



1026

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 *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an 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. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Hillside Park High School

other names/site number Hillside High School, James A. Whitted Elementary School, James A. Whitted Junior High School

2. Location

street & number 200 E. Umstead Street

not for publication N/A

city or town Durham

vicinity N/A

state North Carolina code NC county Durham code 063 zip code 27549

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 for 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  nationally  statewide  locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Hevin Cherry, SHPO  
Signature of certifying official/Title

11/12/13  
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See Continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

- I hereby certify that the property is:
  - entered in the National Register.
    - See continuation sheet
  - determined eligible for the National Register.
    - See continuation sheet
  - determined not eligible for the National Register.
  - removed from the National Register.
  - other, explain: \_\_\_\_\_

[Signature]  
Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

12/30/2013

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in count.)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

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

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

Historic Resources of Durham

**Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION/school  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/NOT IN USE  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Classical Revival  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Modern Movement  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK  
\_\_\_\_\_  
walls BRICK  
\_\_\_\_\_  
roof ASPHALT  
\_\_\_\_\_  
other \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**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:

- 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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

- ARCHITECTURE
- EDUCATION
- ETHNIC HERITAGE/BLACK

**Period of Significance**

1922-1970

**Significant Dates**

1922  
1954-1955

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

n/a

**Cultural Affiliation**

n/a

**Architect/Builder**

Milburn, Heister, and Company (Architect)  
Hackney and Knott (Architect)

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**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 # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:  
Durham Public Schools



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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Hillside Park High School  
Durham County, NC

## Narrative Description

The Hillside Park High School (most recently known as J. A. Whitted Junior High School) at 200 East Umstead Street stands approximately one mile south of the city center of Durham, North Carolina. The school is located in an urban area of mixed residential and commercial development in the south-central portion of the city in a historically African American neighborhood known as Hayti. Historic single-family dwellings are to the east and northeast and a small commercial complex stands to the north. South Roxboro Street, a major north-south corridor, is immediately west of the school, while city-owned Hillside Park is to the south. Sawyer Street extends along the east side of the property. The school addresses East Umstead Street, which terminates in a small cul-de-sac just in front of the building. East Umstead Street no longer intersects with the east side of South Roxboro Street, but rather begins again on the west side of South Roxboro Street. The Stokesdale Historic District (NR, 2010) is to the east of the school.

The four-acre parcel slopes downward on its east and west sides. A paved lane extends from Sawyer Street westward at the rear of the lot and provides access to a paved parking area on the south (rear) side of the school. A stone retaining wall borders the west side of the school parcel. It appears to date to the period when the original portion of the school was constructed in 1922. In the 1940s, a shop building and janitor's house stood behind the school on the south side of the parcel.

The Classical Revival-style, red-brick school stands on a grass-covered hill facing north toward downtown Durham. The original western portion dates to 1922 and is a T-shaped, two-story building on a full basement. Built in 1954-1955, a three-story red-brick, T-shaped addition, with a one-story-on-basement gymnasium rear wing connects to the east end of the original school. Because of the change in elevation of the parcel from west to east it sits lower than the original building.

A modern playground enclosed by a fence is off the southwest corner of the 1922 building. A deteriorated greenhouse, likely dating from around 1960, stands behind the 1954-1955 addition and west of the gymnasium wing.

### **Hillside Park High School** **1922; 1954-1955** **Contributing Building**

*The description starts with the exterior of the original 1922 section then proceeds to the exterior of the 1954-1955 addition. The interior description, in the same order, follows.*

The 1922 section of this common bond brick school stands on a brick foundation and is topped by a flat roof with a brick parapet that is capped by vinyl coping. The parapet does not continue to the rear (south) elevation, but the unpainted metal frieze does extend along the four sides of the main block. A bonded soldier course extends above the lowest-level bays along each elevation.

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The long, symmetrical, north-facing facade is twenty-seven bays wide and contains its original, mostly nine-over-nine wood, double-hung windows. A concrete sill and lintel of vertically-placed brick frame each window. Windows on the basement level are three-over-three and, like the larger sash, are covered in plywood. A large, arched window with paired nine-over-nine sash topped with a semi-circular brick arch with a cast concrete keystone and cast concrete springers pierces the upper level at each end of the façade. A flat arch with a cast concrete keystone tops an entrance with double-leaf, half-glazed, divided-light doors with divided-light transoms that are positioned on the lower level below the arched windows. Nearly all of the building's windows and doors have been covered in plywood. Physical inspection of the interior reveals that most of the windows remain intact behind the plywood. The building's owner asserts that over ninety percent of the building's windows remain.

A brick projection holds the nine central bays of the façade, including the entrance that is framed by a flat cornice and concrete pilasters with a Greek key motif. Originally, divided-light, double-leaf doors topped by a divided-light transom flanked by divided-light sidelights marked the main entrance. The sidelights have been covered in plywood and the doors replaced with double-leaf metal doors with their upper lights covered in plywood. The transom has been covered in wood and plywood. The Abraham Lincoln medallion on the east side of the entrance is not original, but was in place as early as 1942 when a photograph of that year's graduating class shows the medallion. A stepped parapet crowns the central projection. At its center, just below the cornice, is an ornamental, cast-concrete shield with a torch and book motif; four cast concrete are symmetrically placed on the upper level. Windows on this projection are identical to those on the remainder of the façade, except for two tall narrow six-over-six sash that flank a nine-over-nine sash centered over the entrance.

At the building's west end, the basement and two full stories are visible as the parcel slopes downward. The west end elevation presents a large expanse of brick pierced in the center of the first and second floors by a pair of windows with vertically-laid brick lintels and concrete sills. Louvered wood vents top the uncovered second floor six-over-six windows. The first level windows are covered in plywood. The lowest level bays are single window and a door topped with a louvered wood vent; both are covered with plywood.

The rear, or south, elevation of the 1922 building prominently features the flat-roofed, brick auditorium wing extending from its center. Most of the wing is the same height as the main block, but it is one-story on a basement. It features large, nine-light, triple-hung rectangular windows with concrete cast stone sills. Windows are topped with segmental vertical brick arches on the upper level and smaller windows and doors at the basement on its west and east side elevations. Both side elevations have metal fire stairs that lead to doors under large windows. The area where this door is located has been bricked in suggesting that the door might have been wider at some time or that the window once extended the height of the other windows on the side elevations. A door under the metal stair appears to be modern and located in an area of the wall that was infilled with brick. Vinyl coping tops the rear of the auditorium section of the wing. A shorter, two-story, flat-roofed portion is at the rear (south) of the wing. Its east and west elevations feature a high brick parapet with vinyl coping. A tall, corbelled brick chimney rises from the interior of the auditorium wing.

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The rear elevation of the main block flanking the auditorium is eleven bays wide on each side of the wing. Windows on this rear elevation are identical to those on the façade although four on each side of the wing have been partially bricked. Two entrances, one on each side of the wing, consist of replacement, double-leaf, metal doors below paired nine-over-nine windows covered in plywood.

The east elevation of the 1922 building features a pair of uncovered nine-over-nine windows on the third floor. This end of the building connects to the 1954-1955 addition.

*James A. Whitted Junior High School (1954-1955 addition to original section)*

The three-story, Scotch bond brick addition was built onto the east end of the original building in 1954-1955 when the school was converted to a junior high school. It follows the overall T-shape form of the original school, but with a more modest, somewhat streamlined style. The elongated, flat-roof building has a brick foundation, faces north, and is topped by a flat roof with concrete coping. Ribbons of twenty-six metal, awning-style windows framed by continuous concrete lintels, sills, and end pilasters extend along the second and third levels, while twenty-four awning-style windows pierce the lower level where the west end is built into a grassy slope. Unless otherwise noted, most of the original windows remain intact and are covered in plywood.

The east end displays two square windows: one at the center of the third level and one at the center of the second level. This bay is framed in concrete banding that extends to the first level where there is no window.

The rear or south elevation features the full-height, two-story, flat-roofed gymnasium with south and north elevation parapets with concrete coping; the rear section of the gym, which is one bay wide, is shorter but also two stories. The east and west elevation features six bays that hold windows, except for the lower level southern bay, which holds a double metal door, a transom above, and a smaller window to the right (or north). All windows are framed in cast concrete trim like those found on the main block. A single tall window with concrete framing pierces the east and west elevations of the rear, two-story section. Nine windows framed in cast concrete trim are centered on the first and second levels of the south (rear) elevation of the gym. Concrete steps access a lower level, double-leaf metal door on the south end of the west elevation of the gym.

East of the gym, the rear or south, elevation of the main block features eight bays on each level. Window openings on the upper level are taller than those on the first and second levels, but all openings are covered in plywood. Windows are framed in continuous cast concrete trim. Two sets of double metal doors are on the lower level; the area east of the doors is obscured by overgrown vegetation. West of the gym, the rear, or south, elevation of the main block displays four bays on two levels with similar treatment.

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## Interior

*Note: The presence of asbestos and peeling lead paint prevent full documentation of the interior. Building plans, documentary photos, photos and videos taken in the last five years, as well as two site visits provide information as to the appearance of the interior.*

The interior has suffered vandalism and neglect, but very little alteration otherwise. The 1922 building's interior follows a central, double-loaded corridor plan extending the length of the school, with classrooms, offices, and restrooms flanking the corridor on each of the building's three levels. Finishes and features include some original tile floors, plaster and exposed brick walls, original tile in the bathrooms, and original divided-light and wood paneled doors. Flush-mounted and pendant-style fluorescent light fixtures are found throughout the interior. In the classrooms, original blackboards remain, as do original divided-light transoms over original paneled wood and divided-light doors. Slate stair treads date to 1952.

Like the original building, the 1954-1955 addition's interior follows a central, double-loaded corridor plan extending the length of the building with classrooms, offices, and restrooms flanking the corridor on each of the three levels. Finishes and features include some original tile floors, plaster and exposed brick walls, original tile in the bathrooms, and original divided-light and wood paneled doors. Flush-mounted and pendant-style fluorescent light fixtures are found throughout the interior. In the classrooms, original blackboards remain, as do original divided-light transoms over original paneled wood and divided-light doors.

## Greenhouse

Ca. 1960

### Contributing Structure

The greenhouse stands just south of the 1954-1955 addition and west of the gymnasium wing. The gable-roofed structure rests on a brick foundation has metal framing that holds synthetic panels on the sides and top.

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## Summary

Hillside Park High School meets National Register of Historic Places Criterion A in the areas of education and black ethnic heritage and Criterion C for architecture. The original section of the building dates to 1922 and was the first high school for African Americans in Durham, North Carolina. Located in the historic African American community of Hayti, the school chronicles the advancement of African American education in Durham during the early and mid-twentieth century in the context of a segregated school system. Hillside Park High School, which was renamed Hillside High School in 1941 and became James A. Whitted Elementary School in 1950 and James A. Whitted Junior High School in the mid-1950s, is a significant pre-integration school from a period in Durham when schools for African Americans fought to receive funding, materials, and buildings comparable to those afforded white schools. Its 1954-1955 addition resulted from the school's 1950 conversion to an elementary school, but also from the city board of education's efforts to satisfy a lawsuit that successfully challenged Durham's inequities in funding African American schools at a level similar to white schools. It is architecturally significant for the 1922 Classical Revival-style brick building, designed by architects Milburn, Heister, and Company, which displays a Greek key motif in the pilasters and flat cornice that surround the entrance, arched multi-light windows, and cast concrete elements like keystones and other decorative elements. Hillside Park High School holds significance on the local level for the period 1922 to 1970, the year city schools integrated. For its continued contribution to the education of African Americans in Durham during the period of segregated education that endured until 1970, Hillside Park High School satisfies Criteria Consideration G for properties less than fifty years of age or that achieved significance within the past fifty years.

## Historical Background

In 1882, the Durham public school system was established following a special bond election authorized the year before by the state legislature. Despite strong opposition by some, supporters approved the bonds by a wide margin. Under the legislative act, funds paid by white citizens applied to the white school, while taxes paid by African Americans were to be applied to a school for African American children. In the fall of 1882, the Morehead School, a facility for white children, opened its doors becoming the first public school in Durham.<sup>1</sup>

The City of Durham established Whitted School in 1887 as the first graded school for African Americans in North Carolina.<sup>2</sup> The school met in a church and a tobacco prize house before the construction of a dedicated building on Ramsey Street in 1893.<sup>3</sup>

During the late 1910s, Whitted School, East End School, and West End School served African American children in Durham, but only through the eighth grade.<sup>4</sup> Schools, both white and African American, were becoming

<sup>1</sup> Wyatt T. Dixon, "How Times Do Change: Public School Opposed," *Durham Sun*, January 16, 1976

<sup>2</sup> *Durham News*, June 6, 2012.

<sup>3</sup> "Whitted School: Ramsey Street," on Open Durham, <http://www.opendurham.org/buildings/whitted-school-ramsey-street-1893-1921>, accessed May 27, 2013.

<sup>4</sup> "Directory, Durham City Schools, 1917-1918," in the collection of Durham County Library.

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crowded as noted in the superintendent's report to the Durham Board of Education of March 7, 1918: "The present crowded conditions of some of the school buildings, and the more crowded conditions to be expected next year, make it imperative that the Board of Education should begin to provide additional school room."<sup>5</sup> In January 1919, the superintendent offered the board recommendations for easing overcrowding in the city schools. His proposal included construction of a new white high school and expansion of Fuller School, which was downtown. For African American schools he suggested that East End School and Whitted School be expanded. He concluded, "the three colored schools are sufficiently near the colored population to render unnecessary additional buildings for the colored people."<sup>6</sup> In May 1919, the school board formed a committee on buildings to make recommendations as to necessary alterations needed to Whitted School.<sup>7</sup>

During the 1910s, African American teachers and principals were paid much less than their white counterparts. For example, during the 1919-1920 school year, a first grade teacher at Fuller School, a white school, was paid \$810, while first grade teachers at Whitted School were paid anywhere from \$450 to \$480 per year. The principal of the white high school, F. H. Hallenbeck, was paid \$2,400, while W. G. Pearson, principal of Whitted School, which taught first grade through the high school level, was paid \$1,100.<sup>8</sup>

The discussions among the school board regarding a new building for African American students increased in 1920. At its March 4 meeting, the school board asked the city school superintendent to request architects Yancey Milburn, H. C. Linthicum, and William P. Rose to appear before the board at its next meeting "to present to the board any plans they may have to offer in reference to school buildings." At its June 4 meeting, C. C. Spaulding, Chairman of the Committee of Colored Citizens, submitted a letter to the board concerning the location of a new school. Spaulding's committee "recommended that the Board locate the new school for colored at Hillside park, or if not possible to locate within the park, locate same on the street across from the park." The board moved to secure an option on the property "in the very near future."<sup>9</sup>

On April 29, 1921, Whitted School burned and on December 15 of that year, John Sprunt Hill and his wife sold the city board of education a 4.48-acre parcel to construct a new school at the corner of Pine Street (now South Roxboro Street) and Umstead Street for \$100 and "conveyance of Whitted School property in exchange." The parcel was part of a larger fourteen-acre lot the Hills acquired from the heirs of J. N. Umstead in 1919. The Hills had already given the city the other ten acres to establish a park just to the south of the future school site.<sup>10</sup>

The city contracted with architects Milburn, Heister, and Company to design the new school on Umstead Street. Milburn Heister, and Company comprised founder Frank Pierce Milburn (1868-1926), Michael Heister (1871-

<sup>5</sup> Durham City Board of Education Minutes, March 7, 1918.

<sup>6</sup> Durham City Board Of Education Minutes, January 2, 1919.

<sup>7</sup> Durham City Board of Education Minutes, May 5, 1919.

<sup>8</sup> Durham City Board of Education Minutes, May 5, 1919.

<sup>9</sup> Durham City Board of Education Minutes, March 4, 1920 and June 4, 1920.

<sup>10</sup> Durham County Deed Book 57, page 11; Richard B. Westin, "A History of the Durham School System: 1882-1933," M. A. thesis, Duke University, 1960, 110-111; Durham County Deed Book 62, page 516.

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1948), and Milburn's son Thomas Yancey Milburn (1890-1970). Founded in 1909 with the elder Milburn and Heister as its principals, the Washington, D. C. firm became one of the most prolific in the capital city. Milburn, Heister, and Company established an office in Durham and designed numerous buildings in the city, including Union Station in 1901 (demolished); the 1916 Durham County courthouse, one of twenty-six courthouses in North Carolina the firm designed; First Presbyterian Church, also built in 1916; Lincoln Hospital (demolished) in 1924; and the Durham Auditorium (now the Carolina Theatre) in 1926.<sup>11</sup>

In a letter dated June 1, 1922, to Milburn, Heister, and Company, Edwin D. Pusey, Superintendent of Durham City Schools, reported on the progress of the construction of two schools the firm designed: Hillside Park High School and Durham High School:

The two new school buildings that you planned for us have well advanced towards completion. We have found your plans and specifications very easy to follow and, so far, nothing has risen to cause any disagreement between the contractors and the Building Committee of the Board of Education. This I consider due to the extreme care with which the plans and specifications were drawn. The buildings, I believe, are going to be very satisfactory in every respect and mean to our city quite an advancement in school architecture.<sup>12</sup>

The year Hillside Park High School, named for the park land donated by Annie and John Sprunt Hill, was completed, the number of children attending school in Durham stood at 3,778 white students and 2,055 black students.<sup>13</sup>

The September 7, 1922 edition of the *Durham Morning Herald* reported that Hillside Park High School was to open the following Monday with 1,000 students in a new twenty-room building with an auditorium. The September 10 edition of the newspaper noted that the school opening would be delayed because construction was behind schedule.<sup>14</sup>

On September 15, 1922, the *Durham Morning Herald* announced that Hillside Park High School would open on Monday September 18 and that "desks have been purchased from Raleigh and have already been placed in the building." The paper reported 900 students were expected the first week but that number would likely grow to over one thousand. The article went on to say that "all of the [African American] high school children of the city attend school in this building." It was, the paper remarked, the largest school for African Americans in Durham.

<sup>11</sup> "Milburn, Heister, and Company (1909-1934)," North Carolina Architects and Builders: A Bibliographic Dictionary, [www.ncarchitects.lib.ncsu.edu/people/P000011](http://www.ncarchitects.lib.ncsu.edu/people/P000011), accessed May 27, 2013; Lawrence Wodehouse, "Frank Pierce Milburn," *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, Volume 4, ed. By William Stevens Powell (Chapel Hill: University North Carolina Press, 1991), 268-269.

<sup>12</sup> *Selections from the Latest Work of Milburn, Heister, & Co., Architects, Washington, D. C., 1922* (Washington: no publisher, 1922) 17.

<sup>13</sup> Durham County Board of Education Minutes, July 3, 1922.

<sup>14</sup> *Durham Morning Herald*, September 7, 1922; *Durham Morning Herald*, September 10, 1922.

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Finally, the paper described the building as “one of the most modern and conveniently arranged in the city’s system and was erected to take the place of the one destroyed by fire.”<sup>15</sup> The total cost of construction was \$136,500.<sup>16</sup>

The construction of Hillside Park High School was part of a program of school building for African Americans taking place across the state. The fall that the Durham school opened, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction held a conference on Negro education at Shaw University in Raleigh. In attendance were 250 African American leaders and “forty-six influential white persons.” Among the accomplishments cited in a report of the previous year’s activities was that “new, well-built, fireproof brick buildings at various institutions going up and being furnished have tremendously stimulated the Negro thought and life of the State.” According to the report, a little over one million dollars were spent annually during 1921-1922 for “the construction of modern schoolhouses for Negroes.”<sup>17</sup>

Hillside Park High School’s first principal, William Gaston Pearson (1858-1947), had served as the principal of Whitted School.<sup>18</sup> Born into slavery in Durham, he formed part of the six-man group who founded North Carolina Mutual in 1898. He also helped organize the Fraternal Bank and Trust Company, Southern Fidelity Bank and Surety Company, and Banker’s Fire Insurance Company. Pearson grew wealthy from his business dealings and was purported to own over 125 houses in the city. For most of the twentieth century, he and his wife Minnie Pearson, a teacher, lived in a grand dwelling at 808 Fayetteville Street, where most of the city’s elite African American families owned houses.<sup>19</sup> He retired as principal in 1940.<sup>20</sup>

The principal’s report submitted annually to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction provide information about Hillside Park High School’s facilities and the curriculum. For the years 1924-1925, Pearson reported that the school year began on September 3 and ended on May 29. The school enrolled students in grades eight through eleven. Sixteen students graduated that year. The school day began at 8:00 a.m. with chapel and ended at 2:45. Classes included science, Latin, civics, algebra, biology, English, and manual training

<sup>15</sup> *Durham Herald-Sun*, September 15, 1922.

<sup>16</sup> “Hillside Park High School,” High School Principal’s Annual Report, State Department of Public Instruction, Year 1924-1925, State Archives, Raleigh.

<sup>17</sup> Report on the State Conference on Negro Education, November 3-4, 1922, in the records of the Division of Negro Education, Department of Public Instruction, State Archives, Raleigh.

<sup>18</sup> W. G. Pearson Elementary School and W. G. Pearson Magnet Middle School are named for him.

<sup>19</sup> 1940 Census of the Population, [http://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?rank=1&new=1&MSAV=1&msT=1&gss=angs-g&gsfn\\_x=1&gsln=Pearson&gsln\\_x=1&msydy=1940&msypn\\_ftp=Durham%2c+Durham%2c+North+Carolina%2c+USA&msypn=20488&msypn\\_PInfo=8-%7c0%7c1652393%7c0%7c2%7c3245%7c36%7c0%7c931%7c20488%7c0%7c&cpxt=0&catBucket=rstp&uidh=5c3&cp=0&pcat=ROOT\\_CATEGORY&h=154826159&db=1940usfedcen&indiv=1](http://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?rank=1&new=1&MSAV=1&msT=1&gss=angs-g&gsfn_x=1&gsln=Pearson&gsln_x=1&msydy=1940&msypn_ftp=Durham%2c+Durham%2c+North+Carolina%2c+USA&msypn=20488&msypn_PInfo=8-%7c0%7c1652393%7c0%7c2%7c3245%7c36%7c0%7c931%7c20488%7c0%7c&cpxt=0&catBucket=rstp&uidh=5c3&cp=0&pcat=ROOT_CATEGORY&h=154826159&db=1940usfedcen&indiv=1), accessed June 1, 2013; “808 Fayetteville Street,” Durham Urban Renewal Records, <http://library.digitalnc.org/cdm/compoundobject/collection/durham/id/1335/rec/1>, accessed June 1, 2013.

<sup>20</sup> “Hillside History Book,” (published by *The Hillside Chronicle*), June, 1979, 6-7.

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courses as well as sewing and cooking. The report described the school as two stories and a basement containing thirty-one classrooms. "Open windows" provided ventilation and steam heated the school.<sup>21</sup>

The report for 1925-1926 gave the number gave the number of enrolled as 343, with an average daily attendance of 302. Among the thirty-eight graduates that year was Pauline (Pauli) Murray, who would go on to become a women's rights and civil rights activist as well as the first female African American priest ordained in the Episcopal church. Principal Pearson reported that Durham Hosiery Mills had loaned the school a hosiery mill knitting machine for its manual training curriculum. Sports offered included football and baseball for boys and basketball for boys and girls.<sup>22</sup>

For the 1935-1936 academic year, the school employed twenty-seven teachers, eight men and nineteen women, teaching 824 students in grades eight through eleven. The senior class consisted of seventy-three students. Principal Pearson reported the school had twenty-eight classrooms, a library with 2,915 books, laboratories for the sciences, home economics, and manual training, an auditorium, and a lunchroom. Courses taught included English, public speaking, algebra, geometry, citizenship, European and American history, Negro history, for which there was no textbook, Latin, French, sciences, bookkeeping, typewriting, stenography, commercial law, industrial geography, agriculture, knitting and looping, art, industrial arts, and music.<sup>23</sup>

The principal's report for 1937-1938 indicates that was the year the twelfth grade was added to Hillside Park High School. With the addition of another grade, enrollment climbed to 861 students that year.<sup>24</sup>

William McKinley McElrath (1896-1965) took over as principal in 1940. Born in Tennessee, he received his master's degree from Columbia University. Prior to taking the position at Hillside Park High School, he served as a principal in Kinston, North Carolina.<sup>25</sup> For the 1941-1942 school year, "Park" was dropped from the school

<sup>21</sup> "Hillside Park High School," High School Principal's Annual Report, State Department of Public Instruction, Year 1924-1925, State Archives, Raleigh.

<sup>22</sup> "Hillside Park High School," High School Principal's Annual Report, State Department of Public Instruction, Year 1925-1926, State Archives, Raleigh.

<sup>23</sup> "Hillside Park High School," High School Principal's Annual Report, State Department of Public Instruction, Year 1935-1936, State Archives, Raleigh.

<sup>24</sup> "Hillside Park High School," High School Principal's Annual Report, State Department of Public Instruction, Year 1937-1938, State Archives, Raleigh.

<sup>25</sup> "Hillside History Book," 7; 1940 Census of the Population, [http://interactive.ancestry.com/2442/m-t0627-02936-00462/152914336?backurl=http%3a%2f%2fsearch.ancestry.com%2fcgi-bin%2fse.dll%3frank%3d1%26new%3d1%26MSAV%3d1%26msT%3d1%26gss%3dangs-g%26gsfn%3dWilliam%26gsfn\\_x%3d1%26gsln%3dMcElrath%26gsln\\_x%3d1%26msypn\\_ftp%3dDurham%252c%2bDurham%252c%2bNorth%2bCarolina%252c%2bUSA%26msypn%3d20488%26msypn\\_PInfo%3d8-%2527c0%2527c1652393%2527c0%2527c2%2527c3245%2527c36%2527c0%2527c931%2527c20488%2527c0%2527c%26cpxt%3d0%26catBucket%3drstp%26uidh%3d5c3%26cp%3d0%26pcat%3dROOT\\_CATEGORY%26h%3d152914336%26db%3d1940u-sfedcen%26indiv%3d1&ssrc=&backlabel=ReturnRecord](http://interactive.ancestry.com/2442/m-t0627-02936-00462/152914336?backurl=http%3a%2f%2fsearch.ancestry.com%2fcgi-bin%2fse.dll%3frank%3d1%26new%3d1%26MSAV%3d1%26msT%3d1%26gss%3dangs-g%26gsfn%3dWilliam%26gsfn_x%3d1%26gsln%3dMcElrath%26gsln_x%3d1%26msypn_ftp%3dDurham%252c%2bDurham%252c%2bNorth%2bCarolina%252c%2bUSA%26msypn%3d20488%26msypn_PInfo%3d8-%2527c0%2527c1652393%2527c0%2527c2%2527c3245%2527c36%2527c0%2527c931%2527c20488%2527c0%2527c%26cpxt%3d0%26catBucket%3drstp%26uidh%3d5c3%26cp%3d0%26pcat%3dROOT_CATEGORY%26h%3d152914336%26db%3d1940u-sfedcen%26indiv%3d1&ssrc=&backlabel=ReturnRecord), accessed June 1, 2013.

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name and over 1,000 students were enrolled.<sup>26</sup> The curriculum expanded in the 1940s, with offerings such as urban family living, auto servicing, sheet metal, vocational woodwork, mechanical drawing, and a class called Negro Makers of History.<sup>27</sup>

In 1944, the Southern Association of College and Secondary Schools evaluated Hillside High School, including its facilities, curriculum, and teachers. Of the building, the report indicated that "space is woefully inadequate" for an enrollment of what was by then one thousand students. Among the needs were a gymnasium, additional playground space, and workrooms. Concerning the school site, the report noted that "streets surrounding the building should be paved [because] at present, the dust is very offensive on dry days."<sup>28</sup>

In 1947, Principal McElrath resigned and Harold M. Holmes replaced him. A native of Greensboro, Holmes, like McElrath, received his master's degree from Columbia University. He organized the first guidance department at Hillside High School and served as principal when Hillside High School moved to the James A. Whitted Elementary School building in 1950.<sup>29</sup>

In July 1950, Durham City Schools Superintendent L. Stacy Weaver announced that Hillside High School would move to James A. Whitted Elementary School, which had been constructed on Concord Street in 1935, and James A. Whitted Elementary School would occupy the Hillside High School building.<sup>30</sup>

On November 4, 1952, a four million dollar bond issue was passed to fund several projects at African American schools, including an addition at James A. Whitted Elementary School, formerly Hillside High School.<sup>31</sup> The board hired architectural firm Hackney and Knott to prepare plans and specifications for the addition at a fee of five percent of the bid price.<sup>32</sup> In March 1953, architects Hackney and Knott presented preliminary plans for the addition to the school board.<sup>33</sup> In May 1953, the *Durham Morning Herald* reported that work to convert James A. Whitted Elementary School to a junior high school was about to begin. The plan was to add classrooms, a library, gymnasium, laboratories, and a practical arts room.<sup>34</sup> By July of that year, final plans were ready and the school board advertised for bids on the project.<sup>35</sup> In November 1953, C. A. Herrin was chosen as general contractor, Arrow Heating and Plumbing as the plumbing contractor, Alliance Company as the heating and ventilating

<sup>26</sup> "Hillside Park High School," High School Principal's Annual Report, State Department of Public Instruction, Year 1941-1942, State Archives, Raleigh.

<sup>27</sup> "Hillside Park High School," High School Principal's Annual Report, State Department of Public Instruction, Years 1942-1943, 1943-1944, 1945-1946, State Archives, Raleigh.

<sup>28</sup> "Hillside High School, Durham," Evaluation of Schools, Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools: 1944, Division of Negro Education, State Department of Public Instruction, State Archives, Raleigh.

<sup>29</sup> "Hillside History Book," 7.

<sup>30</sup> *The Carolina Times*, July 22, 1950; Durham City Board of Education Minutes, July 17, 1950.

<sup>31</sup> Durham City Board of Education Minutes, November 10, 1952.

<sup>32</sup> Durham City Board of Education Minutes, December 9, 1952.

<sup>33</sup> Durham City Board of Education Minutes, March 9, 1953.

<sup>34</sup> *Durham Morning Herald*, May 14, 1953.

<sup>35</sup> Durham City Board of Education Minutes, July 23, 1953.

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contractor, and Thomerson Electric as the electrical contractor.<sup>36</sup> The school board minutes for April 22, 1955 report “the building has been completed in accordance with [the architect’s] plans and specifications.”<sup>37</sup>

In 1955, civil defense sirens were installed on the school.<sup>38</sup> In August of that year, the school board sold a two-story house adjacent to the building that had been used for home economics classes to Ulysses Keith.<sup>39</sup> The 1955-1956 school year started with forty-one teachers at James A. Whitted Junior High School.<sup>40</sup>

In the summer of 1968, renovations were made to the library at James A. Whitted Junior High School.<sup>41</sup> In April 1970, plans were made to enlarge the cafeteria.<sup>42</sup> Those plans were likely never carried out because the city schools were integrated in 1970 and James A. Whitted Junior High School was closed.

From the time James A. Whitted Junior High School occupied the East Umstead Street building until closing in 1970, James M. Schooler Sr. served as principal. Born in 1904, he earned a degree in English from Wittenburg College. Schooler began his career in education as a biology teacher at Hillside High School. He died in 2009 at the age of 104.<sup>43</sup>

The anti-poverty agency Operation Breakthrough leased office space at the school from the 1970s until the 1990s. In 1994, the school became county property through a land exchange with Durham Public Schools. It has been vacant since 2005.

## Education/Black Ethnic Heritage/Social History Context

Public elementary education became available to African Americans in the South during the early twentieth century largely because of campaigns by African Americans and Northern philanthropists, most famously the Rosenwald Fund, started in 1917 by Julius Rosenwald, president and later chairman of Sears, Roebuck and Company. By the time the fund ceased operations in 1932 it had built 813 schools in North Carolina, including eighteen in Durham County.<sup>44</sup>

Despite this movement toward universal education for African American school children, during the 1920s all school systems in the state maintained separate educational facilities for white and African American students. Throughout the state, campaigns for equalization—in materials and facilities—were waged by parents, clergy, and

<sup>36</sup> Durham City Board of Education Minutes, November 9, 1953.

<sup>37</sup> Durham City Board of Education Minutes, April 22, 1955.

<sup>38</sup> Durham City Board of Education Minutes, July 11, 1955.

<sup>39</sup> Durham City Board of Education Minutes, August 1, 1955.

<sup>40</sup> Durham City Board of Education Minutes, September 12, 1955.

<sup>41</sup> Durham City Board of Education Minutes, July 5, 1968.

<sup>42</sup> Durham City Board of Education Minutes, April 6, 1970.

<sup>43</sup> *Durham Herald-Sun*, January 5, 2009.

<sup>44</sup> Thomas W. Hanchett, “Saving the South’s Rosenwald Schools,” [www.rosenwaldplans.org](http://www.rosenwaldplans.org). Accessed May 25, 2013.

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students.<sup>45</sup> In the early 1940s, spending for the education of African Americans increased statewide, somewhat, but it did not approach the per capita funding for white students, so that “separate but equal” remained inherently unequal.<sup>46</sup>

School construction and improvement received a big boost in 1949 with the first issuance of bonds for the construction and repair of schools by the North Carolina General Assembly. Each county’s grant was based on student population in 1947-1948 and funds were deducted for administration and expenses. In total, fifty million dollars was awarded to county and city school systems statewide.<sup>47</sup> Speaking to a group of educators in Raleigh about the school bonds, Governor Kerr Scott remarked, “We are going to have the money to bring up the level of grammar schools and high schools for the minority race.” The state legislature would allocate more money for school construction in 1953 and in 1961.<sup>48</sup>

On May 16, 1949, a group of Durham parents and guardians of African American students filed a lawsuit known as *Blue et al v. Durham Public Schools*. The suit, said to be the first for school funding equalization in the state, charged that school facilities and instructional personnel for African American children were inferior to those for white students. The suit identified as the defendants the Durham Public School District; the city board of education; L. Stacy Weaver, the city schools superintendent; J. L. Woodard, business manager of the city schools; the North Carolina Board of Education; and Clyde Erwin, Superintendent of Public Instruction. The Durham City Board of Education met in a special session on May 20 to “employ a counsel to defend a law suit instituted against the Board and school officials by certain Negroes of the City of Durham, alleging differences in school facilities furnished for whites and negroes.” The board voted to hire Percy Reade and W. B. Umstead to serve as its attorneys.<sup>49</sup>

The claims of the plaintiffs in *Blue* were supported by the 1950 “Survey of the Public Schools of Durham, North Carolina,” that concluded “the City of Durham has invested a grossly disproportionate amount of money in its Negro school and consequently has not purchased for the Negro children of the city educational opportunities equal to those provided for its white children.”<sup>50</sup> Pioneering African American educator, J. Rupert Picott, the

<sup>45</sup> Sarah Caroline Thuesen, “Classes of Citizenship: The Culture and Politics of Black Public Education in North Carolina, 1919-1960” (Ph.D dissertation, University of North Carolina, 2003), 248.

<sup>46</sup> Jeffrey J. Crow, Paul D. Escott, and Flora J. Hatley, *A History of African Americans in North Carolina* (Raleigh: North Carolina Division of Archives and History, 1992), 166.

<sup>47</sup> “Survey Committee Organization, etc. 1949-1950,” in the Records of the North Carolina Board of Education, Teacher Allotment and General Control Division, General Correspondence, State Archives, Raleigh, N.C.

<sup>48</sup> *The Carolina Times*, October 15, 1949; *The Durham Sun*, August 15, 1955; “Editorial by Governor Terry Sanford for Southern Architect,” *Southern Architect*, September 1962, 18.

<sup>49</sup> Durham City Board of Education Minutes, May 20, 1949.

<sup>50</sup> J. Rupert Picott, Stephen Junius Wright, and Ellis O. Knox, “A Survey of the Public Schools of Durham, North Carolina,” Durham: no publisher, June 1950, 8.

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survey's main author, worked as the Director of Evaluation for the National Education Association, which likely sponsored the survey.<sup>51</sup>

In a judgment rendered on January 26, 1951, district court justice Johnson J. Hayes ruled that evidence failed to establish any discrimination by state officials, but that local officials did discriminate entitling the plaintiffs to injunctive relief against local officials. At the city school board meeting following Judge Hayes' decision, attorney Umstead advised the group that it was useless to appeal to the Circuit Court for a reversal of the judgment. He also suggested to the board that it "not let any further contracts for school buildings until sufficient funds were at hand to do those things specifically discussed in the judgment." As a result of the attorney's advice, the board instructed the superintendent to ask architect H. Raymond Weeks to withdraw bids for remodeling all-white Durham High School. The board was scheduled to open those bids on February 27, 1951.<sup>52</sup>

The "Negro Lawsuit," as it is referred to in the Durham City Board of Education minutes, spurred construction at several African American schools.<sup>53</sup> At its April 9, 1951 meeting, the board approved plans to spend over \$1.1 million dollars to construct additions at James A. Whitted Junior High and Burton Elementary school and to build a new elementary school for African Americans. The only project listed for white schools was an auditorium and music room for Durham High School.<sup>54</sup>

In 1954, the United States Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. the Board of Education of Topeka* dismantled the legal basis for racial segregation in schools and other public facilities. Whites in Durham did not explicitly express defiance to *Brown* but there was no indication that segregation would come to an end in the near future. In June 1955, the Durham City School Board formed a Segregation Committee "to study the segregation question" and appointed F. L. Fuller and H. A. Rhinehart, two of its most conservative members, to the committee.<sup>55</sup>

In July 1955, Rev. William Fuller, President of the Durham chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and J. H. Wheeler, of the Durham Committee on Negro Affairs (DCNA), a political action organization, presented the school board with a petition containing 740 signatures. The petition asked for the desegregation of Durham schools. The board chair "thanked the group for its appearance and its interest in this subject." The board minutes reported, "the board took no action on the petition."<sup>56</sup>

<sup>51</sup> "Pioneer Black Virginia Educator Dies," (Hampton Roads) *Daily Press*, October 13, 1989, [http://articles.dailypress.com/1989-10-13/news/8910130201\\_1\\_black-teachers-black-history-month-history-week](http://articles.dailypress.com/1989-10-13/news/8910130201_1_black-teachers-black-history-month-history-week), accessed July 11, 2013.

<sup>52</sup> *The Carolina Times*, November 5, 1949; "Blue et al v. Durham Public Schools," in the vertical files of the North Carolina Collection of the Durham County Public Library; Durham City Board of Education Minutes, February 6, 1951.

<sup>53</sup> Durham City Board of Education, March 27, 1951.

<sup>54</sup> Durham City Board of Education Minutes, April 9, 1951.

<sup>55</sup> Durham City Board of Education Minutes, June 20, 1955.

<sup>56</sup> Durham City Board of Education Minutes, July 11, 1955.

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In August 1955, the Segregation Committee provided a report on *Brown*, as well as recent court cases in Clarendon County, South Carolina, and Prince Edward County, Virginia. The committee members reported “that since [the committee] will not have had time by the opening of the school in September of this year to complete their studies with reference to the many problems arising as a result of the decisions of the Court, they recommend that the schools of the City of Durham commence operation in September 1955 with practices of enrollment and assignment of students similar to those in use during the past school year.” The board accepted and approved the committee’s report.<sup>57</sup>

Many Southern school districts, including Durham City and County districts, adopted a state court-approved approach of “freedom of choice” as a way to avoid desegregation. Freedom of choice did not require integration but instead turned control of enrollment and the student assignment over to local school boards. Even after a 1955 United States Supreme Court order that required school systems to desegregate in a timely manner so as to comply with *Brown*, states, including North Carolina, pushed for voluntary desegregation. In 1956, North Carolina’s Pearsall Plan, as it came to be known, was instituted statewide as a way for parents of school children to legally ignore the Supreme Court orders of 1954 and 1955. This amendment to the state constitution allowed parents to withdraw their children from schools where children of another race attended and provided them with state grants to pay tuitions at private schools.<sup>58</sup>

In August 1956, the Durham City School Board issued a freedom of choice plan that required parents to fill out an application for their desired school.<sup>59</sup> In a move that ensured that African American students would not be granted admission to white schools, the board authorized the superintendent to make changes in pupil assignment for several reasons, including to serve the best interests of the pupil or for the most efficient operation of the school. The board noted that all such assignments were subject to the approval of the board.<sup>60</sup>

Most whites in Durham supported the status quo in regard to segregation. In August 1957, Horton Poe, who was white, presented the board a petition with 4,311 signatures stating that the document urged the board to “continue to operate the schools in the same manner as heretofore.” The petition stated “any deviation in the present operations of our schools will result in mass abandonment of public supported schools.”<sup>61</sup>

On September 3, 1957, Evelyn McKissick, along with her attorney husband, Floyd McKissick Sr., who successfully sued the University of North Carolina in 1951 for admission to its law school, filed a transfer application on behalf of their daughter, Joycelyn Daszelle McKissick, for transfer from Hillside High School “to high school nearest residence,” which happened to be all-white Durham High School. The board decided that “it would be unwise psychologically and otherwise to reassign one applicant from Hillside to attempt adjustment to more than 1,200 pupils at Durham High School.” At the same meeting where the McKissicks requested a transfer,

<sup>57</sup> Durham City School Board Minutes, August 1, 1955.

<sup>58</sup> Jeffrey J. Crow, Paul D. Escott, and Flora J. Hatley, *A History of African Americans in North Carolina*, 170.

<sup>59</sup> Durham City School Board Minutes, August 2, 1956.

<sup>60</sup> Durham City School Board Minutes, September 10, 1956.

<sup>61</sup> Durham City School Board Minutes, August 12, 1957.

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eight James A. Whitted Junior High School students applied to all-white Carr Junior High School, but were denied.<sup>62</sup> Even after five attorneys representing the nine students appeared before the school board on September 17, 1957 to appeal the decision, the board stuck with their original ruling denying the transfers.<sup>63</sup>

Two African American women led the legal fight to integrate city schools in Durham after *Brown*. On May 12, 1958, Evelyn McKissick and Rachel Richardson brought a class action suit on behalf of their daughters, Joycelyn McKissick and Elaine Richardson, against the Durham City Board of Education and the North Carolina State Board of Education to attend the public schools of the City of Durham without discrimination based on race or color. The women had the support of the NAACP and the DCNA and were represented by five lawyers, including Floyd B. McKissick Sr., Eveylyn's husband and Joycelyn's father. A judge dismissed the suit claiming the plaintiffs had not made sufficient efforts to integrate schools.<sup>64</sup>

Also in 1958, Rencher N. Harris became the first African American member of the city school board. As the only member of color on the board, Harris faced the difficult challenge of appeasing both whites and African Americans and chose to maintain a conservative approach by not pushing the board to change its policies on integration.<sup>65</sup>

In the spring of 1959, the Durham City School Board launched a plan to use the old Morehead School to ease overcrowding in the African American schools. On April 13, 1959, a delegation of over twenty people representing the Durham Negro Parent Teacher Association (PTA), Whitted School PTA, Pearson School Committee, the Durham branch of the NAACP, Burton School PTA, and the Durham Committee on Negro Affairs appeared before the city school board. The group, whose spokesmen included the dean of North Carolina College (now North Carolina Central University), the African American college located just to the east of James A. Whitted Junior High School, requested the board not send African American students to Morehead School but instead allow African American and white students to attend any conveniently located school. Frank Fuller, school board chair, responded "the city is not ready for integration." An editorial in the local African American paper remarked of the meeting's outcome "for the most part, the City Board of Education is composed of die hards who are living in the dead past when respect to wishes of Negroes was considered against southern traditions. The Board will apparently therefore move in the direction of the new era only when the power of a federal court forces it to do so."<sup>66</sup>

After much pressure from the African American community, as well as the federal government, which was calling on local school districts to implement the *Brown* ruling, on August 28, 1959, the Durham City School Board

<sup>62</sup> Durham City School Board Minutes, September 3, 1957.

<sup>63</sup> Durham City School Board Minutes, September 17, 1957.

<sup>64</sup> *The Herald-Sun*, September 2, 2009; *McKissick v. Durham City Board of Education*, www.leagle.com. [http://www.leagle.com/decision/1959179176FSupp3\\_1178](http://www.leagle.com/decision/1959179176FSupp3_1178), accessed September 3, 2013.

<sup>65</sup> Sarah Elizabeth Reckhow, "What we considered the best: Making the Best of Integration at Hillside High School," an essay presented to the Committee on Degrees in Social Studies, Harvard College, March 2002, 42-43.

<sup>66</sup> *The Carolina Times*, April 19, 1959; Durham City School Board minutes, April 13, 1959.

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agreed to reassign seven African American students to white schools: Lucy Jones and Anita Brame, who moved from James A. Whitted Junior High School to Brogden Junior High, were the first to integrate; Claudette Brame went from Hillside High School to Durham High School; Henry Vickers and Andree McKissick, Joycelyn McKissick's sister, were admitted to Julian Carr Junior High; Sylvester Cary Williams and Amos Augustic Williams, both students at James A. Whitted Junior High, enrolled at East Durham Junior High School.<sup>67</sup>

On September 17, 1959, Floyd McKissick Sr., who had first challenged the board to integrate city schools, and his three attorneys appeared before a special session of the school board, which was considering his motion to admit his daughter, Joycelyn McKissick, to Durham High School. Members of the school board offered several reasons why Miss McKissick should remain at Hillside High School, including that teachers at Hillside were better paid and better trained than those at Durham High School; that the curriculum at the two schools was the same; that many students in the city did not attend the school closest to their home; and that Durham High School was overcrowded. Despite some opposition, McKissick's request was approved.<sup>68</sup> In 1963, Floyd McKissick Jr. and Charmaine McKissick followed their sister's lead when the Durham City School Board finally extended integration to the elementary level.<sup>69</sup> While the instances of integration in Durham in 1959 represented progress on the road to desegregation, the board of education rejected applications from 217 African Americans seeking to attend predominantly white schools.<sup>70</sup>

In August 1961, the school board rejected 133 applications from African Americans for transfer to white schools. The board's lone African American member, Rencher N. Harris, told a local newspaper, "I'm not going to say that the board is purposely trying to block integration. I'll just let the figures and their actions speak for themselves."<sup>71</sup>

In July 1962, twenty of 110 African American students who applied to white schools were granted admission. That was the most up to that point following *Brown*.<sup>72</sup>

As a result of the delaying tactics employed by state and local governments, only 2.3 percent of African American students were attending majority white schools in the South ten years after *Brown*.<sup>73</sup> In May 1964, the *New York Times* reported that in North Carolina, the state with the highest population of African American students in its

<sup>67</sup> Durham City Board of Education Minutes, August 28, 1959.

<sup>68</sup> Durham City Board of Education Minutes, September 17, 1959.

<sup>69</sup> *Durham Herald Sun*, June 1, 2010.

<sup>70</sup> Amanda Truelove, "The History of Education in Durham, 1950," Digital Durham Final Paper, <https://web.duke.edu/digitaldurham/AmandaTruelove/1950DurhamSchoolsPaper.pdf>, accessed May 25, 2013; Durham City School Board minutes, September 17, 1959.

<sup>71</sup> *The Carolina Times*, August 26, 1961.

<sup>72</sup> *The Carolina Times*, July 28, 1962.

<sup>73</sup> McDonough, Molly, "Making Brown Real: A North Carolina Family Fought Threats and Intimidation After Suing to Integrate Schools," *American Bar Association Journal*, April 1, 2004. [www.abjournal.com/magazine/making\\_brown\\_real/](http://www.abjournal.com/magazine/making_brown_real/), accessed May 25, 2013.

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public education system, about 30 percent of the total school population, only .537 percent attended desegregated schools.<sup>74</sup>

The federal government employed measures to ensure that local school boards complied with *Brown*. When the Civil Rights Act of 1964 became law it tied compliance with *Brown* to local governments' access to federal money, including money for local school funding. In *Green v. School Board of New Kent County* in 1968, the U. S. Supreme Court ruled that "freedom of choice" plans did not help establish an integrated school system.<sup>75</sup>

In February 1970, plaintiffs in a case against the Durham City Schools filed to abandon the freedom of choice plan. On May 28, Judge Stanley of the U. S. Middle District Court ordered that the city school board "take no further steps under freedom of choice, and directed the attorneys for the plaintiffs and the attorneys for the defendants of the desegregation case to try and get together on a plan for complete desegregation of Durham City Schools." Stanley ordered the plan be submitted to the court Monday, June 22, 1970.<sup>76</sup>

On June 14, 1970, the redistricting plan for Durham city schools that would integrate its schools was published in the *Durham Morning Herald*. According to the plan, some elementary and junior high school zones put white students into predominantly black schools.<sup>77</sup>

At its July 13 meeting, school board chair, Dr. Theodore R. Speigner, who was African American remarked:

I can say without equivocation that all members of the Board have worked diligently to prepare a tentative plan for the desegregation of Durham's public schools. It is true that at times some expressed hope that [the] "freedom of choice" plan under which the Durham City Schools had operated for several years would be effective in 1970-1971, and that we should wait for the court to declare openly the freedom of choice plan as void.<sup>78</sup>

On July 14, 1970, Judge Stanley approved the desegregation plan with a few changes.<sup>79</sup>

The 1970-1971 school year marked the first time that Durham City Schools were fully integrated, but also an end to the tenure of a school building with deep roots in the city's African American community. While integration was hard fought and long overdue, it meant that many buildings associated with African American education were abandoned or repurposed, creating a disconnect between the community's history and its material culture. The

<sup>74</sup> Katherine Paige Ohale, "The Strange Career of Freedom of Choice: the Story of the Johnston County, North Carolina Schools" (Honors Essay, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2007), 32-33.

<sup>75</sup> *Green v. County School Board of New Kent County* (No. 695), [http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/historics/USSC\\_CR\\_0391\\_0430\\_ZO.html](http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/historics/USSC_CR_0391_0430_ZO.html), accessed July 31, 2013.

<sup>76</sup> Minutes of the Durham City Board of Education, June 8, 1970.

<sup>77</sup> Reckhow, 53-54.

<sup>78</sup> Minutes of the Durham City Board of Education, July 13, 1970.

<sup>79</sup> Reckhow, 53-54.

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Hillside Park High School  
Durham County, NC

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continued allegiance to Hillside Park High School and its successors that occupied the building on East Umstead Street is a testament to the school's vital role in the history of the African American community in Durham.

## Architecture Context

The original portion of Hillside Park High School takes inspiration from the Classical Revival style that was frequently applied to school buildings in North Carolina during the 1910s and 1920s. The long, horizontal brick building displays restrained classical elements such as the cast concrete stylized Greek key element around the entrance and the cast concrete panels on the projecting front bay. The Classical Revival style enjoyed widespread and long-lasting popularity after the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, which promoted a renewed interest in classical forms. Classical Revival remained popular for public buildings into the 1950s.

The city of Durham retains numerous historic school buildings. The city's oldest school building is the East Durham Graded School, which became the Y. E. Smith School in 1925. Located on South Driver Street, the two-and-a-half-story brick building with a low-hipped roof and granite lintels was built in 1909-1910 following the design of Fred Githins of the New York City firm of Tilton and Githins. In 1920, two wings were added to the rear. Soon after those additions were completed, the space between the wings was infilled with a gym/auditorium. The building was recently renovated and will be returned to its original function as a school in the fall of 2013.<sup>80</sup>

Watts Street School (now George Watts Elementary School) at 704 Watts Street is the oldest school building still functioning in its original capacity. The original building dates to 1918-1919 and was designed by local architect C. Miller Euler combining classical and Gothic Revival elements. Additions have been made to the north and south ends of the original building.<sup>81</sup> It remains in use as a school and is in excellent condition.

At the same time it designed Hillside Park High School, the firm of Milburn, Heister, and Company also planned the original Neoclassical Revival-style section of Durham High School (originally known as Central High School and now Durham School of the Arts), which was completed in 1922. The brick building is two stories on a basement with a three-story main block topped by a belvedere. Classical elements include a dentil cornice, keystones above windows, and entrances flanked by Doric pilasters supporting a full entablature. A free-standing gymnasium was added to the campus in the 1940s and later modern additions attach to the north, west and south ends of the original building.<sup>82</sup> Durham High School remains a school and is in good condition.

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<sup>80</sup> "East End Graded School/Y. E. Smith School," on Open Durham, <http://www.opendurham.org/buildings/east-durham-graded-school-ye-smith-school>, accessed May 30, 2013; Claudia P. Roberts, Diane F. Lea, and Robert M. Leary, *The Durham Architectural and Historic Inventory* (Durham: City of Durham, 1982), 98-99.

<sup>81</sup> Roberts et al., 213.

<sup>82</sup> "Central High School/Durham High School/Durham School of the Arts," on Open Durham, <http://www.opendurham.org/buildings/central-high-school-durham-high-school-durham-school-arts>, accessed May 30, 2013; Roberts et al., 210.

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In the late 1920s, the George Watts Carr-designed Julian Carr Junior High School (originally known as Central Junior High School), which was built at 700 Morgan Street just south of Durham High School. The three-story, Colonial Revival-style brick building features a dentil cornice, keystones over the windows, and a classical entrance with a fanlight transom. Two perpendicular wings and an auditorium were added in the late 1920s. In 1975, the junior high school closed and the campus became part of Durham High School.<sup>83</sup> The renovated building remains in use as a school.

The central portion of E. K. Powe Elementary School, which remains in use as a school, was built in 1928 as an addition to West Durham Elementary School. Located at 913 Ninth Street, the school was designed by the Durham architectural firm of Atwood and Nash. The two-story-on-basement brick building designed in the Neoclassical Revival style features a central projecting bay with classical elements.<sup>84</sup> The building retains its original plan and early finishes. A west (rear) addition was built recently, but the overall building retains its historic integrity.

The 1954-1955 addition to Hillside High School represents not only a dramatic shift in style and form for school buildings in the 1950s and 1960s, but also a boom period in school construction. This escalation in building occurred statewide, beginning in the early 1950s, as a result of the North Carolina General Assembly's creation of the School Plant Construction, Improvement, and Repair Fund in 1949. Under this bill, the state legislature authorized the issuance of the first state bonds to be used for school construction, an action that led to a significant wave of school construction during the decade that followed. This legislation sought to settle the debt owed to the counties by the state for school construction and improvement, because it was "a statutory duty of the State to provide funds for the operation of the public schools...upon a uniform basis."<sup>85</sup> On June 24, 1949, the State Board of Education established rules under which the fund operated. Among other regulations, the board stipulated that money allocated to counties could not be used to build additions to structurally unsafe schools. The board also directed that "there shall be a just and equitable expenditure of funds within the counties as between the races."<sup>86</sup> As a result of the 1949 bonds, counties across North Carolina built a new generation of modern schools for African Americans, complete with the amenities that white schools already had, such as indoor plumbing and rooms dedicated to specialized use.

Following the initial bond approval in 1949, the State Board of Education took a proactive role in school construction and design. In October of that year, it announced a joint effort with the North Carolina State College School of Design to hold a workshop at the campus for architects focused on the upcoming statewide school-building campaign. The board announced that Ernest J. Kump Jr., a leading modernist architect from California,

<sup>83</sup> "Central Junior High School/Julian Carr Junior High School," on Open Durham, <http://www.opendurham.org/buildings/central-junior-high-school-julian-s-carr-junior-high-school>, accessed May 30, 2013; Roberts et al., 210.

<sup>84</sup> Roberts et al., 160-161.

<sup>85</sup> *State of North Carolina Session Laws and Resolutions, 1949*, Chapter 1020, pages 1155-1159.

<sup>86</sup> "School Plant Construction Rules and Regulations," in the Records of North Carolina Board of Education, Teacher Allotment and General Control Division, General Correspondence, 1949-1955, State Archives, Raleigh, N.C.

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and Alonzo Harriman, a school architect from New England, would participate in the three-day workshop.<sup>87</sup> The State Board of Education and the School of Design sponsored a second workshop, called the Institute of School Planning, in December 1950, with William W. Caudill, an architect from Texas Agricultural & Mechanical College, and Harriman serving as speakers. Douglas Haskell, editor of *Architectural Forum*, and John Lyon Reid, a prominent school architect from California, also appeared on the program.<sup>88</sup> At these workshops, architects were encouraged to use glass for improved natural lighting, reduce ornamentation, and integrate the landscape, site, and building, principles that formed the foundation of modernism.<sup>89</sup>

The move toward modernism in school design was a national trend, helped along in North Carolina by the students and faculty from the School of Design at North Carolina State College, which was established in 1948 with Henry Kamphoefner as its first dean. Not only did the School of Design participate in the Institute of School Planning workshops held in 1949 and 1950, but in 1949, Edward "Terry" Waugh, of the School of Design, became supervisor of the state's Office of School House Planning, thereby reinforcing the architecture school's connection to educational building design in North Carolina.<sup>90</sup>

The addition at Hillside High School exemplifies the modernist idiom as applied to school buildings, a movement that was occurring across the state and which resulted in the construction of scores of similar buildings in the mid-twentieth century. The three-story, brick, flat-roofed building followed the post-World War II trend of integrating the building into the setting's terrain, while its large windows encouraged natural light to fill the classrooms, something that many educators felt encouraged the learning process. Its lack of ornament and horizontal massing typify school buildings of the period.

During the period when the addition to Hillside Park High School was constructed, architects took great interest in school design, in part because it allowed them to showcase modernism. In an article in the October 1954 edition of *Southern Architect*, Marvin R. A. Johnson, AIA, and educator Boyce M. Morrison commented that, "Unless architects accept the opportunity which they now have to make each school a school designed and suited to one particular site and location and to specific purposes, he misses an opportunity for developing a deeper and more sincere appreciation of architecture by the lay public."<sup>91</sup> In his 1954 work, *Toward Better School Design*, architect William W. Caudill noted that during this period, "the battle between 'contemporary' and 'traditional'

<sup>87</sup> "School Jobs Get Approval," newspaper article dated October 7, 1949, in the Records of the North Carolina Board of Education, Teacher Allotment and General Control Division, Miscellaneous Records, 1949-1950, State Archives, Raleigh, N.C.

<sup>88</sup> Letter from John L. Cameron, Director of the Division of Schoolhouse Planning and Surveys, to Mr. J. E. Hunter, Department of Public Instruction, dated November 22, 1950, in the Records of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, Division of Schoolhouse Planning, Correspondence of the Director, 1949-1950, State Archives, Raleigh, N.C.

<sup>89</sup> David Black, "Early Modern Architecture in Raleigh Associated with the Faculty of the North Carolina State University School of Design, Raleigh North Carolina," National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, 1994, E-16.

<sup>90</sup> Black, E-16.

<sup>91</sup> Marvin R. A. Johnson and Boyce M. Morrison, "School Building in North Carolina," *Southern Architect*, October 1954, 14.

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Hillside Park High School  
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was won. The public not only began to accept 'modern,' but to demand it. So the architects had no choice but to try to produce logical schools."<sup>92</sup> Caudill declared that the light-filled, modern school created the most positive, comfortable learning environment for the pupil.<sup>93</sup> Johnson, Morrison, Caudill, and architectural critics of the period urged architects to stay apprised of improvements in materials, design, and building methods in school design and to create architecture that could be appreciated by the general public.

Hillside Park High School, composed of two sections from the early and mid-twentieth-century, is the most complete educational complex that portrays the pre-integration period in the city of Durham. The school, which remains the focus of much pride among its past administrators, teachers, parents, and students, reflects the struggle of segregated African American schools as their supporters rallied the local school board for adequate buildings to accommodate swelling student populations throughout the twentieth century. The school's addition reflects the adaptation of modernism to institutional buildings during a period when the idiom was gaining attention statewide because of the School of Design at North Carolina State College in Raleigh. The architecture school and its graduates influenced the appearance, materials, and siting of school buildings through their close association with the State Board of Education.

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<sup>92</sup> William W. Caudill, *Toward Better School Design* (New York: F. W. Dodge Corporation, 1954), 16.

<sup>93</sup> Caudill, 13.

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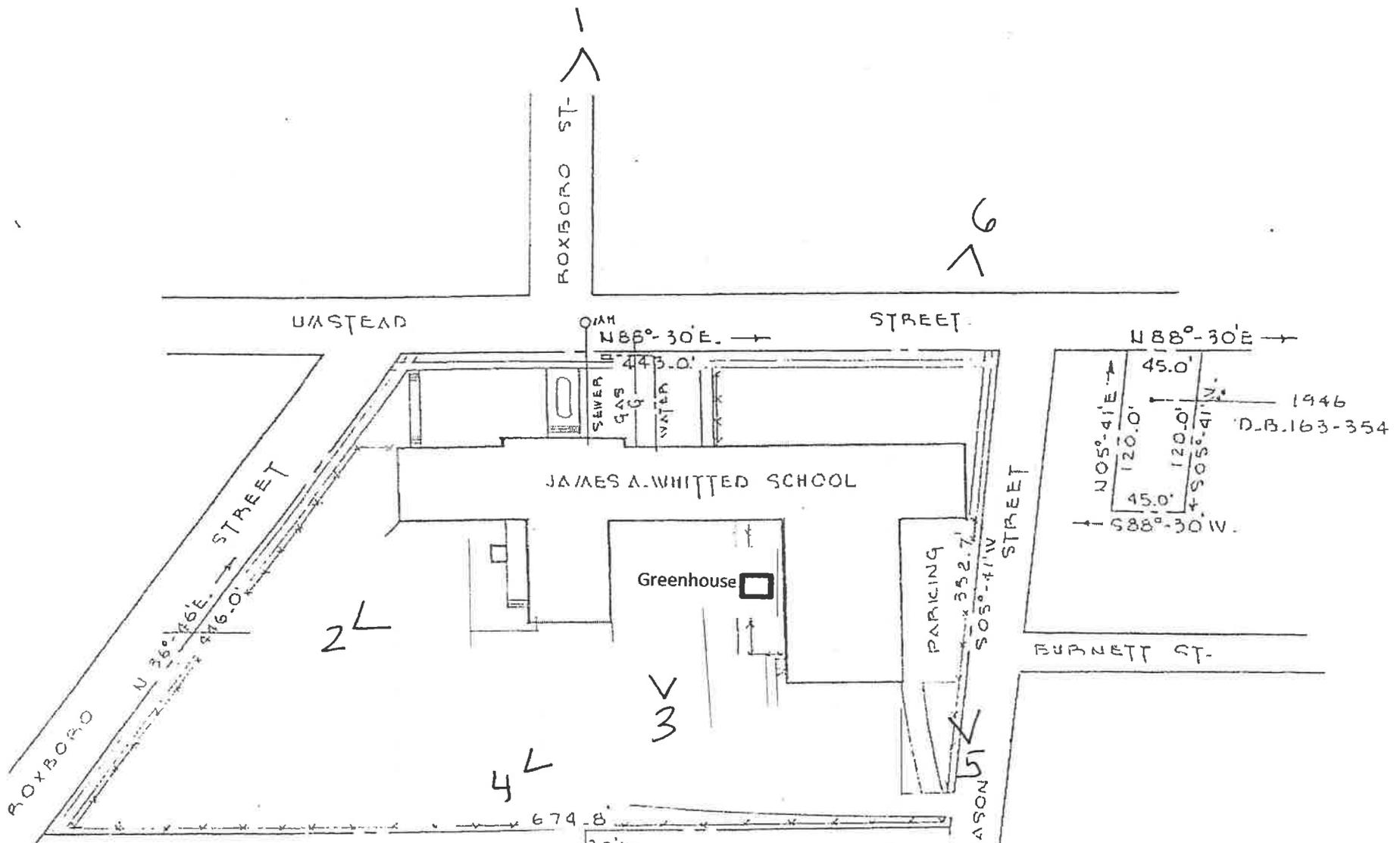
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## Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the nominated property contains 4.062 acres. The boundary is indicated on the accompanying map drawn at a scale of 1"= 95 feet.

## Boundary Justification

The nominated parcel includes the historic building constructed in 1922 and 1954-1955 and the modern playground associated with Hillside Park High School. The 4.062 acres is the residual portion of the 4.48 acres Annie and John Sprunt Hill deeded to the Durham City Board of Education on December 15, 1921 and is historically associated with Hillside Park High School.



**SITE PLAN**  
 Hillside Park High School  
 200 East Umstead Street  
 Durham, Durham County, NC

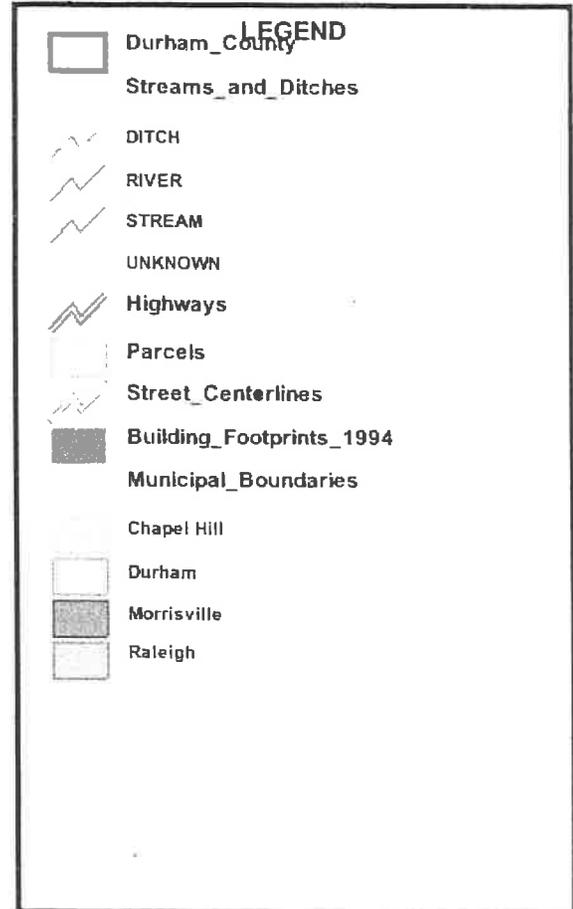
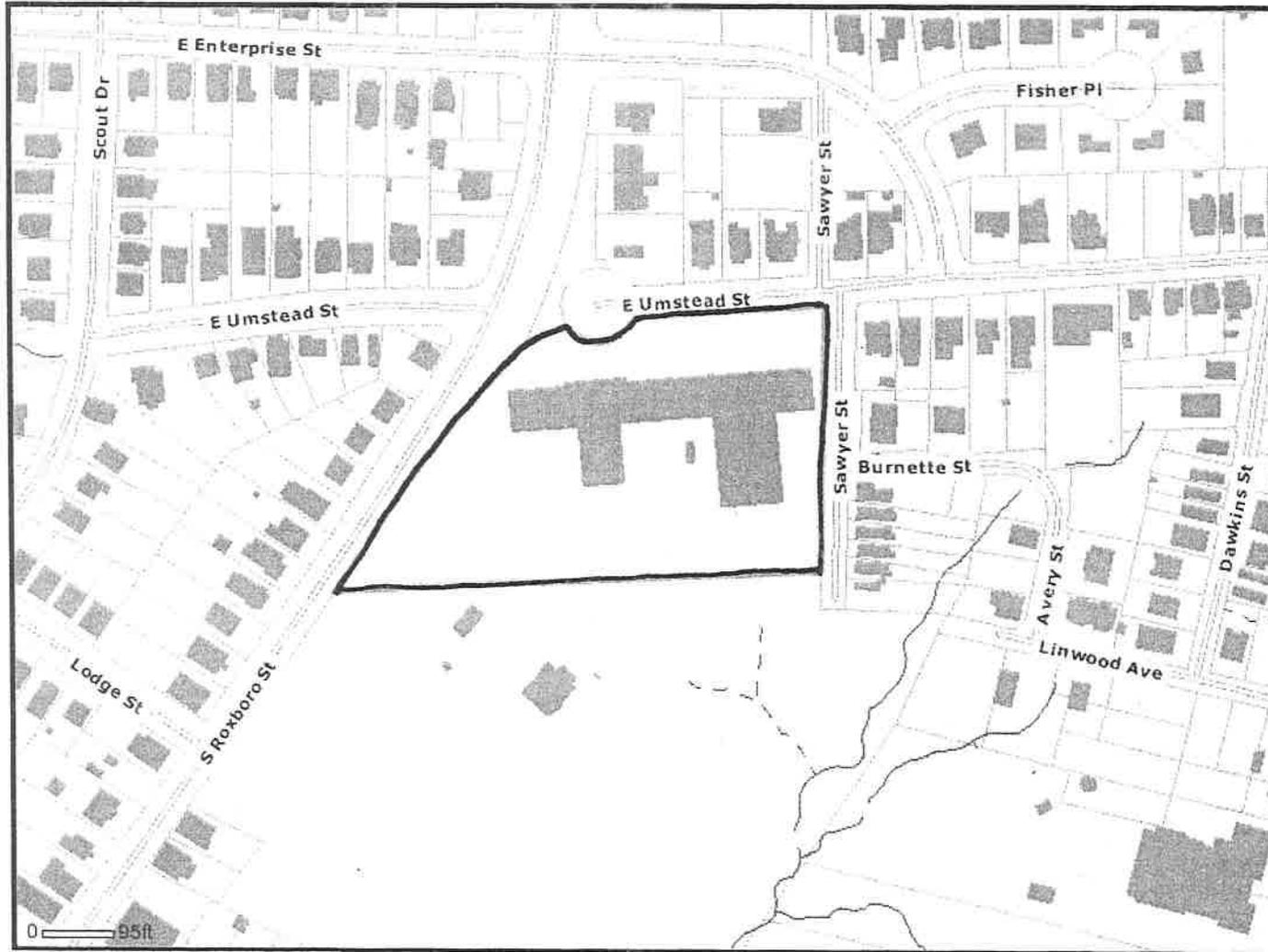
**—** National Register Boundary

*all buildings are contributing resources*

# < photo direction

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# Hillside Park High School, Durham, Durham County, NC



Monday, June 3 2013



Hillside Park High School  
 200 East Umstead Street  
 Durham, Durham County, NC

Area map  
 1" = 95 feet

National Register Boundary



Hillside Park High School, Durham, Durham County NC  
Zone 17  
E 689100  
N 394020

Produced by the United States Geological Survey in cooperation with the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources. Topography compiled 1972. Planimetry derived from imagery taken 2002 and other sources. Survey Control current as of 1973. Boundaries current as of 2003.

North American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83). Projection and 1 000-meter grid: Universal Transverse Mercator, zone 17S. 2 500-meter ticks: North Carolina Coordinate System of 1983. North American Datum of 1927 (NAD 27) is shown by dashed corner ticks. The values of the shift between NAD 83 and NAD 27 for 7.5-minute intersections are obtainable from National Geodetic Survey NADCON software.

There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map. Areas covered by dashed light-blue pattern are subject to controlled inundation. Houses of Worship, Schools, and Other Labeled Buildings verified 1973.

UTM GRID AND 2004 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

U.S. National Grid  
100,000-m Square ID  
PV  
Grid Zone Designator  
17S

SCALE 1:24 000

CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET  
SUPPLEMENTARY CONTOUR INTERVAL 5 FEET  
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929  
(TO CONVERT ELEVATIONS TO THE NORTH AMERICAN VERTICAL DATUM OF 1988, SUBTRACT 1 FOOT)  
TO CONVERT FROM FEET TO METERS, MULTIPLY BY 0.3048

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, P.O. BOX 25286, DENVER, COLORADO 80225  
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

- Primary highway hard surface
- Secondary highway hard surface
- Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
- Unimproved road

QUADRANGLE LOCATION

1	2	3
4	5	6
7	8	9

1 Hillsborough  
2 Northwest Durham  
3 Northeast Durham  
4 Chapel Hill  
5 Southeast Durham  
6 Farrington  
7 Green Level  
8 Cary

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2002  
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