

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION FILE
Tennessee State Historic Preservation Office

Listing Name: Chester County Training School/Vincent High School
Address: 524 Luray Avenue
City: Henderson
County: Chester
Associated MPS: N/A

Listing Date: March 9, 2026
Reference Number: SG100012788



Rebecca Schmitt

From: NPS WASO NRHE NR Info <nr_info@nps.gov>
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WEEKLY LIST OF ACTIONS TAKEN ON PROPERTIES: 3/9/2026 THROUGH 3/13/2026

KEY: State, County, Property Name, Address/Boundary, City, Vicinity, Reference Number, NHL, Action, Date, Multiple Name

ILLINOIS, IROQUOIS COUNTY,
Watseka Downtown Historic District,
Roughly bound by First, Oak, Walnut, Fifth, and Union Pacific Railroad,
Watseka, RS100012297,
LISTED, 3/12/2026

OHIO, FRANKLIN COUNTY,
Railroad Employees Building & Loan Company,
60 East Broad Street,
Columbus, SG100012803,
LISTED, 3/12/2026

OKLAHOMA, TULSA COUNTY,
Garden Park Historic District,
2126 E. 59th Street,
Tulsa, RS100012563,
LISTED, 3/12/2026

TENNESSEE, CHESTER COUNTY,
Chester County Training School/Vincent High School,
524 Luray Avenue,
Henderson, SG100012788,
LISTED, 3/9/2026

TENNESSEE, DAVIDSON COUNTY,
Club Baron,
2614 Jefferson Street,

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 Chester County Training School/Vincent High School
Other names/site number N/A
Name of related multiple property listing N/A
(Remove "N/A" if property is part of a multiple property listing and add name)

2. Location

Street & Number: 524 Luray Avenue
City or town: Henderson State: TN County: Chester
Not For Publication: N/A Vicinity: N/A Zip: 38340

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,
I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

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

national statewide local

Applicable National Register Criteria: A B C D



January 20, 2026

Signature of certifying official/Title:

Date

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Tennessee Historical Commission

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 of 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

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
3	1	buildings
0	0	sites
0	1	structures
0	0	objects
3	2	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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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

RECREATION AND CULTURE/Sports Facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Modern Movement

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Brick; Concrete; Metal; Asphalt

Narrative Description

The Chester County Training School/Vincent High School is located in a residential area near the eastern city limits of Henderson (population 6,308) in Chester County, Tennessee.¹ The school sits on ten acres of land, within one of the city’s historically African American neighborhoods, historically referred to as the Lucyville Community.² The nominated building was built in 1949-1950 to replace an earlier school building that burned. The modern building is one-story with a complex footprint, flat roof, metal multilight windows, and metal doors. The prominently placed gymnasium rises above the rest of the school, adding to the building’s overall asymmetrical appearance. In 1963, a wing housing a cafeteria/kitchen, five classrooms, and two restrooms was added to the south elevation of the building. The building continues to be used by the local school system as an alternative school and general storage. There are two additional contributing resources and two non-contributing resources. The property retains its overall integrity.

¹ 2020 Decennial Census, Henderson, Tennessee, data.census.gov, <https://data.census.gov/all?=Henderson%city,%20Tennessee>.

² Chester County Board of Education Minutes, Book 1949, Jan. 27, page 1, Chester County Board of Education, Henderson, Tennessee.

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Site and Setting

The Chester County Training School/Vincent High School retains its integrity of location and setting. The school is located at its original location, near the eastern edge of Henderson's city limits. The area around the school is a historically African American residential neighborhood originally known as Lucyville. Located nearby are two African American churches, both of which are less than a mile east and west of the school. The North Henderson Church of Christ is located on 567 Luray Avenue and J. P. Baptist Church on 420 East Fourth Street.

The Chester County Training School/Vincent High School's façade is located on the west elevation of the building, facing an intersection of Luray Avenue and Beechwood Street. In front (west) of the building is a half-circle, paved driveway, added ca. 1979. North of the building is an asphalt parking lot, added ca. 1979.³ Bordering the property on the south is East Fourth Street, a residential street with single-family homes. To the north is Trice Street which intersects Luray Avenue at the property's northwest corner. Both are residential streets with single-family homes. Agricultural fields are located to the south of East Fourth Street, as they were historically.

A lighted, fenced-in soccer field and fieldhouse were added to the property in 2011 and are located to the north and east of the school (both are non-contributing). Two contributing buildings are also located to the northeast of the school, as they were historically. To the school's east is land that was formerly part of the school's parcel and rented for agricultural purposes to financially support the school. The school's parcel was subdivided in 1975, and the eastern half of approximately twenty-five acres of land was given to a new owner. The land has recently been redeveloped and is excluded from the nominated property.

CHESTER COUNTY TRAINING SCHOOL/VINCENT HIGH SCHOOL, (CONTRIBUTING BUILDING) 1950, 1963:

Exterior Summary

The school is a one-story, asymmetrical, complex-shaped building on a concrete slab foundation. The building is constructed of concrete block covered by a brick veneer and capped by a flat built-up, composition roof. Unless otherwise noted, doors are metal, and windows are horizontally oriented multilight metal with some panes removed to facilitate ductwork for an HVAC system added in 2009.⁴ Windows are typically grouped, though the amount in each group varies. Since the building lacks ornamentation, the fenestration pattern comprises a major character-defining feature. All windows have concrete sills.

The building has a complex shape. To assist with description, it has been broken into sections (see Figure 1). The original 1950 building comprises the Central Hallway, Gymnasium, and North Wing. The Gymnasium's height extends beyond the rest of the building. The 1963 addition comprises the Cafeteria/Kitchen and the South Wing containing five classrooms and restrooms.

³ Chester County Board of Education Minutes, Book 1979, page 250.

⁴ Chester county Board of Education Minutes, Book 2002, January 7, 2002, page 250.

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Figure 1: Aerial View of School with Notations indicating the Sections that comprise the 1950 Chester County Training School and the 1963 Addition.

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Façade (West Elevation)

The west façade is asymmetrical, composed of four distinct sections: the North Wing; Gymnasium; Central Hall containing the original main entrance; and the 1963 Cafeteria/South Wing with another entrance. The North Wing, Central Hall, and Cafeteria/South Wing are primarily characterized by the fenestration pattern of bands of multilight metal windows (Photos 1-6).

The original main entrance (Central Hall Section) is filled with a double door, each with a panel and two lights. Glass blocks surround the entrance and are set within a slight recession. A non-historic flat aluminum canopy, supported by aluminum posts, shelters the entrance (Photo 4, 14).

In 1963, the school was enlarged by means of an addition on the south elevation. The west façade entryway to the addition consists of a recessed double metal door with single lights. The door is surrounded by large sidelights and transom. Another entrance door is located nearby on the north elevation of the cafeteria. It contains a double metal door with single lights. The door is topped by a large single-light transom (Photo 3, 17).

Perhaps the most prominent section of the façade is the Gymnasium, which rises higher than the rest of the school building. The gymnasium's brick cladding was painted in 2023. The gymnasium projects approximately thirty feet from the rest of the west elevation and contains an entrance. The entrance has new, metal double doors surrounded by concrete block infill. The door replaced three single-doors with transoms ca. 2024. The doors are flush with the rest of the gymnasium's west wall, but it is surrounded by a prominent surround that extends approximately 2.5 feet from the wall, creating a small, recessed space. Low planters flank the entrance. On the south end is a small plaque installed to mark the school's 1950 dedication. On the north and south elevations of the gymnasium, the multilight windows have been infilled with concrete blocks ca. 2023 (Photos 1, 5-6).

North elevation

The north elevation is primarily covered with brick and has an entryway to the North Wing. The entryway consists of two metal doors with small single lights. A non-historic aluminum canopy, supported by aluminum posts, shelters the doorway (Photo 7).

East Elevation

The east elevation is considered the rear elevation and faces a soccer field. The elevation is almost entirely covered by windows and HVAC equipment. A brick chimney rises from the north end of the Central Hall section, which corresponds to the school's Boiler room. An entryway with double metal doors is located on the east elevation of the South Wing (Photos 8-9).

South elevation

The south elevation is comprised of the 1963 addition, which contains the South Wing classrooms and Cafeteria/Kitchen. The majority of the elevation is covered by windows. A recessed entrance with metal double doors with single lights provide exterior access into the kitchen. The kitchen section projects slightly beyond the rest of the South Wing (Photo 10).

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Interior

The interior has a complex footprint (see Floor Plans). All walls are painted concrete block, and ceilings are acoustic panels with grid lights, unless otherwise noted. Except for the gymnasium, all floors are covered with vinyl tile. Doors are metal; those that enter into classrooms have a single light while others typically do not have any windows.

The original main entrance opens into the Central Hallway, which extends to the north and south with classrooms, restrooms, and offices on both sides (Photos 14-16). Classrooms/Offices in this section generally have historic or replaced tile floors. The classrooms have wood fire escape staircases, which were added ca. 1984 when the classrooms housed Headstart classes.⁵ (Photos 22-25) A boiler room is located at the north end of the Central Hallway. The level of that room is lower than the rest of the building, necessitating access via a short concrete staircase. The room primarily contains mechanical equipment and has a concrete floor.

At the south end of the Central Hallway are double doors that access the 1963 addition, which houses the Cafeteria/Kitchen and the South Wing. The South Wing comprises a hallway with classrooms on either side (Photo 20). The classrooms in the South Wing generally have historic tile floors. They also have storage alcoves formed by a concrete block wall at one end of the classroom where children stored their coats and personal belongings on hooks and shelves (Photo 21). The Restrooms have partially tiled walls and decorative tiled floors. The Cafeteria is a large open room with tile floors that appear to be historic (Photo 18). The kitchen has plasterboard ceiling, fluorescent tube lighting, and historic tile floors. At the east end of the Kitchen are small storage closets, office, and restroom (Photo 19).

The north end of the Central Hallway accesses the North Wing and Gymnasium. The North Wing's hallway has a historic tile floor (Photo 26), but the classrooms have all been renovated with new tile floors. Walls dividing classrooms have also been removed, but partitions generally maintain the same sense of space (Photos 27-28).

The gymnasium is accessed via double metal doors. The gymnasium contains a basketball court and stage area. The gymnasium retains its original wood ceiling. Below the ceiling are metal roof trusses with their length running north-south. Two basketball goals with glass backboards hang from the trusses. The gymnasium contains its original wood flooring (Photo 29-31).

The east wall of the gymnasium contains a rectangular opening to the stage. The stage floor retains its original tongue-and-groove hardwood. The stage is accessed via small wood staircases at either end of the stage (Photo 30-31).

In the gymnasium's west wall is a wood door that accesses a storage room. Adjacent to the north is an opening that leads to a foyer. The south wall of the foyer contains a paneled, single light door that accesses the aforementioned storage room. The west wall contains exterior double doors, which are surrounded by concrete block infill. The north wall of the foyer has a two-paneled door leading to a second storage area. The gymnasium formerly had large multilight windows on the north and south walls, but they were blocked-in with concrete blocks in 2023.

⁵ Chester County Board of Education Minutes, Book 1984, April 15, 1984.

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AGRICULTURE/SHOP BUILDING (CONTRIBUTING BUILDING) 1954:

An Agriculture/Shop building was constructed in 1954 to the northeast of the school building. The one-story building housed classes in agriculture, auto shop, metal shop, and wood shop. The building is concrete block with a painted brick veneer and vertical metal sheeting in the gable field. On the north elevation are brick privacy walls at two of the three metal entrance doors. The south elevation has three single-light windows and a metal entrance door. The interior of the classroom and office area has vinyl flooring, concrete block walls, and steel doors with small glass windows. The ceiling is tiled with fluorescent lighting. The shop area of the building has concrete block walls, concrete flooring with tiled ceiling and fluorescent lighting. The shop area has a large steel garage door, opening onto the east elevation. It is a contributing building due to its age and because it contributed to the property's importance during its period of significance (Photo 11)

PREFABRICATED BUILDING (CONTRIBUTING BUILDING) 1966:

A prefabricated one-story building is located northeast of the school building, next to the Agriculture/Shop Building. It was added in 1966 and was used as a classroom for special needs students. It has a low-pitched metal gable roof. It is a painted steel building with two metal windows on each side and a metal entrance door. The interior walls are drywall, and the floor is laminate. It has fluorescent lighting. It is a contributing building due to its age and because it contributed to the property's importance during its period of significance (Photo 11).

STORAGE SHED (NON-CONTRIBUTING BUILDING) 2011:

A storage shed is located northeast of the school building. The one-story storage shed was placed on the site in 2011 for use by the soccer team. It has a metal gable roof with vertically oriented metal siding. This is a Non-Contributing building due to its age and because it is not associated with the property during its period of significance (Photo 12).

SOCCER FIELD (NON-CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURE) 2011:

A soccer field was installed by the local school system west of the school building in 2011. The soccer field has a chain-link fence and LED flood lights around the perimeter with bleachers and soccer goals. Along the east edge are two open-air metal shelters with benches for players. The Soccer Field and its associated features are collectively inventoried as a non-contributing structure for ease. The resource is non-contributing due to its age and because it was not associated with the property during its period of significance (Photo 13).

Integrity

The Chester County Training School-Vincent High School building retains integrity of location and setting in a historically African American neighborhood. Though departure of the population has affected the neighborhood's make-up, it remains an area of mostly single-family residences and small church buildings built in the early-to-mid-twentieth century at the edge of the City of Henderson. The Chester County Training School/Vincent High School building's enduring existence in the neighborhood conveys the historic racial segregation that mandated where Black communities and institutions formed, as well as separate facilities in which Black children obtained an education. The nominated property itself retains its overall features, including grassy flat areas surrounding the school building located at the property's southwest corner.

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The school overall retains its integrity of materials, design, and workmanship. The majority of the building retains its original footprint with overall plan of double-loaded corridors and larger meeting spaces in the gymnasium and cafeteria. The building retains many original multilight metal windows and metal doors. While some floors have been replaced, the new tile floor matches the overall character of the original tile floors, which are still present in some areas. Some walls have been removed to combine classrooms in the North Wing, but the interior overall maintains integrity due to retention of the doorways and walls defining the corridor, as well as the exterior fenestration pattern. The most notable alteration occurred to the windows of the gymnasium, specifically an infill of the original gymnasium's multilight metal windows with concrete blocks in 2023. The exterior of the gymnasium was also painted in 2023.

Alterations have not majorly affected the building's design, workmanship, and materials due to the retention of the building's overall form, such as massing and rooflines, overall fenestration patterns, and the retention of interior characteristics, such as circulation patterns, historic or compatible tile floors throughout, and the gymnasium's wood floor and stage area. The presence of the Non-Contributing resources also does not majorly detract from the building's ability to communicate historical significance due to their location behind the school building. As a result of the retention of the majority of its physical characteristics, the Chester County Training School-Vincent High School also retains its integrity of association and feeling.

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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.)
 Property is:

N/A

- 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.
less than 50 years old or achieving
- G significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION

 ETHNIC HERITAGE: BLACK

 SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance
 1950-1970

Significant Dates
 1954

 1963

 1966

Significant Person
 (Complete only if Criterion B is marked
 above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation
 N/A

Architect/Builder
 Ross, Charles (architect)

 Johnson Lumber Co. (contractor)

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

The Chester County Training School/Vincent High School in Henderson, Chester County is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A at the local level of significance for its association with themes of African American heritage, education, and social history. Constructed in 1950 as the Chester County Training School and renamed Vincent High School in 1963, the school offered grades one through twelve and included subjects such as social studies, math, agriculture, home economics and language. The school was the only public high school for African American children in Chester County and was one of the few places open for social events for the larger Black community in Henderson. Students also participated in extracurricular activities such as sports, chorus, New Homemakers of America, and New Farmers of America. These experiences provided students with a quality education for academic excellence across Southwest Tennessee. The period of significance for the Chester County Training School/Vincent High School is 1950 to 1970, which corresponds with the year the school opened and the year the school closed as a segregated facility.

Narrative Statement of Significance

Local Educational Context

Following the end of the Civil War and slavery in 1865, Black Tennesseans embraced new opportunities in all realms of life but also continued to experience discrimination and disadvantage. Within the realm of education, Black Tennesseans were not afforded the same opportunities, despite an 1867 state law establishing a system of public schools throughout the state. Though free, the schools were required to teach Black and white students separately, following the theory of ‘separate but equal,’ later enshrined in law by the 1896 U.S. Supreme Court decision in Plessy v. Ferguson.⁶

In reality, facilities for Black students were rarely equal, if existent at all. In response, African Americans united to create their own schools by pooling their financial resources and seeking partnerships with local governments and philanthropists. Perhaps the most notable of the latter was the Rosenwald Fund, established by Julius Rosenwald, part owner of Sears, Roebuck and Company. Between 1912 and 1932, the Rosenwald Fund provided partial funding for more than 5,000 African American schools, predominantly in the rural South. The fund required local people to supply part of the construction costs, which was often achieved through donations.⁷

The Henderson Rosenwald School was a direct predecessor of the Chester County Training School/Vincent High School. In 1922, the Chester County Board of Education and the Henderson City Board of Education purchased two acres of land to build a school building for the African American people of the City of Henderson and Chester County for a sum of \$1,000.00 in the “Jaybird” Community (west side of the city of Henderson). The building fund was a part of a consolidation fund with \$1,000 out of what is known as the Rosenwald Fund and the remainder of the said cost of the building to be paid as follows: one-third: County

⁶ Kelsey Lamkin, “Lauderdale High School,” National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2021), Section 8.

⁷ Mary S. Hoffschwelle, *The Rosenwald Schools of the American South* (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 2006).

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Board of Education, one-third: City Board of Education, and remaining one-third raised by the Black citizens.⁸

J.A. Vincent served as the school's first principal until 1937. On July 6, 1932, he received permission to reorganize the school as a high school, and the name was changed to Chester County Training School.⁹ It became the first African American high school in Chester County. The first graduating class in 1936 consisted of seven students. J. M. Trice, a student of the second graduating class of 1937, later became principal of Chester County Training School/Vincent High School in 1948. The school provided a new quality of educational accommodation for students and teachers in the Henderson city limits. Because of the difficulties imposed on residents by the Depression, several of the rural communities requested the Board of Education to provide transportation from their schools to the Chester County Training School to allow their students to receive a high school education.¹⁰

Many Black educators began long careers at the original Chester County Training School. Claude C. Bond served as one of the teachers in the school in 1930-31. He later served as principal of Montgomery High School in Lexington, Tennessee for twenty-one years. He served as principal of Howard High School in Chattanooga beginning in 1956, then as Coordinator of General Education for the City system, and then became Assistant Superintendent for Personnel Services. He served nine years on the Tennessee Board of Regents.¹¹

In 1935, Walton B. Stewart joined the school as a teacher. In 1943, he was selected as principal of Chester County Training School. In 1944, he moved to Milwaukee, Wisconsin where he became active in the labor movement and in the Democratic Party. He was chairman for several years of the 6th Ward Democratic Party and was elected a delegate at large to the 1952 Democratic Party and was elected as a delegate at large at the 1952 Democratic National Convention. He was elected to the Wisconsin House of Representatives in 1954. He also served as the only African American member of the Milwaukee Motion Picture Commission. He continued to work as a teacher and was head of the mathematics department at Roosevelt Junior High School in Milwaukee.¹²

J. M. Trice, a member of the second graduating class of Chester County Training School was named principal in 1948 of Chester County Training School. He served in this position until 1970 when the school system was integrated. He was hired as the attendance teacher in 1971 and resigned on August 31, 1972.¹³

⁸ Chester County Board of Education Minutes, Book 1928-29, page 7, Chester County Board of Education, Henderson, Tennessee.

⁹ Chester County Board of Education Minutes, Book 1932, page 52 & Book 1933, page 67.

¹⁰ Chester County Board of Education Minutes, Book 1942, page 102

¹¹ Chester County Board of Education Minutes, Book 1930-31, p. 28; "Giant Leaves Legacy in Education: Dr. Claude C. Bond," Yesterday's Tennessee, <https://www.tnyesterday.com/schools/henderson/mhs/bond.html>.

¹² Chester County Board of Education Minutes, Book 1935, p. 86; Book 1937-38, p. 138; Book 1944, p. 134; "Walton Bryan Stewart," *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved 20:33, April 15, 2024, from <https://wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=WaltonBryanStewart&oldid=1209059393>.

¹³ Chester County Board Minutes, Book 1948, April 24, p. 197; June 10, p. 201; Book 1972, August 31, 1972, p. 38.

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In 1940, Superintendent R. E. Henson was appointed to negotiate with the National Youth Administration (NYA) authorities to build a vocational shop at the Chester County Training School. The NYA was an agency created during the Great Depression to provide work and education opportunities for young Americans between the ages of sixteen and twenty-five. Participants provided the labor to build a variety of public and recreational facilities throughout the nation. By 1942, the NYA had built a vocational shop for the school. J. K. Davis was hired to teach vocational agricultural education. He travelled throughout Chester County and held classes in nine communities for Black farmers. The classes stressed gardens of victory and emphasis on egg production to combat malnutrition.¹⁴

As enrollment continued to increase, it was necessary to increase the teaching staff. A music teacher, Mildred Davis, was added and a part-time teacher, Josie Clemons, was employed via the Jeanes Foundation to work with the African American schools in the county on a part-time basis. The Jeanes Foundation, or Negro Rural School Fund, was another major contributor to the development of African American education in the early twentieth century. Clemons also served as a liaison between black schools in Chester County and the local newspaper.¹⁵

Establishment of the Nominated Chester County Training School/Vincent High School

On November 8, 1948, a fire destroyed the original Chester County Training School building. The County Education board met on November 12, 1948 to discuss the situation.¹⁶ On January 27, 1949, the Board purchased land in the “Lucyville” Community (east side of the city of Henderson) to build the school. In 1949, construction of the new building began with Charles Ross as the architect and Johnson Lumber Company as the contractor.¹⁷ While the new school building was being constructed, a local café (Lonnie Welch’s Café) and a church building (Cools Spring Baptist Church) were rented for classrooms in the “Jaybird” Community on the west side of Henderson.¹⁸ The new school facility was completed at the final cost of \$116,800.00. Classes in the new building began in March 1950 and the dedication occurred on April 7, 1950.¹⁹

¹⁴ Chester County Board of Education Minutes, Book 1941, page 80.

¹⁵ Chester County Board of Education Minutes, Book 1942, page 102 & Book 1943, page 126.

¹⁶ Chester County Board of Education Minutes, Book 1948, page 213.

¹⁷ Chester County Board of Education Minutes, Book 1949, page 223 & Book 1949, page 235; “Bids for Contract at Henderson,” *The Memphis Press Scimitar*, June 30, 1949.

¹⁸ Chester County Board of Education Minutes, Book 1949, Jan. 27 page 1; March 10, pages 222 & 224; April 11, page 227; July 13, page 238; Book 1949, page 222.

¹⁹ “New Colored School Here To Be Dedicated,” *Chester County Independent*. April 7, 1950

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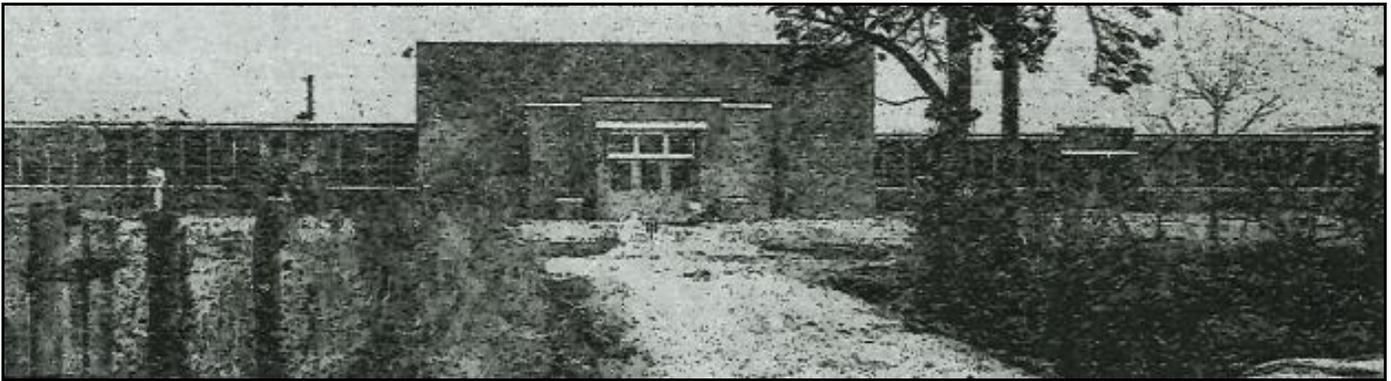


Figure 2: Image of the Chester County Training School from the Souvenir Program of the Dedicatory Exercises, April 7, 1950. Scanned copy provided by author and on-file at the Tennessee Historical Commission.

At the time the new high school was built, there were six rural African American elementary schools in Chester County. It had been thought for some time that one large school could supply more needs for all the people than several small ones. However, reaching this goal was not easy and took more than a decade to achieve. On May 31, 1962, the Chester County Board of Education approved a contract to build an addition to Chester County Training School, including five classrooms, kitchen, cafeteria, and two bathrooms. Workers also remodeled the existing school, including replacing the ceiling and repainting interior walls. After the work was completed, the three remaining county schools (Oak Grove, Jacks Creek, and Gibson Rosenwald) were closed on Friday, February 22, 1963. All students were transported to Chester County Training School, the only school in the county for African American children. On November 1, 1963, the school was renamed Vincent High School in honor of its first principal, J. A. Vincent.²⁰

In strongly segregated rural Chester County, the Chester County Training School/Vincent High School was a pillar of the African American community. While not initially the only African American school in Chester County, it was the only African American high school in the county at the time of its construction and soon became the county's only school for Black children in all grades. The school not only provided educational opportunities but served as an important community gathering place, hosting events and adult education programs. Rental of the surplus grounds also served as a source of income for the school.²¹

The school building and grounds was also an important place of social gatherings in the African American community. One of the first social gathering was in 1950 when the Board of Education approved the African American Masons to use the school auditorium for a Masonic convention.²² A barbeque picnic was held on August 8 beginning in 1950. The event was sponsored by the African American PTAs and community to raise funds of the school. It became an annual event for the African-American citizens in the county and

²⁰ Chester County Board of Education Minutes, Book 1962, page 70; Book 1963, page 96 & 118; "School Completed Consolidation to Begin Monday," *The Jackson Sun*, Feb. 22, 1963.

²¹ Chester County Board of Education Minutes, Book 1951, March 8, p. 300.

²² Chester County Board of Education Minutes, Book 1950, Feb. 17, p. 266.

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surrounding counties ending in 1957.²³ Various other events have been held in the Chester County Training/Vincent High School building such as Sunday lunches of various African-American churches in the cafeteria, community basketball practices and games in the gym, and community social events held in the cafeteria and gym.

In 1954, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Brown v. Board of Education* that the “separate but equal” doctrine was unconstitutional, which required school districts to desegregate. Many southern districts fought the order and attempted to circumvent it through a variety of means, including building new facilities to prove equality in separate facilities or by delaying implementation. The case in Chester County was similar to other southern districts but diverged in its final years. Under pressures from the federal government, the school district began a “freedom of choice” plan in 1966 to integrate completely or forfeit its federal funds. The plan allowed families to choose which school to send their children. However, the plan did not result in desegregation because families sent their children to the same facilities as they had previously done. As a result, Vincent High School’s student body consisted of 350 Blacks and no whites. School Superintendent V. M. Plunk argued in a telephone interview that the Vincent High School’s lack of racial integration was only due to its location: “There is nothing wrong with Vincent school except its location...It’s surrounded by small Negro huts.” Plunk also said, “if the Vincent High School was situated away from the Negro section of town, local whites would not balk so much at sending their children to Vincent.”²⁴

By the late 1960s, the Chester County School system was among three southern schools facing cutoff of federal funds because officials from the United States Office of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) said they failed to meet federal guidelines. A spokesman for HEW Office of Civil Rights said the system was among 102 southern school districts investigated. Superintendent Plunk protested the cutoff of funds.²⁵

In 1967, two trips were made by HEW officials to Chester County to negotiate a plan to produce integration. However, Superintendent Plunk and the Board of Education would not accept any plan to produce total integration in the county. For two years, the school system showed little signs of bending as the case continued. On February 16, 1969, Secretary of HEW Robert Finch announced the cutting off Chester County funds in thirty days. On February 24, 1969, Superintendent Plunk sent a letter to Tennessee’s Senator Howard Baker in Washington for another review. Senator Baker sent a special department team to Chester County to see Superintendent Plunk. Later, Superintendent Plunk traveled to Washington to see HEW Secretary Finch and Assistant Secretary Leon Panetta. On March 16, 1969, the Chester County Board of Education approved a plan to meet some the HEW’s objectives, including the transfer of all black students at Vincent High School to the white Chester County High School by September 1970. However, that still left grades one through eight of black students at Vincent High School. Finch extended the deadline for cutting off funds March 16, 1969, and had another meeting in its place March 19, 1969, with Senator Baker and

²³ Chester County Board of Education Minutes, Book 1950, July 17, p. 270.

²⁴ Joseph Albright, “Dixie Calls Signals, Finch Shifts” *Newsday*, May 7, 1969, Long Island, NY; Chester County Board of Education Minutes, Book 1963, November 1, 1963, page 125.

²⁵ “Funds Cutoff Protested By Chester Schools Chief” *The Tennessean*, February 14, 1969, Nashville, TN.

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Superintendent Plunk. The Chester County Board of Education agreed to send thirty-five white students the following year to Vincent High School for classes in music and chorus.²⁶

According to *Newsday*, the daily newspaper of Long Island, N.Y., HEW Secretary Robert Finch “personally negotiated an unusual settlement under which the [Chester County] school district could postpone full desegregation for a year without losing \$148,000 in federal funds.” Another nationally prominent newspaper reported that restoration of Chester County federal school funds in March by Secretary Finch was politically motivated, due to the special request of Senator Baker, the involvement of White House officials from the Nixon Administration, and the timing of it coinciding with a special congressional election – the implication being that cutting off the funds could have made school desegregation a major issue and led to the election of an opposing candidate who backed segregation policies.²⁷

Even though Panetta stated that the negotiated plan to desegregate schools in Chester County was acceptable legally, many HEW professionals remained convinced that Chester County got something other districts like it had never gotten: an extra year to desegregate without a justifiable reason, such as due to insufficient space. According to Edwin H. Yourman, HEW’s assistant general counsel for education, “As far as I know, there never was a case where there was so much feeling (in the department) that they already had a usable facility” and therefore had no justifiable reason to delay desegregation. Another veteran department official referred to Chester’s plan to build new classrooms onto a white school building as “something we can hide behind” in defending the Chester settlement to other school districts.²⁸

In 1969, the county approved a final desegregation plan, which merged Vincent High School with Chester County High School, resulting in all students and teachers transferring to the latter facility by the end of the 1969-1970 school year. Therefore, the Chester County Training School/Vincent High School closed as a segregated, Black-only school in 1970, but it quickly transitioned to serve new roles in education. Beginning in 1969, the building hosted adult-education classes offered for African Americans and was used as a Shop-Agricultural building by the Shiloh Area Development Corporation Neighborhood Service Center, which provided services to African Americans. Senior citizens met in the building while a building was being secured for them in 1977.²⁹

The building has also been used by the Chester County School system for housing several occupants. In the 1970s, the building housed the Chester County Junior High School for several years until a new building was constructed. It also housed the county’s sixth graders while a space was being added to an existing school. At that time, the building’s name was to North Chester Elementary School. The school system’s Human Resource Agency and Family Resource Center was also housed in the building. Kindergarten classes were held in the building while space was added to the other elementary schools in the county. HeadStart was

²⁶ Joseph Albright, “Dixie Calls Signals, Finch Shifts,” *Newsday*, May 7, 1969, Long Island, NY; Chester County Board of Education Minutes, book 1960, April 2, 1969, page 260.

²⁷ “Funds Cutoff Protested By Chester Schools’ Chief” *The Tennessean*, February 14, 1969, Nashville, TN.

²⁸ Johnny Malone, “‘Sellout’ Is Charged in Chester Case,” *The Jackson Sun*, May 7, 1969, Jackson, TN.

²⁹ Chester County Board of Education Minutes, Book 1969, April 2, p.260; Nov. 25, p. 277; Book 1977, March 10, p.175.

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housed in the building in the 1980s while a new facility was being built.³⁰ Today, the building continues to maintain its current historic state and is used by the local school system as an alternative school, a classroom for special needs students, storage facility for technological equipment, and general storage. The gymnasium is used for a variety of community needs.

Local Recognition of the School and its Historical Significance

The importance of the Chester County Training/Vincent High building can be seen in the gratitude of the alumni association in being able to meet in the building for the first time since the school closed its doors in 1970. Teachers and students had a chance to reconnect in their former school, resulting in the formation of the Vincent High School Committee/Alumni Organization which has dedicated its mission to preserving and interpreting the history of the school through public service, heritage education and programs designed to enhance the quality of life for Chester County residents of all ages. About 254 names of alumni, family, and friends of the former Chester County Training/Vincent High School signed a petition encouraging the listing of Chester County Training/Vincent High School’s building in the National Register for Historic Places. The Chester County Board of Education has given their support for the listing, as well.

Lastly, recognition of the school was partially developed by Kylie Carte, who completed an internship in the history department at Freed-Hardeman University. Carter presented her research at the 2022 University Scholars’ Day entitled “Worthy of Preservation: Nominating Henderson’s All-Black Vincent High School for the National Register of Historic Places.” Carter’s work served as the beginning for this nomination, upon which the primary nomination author (an alumnus of Chester County Training School/Vincent High School) built the remainder of the narrative.

³⁰ Chester County Board of Education Minutes, Book 1969, July 1, p. 269; Book 1970, March 10, p. 175; Book 1978, July 31, p. 244; Book 1983, April 15, p.79; Book 1993, Dec. 7, p. 32.

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9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography

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- Chester County Board of Education Minutes, Various Books. Chester County Board of Education, Henderson, Tennessee
- "Funds Cutoff Protested by Chester Schools Chief." *The Tennessean*, February 14, 1969. Nashville, TN.
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- "New Colored School Here to Be Dedicated." *Chester County Independent*. April 7, 1950, Henderson, TN
- "School Completed Consolidation to Begin Monday," *The Jackson Sun*, Feb. 22, 1963, Jackson, TN
- Wikipedia contributors. "Walton Bryan Stewart." In Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. Retrieved 20:33, April 15, 2024, from <https://wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=WaltonBryanStewart&oldid=1209059393>

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):		Primary location of additional data:	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	State Historic Preservation Office
<input type="checkbox"/>	previously listed in the National Register	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other State agency
<input type="checkbox"/>	previously determined eligible by the National Register	<input type="checkbox"/>	Federal agency
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	designated a National Historic Landmark	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Local government
<input type="checkbox"/>	recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #	<input type="checkbox"/>	University
<input type="checkbox"/>	recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other
<input type="checkbox"/>	recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey #	Name of repository: Chester County Board of Education	
Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A			

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 10 **USGS Quadrangle** Henderson 12-A-NW

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: NAD1983

A. Latitude: 35.446788 Longitude: -88.630416

B. Latitude: 35.448358 Longitude: -88.630371

C. Latitude: 35.449009 Longitude: -88.629945

D. Latitude: 35.449086 Longitude: -88.628553

E. Latitude: 35.446777 Longitude: -88.628385

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries correspond to the parcel boundary for Chester County Parcel 034 03300 00006034, as shown on the accompanying Boundary Map

Boundary Justification

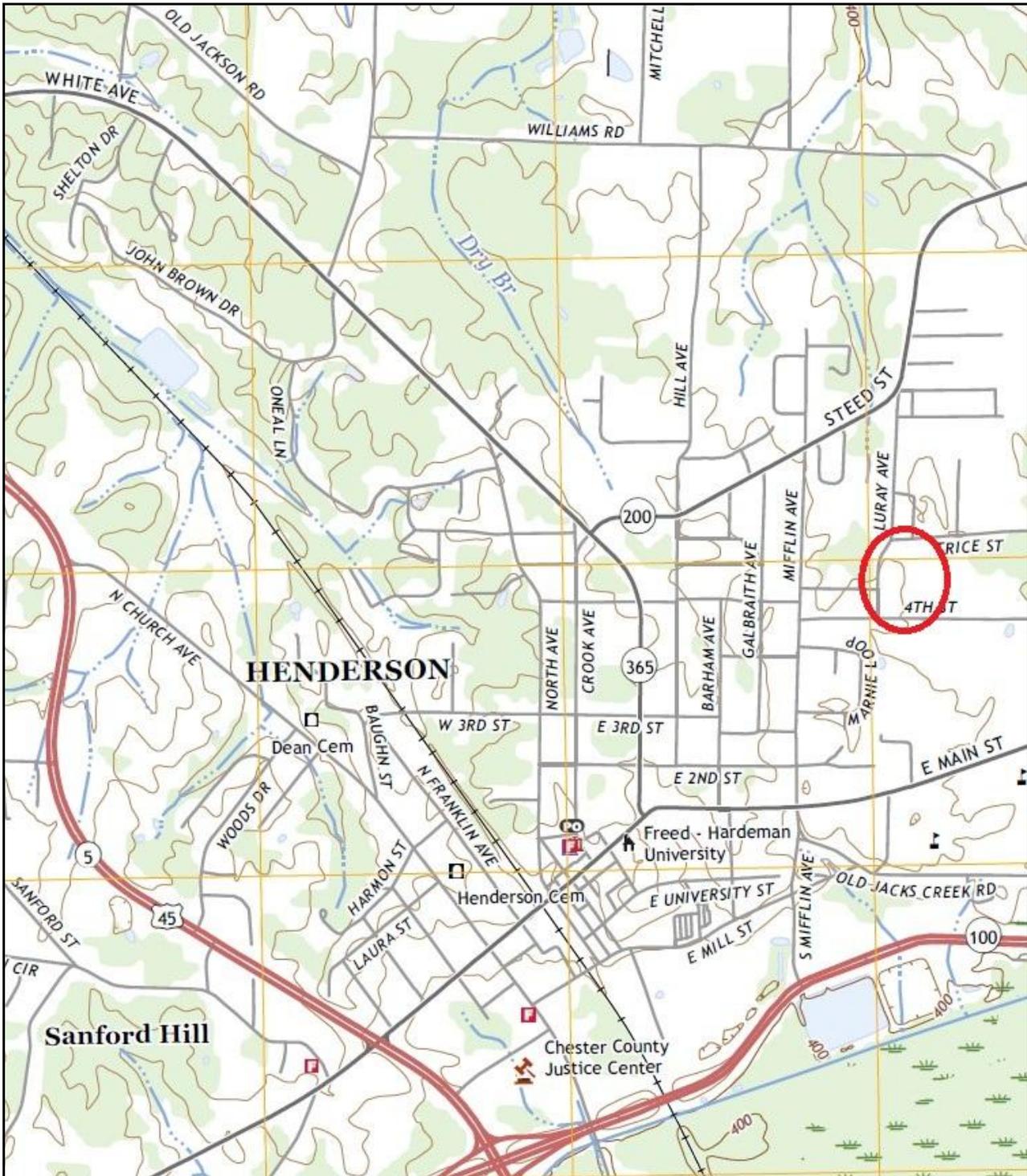
The nominated boundary includes the land that was historically associated with the Chester County Training School-Vincent High School and retains integrity. The boundary includes the entirety of the school and associated resources that contributed to the significance of the school.

Originally, the land associated with the school was larger. The 'surplus' land was used as rental property to provide funding for the school. The parcel was subdivided and reduced to its current ten-acre size in 1975 when the surplus land was traded to the City of Henderson in exchange for a different parcel of land elsewhere. The formerly associated land is currently experiencing development and new construction. It is therefore excluded from the boundary due to a lack of integrity.

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USGS Topographic Map



USGS Topographic Map with the location of the nominated property indicated by the red circle. Original Map Scale 1:24,000

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Boundary Map



The National Register boundary is depicted by the bold red polygon, overlaid on ca. 2020 aerial imagery and current parcel lines (white lines). Keys for the latitude/longitude coordinates are also included.

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11. Form Prepared By

Name Dr. Elizabeth A. Saunders (primary author); Dr. Rebecca Schmitt

Organization CCTS/Vincent High School Historical Committee; Tennessee Historical Commission

Street & Number 659 White Ave. Date August 2024

City or Town Henderson Telephone 731-989-5725

E-mail esaunders@fhu.edu State TN Zip Code 38340

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Photographs** (refer to Tennessee Historical Commission National Register *Photo Policy* for submittal of digital images and prints. Photos should be submitted separately in a JPEG or TIFF format. Do not embed these photographs into the form)
- **Additional items:** (additional supporting documentation including historic photographs, historic maps, etc. can be included on a Continuation Sheet following the photographic log and sketch maps. They can also be embedded in the Section 7 or 8 narratives)

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

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

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Photo Log

Name of Property: Chester County Training School/Vincent High School

City or Vicinity: Henderson

County: Chester

State: Tennessee

Photographer: Rebecca Schmitt

Date Photographed: March 31, 2025

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

- 1 of 31. Façade (West Elevation) of the Chester County Training School/Vincent High School
Photographer facing east.
- 2 of 31. Oblique view of the Façade (West elevation), including the Gymnasium, Central Hallway,
and Cafeteria. Photographer facing northeast.
- 3 of 31. Oblique view of the north and west elevations of the 1963 Addition containing the cafeteria
and classrooms. Photographer facing southeast.
- 4 of 31. View of the Main Entrances on the Façade (West elevation). Photographer facing east.
- 5 of 31. Oblique view of the west and south elevations of the Gymnasium. Photographer facing
northeast.
- 6 of 31. Oblique view of the north and west elevations of the North Wing and the Gymnasium.
Photographer facing southeast.
- 7 of 31. North Elevation of the North Wing. Photographer facing southwest.
- 8 of 31. East Elevation of the North Wing and North elevation of the Central Hallway. Photographer
facing southwest.
- 9 of 31. North Elevation of the South Wing (1963 Addition) and East Elevation of the Central
Hallway. Photographer facing southwest.
- 10 of 31. South Elevation of the South Wing (1963 Addition). Photographer facing northeast.
- 11 of 31. West and north elevations of the Agriculture/Shop Building (foreground) and Prefabricated
Building (background). Both are contributing. Photographer facing southeast.
- 12 of 31. Storage Building, south and west elevations (non-contributing). Photographer facing
northeast.
- 13 of 31. Soccer Field and associated open-air shelters (non-contributing). Photographer facing east.

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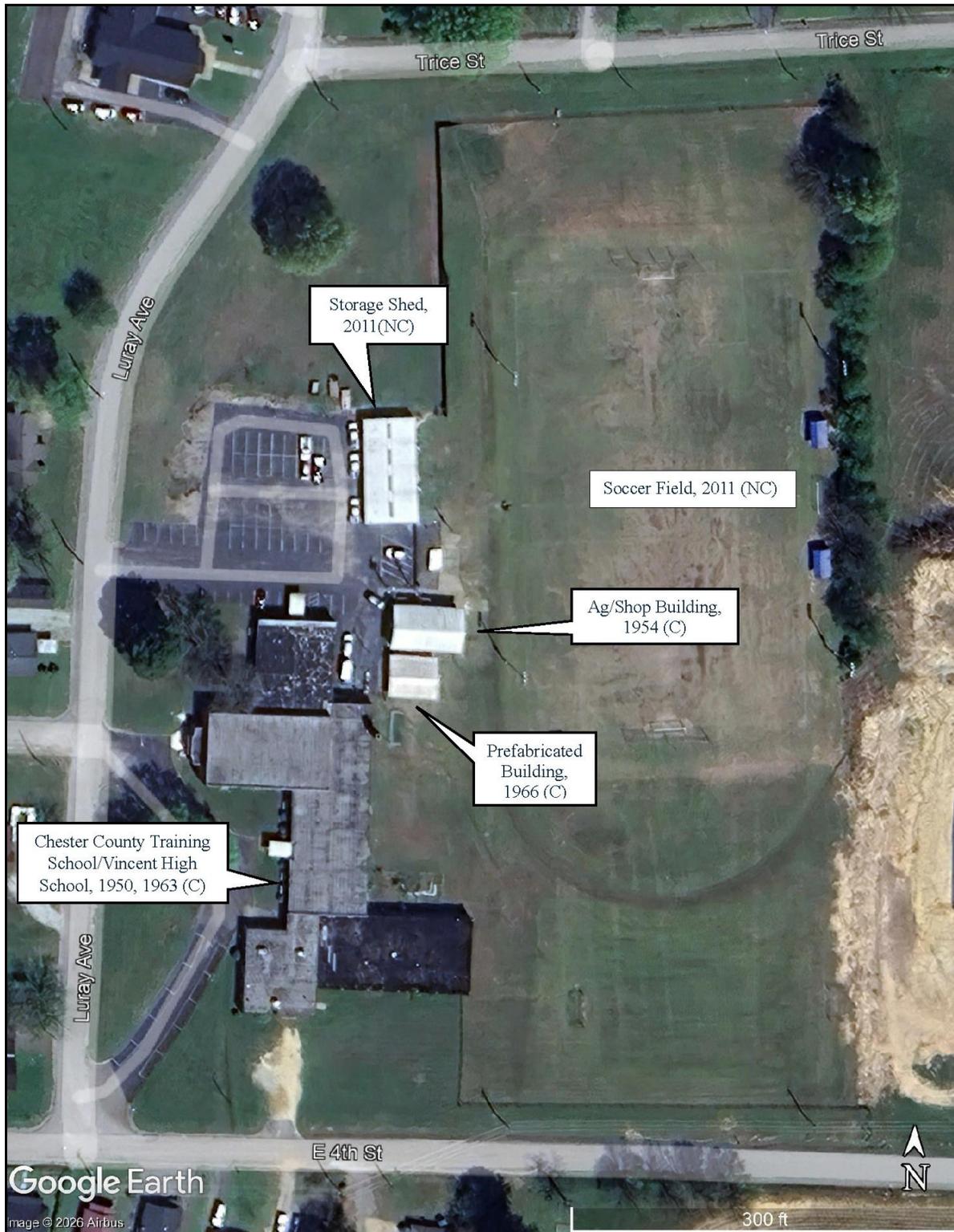
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- 14 of 31. View of the original main entrance. Photographer facing west.
- 15 of 31. View of the Central Hallway within original 1950 Building. Photographer facing north.
- 16 of 31. View of the Central Hallway within original 1950 Building, looking towards the 1963 Addition. Photographer facing south.
- 17 of 31. View of the Entrance Doors within the 1963 Addition. Photographer facing west.
- 18 of 31. Cafeteria, within the 1963 Addition. Photographer facing southwest.
- 19 of 31. Kitchen, within the 1963 Addition. Photographer facing southwest.
- 20 of 31. South Wing Hallway, within the 1963 Addition. Photographer facing east.
- 21 of 31. Representative South Wing Classroom within the 1963 Addition. Photographer facing southeast.
- 22 of 31. Representative Office within Original 1950 Building. Photographer facing southwest.
- 23 of 31. Representative Classroom in Central Hallway (1950 Building). Photographer facing northeast.
- 24 of 31. Representative Classroom in Central Hallway (1950 Building). Photographer facing southeast
- 25 of 31. Representative Classroom in Central Hallway (1950 Building). Photographer facing south.
- 26 of 31. North Wing Hallway, within original 1950 Building. Photographer facing north.
- 27 of 31. Representative Classroom in North Wing, within original 1950 Building. Photographer facing north.
- 28 of 31. Representative Classroom in North Wing, within original 1950 Building. Photographer facing north.
- 29 of 31. Gymnasium, within original 1950 Building. View towards the Stage. Photographer facing east.
- 30 of 31. Gymnasium, within original 1950 Building. View of the Stage. Photographer facing south.
- 31 of 31. Gymnasium, within original 1950 Building. View from the Stage. Photographer facing west.

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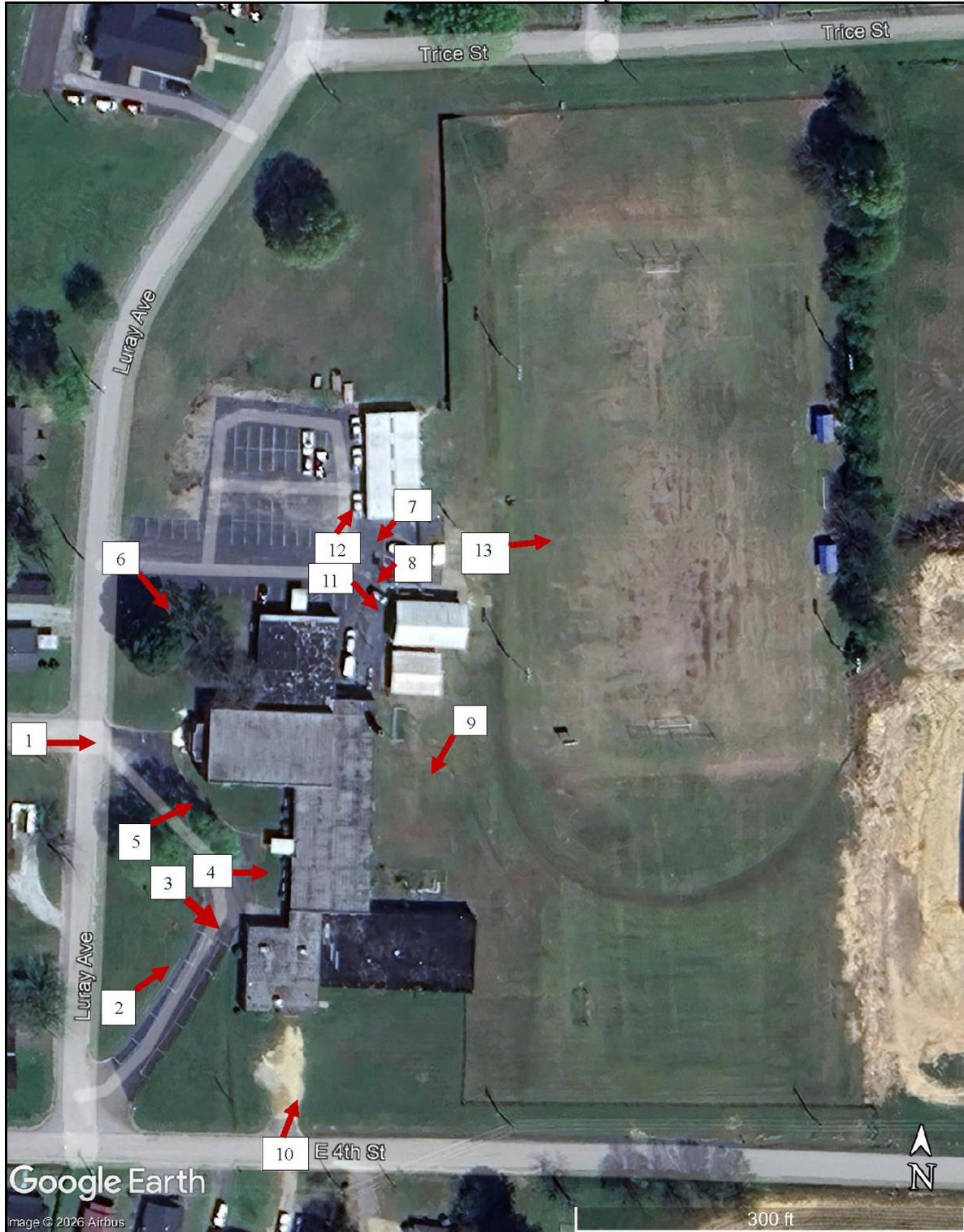
Site Plan with Resources Labelled



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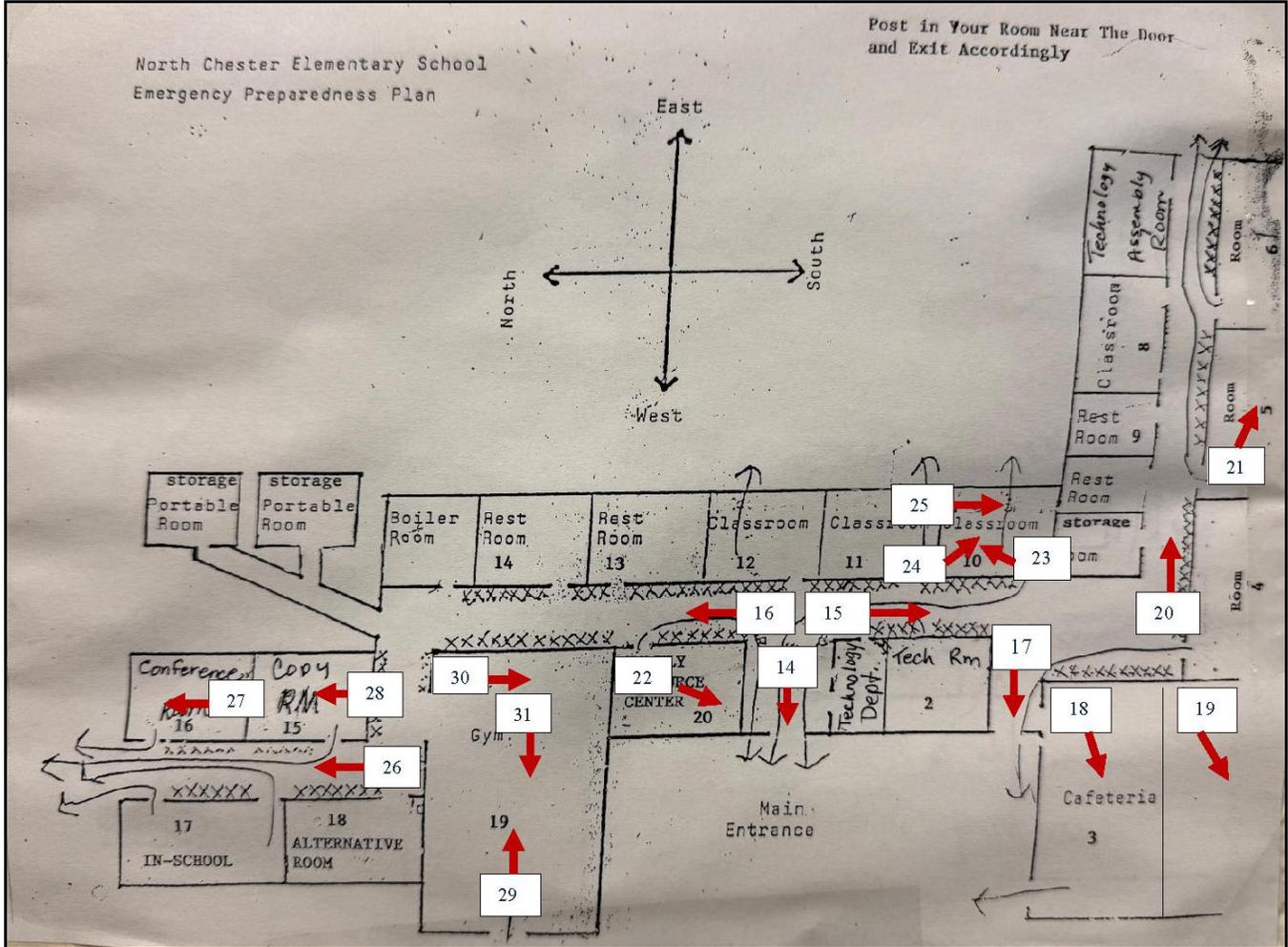
Site Plan with Photos Keyed



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**Floor Plans with Photos Keyed
Not to Scale**



Plans provided by Chester County Board of Education

Property Owner(s):

(This information will not be submitted to the National Park Service, but will remain on file at the Tennessee Historical Commission)

Name Chester County Board of Education
Street & Number 970 East Main Street Telephone 731-989-5134
City or Town Henderson State/Zip TN 38340

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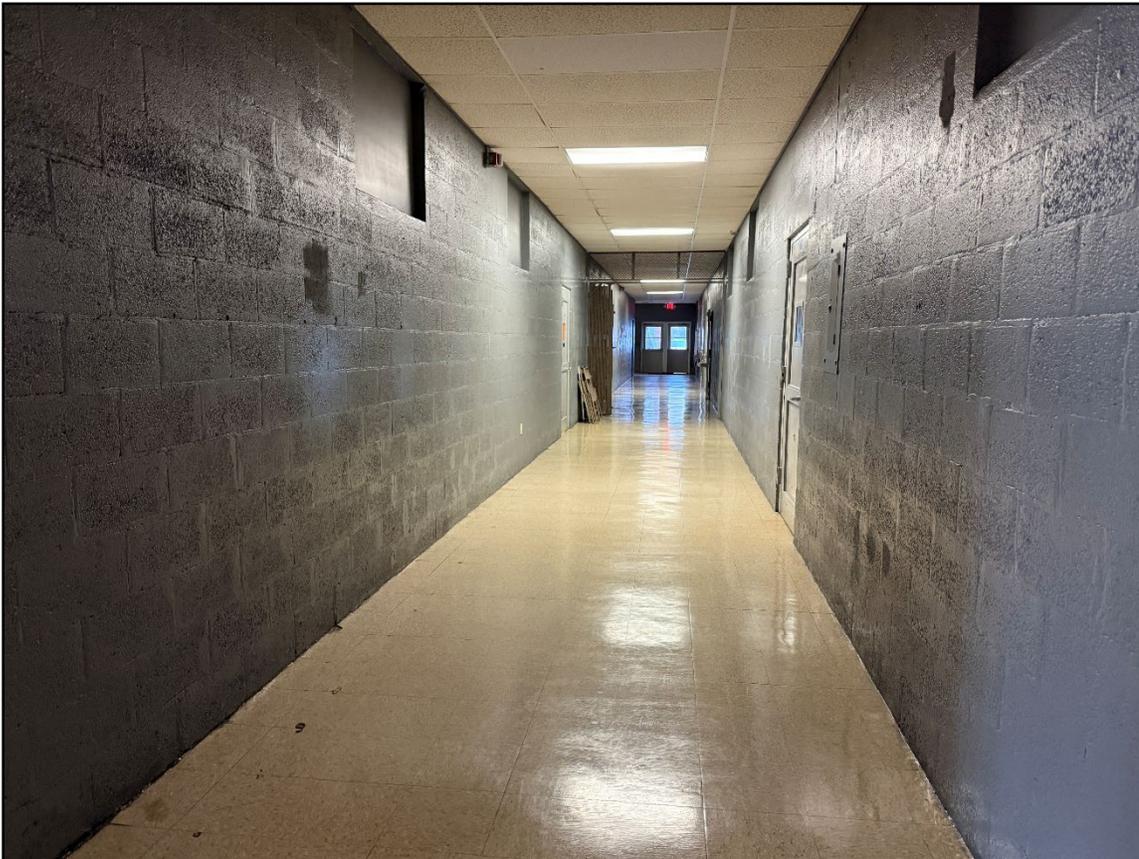
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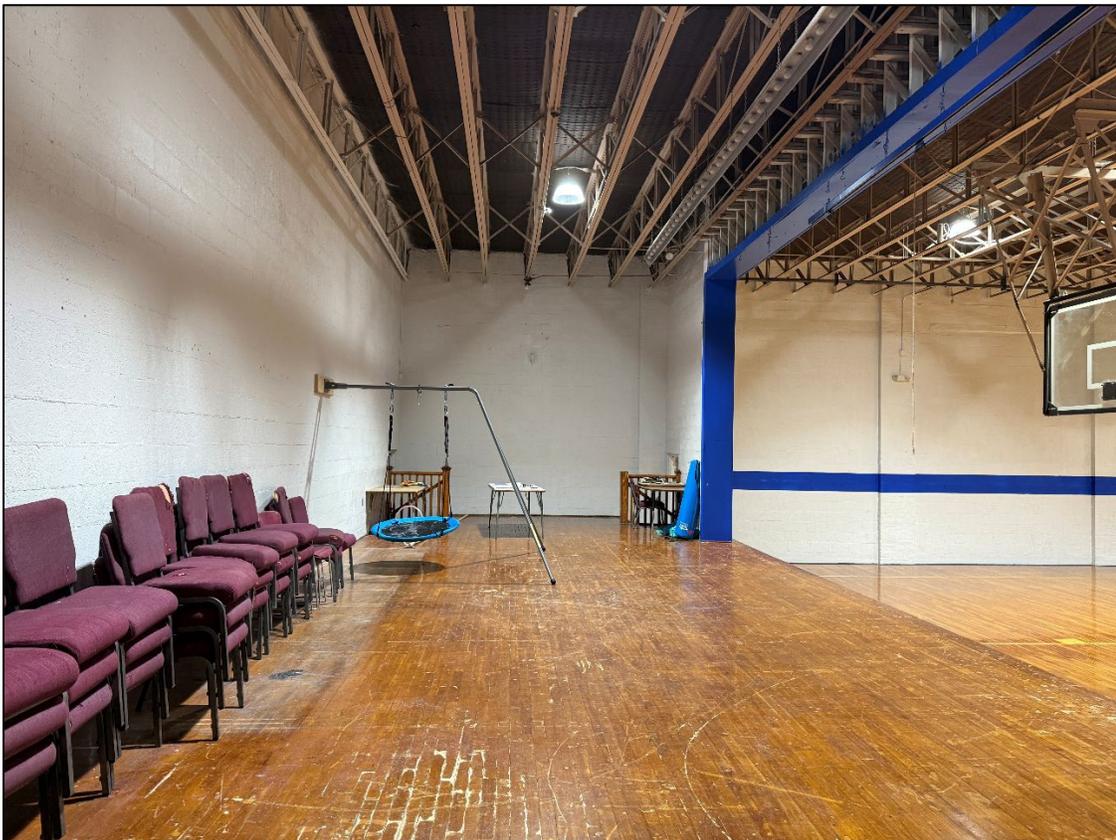


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