

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NRHP

## National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

JUN 01 2023

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: Lamar Elementary SchoolOther names/site number: Lamar Kingston Primary School, Lamar Primary School, Lamar School, Kingston SchoolName of related multiple property listing: N/A

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

**2. Location**Street & number: 400 15<sup>th</sup> Street WestCity or town: Laurel State: Mississippi County: JonesNot For Publication: n/a Vicinity: n/a**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

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

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

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

    national     statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A     B X C     D

<u>Kate Blount</u>		<u>3-23-23</u>
Signature of certifying official/Title:		Date
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government		
In my opinion, the property <u>   </u> meets <u>   </u> does not meet the National Register criteria.		
Signature of commenting official:		Date
Title :	State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

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#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

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#### 5. Classification

##### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private: ☒  
Public – Local ☐  
Public – State ☐  
Public – Federal ☐

##### Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s) ☒  
District ☐  
Site ☐  
Structure ☐  
Object ☐

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**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>                    </u>	buildings
<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	sites
<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	structures
<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION/ School

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT/Not in use

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS/Prairie School  
MODERN MOVEMENT/Art Deco

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

Principal exterior materials of the property:

FOUNDATION: Stone

WALLS: Brick

ROOF: Asphalt, Metal, Synthetic

## Narrative Description

### Summary Paragraph

The former Lamar Elementary School (originally known as Kingston School) lies in the north section of Laurel, a historic lumber mill town in the Piney Woods region of southeast Mississippi. The school building is located at 400 West 15<sup>th</sup> Street in Laurel and consists of a two-story Prairie-style building with two later additions. It sits on a large plot of land situated between West 14<sup>th</sup> Street, West 15<sup>th</sup> Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, and an unnamed alley immediately east of North 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The building encompasses approximately 39,740 square feet of interior space. It was used as a school from its completion in 1912 through the early 1990s. Following that, the former auditorium space was used as a church from about 2005 through 2022. Portions of the building have been vacant since at least 1993. The 1912 Prairie-style school building was designed as a neighborhood elementary school by architect Penn Jeffries Krouse of Meridian, Mississippi. It was the second of Laurel's schools to be designed in the Prairie style. In 1935, one-story brick wings were added to each side of the original building, each containing two classrooms.<sup>1</sup> This project added needed classroom spaces while maintaining the symmetry of the original design. In 1948, architect Luther Lee Brasfield of Meridian designed an auditorium, which was added to the east side of the existing structure. Having been largely vacant since the 1990s, the property has deteriorated and is in fair to poor condition. It still retains historic integrity through interior and exterior elements, including setting, historic room arrangement, architectural details, built-in elements, and chalkboards.

<sup>1</sup> "Community Program," *The Leader-Call*, March 9, 1935.

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## Narrative Description

### SETTING

The former Lamar Elementary School property consists of a primarily rectangular parcel encompassing 3.0246 acres. The building is located approximately one mile north of Laurel's central business district, which is bounded on the north by 5<sup>th</sup> Street. It is situated on the south side of 15<sup>th</sup> Street West, an east-west street that spans between MS-15 and US-11. The campus is bounded by 14<sup>th</sup> Street West, 15<sup>th</sup> Street West, 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, and an unnamed alley just east of 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The site is graded in such a way that the school sits approximately four to six feet above street level with a grassy slope forming the boundary between the sidewalk and the school yard.

The building's surroundings look much the same as they did during its decades of use as a primary school. It fronts 15<sup>th</sup> Street West with a large, open field in the rear and an asphalt playground to the west. The former school property is surrounded by a residential neighborhood. The building and its features are generally intact, although historic playground equipment is no longer present on the site.

### BUILDING

#### Exterior

The first section of the Lamar Elementary School building was constructed in 1912, with additions completed in 1935 and 1948. The 1912 building is an early example of the use of the Prairie style in Mississippi's public-school architecture.<sup>2</sup> Its low-pitched, hipped roof and overhanging eaves are hallmarks of the Prairie style. The school's later additions reflect the rectangular plan and symmetrical façade typical of the Prairie style with increasingly simplified details. The primary façade of the 1948 auditorium addition also incorporates elements of the Art Deco style, including stylized "zigzag" incised decoration and vertical emphasis communicated through its fenestration and stone ornamentation. The building's additions are unified through the use of brick facing and stone ornamentation.

#### 1912 Building

The 1912 building features a stone foundation and buff brick exterior with stone ornamentation applied to entrance surrounds, continuous and non-continuous sills, and belt courses. The building is topped with a quintessentially Prairie-style hipped roof with overhanging eaves and brackets. Existing asphalt roofing materials are undated but are not original to the building.

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<sup>2</sup> "Lamar School, c 1912," Mississippi Landmark Nomination & Comment Form, 1993, Provided by the Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH).

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The 5-bay primary (north) façade of the 1912 building is mirrored around a central main entrance with a half-lite double-leaf wood door that is not original to the building. Historic stone steps lead to the entrance. It is surrounded by glass block lites which are not original to the building and appear to date to the mid-twentieth century. The decorative stone surround at the main entrance features an inscription reading "LAMAR SCHOOL" and incised geometric decoration. Twenty 9/9 wood windows are grouped in five on either side of the entrance at both levels. A pair of 2/2 wood windows is centered above the entrance. Some windows have been infilled, but the original openings remain. There are additional ground-floor exterior doors at each end bay. At the east, there are two non-original 3-lite doors within the historic opening. At the west, there is a non-original half-lite door with infilled lites. Each is topped with a mid-twentieth century glass block transom. Above the end-bay doors are paired 9/9 wood windows with 6-lite fixed transoms. Window openings at the basement level appear to have been infilled, and the fill contrasts with the historic stone foundation. The primary façade features common bond brick with a sixth course of Flemish bond. There are soldier course headers over the north elevation's ten first-floor window openings.

The east and west elevations of the original 1912 building now adjoin the two sections of the 1935 addition. Original windows at the first floor of these elevations were infilled at the time of the addition's construction. Central window openings at the second floor remain on both the east and west elevations. There are decorative recessed brick elements to either side of the remaining openings. Due to the placement of later additions, only the top portions of the east and west elevations are currently visible, and they are difficult to see from ground level.

The rear (south) elevation is symmetrical, featuring a central, first-floor entrance with stone surround. The door opening remains but has been covered with metal sheeting for security. Historic stone steps lead to the central rear entrance. As on the primary façade, there are twenty 9/9 wood windows in groups of five on either side of the central entrance at first and second floor levels. 2/2 windows are stacked at first and second floor levels at either side of the central entrance, and four double-hung windows topped with decorative transoms are grouped centrally above the main rear entrance. There are no glass panes in the grouping of four windows, but the historic lites may have been 2/2, like those over the front entrance. A stone belt course acts as the sill for ten of the first-floor windows. Other window openings at the rear elevation have continuous or non-continuous stone sills. There are basement-level exterior doors at the east and west ends of the south elevation. The east features a single, 3-lite, 1-panel door, while the west features a single metal door with no lites or panels. Each is covered by rusted metal supports that appear to be the remains of a porch or other covering. Two basement window openings exist within the stone foundation between the central entrance and its east and west basement exits. Each is filled with four metal window units. Many window openings on the south elevation are missing panes of glass, and some have been covered by metal or plywood sheeting from the interior. Two copper downspouts extend vertically to either side of the central entrance.

### 1935 Addition

The 1935 addition was completed as two wings which flank the 1912 building. Added to extend the building to the east and west, the one-story addition sections are constructed of running bond

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red brick with a stone foundation and stone ornamentation. Although the architect is not known, these wings are sympathetic to the original Prairie design, emphasizing the strong horizontal flow of the Prairie style. The 1935 addition features pared-down aspects of the Prairie style intended to complement the original building, including continuous stone sills and a belt course. The addition was originally constructed with flat roofs, although the east section of the addition now features a sloped roof.

### *East Wing*

The eastern portion of the 1935 addition adjoins the 1912 building at the addition's west façade, obscuring the lower portion of the 1912 building's east elevation.

The east wing of the 1935 addition was constructed with one continuous window opening at the first floor of its north (primary) façade. None of the original lites remain, and the opening has been filled with glass block, fixed lites, and wood. Portions of the window opening have since been infilled with brick, but the remaining stone sill, which extends to the edge of the addition, suggests that the opening was originally larger than its current window arrangement suggests. The basement windows, located in the stone foundation, have been infilled with metal. There is a full-lite metal door with sidelights and a faux-divided 3-lite transom at the eastern side of the east addition. The door is not original to the building, and its opening does not appear to have been present in 1956, as shown in Figure 9. The door is covered with a flat roof. The opening does not feature any stone decoration and was not present at the time of the 1935 addition's construction. It is accessible via a wooden ramp and wood stairs. The wooden stairs/ramp currently obscure the view of a historic entrance to the basement of the east section of the 1935 addition. There is a vent located centrally above the single basement door. The sidewalk leading to that entrance is clearly visible in Figure 9, which was taken in the mid-1950s.

The east façade of the east wing of the 1935 addition is completely obscured by the 1948 auditorium addition. No historic photographs showing the east elevation of the school prior to the 1948 addition have been located. As the west elevation of the 1935 addition adjoins the 1912 building to its west, there is no visible west elevation of this portion of the addition.

The south façade of the east 1935 addition was constructed with one continuous window opening at the first floor of its south façade. As at the north façade, a stone belt course acts as a continuous sill at the first-floor level, joining with the 1912 building's belt course to its west. None of the original lites remain, and the opening has been filled with glass block, fixed lites, and an air conditioner unit. The north façade also features a large, rectangular basement window opening, which has been infilled with metal and/or wood.

### *West Wing*

The western portion of the 1935 addition adjoins the 1912 building at the addition's east façade, obscuring the lower portion of the original building's west elevation. The west wing of the 1935 addition was constructed with a continuous window opening at the first floor of its north (primary) façade. It has been infilled with metal and glass block and reads as three "windows." The stone belt course beneath the windows extends across the entire elevation, functioning as a

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continuous sill, and ties into the belt course of the adjoining 1912 building. There are two small vents in the stone foundation of the addition's north elevation.

The west elevation of the western portion of the addition features a central entrance with a brick and stone surround as well as a stone belt course at the level of the sill on other elevations. There is a non-historic half-lite door within the opening. It is topped with a transom that has been infilled with non-original glass block. The entrance is accessible via wood stairs and a ramp, which are in poor condition. The east elevation of the west portion of the addition is not visible, as it adjoins the 1912 building.

The south façade of the western section of the addition was constructed with a continuous window opening at the first-floor level. The opening has been infilled with metal, glass block, and a wood-mounted air conditioning unit. The stone belt course beneath the window opening extends across the entire elevation and ties into the belt course of the adjoining 1912 building, functioning as a sill. There are two small vents in the stone foundation of the addition's south elevation. There are no basement windows at this elevation. The stone foundation has received some graffiti.

### 1948 Addition

The 1948 auditorium addition features a red brick façade and stone detailing. Its foundation is intended to visually match the stone of the 1912 and 1935 sections of the school, although it appears to be parging over block. It is laid out on an irregular, "T-shaped" plan and adjoins a portion of the 1935 addition to the east. Its geometric carvings combine elements of the Prairie and Art Deco styles through the repetition of two circular details from the 1912 building and the incorporation of the more Art Deco "zigzag" motif. The verticality of the entrance, communicated through its stone surround, thin rectangular windows, and set-back vertical projection, incorporate additional Art Deco elements to the primary façade. This verticality is a departure from the more typically Prairie style horizontal emphasis of the 1912 building and its 1935 addition(s). The building has a flat synthetic roof with a sloped metal roof covering its southern portion. Neither section of roof has retained its historic materials.

The primary (north) façade of the auditorium addition is dedicated to its main entrance. The elevation is symmetrical, centering three full-lite metal double doors with glass block transoms. It is accessible through a central, curved stone "grand" stair as well as through a later wood ramp. Two thin, rectangular window openings are located to either side of the entrance. They feature glass block lites. The word "AUDITORIUM" is inscribed above the entrance, and there is incised geometric decoration above each rectangular opening. The circular ornamentation is carried over from the original Prairie-style school building, while the additional carvings are consistent with the Art Deco style still popular at the time of the addition's 1948 construction. There are additional glass block lites set back above the entrance. The windows are difficult to see from street level but are visible in Figure 9.

The east elevation of the auditorium addition shows its irregular T-shaped plan, which is necessary to accommodate the auditorium seating as well as the stage to its south. There is one

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window opening at the north end of the east façade to provide light to a restroom at the east side of the vestibule. It features an unusual 1/2/1 divided light configuration. There are four window openings at the seating portion of the auditorium space, each consisting of a glass block lite over casement windows. There are three window openings at basement level below the seating, and all but one of the openings has been entirely infilled with wood. South of the seating portion are four exterior entrances at stage, ground, and basement levels. One of these is on the north elevation of the east portion of the T. Three of the doors are covered by flat roofs. At the south end of the east elevation (on the east elevation of the T), there are two additional window openings. Each consists of glass block lites over either infill or 1/1 windows. Each of the window openings, including those at basement level, has a stone sill. A modern, white metal roof is visible at the east side of the T.

The south façade of the auditorium addition features asymmetrical window openings. At the east end of the elevation, there are stacked continuous window openings. The openings are filled with glass block lites, 1/1 hopper-style windows, and metal or other infill panels. At the center of the elevation, there are three rectangular windows, all of which have been infilled with brick or metal. The west end of the south elevation features upper and lower continuous window openings filled with glass block lites, 1/1 hopper windows, and infill panels. There is non-historic graffiti at this elevation.

The west elevation of the auditorium addition connects to the 1935 east wing, which bisects it near the center. At the south portion, a metal fire stair extends from the roof of the auditorium addition along the south façade of the 1935 addition. There are three window openings and one door opening at the west elevation of the auditorium addition. The window openings feature glass block lites over 1/1 awning windows, glass block over metal infill, and multi-lite windows. There is a metal roof over the basement-level door in poor condition. This section of the building has received significant graffiti. The auditorium roof has been replaced and re-sloped. Non-historic portions of white metal roofing are evident at the west elevation. At the north portion of the west elevation (visible from 15<sup>th</sup> Street), there are three window openings. A 1/2/1 window with stone sill provides light to a bathroom at the west end of the vestibule. Two window openings to its south provide light to the portion of the auditorium used for seating. The windows consist of glass block over paired casement windows. Each of the windows has a stone sill.

## **Interior**

Historic circulation patterns remain largely intact within the Lamar School building, including room arrangement and window and door openings. The interior of the building, which has been largely vacant for decades, is in poor condition, but it has retained many of its character defining features, including built-in storage, chalkboards, marble wainscoting, and breeze and transom windows.

The original school building and flanking 1935 additions were utilized as classroom, office, facilities, and corridor spaces. Historically, a portion of the basement was utilized as a cafeteria, as shown in Figure 11. The 1948 addition consisted of an entrance vestibule, auditorium space, classrooms, and an activity room, with restroom facilities throughout and a full basement.

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The 1912 building consists of a rectangular plan with a cross-shaped corridor arrangement on its first and second floor levels. It has a partial basement. Upon entering the 1912 Lamar School building through its original 15<sup>th</sup> Street entrance, there is a north-south corridor that functions as an entrance hall. At its south end is another double door. To the east of the main, north entrance hall is an office/administration space accessible to students and staff through doors from the entrance hall and corridor. Visual access is provided through interior windows. The window openings remain, although some lites have been broken. The administration space is divided into two rooms as well as a historic safe and a toilet room. The toilet room is missing its fixtures, but features white subway tile with pink tile trim at dado level. There is a tile floor and painted plaster walls. The tile appears consistent styles popular in the first half of the twentieth century.

The entrance hall connects to a wide, east-west corridor that runs the entire length of the 1912 building. Historically, this connected to and communicated with the corridors of the 1935 additions, although in recent years partition walls have been added to divide the space. The east partition wall was added in ca 2005. The first-floor corridor is double-loaded and provides access to three classrooms, the administration space, an additional room east of the administration space, and two stairwells. The room east of the administration space communicates with the administration space and may have served as a principal's office. It features historic green marble wainscoting and wood chair and picture rail. Each classroom space adjoins a long coat room, as shown in Photograph 10. Shelving and coat racks exist at chair-rail height within these storage spaces, providing evidence of their historic use.

Finishes in the first-floor entrance hall and corridor of the 1912 building include wood and laminate floors, ACT ceiling systems with missing tiles, painted plaster walls, wood baseboards, and wood chair and picture rails. There are some surviving built-in storage cubbies and/or open lockers at the south portion of the entrance hall. They are painted wood and are slightly taller than chair-rail height. Transoms and breeze windows allow the corridor spaces within Lamar School to borrow light from the adjacent classrooms.

The second floor of the 1912 building is accessible through two stairwells located at the northeast and northwest corners of the building. Upon entering the second floor through either stairwell, there is a wide, east-west corridor extending the entire width of the building. There are four classrooms, four adjacent vertical coat rooms, and two toilet rooms. The toilet rooms are located near the center of the south wall of the original building. The second-floor corridor features painted wood picture rail, chair rail, window and door trim, and baseboards; a painted plaster dado and contrasting upper wall section; and painted wood cubbies just below chair rail height. There is a dropped ACT ceiling grid with missing tiles and linoleum flooring. The original ceiling throughout the 1912 building, visible in places above missing ceiling tiles, is a tongue-and-groove wood ceiling.

On the first and second floors, the corridors provide access to classrooms and their adjoining coat rooms. Painted, 2-panel, 4-lite single-leaf wood doors allow entrance to the classrooms and coat rooms from the adjoining corridor. Not all historic doors have survived. Coat rooms have wood

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painted, 2-panel doors with partial lites to access the adjacent classroom space. Most surviving historic doors in this location have 4 upper lites. Transom windows are located above chalkboards at the inside walls of classrooms to allow borrowed light into the corridor and air circulation throughout the building. Wood window and door casings are painted and simple in style. The classroom spaces feature original wood built-ins, painted plaster walls, wood floorboards and linoleum, wood trim (including chair and picture rail), and chalkboards mounted in wood frames. Classrooms feature chalkboards on two walls and painted historic wood built-ins along the partition wall dividing classrooms from coat rooms. The historic built-ins consist of 2-panel lower doors and 12-lite upper doors. The rear of the cupboards are painted beadboard, and each includes wood shelves. There is painted wood cubby storage at the rear wall of each classroom. Most classrooms also feature wood-framed cork or other boards. Classroom ceilings consist of ACT grid, and tiles are missing throughout the building.

The second-floor toilet rooms have retained square tiled wainscoting, as shown in Photograph 11. The tile is most consistent with styles and colors popular in the mid-twentieth century. Non-historic ACT ceilings, fixtures, and finished flooring are no longer intact within the second-floor restrooms. Painted finishes on the plaster walls above the dado-height tile are in disrepair. The 1912 building's historic tongue-and-groove wood ceilings are visible above the dropped ceiling grid.

Basement access in the 1912 building is provided by interior and exterior stairwells. Stairwells lead to north-west corridors which allow access to a series of rooms along the north side of the building and two restrooms located along its south elevation. The basement restrooms have retained metal stall dividers and square tiles at dado level. Tiles appear consistent in style and color with a mid-twentieth century installation. There are remnants of mid-century acoustical tile applied to otherwise unfinished ceilings. The upper sections of the walls are painted plaster. The central section of the basement is unexcavated, which appears to be its historic condition.

A series of historic photos of the Lamar School, taken in 1956, show that the wood trim within classrooms, including chalkboard surrounds, was present at that time. It is likely that these elements are original to the building based on style and similarity to surviving features in schools built at similar time periods. In the 1950s, the flooring appears to have been square linoleum tiles (Figures 12 and 13), but wood planks visible under later flooring materials throughout the 1912 building today are likely the original flooring material. Historic photographs of Laurel's other Prairie style schools show wood classroom floors (Figure 6).

Classrooms throughout the building have retained original elements including the built-in storage, wood trim, and chalkboard frames described above (Photograph 09 and Figure 12). Large transoms and breeze windows are an original feature common to school construction at the turn of the twentieth century when school architects and educators emphasized "hygiene" through well-lit and well-ventilated buildings.

Contemporary newspaper articles provide evidence that the 1912 Lamar School was built with plumbing, but the odd configuration of the interior partition dividing the second-floor restrooms suggests that they were either added or updated at a later date. The dividing partition bisects the

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windows unevenly (Photograph 11). Additionally, the colorful square tile installed in the second-floor restrooms is more consistent with styles popular in the mid-twentieth century. Overall, the 1912 building's surviving restrooms do not appear to have retained the original trim or fixtures, as they were likely updated, perhaps at the time of later additions. The first-floor office restroom has retained the oldest tile. Stylistically, it could date to the 1912 construction of the building, with its white subway wall tile with curved pink cap and basket-weave floor tile.

The interior of the 1912 Lamar School has retained its historic primary circulation patterns and its interior boasts the survival of historic trim, built-ins, chalkboards, and even the original wood ceiling. Unique features of its administration space, including a historic bathroom, marble wainscoting, and interior windows also survive. Despite its years of vacancy, many of its characteristic features have remained intact, as has its interior integrity.

### 1935 Addition

Newspaper articles contemporary to the addition's design and construction show that the 1935 addition to Lamar School added four additional classrooms to the school, with two classrooms located in each wing of the new construction. Both portions of the addition have a rectangular plan with a central, primary east-west corridor.

#### *East Wing*

The one-story, rectangular east wing of the 1935 addition consists of an L-shaped corridor that connects classrooms along its north and south sides. It does not currently communicate with the 1912 building due to a partition added ca 2005. Instead, it is accessible through a corridor at its east end, which connects it to the 1948 auditorium addition. There is a (non-historic) exterior entrance located at the east end of the north façade of the east section of the 1935 addition. Upon entering through the north door, there is a classroom with a small, single restroom. The classroom communicates with the adjacent auditorium through a single, half-lite wood door at its east wall. It also communicates with the east wing's central corridor. The corridor door is topped by a transom. The classroom floor is painted, poured concrete. Its walls are painted plaster or gypsum. The single restroom features painted plaster walls with tile floors and dado. There is an ACT grid within the classroom and its restroom.

Upon exiting the southeast classroom into the central corridor, there are four additional classroom spaces. Each original classroom has been divided into two. They have painted gypsum or plaster walls, simple wood baseboards and door casings, ACT ceilings, and engineered hardwood floors. Stairs at the east end of the 1935 addition lead to the basement. This stairwell also provides the only interior access to the basement of the 1948 addition.

The stairwell also provides access to the basement of the 1935 addition's east wing, which houses a kitchen and former cafeteria space. A 1937 WPA report confirms that Lamar School had a basement kitchen at that date.

The east wing of the 1935 addition was modified from its original appearance, most recently with classroom flooring installed in circa 2005. The east wing was also updated at the time of the

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1948 addition and again in about the 1980s. The east wing features the most up-to-date classrooms in the school building. Historic features are covered or have been removed. Its primary circulation patterns have remained consistent since the addition of the 1948 addition with which it communicates, although its original two classrooms have been further subdivided for a total of four classrooms within the wing.

### *West Wing*

The one-story, rectangular west wing of the 1935 addition consists of classrooms at its north and south ends divided by a central, east-west corridor. It is accessible through a single door opening located in the 1912 building's adjacent stairwell. The opening provides access to the north classroom, which is separated from the south classroom by a wide corridor that would historically have connected to the east-west corridor of the 1912 building but is currently separated by a non-historic partition wall. The corridor terminates at its west end with an exterior entrance centered on the west elevation.

The east-west corridor consists of painted plaster walls that have received modern graffiti. As in the 1912 building, breeze windows and transoms provide the corridor with borrowed light. The corridor has a dropped ACT ceiling grid and synthetic tile flooring that appear to have been most recently updated in the 1980s. Missing ceiling tiles show previous layers of square ceiling tile. Classrooms have retained chalkboards and frames, wood trim, and painted plaster walls. Window openings remain with some infilled or covered areas. The south classroom has retained operable hopper-style windows. Classrooms have ACT grid ceiling systems and sheet linoleum floors.

The basement under the 1935 addition, which is only accessible through the 1912 building's basement, is filled with debris and may not have been excavated entirely.

The west wing of the 1935 addition remains more intact than the east wing, which has received additional interior partitions. The overall primary circulation patterns remain historic.

### 1948 Auditorium Addition

The 1948 auditorium is built on a T-shaped, slightly irregular plan. The main entrance of the 1948 addition leads to a vestibule space. Restrooms are located at the east and west ends of the rectangular vestibule. The vestibule has tile floors and a tile base. It has a non-historic ACT grid ceiling and painted plaster walls. There is a painted wood chair rail and painted wood door casings. A curved, built-in ticket counter is located at the center of the room. Behind it, there is a single central door opening. The restrooms have painted plaster walls, floor and dado tile consistent with a 1948 installation, and plumbing fixtures. There are non-historic ACT grid ceilings. Swinging wood doors lead to the restrooms.

Doors at the east and west ends of the vestibule's south wall were designed to usher guests into the large auditorium space, which was not built with permanent seating. Upon entering the seating and auditorium space, there are two stages at the south end. The northmost of these is a wood stage. The southern stage is original to the building's construction and spans the entire

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width of the auditorium. The stage communicates with a corridor running east-west along the top of the "T" through a single door. Two restrooms, a multi-use space, and the north-south corridor of the 1935 addition communicate with the east-west corridor behind the auditorium.

Figures 9 and 10 show the auditorium in the decade after its construction, when it featured an acoustical tile ceiling with openings to allow for borrowed light as well as tall windows at its east and west elevations that could be covered with heavy drapery. There were, as there are today, three door openings along the north wall dividing the vestibule from the auditorium. The auditorium "seating space" contains a sloping (raked) floor, plaster walls and ceilings, and wood trim. There is no visible evidence of fixed seating, although it is typical to mid-century auditoriums. Figure 10, a 1956 photograph of the auditorium, depicts it in use without fixed seating. It is unlikely that original fixed seating was installed in 1948 and removed by 1956, therefore Figure 10 provides evidence that there was not historic fixed seating in the school auditorium. The stage is elevated and reached by a short set of wood steps.

Behind the stage is an east-west corridor that runs the width of the arm of the T. Accessible through a door at the rear (south) of the stage and through a north-south corridor that connects the 1948 addition to the east wing of the 1935 addition, this corridor provides access to a multi-use space, two restrooms, and an exit. The floor and dado tile installed within the restrooms south and east of the stage is consistent with installation in the 1940s. In the southwest restroom, plumbing fixtures and wall and floor tile are all intact. There is a dropped ACT ceiling that is not historic. A second restroom, located at the east side of the stage and accessible through the rear corridor, has floor and dado tile consistent with a 1948 installation. Its fixtures are intact. It has received a new door and dropped ACT ceiling that are not historic. Above the dado tile is a painted plaster wall.

A multi-use space runs the width of the arm of the T at the south end of the 1948 addition. It has retained historic door openings and interior windows and/or transoms. A laminate floor, ACT grid ceiling, and new doors were added to the space in about the 1980s. There are painted plaster walls and minimal painted wood trim at doors and windows.

The basement of the 1948 addition is accessible through a stairwell in the 1935 addition. It is accessible through the L-shaped corridor that communicates with the east-west corridor south of the auditorium stage. The basement includes classroom, restroom, and coat room spaces. The two classrooms, both located along the south wall, feature breeze windows to provide borrowed light to the adjacent coat room spaces, which retain wood shelves and coat racks at chair rail height. There is simple, painted wood trim throughout. Basement classrooms retain chalkboards, built-in shelves, and operable hopper-style windows. The walls are painted plaster and are in poor condition. Flooring is poured concrete with carpet or other materials. There are non-historic ACT grid ceilings throughout. Two restrooms located between the two basement classrooms feature tile consistent with a 1948 installation and original metal hopper-style windows. A pass-through pantry adjacent to the restrooms also appears to be original to the building's construction, as does its porcelain sink. It has painted cupboards and open shelving.

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The 1948 addition retains its original circulation patterns as well as many historic features. This includes the original stage, glass block windows above its entrance, and historic tile throughout the addition.

### **Integrity**

The Lamar School retains sufficient integrity to convey its significance. Exterior changes, which include the replacement of window lites and original doors, appear to date primarily to the 1948 addition. Overall, the building retains the character-defining features which characterize the Prairie style and represent late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century school architecture. The hipped roof and overhanging eaves of its 1912 building are complimented by the one-story wings formed by its 1935 addition. Together, they present an overwhelmingly "Prairie style" appearance, especially given the typical use of rectangular wings in Prairie style vernacular architecture. The 1948 addition incorporates elements of the more modern Art Deco style, marrying elements of the two styles in one structure. Contemporary documents describe the architectural style of Laurel's schools as modern in the 1910s, and the design of the Lamar Elementary School's sympathetic additions show an interest in continuing to display simplified elements of modern architecture throughout the school's history. Despite its more modern appearance and components of two architectural styles, the auditorium addition complements the earlier Prairie style construction and repeats clearly Prairie style elements, including contrasting masonry, stone trim, and the circular incised elements from the 1912 building. Lamar Elementary School's interior remains remarkably intact for a building that has stood vacant for decades, including original built-in elements, trim, window and door openings, and overall circulation patterns. Throughout the building, tile and decorative elements appear to date no later than the most recent building addition (1948).

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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

### Criteria Considerations

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

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

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**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

EDUCATION

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

**Period of Significance**

1912-1948

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

**Significant Dates**

1912

1935

1948

\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

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

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

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

**Architect/Builder**

Penn Jeffries Krouse – Architect, 1912 Building

Burke Construction Company – Contractor, 1912 Building

Luther Lee Brasfield – Architect, 1948 Addition

D.R. Hall – Contractor, 1948 Addition

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Designed by prolific Meridian, Mississippi, architect Penn Jeffries Krouse and completed in 1912, the Lamar School is significant at the local level under Criterion C Architecture as an important early example of the application of the Prairie style to an educational building in Jones County, Mississippi. It has been listed as a Mississippi Landmark since 1993, and its approved Landmark application states that the 1912 building is significant as a “rather early example of Prairie style influence in public school architecture [which] shows how progressive and innovative Laurel’s architecture was in the 1910s.” It was the second school documented to be built in the Prairie style in Laurel. The first, Silas Gardiner School, was demolished in the 1950s. This makes Lamar School the earliest surviving example of a Prairie style educational building in Laurel.

Lamar School is also significant at the local level under Criterion A as a representative example of an updated school facility built during a period of intense growth in both the town and its educational system during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. It was one of four school buildings constructed under the early leadership of Superintendent R.H. Watkins (1874-1965) and was “part of a series of impressive improvements in Laurel’s school system [during a period of] increased enrollment” as the student population more than doubled in the first decades of the 20th century.<sup>3</sup> The construction of several new buildings to accommodate rapidly growing enrollment coincided with a surge in civic growth and push for progressive education in Laurel. “If not for a well-defined educational system, Laurel might [have] become just another short-lived mill town,” according to a history of the city.<sup>4</sup> Lamar School’s significance lies in both its architectural style and its purpose to accommodate Laurel’s rapidly growing student population. The application of the Prairie style to Lamar’s 1912 section exemplifies the progressive education system through what was, at the time and place, an innovative building style.

Lamar School’s period of significance begins with its 1912 construction and ends with the retirement of Superintendent Watkins in 1948.

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<sup>3</sup> “Lamar School, c 1912.”

<sup>4</sup> David Stanton Key, “Laurel, Mississippi: A Historical Perspective” (MA Thesis, East Tennessee University, 2001), 52.

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

## Education in Laurel

Lamar School is located in the northern portion of the city of Laurel, Mississippi. The nucleus of what is now Laurel was created when John Kamper established a lumber mill in the area in 1882.<sup>5</sup> The small camp town struggled during the 1880s, as Kamper and his employees experienced difficulty and delay in attempting to transport the pine logs along existing pole roads. In 1891, the Eastman Gardiner Company purchased the mill from Kamper, beginning its timber and sawmill operations in Laurel.<sup>6</sup> Other lumber mills, including Gilchrist-Fordney, Wausau-Southern, and Marathon followed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>7</sup>

When the Gardiner and Eastman families began their southern lumber operation in 1891, Laurel had a population of 200.<sup>8</sup> Despite its small size, Laurel was a town, having been incorporated by the Mississippi legislature in 1886.<sup>9</sup> An area north of Laurel known as “Kingston” became part of the new town.<sup>10</sup> Historians such as Edward L. Ayers, Jo Dent Hodges, and David S. Key consider Laurel to be an exception to the trajectory of towns built upon the pine industry in the American south: a lumber camp that developed into a “real town.”<sup>11</sup> This development is showcased in its rapid growth: Laurel had 1,220 residents by 1895.<sup>12</sup>

Northern capitalists who invested in Laurel’s lumber industry in the nineteenth century “not only moved their business dealings south to Mississippi but also permanently relocated their families to the region.”<sup>13</sup> The Eastman and Gardiner families were from Iowa but resettled in Laurel after taking over the town’s lumber operations in the 1890s.<sup>14</sup> It was this resettlement that initially sparked heavy investments in Laurel’s infrastructure, including education. This local support is considered unique; “elsewhere in the South lumber barons drained the region of its valuable resources without making any lasting contributions to the economy.”<sup>15</sup> Buoyed by investments and increased jobs, Laurel boasted a population of over 3,000 in April of 1901.<sup>16</sup> By this point, it was considered a city based on a series of Mississippi laws which classify municipalities according to population size.<sup>17</sup> Dates for this reclassification are variously provided in secondary sources as June 24, 1892, and April of 1901.<sup>18</sup> In Mississippi, municipality classifications change based on each U.S. Census count, so it is likely that the 1900 U.S. Federal Census prompted the

<sup>5</sup> Jo Dent Hodge, “The Lumber Industry in Laurel, Mississippi, at the Turn of the Nineteenth Century,” *Journal of Mississippi History* 35, no. 4 (Dec. 1973): 361.

<sup>6</sup> Key, 34.

<sup>7</sup> Laurel Diamond Jubilee Corporation, *Laurel Diamond Jubilee: Commemorating 75 Years of Progress* (Meridian: Gower Printing Co., 1957), 7.

<sup>8</sup> Hodge, 363.

<sup>9</sup> Mississippi, *Laws of the State of Mississippi, Passed at a Regular Session of the Mississippi Legislature, Held in the City of Jackson, Commencing January 5, 1886, and Ending March 18, 1886* (Jackson: H.H. Henry, State Printer, 1886), 583-584.

<sup>10</sup> Hodge, 367.

<sup>11</sup> Key, 24.

<sup>12</sup> Laurel Diamond Jubilee Corporation, 23.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> Hodge, 362.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 366.

<sup>16</sup> Laurel Diamond Jubilee Corporation, 23.

<sup>17</sup> According to the Secretary of State, “Municipalities with populations of more than 2,000 are classified as cities.”

<sup>18</sup> Laurel Diamond Jubilee Corporation, 23 and Key, 38. The Mississippi Secretary of State only lists Laurel’s town incorporation date, although it does refer to Laurel as a city rather than a town.

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city of Laurel's reclassification.<sup>19</sup> Providing additional evidence for the 1901 reclassification date is the following, taken from the *Semi-Weekly Leader*: "Laurel has a population of 3193 and by gubernatorial proclamation is now a city. The municipal machinery of a city government will soon be instituted."<sup>20</sup>

The thriving Eastman-Gardiner sawmill, which employed over 1,000 workers in 1904, sparked the creation of other industrial endeavors, including knitting and cotton mills, an oil company, and a brick yard.<sup>21</sup> John Lindsey's 1899 patent for a new timber delivery wagon and his company's subsequent relocation to Laurel was also key to jumpstarting other industries in the region, including a local iron foundry.<sup>22</sup> At the turn of the twentieth century, there were just over a thousand "educable" children within Laurel's city limits.<sup>23</sup> Their education was supported by the lumber industry; Eastman-Gardiner donated \$600 for a new schoolhouse just after the Panic of 1893 subsided.<sup>24</sup>

As the 20<sup>th</sup> century progressed, Laurel maintained its position as a center of timber and increased its focus on other manufacturing industries, leading to "a pattern of new southern Industrialism that did not visit many parts of the agrarian South until after the Second World War."<sup>25</sup> Still, Laurel's remarkable expansion between 1890 and 1905 was possible due solely to the local lumber industry.<sup>26</sup>

During this period of rapid growth, Laurel's civic and industry leaders continued their strong support for a more progressive school system. In 1907, R.H. Watkins, who had been serving as a superintendent of schools in Bristol, Tennessee, accepted a new position as the superintendent of Laurel's schools.<sup>27</sup> George and Silas Gardiner, of the Eastman, Gardiner & Company, provided funding for Watkins to undertake coursework in progressive educational methods through the University of Chicago in 1908.<sup>28</sup> Watkins considered giving up his post as superintendent of schools after the 1910-1911 school year, but would retain his position for over four decades, shaping the city's educational landscape in methodology and through new building projects.<sup>29</sup> A 1911 newspaper article credits Watkins with having "grown and expanded [Laurel's schools] to a degree of efficiency which gives them a high rank among public schools in the south and they certainly rank with the best in the state."<sup>30</sup>

At the start of the 1909 school year, Watkins reported that Laurel's total school enrollment was 1,747 students.<sup>31</sup> Laurel's schools were racially segregated, with 1,120 enrolled in the white-only schools and the remaining 627 students attending the city's Black schools. In September of 1909,

<sup>19</sup> A law linking the census population count to municipality designations passed in 1892.

<sup>20</sup> "Mississippi News," *Semi-Weekly Leader*, May 1, 1901, 2.

<sup>21</sup> Key, 42-43.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>23</sup> Laurel Diamond Jubilee Corporation, 27.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>25</sup> Key, 5.

<sup>26</sup> Hodge, 370.

<sup>27</sup> Key, 53.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.* and Laurel Diamond Jubilee Corporation, 33.

<sup>29</sup> "Laurel School Board Elects Successor to Prof. R.H. Watkins," *The Laurel Chronicle*, February 17, 1911, 1.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> "School Session Opens," *The Laurel Ledger*, September 23, 1909, 1.

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the Silas W. Gardiner School, Laurel's first known educational building to be designed in the Prairie style, opened its doors to Laurel's white grammar school students. Four hundred students were assigned to the building during its first year of use.<sup>32</sup>

In June of 1912, the *Daily Argus* reported that "School Superintendent Watkins is completing the enumeration of the eligible school children...and states that a very large increase over the enrollment last made will be shown."<sup>33</sup> The previous enumeration showed 2,700 children within the district limits, and by the summer of 1912 the number had grown to over 4,000 prospective pupils. Watkins' count also revealed that "not more than two-thirds of the children of this city are in school," which he was eager to change.<sup>34</sup> This increase in potential students is reflected in the city's growth: the 1910 U.S. Federal Census reports Laurel's population at 8,465, an increase of 165 percent from 1900. It was to accommodate this staggering population growth that additional educational facilities were required.

Between 1907 and 1915, official enrollment in the district increased from 1,585 to 3,465.<sup>35</sup> During that period, four new Prairie-style school buildings were erected, including Silas Gardiner (1908), Lamar (1912), Prentiss (1913), and Junior High (1915).<sup>36</sup> Census data reflects this clear need for additional school facilities, documenting a 54 percent increase in population between 1910 and 1920.<sup>37</sup> With the construction of the Silas Gardiner School (1908), the school district retired three school buildings: the YMCA, the Irwin Russell School, and the Power building.<sup>38</sup> During the 1909 school year, white students were consolidated into three buildings: Gardiner, Old Central, and the high school.

Plans were solicited for another new school in Laurel, to be located north of the city center in the Kingston neighborhood, by January 1912.<sup>39</sup> Laurel City Council passed an ordinance to construct the Lamar School in March of 1912, stating that "the need of larger and better quarters for Kingston school was undisputed."<sup>40</sup> The building, which initially was known as the "Kingston School" was intended to replace the earlier Kingston school building and served only white students. Contracts for the building were awarded in the first week of June, and construction began only two weeks later. Mississippi architect Penn Jeffries Krouse (1877-1944) designed the new school building.<sup>41</sup>

In an effort to continue their support of the local school system's progressive methodologies, the Gardiners established a fund for teachers to take coursework at the University of Chicago (as Watkins had). As a result of this affiliation, the University of Chicago agreed to accept graduates of Laurel's (white) high school without examination by 1912.<sup>42</sup> In the early 1910s,

<sup>32</sup> "School Session Opens."

<sup>33</sup> "Watkins is Counting Educable Children," *The Laurel Daily Argus*, June 25, 1912, 2.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Laurel Diamond Jubilee Corporation, 36-37.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> 8,465 to 13,037.

<sup>38</sup> "Notice," *The Laurel Ledger*, September 16, 1909, 1.

<sup>39</sup> Untitled, *The Laurel Daily Argus*, January 18, 1912, 2.

<sup>40</sup> "Bond Issue for New School Building," *The Laurel Daily Argus*, March 6, 1912, 1.

<sup>41</sup> "Contract for New School Building," *The Laurel Daily Argus*, June 5, 1912, 1 and "Building Begins on New \$30,000 School Structure," *The Laurel Daily Argus*, June 19, 1912, 1.

<sup>42</sup> Laurel Diamond Jubilee Corporation, 33.

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Superintendent Watkins joined forces with the Mississippi Board of Health in an effort to eradicate hookworm, which was common in Laurel's schoolchildren.<sup>43</sup> Lamar School, built with indoor restrooms, is an example of the infrastructure investment required to reduce the incidence of hookworm in Laurel's schoolchildren, and Watkins stated that infections present in students at the time he presented on the topic were presumed to have occurred prior to the construction of updated school facilities.<sup>44</sup>

William H. Mason's invention of Masonite, a type of particleboard, in the mid-1920s helped Laurel sustain its local investment as the profitability of its sawmills faded.<sup>45</sup> Additional educational facilities, including new junior high and high school buildings, were built in the 1920s.<sup>46</sup> Even as Laurel's citizens struggled through the Great Depression, the city continued to invest in its school infrastructure. Watkins was granted an audience with Harry Hopkins, and as a result, "Laurel was one of the first cities in the country to offer free lunches to school children, regardless of race; and later one of the first to apply for and receive P.W.A. money for expanding school construction to provide needed jobs."<sup>47</sup>

In March of 1935, the *Leader-Call* announced that Lamar School would receive a four-room addition.<sup>48</sup> The addition was federally funded through the Public Works Administration.<sup>49</sup> The Works Progress Administration (WPA) drafted a report about the Lamar School in 1937, two years after its addition was completed.<sup>50</sup> It was a modern building, equipped with electric lights, indoor toilets, fire escapes, and a basement cafeteria.<sup>51</sup>

The 1943 discovery of oil near Laurel allowed it (and its manufacturing industries) to continue to flourish, supporting a growing population and continued investment in its educational system.<sup>52</sup>

R.H. Watkins stepped down from his 41-year tenure as superintendent of the Laurel city schools in 1948, taking a new position as the "superintendent of buildings and grounds."<sup>53</sup> He was still employed in that capacity in 1955 at the age of 81, when Jackson's *Clarion-Ledger* newspaper profiled him as part of a series about "eminent educators" statewide. Over his four decades of service in Laurel, Watkins had served as president of the Mississippi Education Association and was a member of several other important state and national educational committees.<sup>54</sup> He championed full-year pay for teachers, supervising principals for each school building, ability-

<sup>43</sup> "Sanitation and Hygienic Laws," *The Laurel Tribune*, January 13, 1911, 1.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> Lauren Rogers Museum of Art (LRMA), "What Lies Beneath: Masonite and American Art of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century," (LRMA, 2019).

<sup>46</sup> MDAH, "(Old) George S. Gardiner High School," Historic Resources Inventory Fact Sheet, Mississippi Historic Resources Inventory (HRI) Database, Accessed November 30, 2022, <https://www.apps.mdah.ms.gov/Public/prop.aspx?id=15651&view=facts&y=1040> and MDAH, "Stewart M. Jones Junior High School," Historic Resources Inventory Fact Sheet, Mississippi Historic Resources Inventory (HRI) Database, Accessed November 29, 2022, <https://www.apps.mdah.ms.gov/Public/prop.aspx?view=facts>.

<sup>47</sup> Laurel Diamond Jubilee Corporation, 57.

<sup>48</sup> "City Projects," *The Leader Call*, March 13, 1935, 4.

<sup>49</sup> "Federal Assistance Will be Asked for Projects in City of Laurel and Jones County," *The Leader-Call*, March 6, 1935, 1.

<sup>50</sup> Susie V. Powell, Comp., *Works Progress Administration for Mississippi, Source Material for Mississippi History: Preliminary Manuscript, Jones County, Volume XXXIV*, WPA: 1937.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> Laurel Diamond Jubilee Corporation, 61 and Hodge, 378.

<sup>53</sup> Jay Milner, "Eminent Educators of Mississippi: R.H. Watkins Was Ahead of His Times and Built Fine Schools at Laurel," *The Clarion-Ledger*, July 3, 1955, 5.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

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based student grouping, small class sizes, adequate libraries, and summer schools for the students in Laurel's educational system.<sup>55</sup>

In July of 1948, the *Sun Herald* reported on another planned addition to the Lamar School.<sup>56</sup> The proposed addition consisted of seven classrooms, an auditorium, and an activities room and was designed by architect Luther Lee Brasfield (1889-1982), who had been a partner of P.J. Krouse. This continued investment in the city's educational facilities paid off: a 1957 article notes that Laurel schools were unmatched in the retention of staff.<sup>57</sup>

R.H. Watkins died in 1965.<sup>58</sup> Laurel's population, which reached a peak of 27,572 in 1960, had begun to decline by 1970.<sup>59</sup> Despite the Laurel School Board's embrace of progressive educational methods, the district continued to be segregated by race through 1970. In addition, the district did not invest equally in its separate educational facilities. When an African-American elementary school burned down in 1954, its students were still housed in a frame structure that had been constructed fifty years prior.<sup>60</sup> The white schools built at the same period were masonry construction. Despite the unequal financial investment, Laurel's African-American high school was considered to be among the best in the state.<sup>61</sup>

Throughout R.H. Watkin's tenure, Laurel's school system was lauded as an excellent example of progressive educational methods. Laurel's student population grew rapidly in the early twentieth century. This, combined with the continual investment by its civic and industry leaders, allowed for rapid construction of school facilities in Laurel during the first decades of the twentieth century. Lamar Elementary School is the earliest school building to be constructed during Watkins' tenure to have survived into the twenty-first century. It stands as an example of Laurel's unique investment in its modern school system, which is reflected in the modern architectural style of the building.<sup>62</sup>

Lamar School continued to function as an elementary school until 1993. It remained vacant for a decade, and in January of 2003, the Laurel School Board resolved that the property was "found not to be used for school or related purposes and not needed in the operation of the schools of the District."<sup>63</sup> The school board advertised the building for sale in the local newspaper and received an extremely low bid, which the board rejected. The school was then put up for auction in March of 2003. It was sold to the winning bidder, who elected to use the auditorium and east wing of the 1935 addition as a church. The new owner granted the building to New Covenant Hispanic Outreach/Iglesia Misionera Nuevo Pacto, Inc., in March of 2004.<sup>64</sup> Since 2004, the church has conducted services and other activities in the east portion of the building. The rest of the building, including the 1912 portion, remained vacant. Iglesia Misionera Nuevo Pacto moved its

<sup>55</sup> "R.H. Watkins: Superintendent of Laurel Schools for 33 Years – Pioneered Special Plan of Organization – Member of Prominent Associations, Author and Contributor," *Daily Clarion-Ledger*, September 17, 1939, 9.

<sup>56</sup> "Contracts Awarded for School Additions," *Sun Herald*, July 17, 1948, 1.

<sup>57</sup> "Laurel's Envious 'Unique Position'," *Clarion-Ledger*, June 28, 1957, 12.

<sup>58</sup> U.S., Find a Grave Index.

<sup>59</sup> Hodge, 379.

<sup>60</sup> "Laurel Negro School Destroyed by Fire," *Clarion-Ledger*, May 9, 1954, 18.

<sup>61</sup> James Bridgforth, "Oak Park School Complex," National Register 100005034, 2020, 13.

<sup>62</sup> "Lamar School, c 1912."

<sup>63</sup> Deed, Jones County Deed Records, Book 1379, Page 568.

<sup>64</sup> Deed, Jones County Deed Records, Book 1432, Page 459.

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religious services from the former Lamar Elementary School in 2022, leaving the building entirely vacant.

## Architecture

As Laurel's student enrollment more than doubled between 1907 and 1915, the district moved to construct four new educational facilities to meet the need for additional space.<sup>65</sup> Four school buildings were erected: Silas W. Gardiner School (1908), Lamar Elementary School (1912), Prentiss Elementary School (1913), and Laurel Junior High School (1915), each displaying defining elements of the Prairie style, including low-pitched, hipped roofs with overhanging, bracketed eaves.<sup>66</sup>

Developed in the 1890s, the Prairie style is one of the few architectural styles native to the United States. The Prairie School, a group of architects who developed the eponymous architectural style, were based in Chicago, and as a result, most "landmark" examples of the style are located in the Midwestern region of the United States.<sup>67</sup> The style continued to be popular throughout the country in its vernacular form between 1905 and 1915.<sup>68</sup> Common features of Prairie style construction include a low-pitched, hipped roof, overhanging eaves, one-story wings, porches, and façade detailing that emphasizes horizontal lines, often through contrasting materials or colors.

The 1914 *Grade School Buildings*, compiled by William C. Bruce, includes several examples of Prairie style elementary school buildings located throughout the United States. The Prairie style school buildings make up a small percentage of the schools represented in Bruce's pattern book – they were still an *avant-garde* choice in 1916. Lamar School's Mississippi Landmark application makes reference to this, as its compiler calls Lamar Elementary a "rather early" example of Prairie style influence in public school architecture. The application notes that other Mississippi municipalities continued to build schools influenced by the style into the 1920s.<sup>69</sup> In Laurel, though, the Lamar School is documented to be the second school constructed in the Prairie style.

### *Silas W. Gardiner School*

Silas W. Gardiner School, the first known Prairie style school to be constructed in Laurel, Mississippi, was designed by De Buys, Churchill & Labouisse, a New Orleans architecture firm.<sup>70</sup> It was constructed in 1908 and demolished in 1958.<sup>71</sup> The firm completed several residential buildings in Laurel in 1909 and 1910.<sup>72</sup> Architect Emile Rathbone DeBuys, who left the firm in 1912 to work in his own name, later designed Laurel's Lauren Rogers Museum of Art

<sup>65</sup> Laurel Diamond Jubilee Corporation, 36-37.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> Virginia Savage McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014), 552 & 564.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 552.

<sup>69</sup> "Lamar School, c 1912."

<sup>70</sup> William Conrad Bruce, Comp., *Grade School Buildings* (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1914), 186.

<sup>71</sup> Untitled, *The Laurel Leader-Call*, May 13, 1958, 1.

<sup>72</sup> MDAH, "DeBuys, Churchill & Labouisse," Artisan Database Search Results, Mississippi Historic Resources Inventory (HRI) Database, Accessed November 30, 2022, <https://www.apps.mdah.ms.gov/Public/rpt.aspx?rpt=artisanSearch&Name=debuys&City=Any&Role=Any>.

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(1923-24).<sup>73</sup> The Silas W. Gardiner school was located on historic Plum Street (now 5<sup>th</sup> Street) next to two other Laurel schools.<sup>74</sup>

Photographs of the Silas W. Gardiner School show a two-story brick building with a low-pitched, hipped roof; overhanging, bracketed eaves; and a central entrance. Its primary façade is symmetrical. There is a belt course at the first story, which extends beneath the first-floor windows. Windows on the second story are grouped and joined by a series of continuous stone sills. Divided lite basement windows are also visible at ground level in what appears to be a stone foundation. The building, as shown in Figure 5, displays clear elements of the Prairie style throughout its exterior. A plan of its first floor was reproduced in William C. Bruce's 1914 *Grade School Buildings*. It shows five classrooms with adjoining cloak rooms and closets. The cloak rooms communicate with both the corridor and adjoining classroom, as is the case in the former Lamar School building. The main entrance leads to a vestibule and entrance hall, and there are two side entrances. Stairwells are located at the southeast and southwest corners of the building (if we presume it is oriented with north at the top). There is a principal's office south of the west stairwell and a "Book Room" south of the east stairwell (Figure 18).<sup>75</sup>

### *Lamar School*

Laurel City Council passed an ordinance to construct the Lamar School in the former Kingston neighborhood at the north side of the city in March of 1912, stating that "the need of larger and better quarters for Kingston school was undisputed."<sup>76</sup> The building was intended to replace the earlier Kingston school building and was also initially referred to as the "Kingston School" during its early years of use. Contracts for the new facility were awarded in the first week June, and construction began only two weeks later.<sup>77</sup> *The Laurel Daily Argus* noted that construction needed to be complete within 120 "working days."<sup>78</sup>

Mississippi architect Penn Jeffries Krouse (1877-1944) designed the new school building, which was valued at \$30,000.<sup>79</sup> Burke Contracting provided construction services, and the building was plumbed by S.A. Gaines and heated by Solomon Heat and Power.<sup>80</sup> This provides evidence that the 1912 building was plumbed when constructed (as was the Gardiner school). Quotes from the superintendent show that the new schools, built with indoor restrooms and water fountains, helped to reduce hookworm in the student population.

Penn Jeffries Krouse is best known for his public architecture, which spans a wide range of architectural styles popular in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Krouse, who opened a branch of his firm in Laurel in 1909, designed many well-known buildings in the city

<sup>73</sup> Thomas Rosell, "Mississippi Architects: Rathbone DeBuys (1874-1960)," Preservation in Mississippi, Published June 1, 2016, <https://misspreservation.com/2016/06/01/mississippi-architects-rathbone-debuys-1874-1960/>.

<sup>74</sup> *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Laurel, Jones County, Mississippi* (New York City: Sanborn Map Company, June 1915), 10, Accessed January 3, 2023, [https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3984lm.g3984lm\\_g044801915/?sp=10&st=image&r=0.0982,0.461,0.276,0.](https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3984lm.g3984lm_g044801915/?sp=10&st=image&r=0.0982,0.461,0.276,0.)

<sup>75</sup> Bruce, 186-187.

<sup>76</sup> "Bond Issue for New School Building," *The Laurel Daily Argus*, March 6, 1912, 1.

<sup>77</sup> "Contract for New School Building," *The Laurel Daily Argus*, June 5, 1912, 1 and "Building Begins on New \$30,000 School Structure," *The Laurel Daily Argus*, June 19, 1912, 1.

<sup>78</sup> "Contract for New School Building."

<sup>79</sup> "Building Begins on New \$30,000 School Structure."

<sup>80</sup> "Contract for New School Building."

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including the courthouse and city hall.<sup>81</sup> He is known to have been the architect of record for at least two more of Laurel's schools, and newspaper articles show that he designed schools throughout the state. Krouse's 1912 Lamar School exemplifies the characteristics of the Prairie style as laid out by Virginia Savage McAlester: a hipped roof with overhanging, bracketed eaves; the use of contrasting colors on the façade; the expression of horizontal lines through exterior detailing; and, with its addition, one story wings. Its pale brick is another common characteristic of the style, in which buildings were often tan or light in color (regardless of building material) to blend with their natural settings.<sup>82</sup>

In March of 1935, the *Leader-Call* announced that Lamar School would receive a four-room addition.<sup>83</sup> The addition was federally funded through the Public Works Administration.<sup>84</sup> Krouse & Brasfield designed at least four school additions funded through the New Deal, and it is possible that they were also the architects of the Lamar School addition.<sup>85</sup> The one-story wings were set to either side of the original building in an effort to remain sympathetic to the Prairie style of the school's original structure. The 1935 addition incorporates a stone belt course that connects to the first store stone ornamentation of the original building. The Works Progress Administration (WPA) drafted a report about the Lamar School in 1937, two years after its addition of four rooms was completed. Somewhat confusingly, it described the school, built in 1912, as a one-story building.<sup>86</sup> This appears to be an error, as its location, cost, and year of construction are correct. By 1937, the school's setting was very much as it is today: in the midst of a dense residential area north of Laurel's city center. The school was lit by electric lights and had a "usual heating plant" in the basement. Its main floor contained eight classrooms and an office, according to the WPA report. The basement contained supply rooms, utility spaces, toilets, as well as a cafeteria and play space. The building had at least one fire escape. There was a grassy playground equipped with "...seats, swings, slides, etc."<sup>87</sup>

In July of 1948, D.R. Hall was awarded the contract for another addition to the Lamar School.<sup>88</sup> The planned addition consisted of seven classrooms, an auditorium, and an activities room. Its architect was Luther Lee Brasfield (1889-1982), who served as Krouse's lead draftsman from 1920 until he became a partner in 1933, at which time the firm of Krouse & Brasfield was founded.<sup>89</sup> Brasfield was Krouse's brother-in-law through his marriage to Krouse's sister.<sup>90</sup> Krouse died in 1944, leaving Brasfield to design Lamar School's auditorium addition. While the brick auditorium addition still incorporates stone decorative elements, including the carved circle

<sup>81</sup> "Personal," *The American Architect* CV, no. 2009 (June 24, 1914): 5 and MDAH, "Krouse, Penn Jeffries (b.1877-d.1944)," Artisan Database Search Results, Mississippi Historic Resources Inventory (HRI) Database, Accessed November 30, 2022, <https://www.apps.mdah.ms.gov/Public/rpt.aspx?rpt=artisanSearch&Name=Krouse&City=Any&Role=Any>.

<sup>82</sup> Connie Copozzola Pinkerton, Maureen Burke, and the Historic Preservation Department of the Savannah College of Art and Design, *Images of America: The Savannah College of Art and Design, Restoration of an Architectural Heritage* (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2004), 62.

<sup>83</sup> "City Projects," *The Leader Call*, March 13, 1935, 4.

<sup>84</sup> "Federal Assistance Will be Asked for Projects in City of Laurel and Jones County," *The Leader-Call*, March 6, 1935, 1.

<sup>85</sup> "Designer: Krouse & Brasfield," *The Living New Deal*, Accessed November 30, 2022.

<sup>86</sup> Powell.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> "Contracts Awarded for School Additions," *Sun Herald*, July 17, 1948, 1.

<sup>89</sup> MDAH, "Brasfield, Luther Lee (b. 1889 – d.1982)," Artisan Database Search Results, Mississippi Historic Resources Inventory (HRI) Database, Accessed November 30, 2022,

<https://www.apps.mdah.ms.gov/Public/rpt.aspx?rpt=artisanSearch&Name=Brasfield&City=Any&Role=Any>.

<sup>90</sup> Mark C. Davis, "Penn Jeffries Krouse in Pearl River," *Preservation in Mississippi*, published August 11, 2011, <https://misspreservation.com/2011/08/11/penn-jeffries-krouse-in-pearl-river>.

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decoration from the 1912 building, it also incorporates Art Deco stylistic elements and reflects a more modern, vertical presentation (as opposed to the horizontal lines emphasized in the Prairie style). The addition successfully marries elements of the two styles, allowing the building to remain modern throughout its additions while still incorporating elements of the 1912 construction's original style (horizontal stone detailing, contrasting colors, and transom/breeze windows).

*Prentiss Elementary School*

Prentiss Elementary School, constructed in the Prairie style in 1913, was demolished in the 1990s.<sup>91</sup> Historic maps of Laurel show that Prentiss was located west of the city center. Like Lamar School, it received an auditorium addition, designed by Luther Lee Brasfield, in the 1940s. This may suggest that Penn Jeffries Krouse also served as the architect for the Prentiss School, although contemporary records of its architect have not yet been located.

Described as Lamar School's "near twin" in the 1993 Mississippi Landmark application, Prentiss also displays clear characteristics of the Prairie style. Historic photos of the brick building show stone detailing, a hipped roof with overhanging eaves, and decorative horizontal lines (Figure 7).

*Junior High*

In March of 1915, Laurel's city council discussed the need to replace the "old Central school," which was sixteen years old.<sup>92</sup> A larger building was required, as some classes were being held in a church across the street. The 1907 *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Laurel, Jones County, Mississippi* shows "Central Grammar School" located adjacent to Laurel's high school on what was then Plum Street.<sup>93</sup> Work on the new building started in June and it was prepared for occupancy by the start of the 1915 school year.<sup>94</sup> The building, known as the "Junior High" after its construction, is allegedly shown in Figure 8. It should be noted here that other historic photographs of the building shown in Figure 8 refer to it as Central High School. The name may have changed, but it is more likely that the photo is mislabeled, instead showing the 1906 high school historically located to the west of the 1915 school. The 1906 and 1915 schools on Plum Street are shown in Figure 19. Figure 4, published in 1916, shows the Plum Street schools in the bottom row of images: the 1906 high school on the right and the 1915 junior high on the left. Figure 20 shows all three school buildings (1906, 1915, and 1908) after 1915. The 1915 building, at center, is clearly designed in the Prairie style and appears to match the school at bottom left in Figure 4.<sup>95</sup> The school buildings located on historic Plum Street (now 5<sup>th</sup> Street) were demolished in the twentieth century.<sup>96</sup>

There may have also been a fifth school in Laurel that displayed elements of the Prairie style, although the schools are difficult to track through their historic name changes. "Laurel and Long

<sup>91</sup> MDAH, "Prentiss Elementary School," Historic Resources Inventory Fact Sheet, Mississippi Historic Resources Inventory (HRI) Database, Accessed November 30, 2022, <https://www.apps.mdah.ms.gov/public/prop.aspx?id=15822&view=facts&y=1040>.

<sup>92</sup> "New School Needed," *Jackson Daily News*, March 15, 1915, 2.

<sup>93</sup> *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Laurel, Jones County, Mississippi* (New York City: Sanborn Map Company, July 1907), 4, Accessed January 2, 2023, [http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g3984lm.g3984lm\\_g044801907](http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g3984lm.g3984lm_g044801907). Plum Street was also known as "School Street," and is sometimes now 5<sup>th</sup> Street.

<sup>94</sup> "Work on New School Starts," *Simpson County News*, June 3, 1915, 1.

<sup>95</sup> A portion of the Silas Gardiner School is also visible at left in Figure 4.

<sup>96</sup> "Building's Move On," *Laurel Ledger*, June 29, 1906, 6.

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Leaf,” an article that appeared in a 1916 issue of *Logging*, includes images of four Laurel schools (and a portion of a fifth), each showing elements of the style (Figure 4).<sup>97</sup> Lamar School, then called Kingston School, appears to be misidentified in the article. The arched entrance surrounds are not consistent with the architecture of the building known as Kingston/Lamar Elementary School (1912). As all pictured schools feature components of the Prairie style, this suggests that there may have been a fifth school displaying elements of the style within Laurel’s city limits in 1916. However, only four Prairie style schools were mentioned in the 1993 Mississippi Landmark application. It is also possible that one of the schools pictured in *Logging* is not from Laurel and was mistakenly submitted to the publication instead of Lamar Elementary. In addition, it is probable that the 1906 high school was omitted from the 1993 Landmark application list of Prairie style schools because was designed in a hybrid architectural style, showcasing Prairie style features primarily in its roof and eaves while its façade is more in line with Beaux-Arts architecture. The low resolution of the images makes it difficult to completely assess each of the schools represented in the article. The consistently mislabeled historic images of Laurel’s schools add to the confusion, though it is clear that there were at minimum four Prairie style schools in Laurel as of 1915 and that these included Silas Gardiner (1908), Lamar Elementary (1912), Prentiss Elementary (1913), and Central/Junior High (1915).

The next of Laurel’s new school buildings, designed by Krouse in 1922, shows a clear departure from the Prairie style of the previous school buildings.<sup>98</sup> Now known as the (Old) George S. Gardiner High School, the building was constructed in the Mediterranean style.<sup>99</sup> By 1926, bids for a new junior high building in the “Colonial type” were being solicited, providing further evidence that the taste for Prairie style school buildings had passed in Laurel.<sup>100</sup> P.J. Krouse also served as the building architect for what would be known as the Stewart M. Jones Middle School.<sup>101</sup> Given the eclectic architectural styles present in Laurel and represented through its school architecture, it is interesting that each of the school buildings constructed between 1908 and 1915 were designed in the Prairie style. It is not clear why Laurel’s Board of Education made the choice to pursue Prairie style designs for each of the schools built early in Watkins’ tenure. Contemporary writers lauded the city as having “public buildings...utterly modern in design and conception” which emphasized “the beauty of the simple,” but there are no surviving documents to shed light on the brief but strong preference for Prairie style schools.<sup>102</sup>

Lamar School is the sole surviving example of Laurel’s historic Prairie style school buildings. Silas Gardiner School was demolished in the 1950s, Prentiss in the 1990s, and the 1906 and 1915 Plum Street schools at an unknown date.

Of the thirty-one schools confirmed to have been designed by Krouse and designated as Mississippi Landmarks, only the Poplarville High School/Poplarville Lower Elementary School Complex and the Lamar School were designed in the Prairie style.<sup>103</sup>

<sup>97</sup> Charles Henry Mackintosh, “Laurel and Long Leaf,” *Logging* 4, no. 4 (1916): 105-112.

<sup>98</sup> “Schools,” *Manufacturers Record: Exponent of America* (July 13, 1922): 89-90.

<sup>99</sup> MDAH, “(Old) George S. Gardiner High School.”

<sup>100</sup> “Schools,” *Manufacturers Record* (February 4, 1926): 133.

<sup>101</sup> Elma L. Malvaney, “Two Fire Updates,” *Preservation in Mississippi*, Published October 6, 2010, <https://misspreservation.com/2010/10/06/an-update-on-capitol-street-church-of-christ/>.

<sup>102</sup> Mackintosh, 105.

<sup>103</sup> See Poplarville, Pearl River County; #109-POP-0101-ML.

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As the only known example of Laurel's Prairie style public school architecture to have survived, as well as a rare example of Krouse's work in the Prairie style when applied to a public school building, the Lamar School has clear local significance in architecture. With a population of under ten thousand during the census prior to the Lamar School's construction, Laurel's investment in its public architecture, including school facilities, is impressive. In 1916, Macintosh wrote: "I can think of no city of the same size or up to FOUR TIMES her size which can compare with her in civic pride and for civic improvements."<sup>104</sup> In the Mississippi Landmark application comment sheet, the submitter theorizes that Laurel's progressive approach to education influenced the choice to embrace the Prairie style in its public school architecture, especially during the period of massive growth in the first decades of the twentieth century, which coincided with the start of R.H. Watkins' tenure. In this way, Laurel's educational history and architectural designs are equally represented within the sole survivor of its Prairie style schools: the former Lamar Elementary School building.

### **Conclusion**

Lamar School retains a high-level of historic integrity on both the exterior and interior, boasting key architectural elements typical to the Prairie Style and early twentieth-century schools overall. These include Prairie style elements like its hipped roof, overhanging eaves, horizontal lines, contrasting masonry, and stone detailing. Its interior has retained features common to early twentieth century school buildings, including built-in storage, coat rooms, marble wainscoting, wood trim, and both transom and breeze windows to allow for borrowed light in public spaces.

The Lamar School is significant under Criterion C as an intact example of the Prairie style of architecture, a style that achieved popularity in the early twentieth century. It is the only surviving Prairie style school in Laurel, and one of the few Prairie style schools designed by Krouse to be listed as a state landmark. The Lamar School is also significant as the earliest surviving example of a Prairie style school built during a period of marked educational growth in Laurel. Its architectural style is inextricably linked with the unique history of education in Laurel, providing significance under Criterion A in the area of local education.

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<sup>104</sup> Mackintosh, 105.

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[https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3984lm.g3984lm\\_g044801915/?sp=10&st=image&r=0,0.982,0.461,0.276,0](https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3984lm.g3984lm_g044801915/?sp=10&st=image&r=0,0.982,0.461,0.276,0).

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**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

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

**Primary location of additional data:**

- ☐ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other
- Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** 067-LAR-0400-ML

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**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 3.0246 \_\_\_\_\_

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

Lamar Elementary School

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(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- |                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 31.707642 | Longitude: -89.130433 |
| 2. Latitude: 31.707625 | Longitude: -89.129049 |
| 3. Latitude: 31.706825 | Longitude: -89.129044 |
| 4. Latitude: 31.706816 | Longitude: -89.130407 |

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

Blocks four (4) and five (5) of the Kingston Addition to the City of Laurel, Mississippi. See local location map below.

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

The boundaries are consistent with the property formerly operated as Lamar Elementary School. Jones County Parcel ID 135L-32-13-001.00.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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date: December 1, 2022

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### **Additional Documentation**

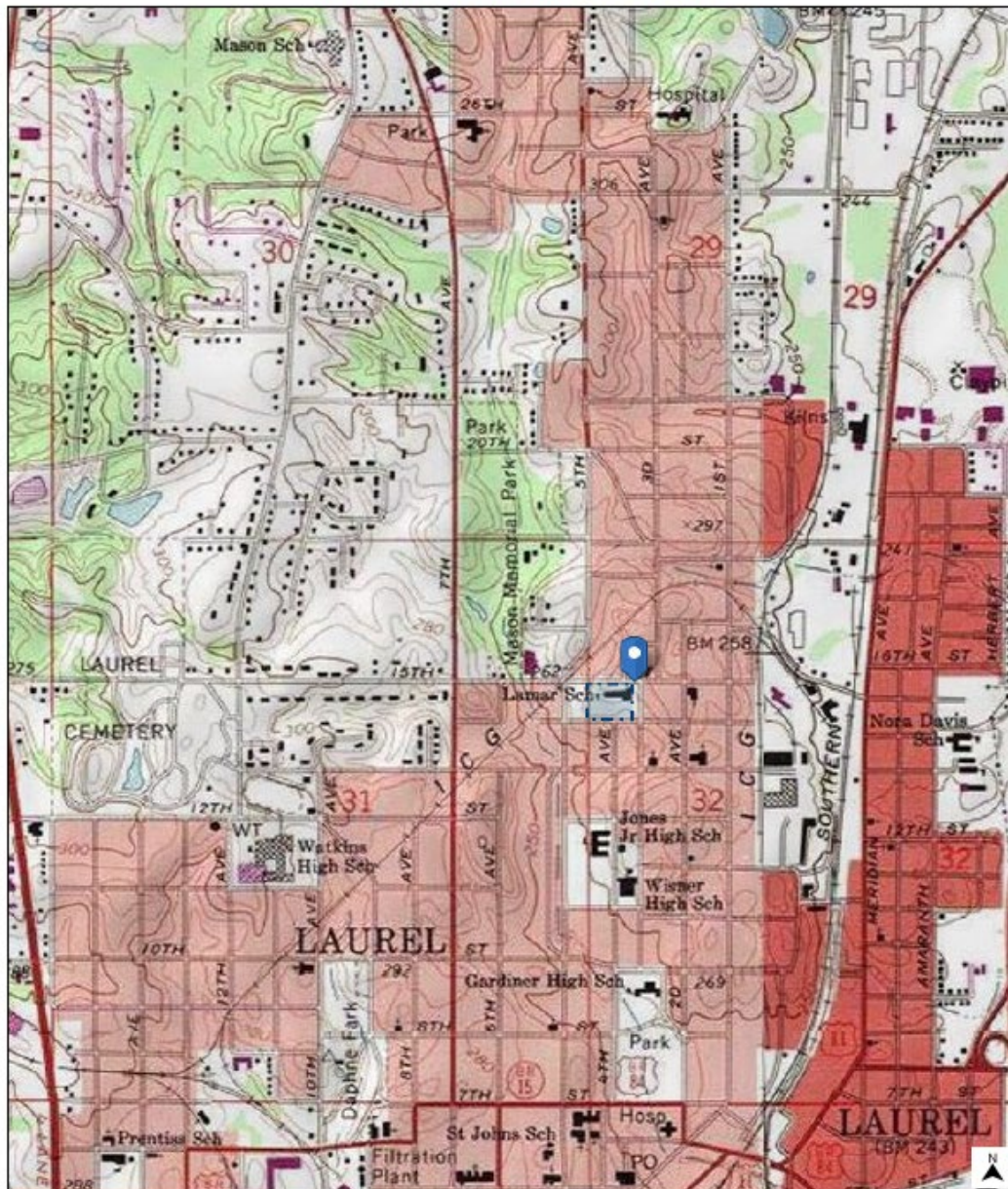
Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** Local location map (Jones County)

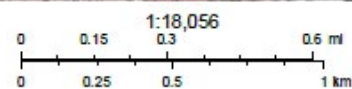
Lamar Elementary School  
Name of Property

Jones, Mississippi  
County and State

## Lamar Elementary School



January 2, 2023



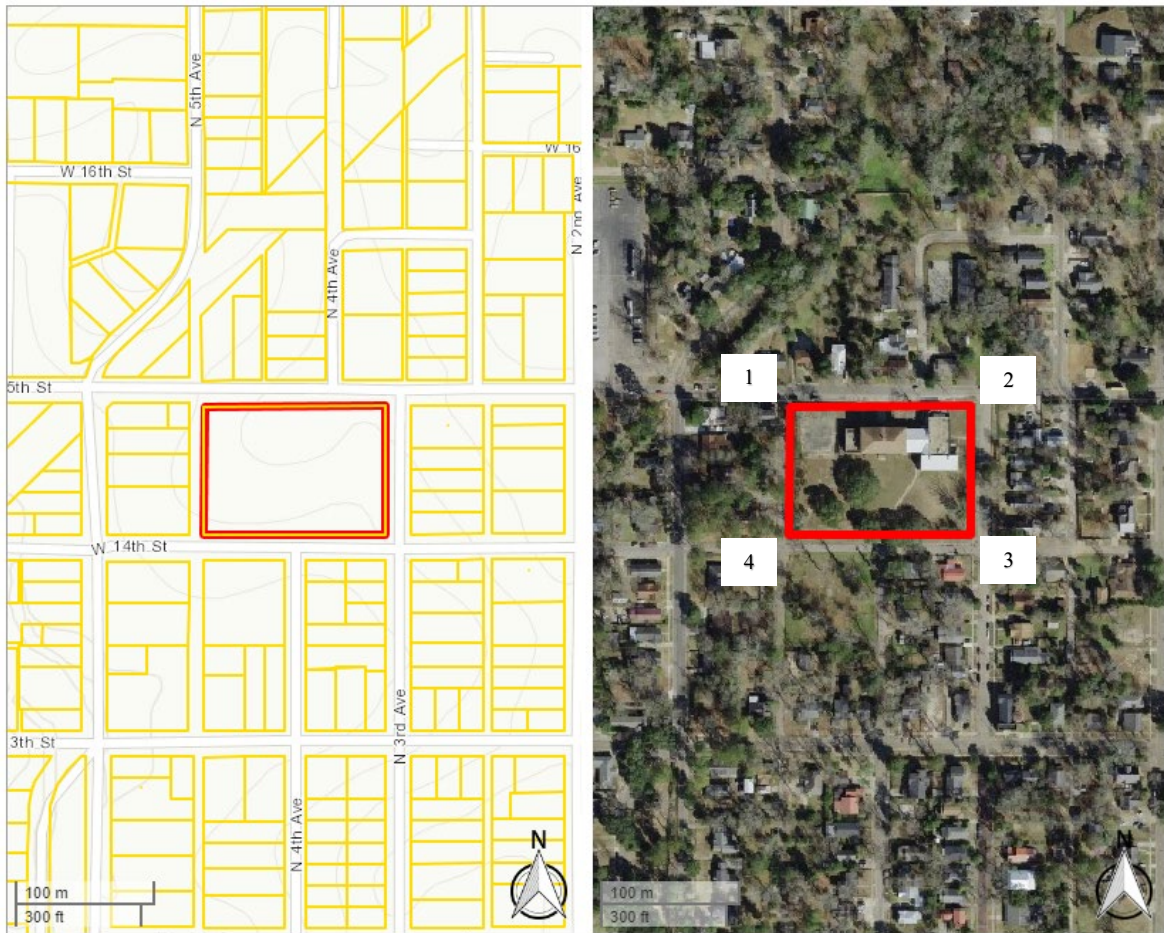
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Map with location of Lamar Elementary School indicated in blue. Via MDAH.

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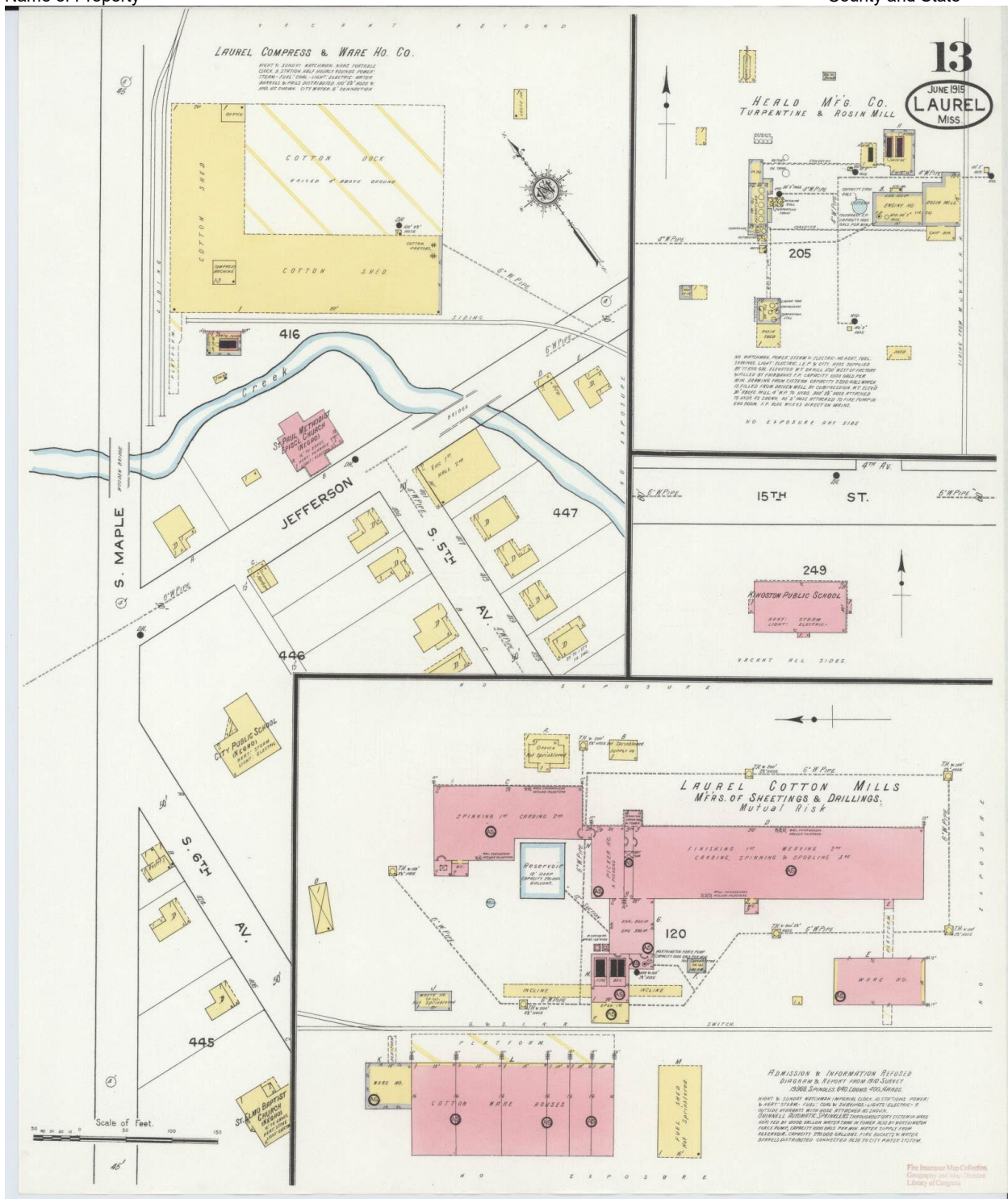
Jones, Mississippi  
County and State



Local location maps via the Jones County, MS Parcel Viewer  
(<http://apps.agdmaps.com/print/ms/jones/index.html?PPIN=11248>.) Red line indicates  
boundaries. Numbers 1-4 correspond with above latitude/longitude coordinates.

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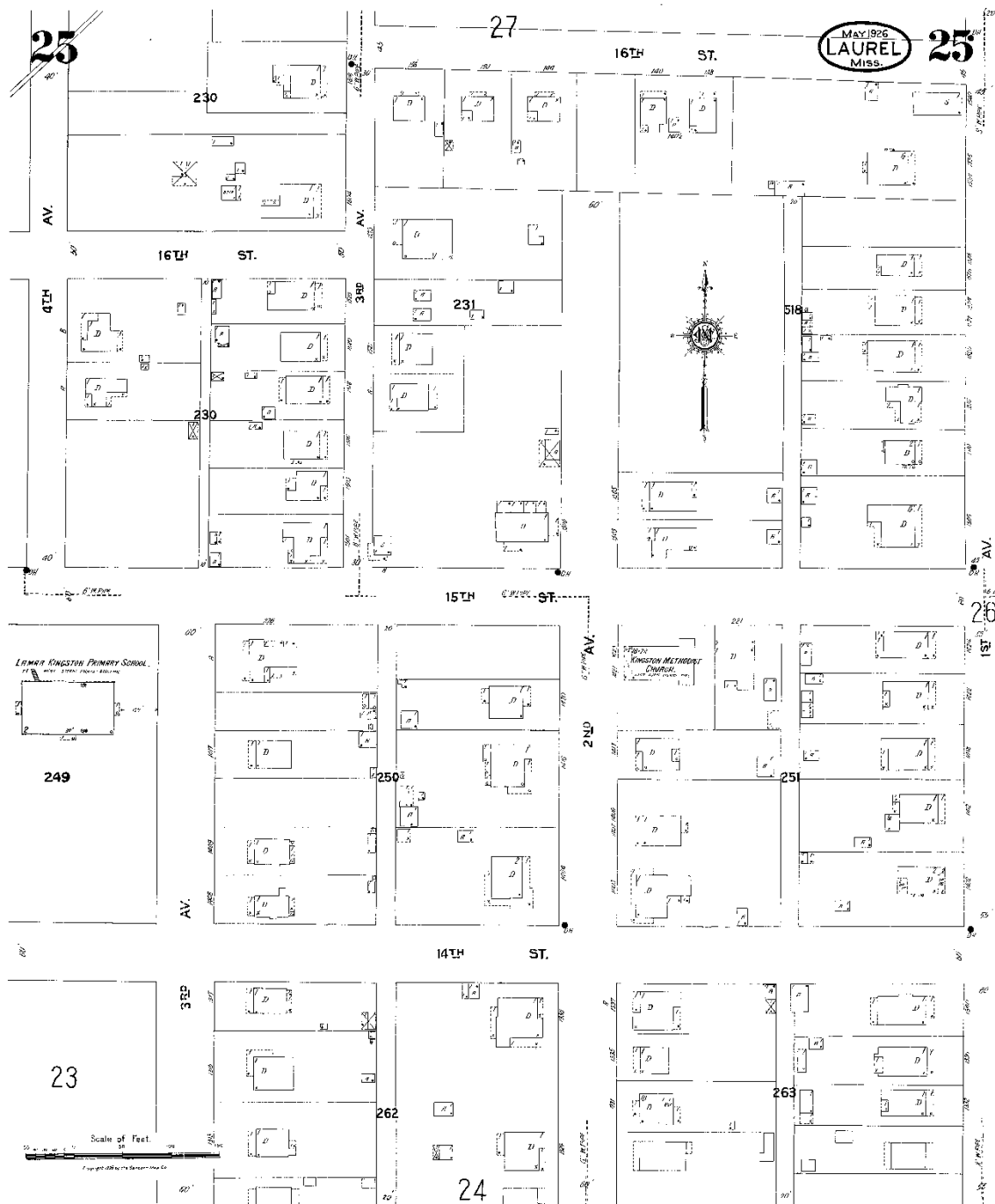
Jones, Mississippi  
County and State



**Figure 1:** Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Laurel, Jones County, Mississippi (New York City: Sanborn Map Company, June 1915), 13, Accessed January 2, 2023, [http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g3984lm.g3984lm\\_g044801915](http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g3984lm.g3984lm_g044801915).

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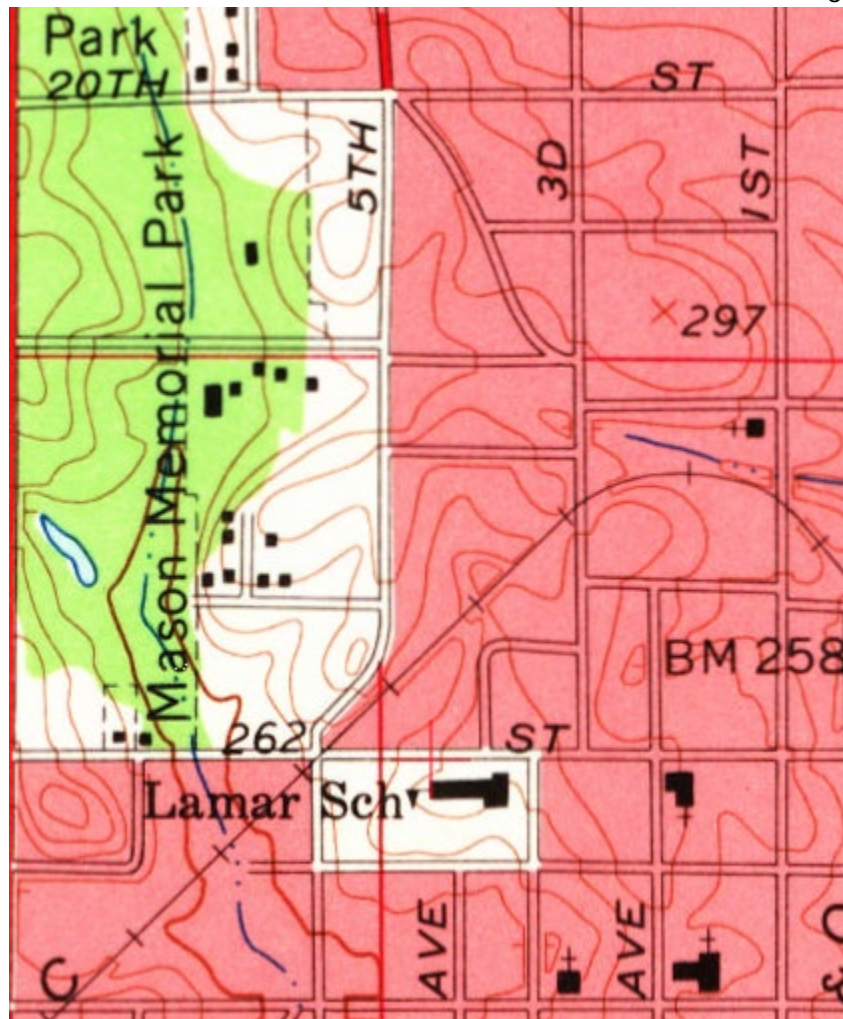
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**Figure 2:** Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Laurel, Jones County, Mississippi (New York City: Sanborn Map Company, May 1926), 25.

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**Figure 3:** Detail of 1964 USGS Map, Laurel West, Accessed January 2, 2023, <https://livingatlas.arcgis.com/topoexplorer/index.html>.

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**Figure 4:** Charles Henry Mackintosh, "Laurel and Long Leaf," *Logging* 4, no. 4 (1916): 107. Courtesy of the General Research Division, New York Public Library.

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**Figure 5:** Silas W Gardiner School 001, Undated (ca 1950), Courtesy of the Lauren Rogers Museum of Art. <https://lrma.pastperfectonline.com/archive/9F6AF981-B3BB-4E90-8DB2-843088735251#gallery-41>.

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**Figure 6:** Silas W Gardiner School 004, Undated (ca 1910), Courtesy of the Lauren Rogers Museum of Art. <https://lrma.pastperfectonline.com/archive/9F6AF981-B3BB-4E90-8DB2-843088735251#gallery-43>.

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**Figure 7:** Prentiss Elementary School 002, Undated (After 1940s), Courtesy of the Lauren Rogers Museum of Art. <https://lrma.pastperfectonline.com/archive/9F6AF981-B3BB-4E90-8DB2-843088735251#gallery-39>.

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**Figure 8:** Postcard 006 ("Old Junior High School, Laurel, Miss."), Undated (after 1906),  
Courtesy of the Lauren Rogers Museum of Art.

<https://lrma.pastperfectonline.com/archive/9F6AF981-B3BB-4E90-8DB2-843088735251#gallery-7>.

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**Figure 9:** Lamar Elementary School Auditorium, 1956, John E. Phay Collection, University of Mississippi.



**Figure 10:** Lamar Elementary School Auditorium, 1956, John E. Phay Collection, University of Mississippi.

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**Figure 11:** Lamar Elementary School Cafeteria, 1956, John E. Phay Collection, University of Mississippi.



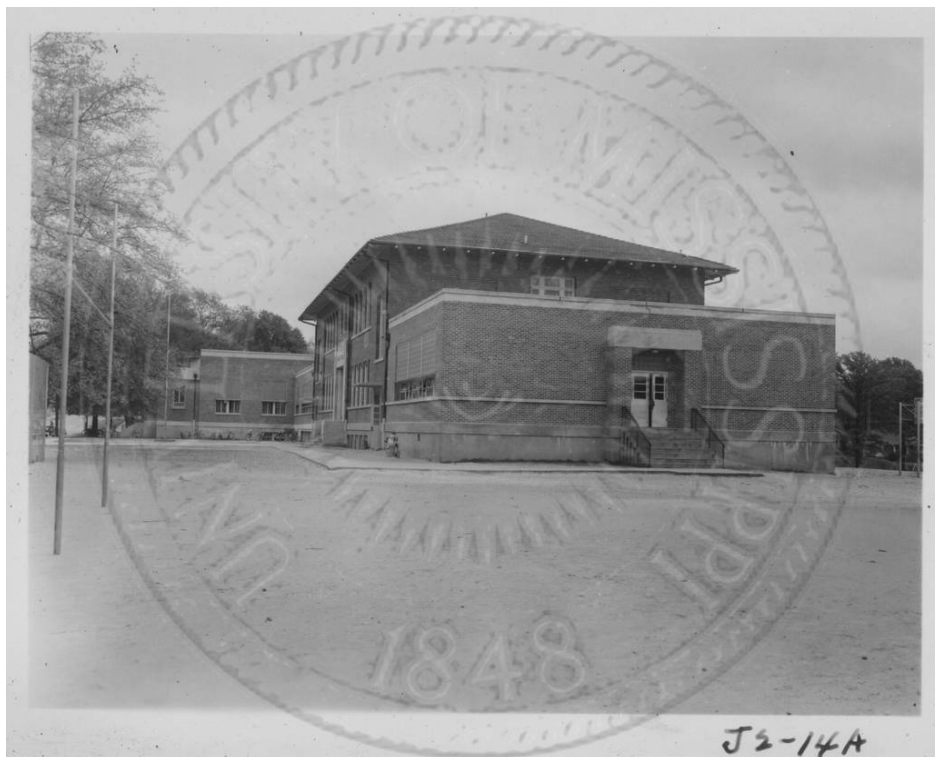
**Figure 12:** Lamar Elementary School Grade 4 Classroom, 1956, John E. Phay Collection, University of Mississippi.

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**Figure 13:** Lamar Elementary School Grade 1 Classroom, 1956, John E. Phay Collection, University of Mississippi.



**Figure 14:** Lamar Elementary School West and North Elevations, 1956, John E. Phay Collection, University of Mississippi.

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**Figure 15:** Lamar Elementary School North Elevation, 1956, John E. Phay Collection, University of Mississippi.



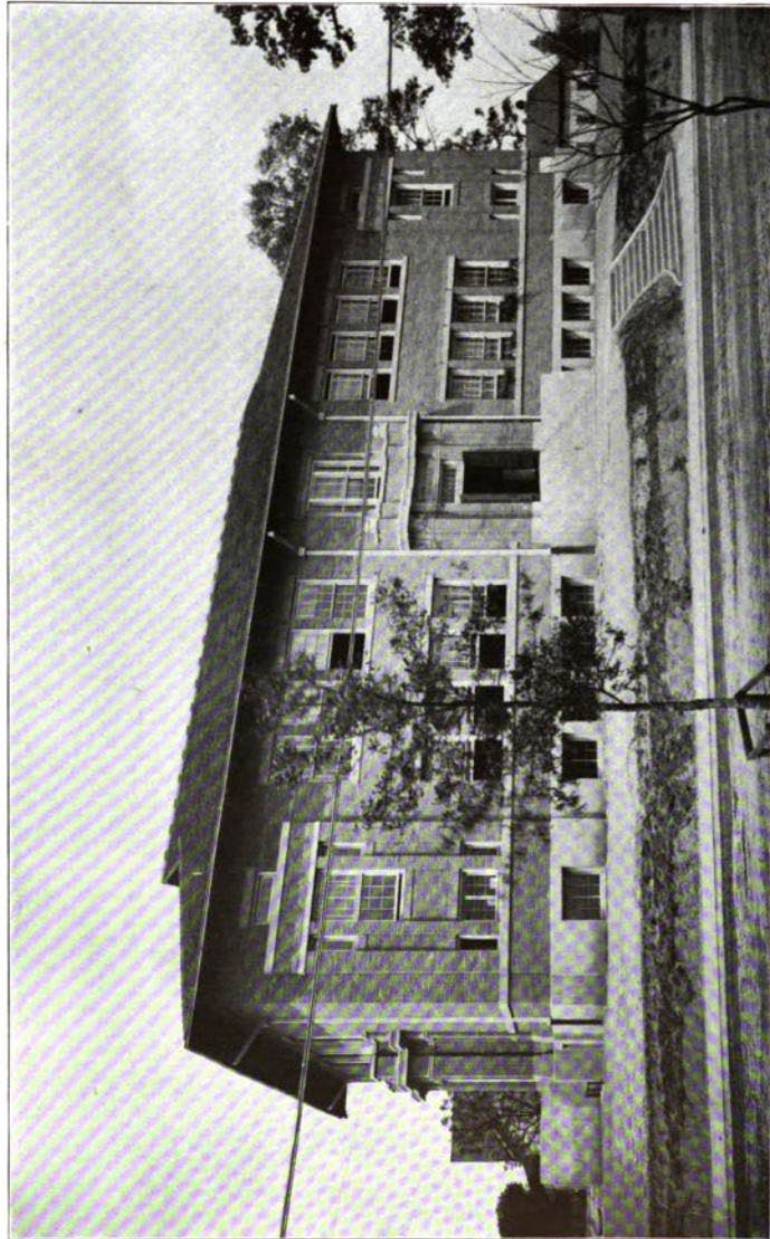
**Figure 16:** Lamar Elementary School South Elevation, 1956, John E. Phay Collection, University of Mississippi.

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GRADE SCHOOL BUILDINGS



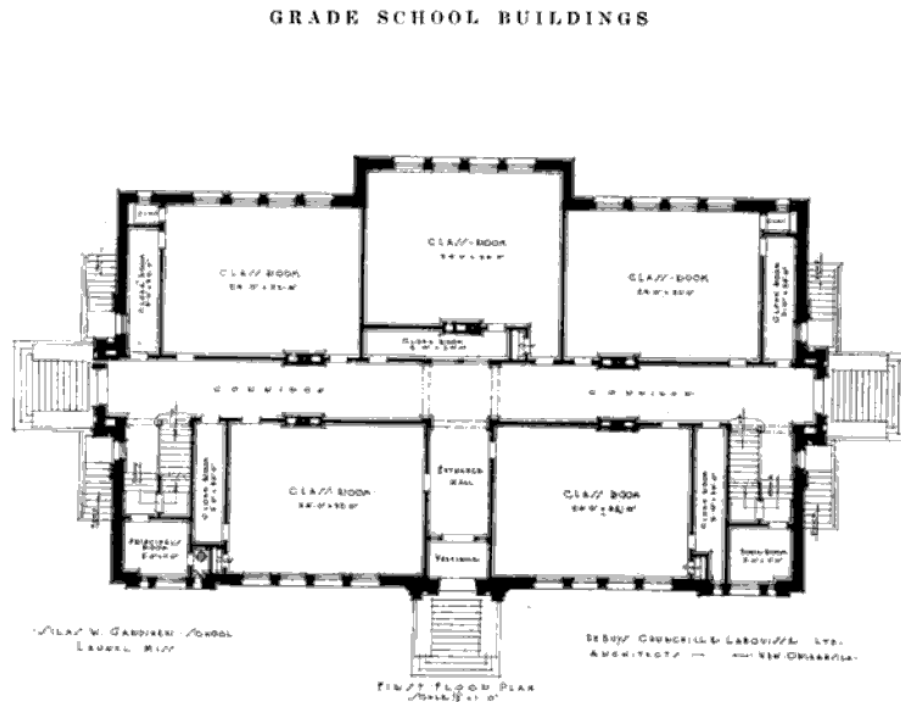
SILAS W. GARDINER SCHOOL, LAUREL, MISS.  
De Buys, Churchill and La Boulsee, Architects, New Orleans, La.

Digitized by Google

**Figure 17:** Silas W Gardiner School, From William Conrad Bruce, Comp., *Grade School Buildings* (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1914), 186.

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**Figure 18:** First Floor Plan of Silas W. Gardiner School, From William Conrad Bruce, Comp., *Grade School Buildings* (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1914), 186.

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**Figure 19:** Rebuilt as Central High School after Old Central School Burned, Undated (after 1915), Lauren Rogers Museum of Art.

<https://lrma.pastperfectonline.com/archive/9F6AF981-B3BB-4E90-8DB2-843088735251#gallery-9>.

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**Figure 20:** Rebuilt as Central High School after Old Central School Burned, Undated (after 1915; ca 1940), Lauren Rogers Museum of Art.

<https://lrma.pastperfectonline.com/archive/9F6AF981-B3BB-4E90-8DB2-843088735251#gallery-12>.<sup>105</sup>

<sup>105</sup> This photograph shows, from left to right, the 1906 high school, 1915 junior high, and the 1908 Silas Gardiner School.

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## Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

## Photo Log

Name of Property: Lamar Elementary School

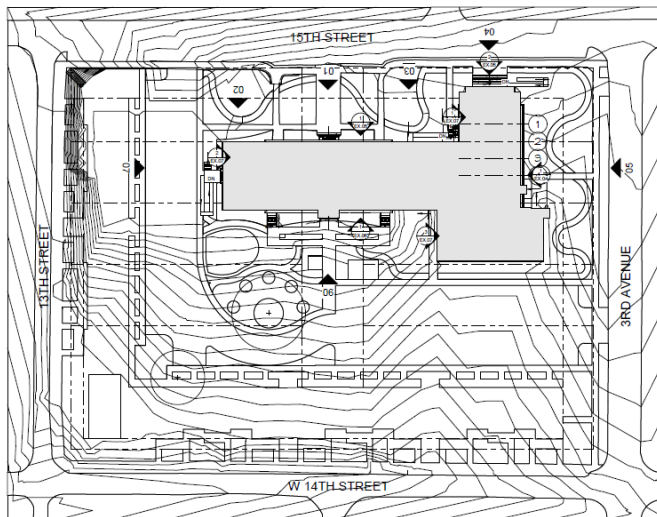
City or Vicinity: Laurel

County: Jones

State: Mississippi

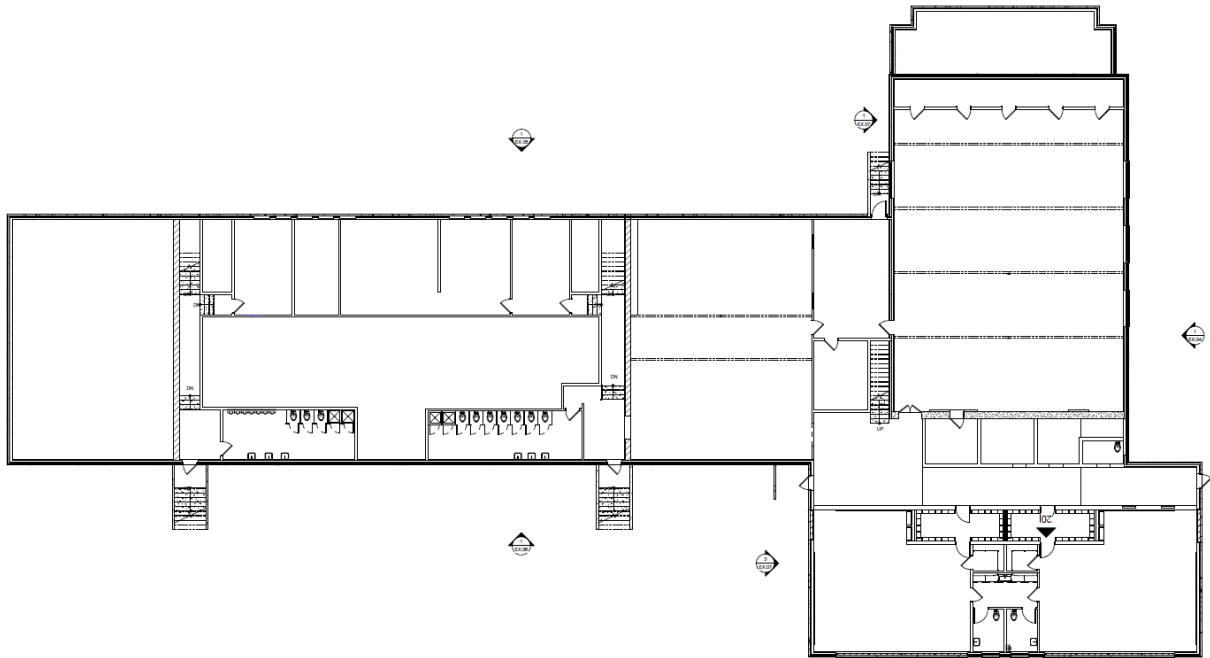
Photographer: Jesse Sweigart

Date Photographed: November 11, 2021; October 10, 2022; November 16, 2022



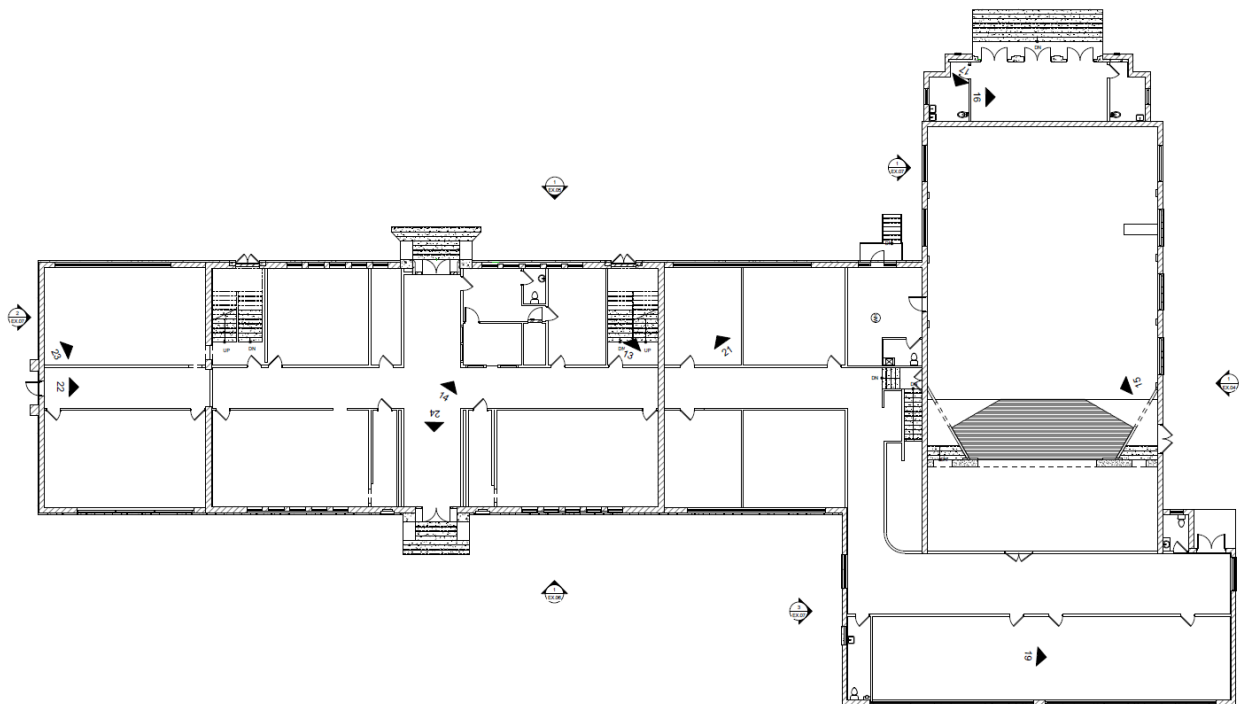
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**LDA** ARCHITECTS  
NR - PK - LOWER LEVEL  
LAMAR SCHOOL  
LAMAR SCHOOL APARTMENTS, LLC

11.30.22  
Page 05.01

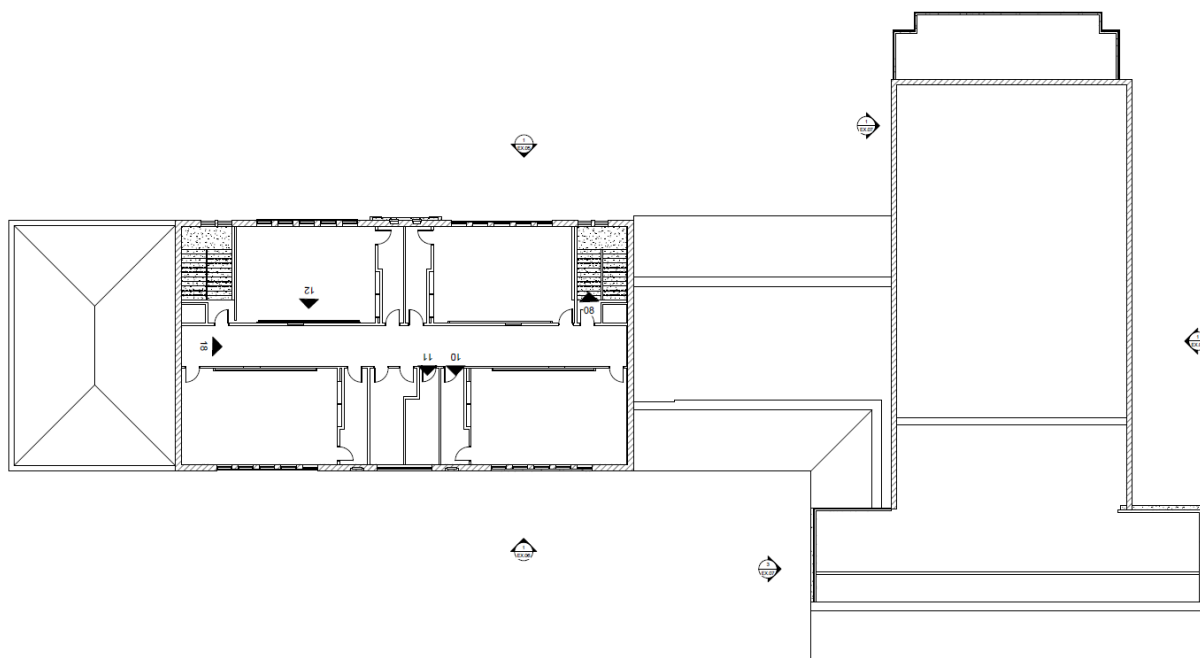


**LDA** ARCHITECTS  
NR - PK - FIRST FLOOR  
LAMAR SCHOOL  
LAMAR SCHOOL APARTMENTS, LLC

11.30.22  
Page 05.02

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**LDA** ARCHITECTS  
NR - PK - SECOND FLOOR  
LAMAR SCHOOL  
LAMAR SCHOOL APARTMENTS, LLC

11.30.22  
Page 05.03

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

- 01 of 24: Main entrance on north elevation, 1912 building. Camera facing south.
- 02 of 24: North elevation, west wing of 1935 addition. Camera facing south.
- 03 of 24: North elevation, east wing of 1935 addition. Camera facing south.
- 04 of 24: North elevation, 1948 auditorium addition. Camera facing south.
- 05 of 24: East elevation, 1948 auditorium addition. Camera facing west.
- 06 of 24: South elevation, 1912 building. Camera facing north.
- 07 of 24: West elevation, 1935 addition. Camera facing east.
- 08 of 24: Interior stairwell, 1912 building. Camera facing north.
- 09 of 24: Classroom, 1912 building. Camera facing west.
- 10 of 24: Coat room, 1912 building. Camera facing south.
- 11 of 24: Second floor restroom, 1912 building. Camera facing south.
- 12 of 24: Classroom interior wall, 1912 building. Camera facing south.
- 13 of 24: Interior stairwell, 1912 building. Camera facing up.
- 14 of 24: Interior of first floor showing entrance hall, corridor, and office, 1912 building. Camera facing northeast.
- 15 of 24: Auditorium, 1948 addition. Camera facing west.

Lamar Elementary School

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- 16 of 24: Vestibule, 1948 addition. Camera facing east.  
17 of 24: Toilet room, 1948 addition. Camera facing southwest.  
18 of 24: Corridor, 1912 building. Camera facing east.  
19 of 24: 1948 addition. Camera facing east.  
20 of 24: Basement coat room, 1948 addition. Camera facing south.  
21 of 24: Classroom, east wing of 1935 addition. Camera facing northwest.  
22 of 24: Hallway, west wing of the 1935 addition. Camera facing east.  
23 of 24: Classroom, west wing of the 1935 addition. Camera facing northeast.  
24 of 24: First floor hall, 1912 building. Camera facing south.

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

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

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

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



2021/11/11 18:20



2021/11/11 18:34



2021/11/11 18:36



2021/11/11 18:38



2021/11/11 18:57



2021/11/11 19:00



2021/11/11 19:06

























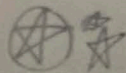


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