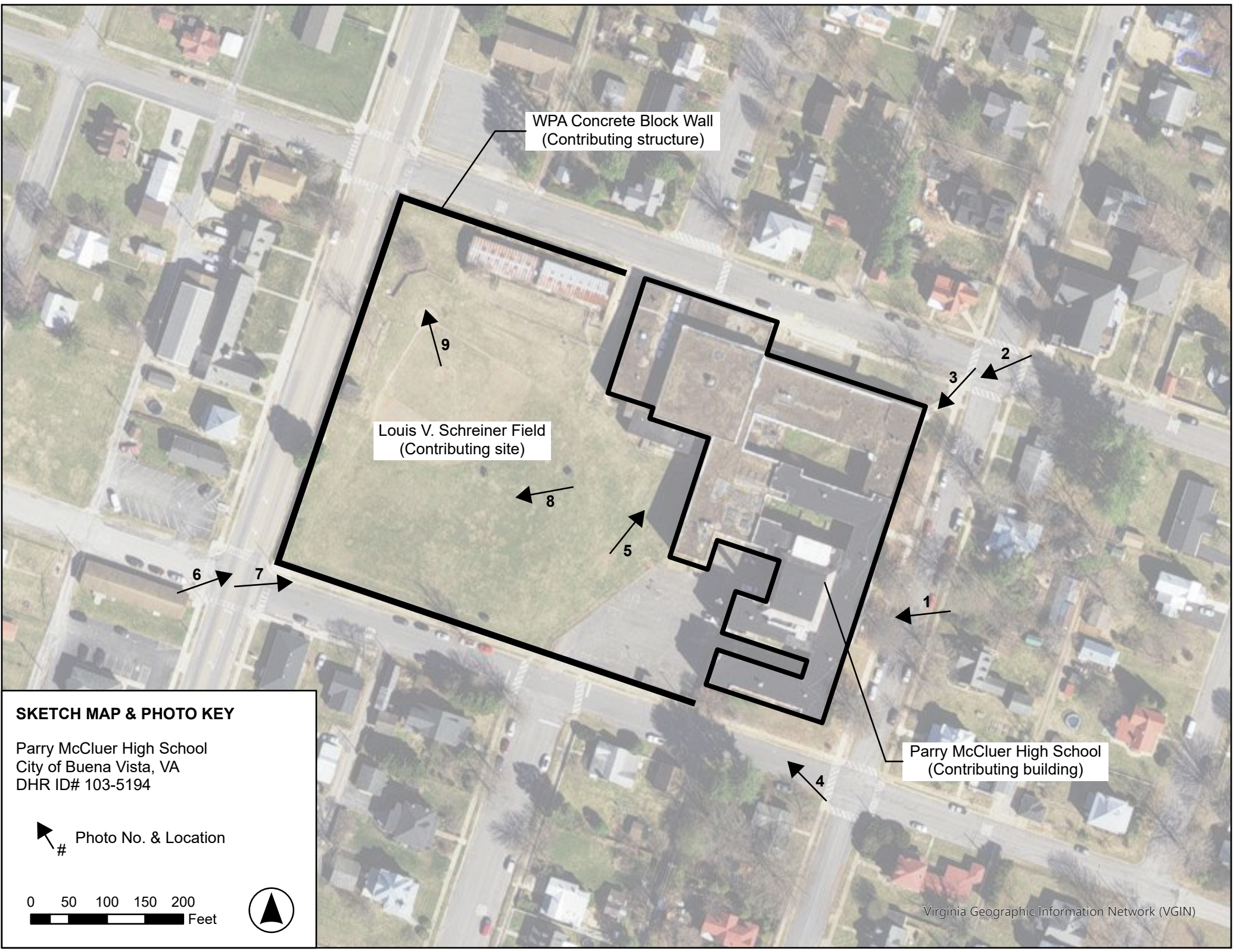


LOCATION MAP

Parry McCluer High School
City of Buena Vista, VA
DHR ID# 103-5194

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates
37.736915, -79.351694





WPA Concrete Block Wall
(Contributing structure)

Louis V. Schreiner Field
(Contributing site)

Parry McCluer High School
(Contributing building)

SKETCH MAP & PHOTO KEY

Parry McCluer High School
City of Buena Vista, VA
DHR ID# 103-5194

➤ # Photo No. & Location

0 50 100 150 200
Feet

