

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Mt. Moriah School

Other names/site number: Mt. Moriah Community Center

Name of related multiple property listing:

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

2. Location

Street & number: 149 Mt. Moriah Rd.

City or town: Tylertown State: MS County: Walthall

Not For Publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☒

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

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

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

I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

 national statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A B X C D

Signature of certifying official/Title:

Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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

Signature of commenting official:

Date

Title :

State or Federal agency/bureau
or Tribal Government

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

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

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

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

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

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

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION: school

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

SOCIAL: meeting hall

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

NO STYLE

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: _____

Siding: Concrete block

Foundation: Concrete

Roof: Metal

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The former Mt. Moriah School stands across the road from Mt. Moriah Missionary Baptist Church and cemetery, forming the center of an African American agricultural community southeast of Tylertown in south Mississippi. The landscape is rolling with cattle farms and tree farms and wooded areas predominating. The rectangular concrete block building faces east and is topped by a hipped raised-seam metal roof. Built in 1931, it was constructed primarily by community members who made the blocks on site.

Narrative Description

The former Mt. Moriah School stands across the road from Mt. Moriah Missionary Baptist Church on Mt. Moriah Road, in an agricultural community of cattle and pine tree farms southeast of Tylertown, the county seat of Walthall County. Walthall County is located in south-central Mississippi, just north of the Louisiana state line, and its topography is rolling, with pine forests and a sandy-red clay soil.

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Built in 1931, Mt. Moriah School is a one-story, rusticated unreinforced concrete-block building, rectangular in footprint, topped by a hipped roof of raised seam metal (5-V crimp), and with exposed rafters in the open eaves. A poured concrete slab-on-grade foundation functions as the floor inside, where it has been covered with vinyl tiles in some classrooms. The 8" x 16" concrete blocks, each of which has a face with two equal rusticated squares, were made on site by community members, according to community history. The block walls are painted a grayish white with white trim around the windows and entrances.

The four-classroom building closely matches the standardized plan #4-EM-8 from a set of plans developed by the State Department of Education's Division of School Building Service beginning in the late 1920s. The building's large grouped windows reflect the four classrooms inside, and it was designed to face east or west so that the windows would be on the front and back. In the case of Mt. Moriah, the east side, which has the main entrance, should be the primary façade, but it faces a small dirt road known as S. Mt. Moriah Road; meanwhile, the south side, where two doors lead into two separate classrooms, faces Mt. Moriah Baptist Church and Mt. Moriah Road and functions as the primary entrance today.

Windows are replacement aluminum single-hung sash with concrete lintels and sills, probably dating to the school's period as a Head Start center from the late 1960s until 1991. On the E façade, a recessed entrance porch at the center is finished in beadboard and has paired replacement 4-panel wood doors leading into a short hallway. Flanking the entrance are two groups of five 3/2 windows, slightly smaller than the original openings.

On the S side, now the primary façade, a recessed entrance porch with concrete lintel at the center is finished in beadboard, and two original 5-panel wood doors lead into separate classrooms. Flanking the entrance are two paired 2/2 windows, slightly smaller than the original openings.

On the W elevation, the original windows were probably grouped into two blocks of six windows, but the space for the center two windows has been blocked up in each, leaving four paired replacement windows roughly equally spaced on the wall.

The N elevation features a recessed center entrance finished in beadboard, with two original 5-panel wood doors leading into two separate classrooms. To the right is a paired 1/1 window, while to the left is a paired 2/2 window set high up on the wall.

The interior retains a high degree of integrity. Ceilings are beadboard throughout, while exterior walls are painted concrete block and partition walls are beadboard. Original doors are 5-panel wood with simple 1x4" trim. Floors are replacement vinyl tile over concrete. A short hallway leads from the entrance on the E façade, and all four classrooms have 5-panel doors opening onto the hallway (this is a variant from the standard plan, which had one classroom opening only to the outside). Two small restrooms with gypsum board walls have been inserted (2009) on either side of the hallway, cutting into the two classrooms that flank the hallway on the north and south sides. The southeastern classroom has been partitioned (2009) with a gypsum board wall to

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create a small kitchen on the far south end. Two larger classrooms span the west side of the building and were originally separated by cased opening and a folding door partition wall that could be opened up for assemblies. This partition does not remain, and the space is now divided only by the cased opening. A raised wooden stage is set at the north end of the northwest classroom, rebuilt in 2009. Two square brick chimneys that acted as flues for heating stoves in each of the classrooms have been cut off below the roofline.

A wood frame, four-room teachers home stood on the property in the 1950s, but is no longer extant.

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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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ETHNIC HERITAGE: BLACK
EDUCATION
ARCHITECTURE

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Period of Significance

1931-1959

Significant Dates

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

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.)

Mt. Moriah School is locally significant in the areas of Education and Ethnic Heritage: Black as a segregated grammar school (grades 1-8) for African American students in the surrounding Mt. Moriah community from the 1930s through 1959. The school building is also significant at the local level in the area of Architecture as an example of a standardized design by the State Department of Education's Division of School Building Service.

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Narrative Statement of Significance

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

Narrative History

Mt. Moriah first appears in the State Department of Education's records in October 1931, when the Division of School Building Service filled out a record card for their files noting that the county superintendent, C.I. Brumfield, had requested help with building a new building. The record card notes that a site visit was made on October 21, 1931, probably by Division Director W.G. Eckles, and that plans and specifications for a building were sent to the superintendent on October 28, 1931. Although the record doesn't document the name of the plans sent, the building bears a resemblance to the School Building Service's Plan #4-EM-8. At least 15 other schools in the state were built using this plan, eleven for black schools and four for white schools, including St. Paul Negro School in Walthall County, built in 1951. If it was built using Plan 4-AM-8, Mt. Moriah is the earliest known use of the plan.¹

Community history relates that the men in the community fabricated the distinctive double-square rusticated concrete block on site, donating their labor in order to get a school built for their children. Photographs from the state's survey of public schools in the 1950s show similar concrete blocks used as a wainscot on Pine Grove School, built c.1935 northwest of Tylertown and now non-extant.²

Grades 1-8 met here, and the school's Average Daily Attendance ranged from a high of 152 with five teachers in 1949-50 (possibly using the hallway as a classroom) to a low of 110 the next year. Each class was composed of two grades that shared a classroom and a teacher. Statistics from the 1954-55 school year show that Grades 1-2 had 47 students, while Grades 7-8 had 24 students.³

In 1955, the State Department of Education surveyed the campus and described it in a report on all of Walthall County's schools:

This center has an administration building of concrete block erected about 1930 on two acres of ground. There are four classrooms and an auditorium which has been used as two classrooms. The building is in poor condition and the equipment is inadequate and poor.

¹ Mississippi Department of Education, "School Building Service Record Cards." Mississippi Department of Archives and History, RG 50, Series 1500: Mount Moriah School, Walthall County.

² Mississippi Department of Education. "School Photograph Scrapbooks." Mississippi Department of Archives and History, RG 50, Series 1513. These photos have been digitized and are online at http://www.mdah.ms.gov/arrec/digital_archives/series/schoolphotographs/browse/1513+-+School+Photograph+Scrapbooks/Mississippi/Walthall/.

³ "Survey, Walthall County Public Schools, 1955," pp. 9-10. RG 50, Series 1653: School Building Surveys from the Act of 1953. Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Miss.

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There are outdoor toilets, deep well with electric pump, no water inside, and no shade trees.

There is a four room, unfinished wood teacher's home which is not in use at present.⁴

The school closed in 1959 when all of Walthall County's African American schools were consolidated to the new campus of J. J. Gullledge High School on the south side of Tylertown. Gullledge became the new Tylertown High School in 1969 after integration and is still in operation. Mt. Moriah reopened as a Head Start Center for children ages 3-5 in the late 1960s, and renovations around that time included the removal of the original windows and replacement with smaller aluminum single-hung sash. A kitchen was inserted into the hallway and the east entrance was closed off. Floors in the classrooms may have also been covered with vinyl tiles at this time. According to a school history, "during the summer months the facility was used to serve as the summer food program, (providing breakfast and lunch for children ages 3-18, and other wellness programs)." The Head Start Center moved out in 1991, but the old school continued to be used for community gatherings such as the Home Makers' Club meetings, church banquets, and wedding receptions.⁵

On August 29, 2005, the winds of Hurricane Katrina tore off panels of the tin roof of the Rosenwald building, and community members and alumni led by Mrs. Annie Bell Holmes, who attended all eight grades at Mt. Moriah and returned to teach from 1950-1952, applied for a grant from the Mississippi Department of Archives and History's Hurricane Relief Grant.⁶ After repairs to the roof and interior repairs that included the insertion of two restrooms and a small kitchen, the building reopened to the community in November 2010 and continues to be maintained by dedicated volunteers today.

Ethnic Heritage: Black and Education

From its opening in 1931 until closing in 1959, the Mt. Moriah School provided grades 1-8 education for African American students who walked to school up to three miles each way from their homes in the surrounding agricultural community. Students who desired to attend higher grades transferred to the Walthall County Training School, located about 5 miles to the west.⁷

Like most counties, Walthall County once had numerous one-room African American schools, but beginning in the 1930s, these began to be shut down in favor of larger, consolidated schools. By the time of the 1955 report by the State Department of Education, the county was operating 10 black schools outside of Tylertown's separate district. Five of these were small, frame buildings ranging from one to three classrooms, while the rest, such as Mt. Moriah were four classrooms or bigger. Three high schools for African American students were open at that time, Hope, Magee's Creek Vocational, and Walthall County Training School, and these were composed of a variety of buildings for all the grades, including vocational shops and teachers' houses. Of these 10 black schools operating in the 1950s, Mt. Moriah and Walthall County

⁴ "Survey, Walthall County Public Schools, 1955," p. 24.

⁵ "Mount Moriah Elementary School, Grades 1-8, History," *Remembering the Past, Looking to the Future*. Open House Program, November 13, 2010. On file at Historic Preservation Division, MDAH.

⁶ Annie Bell Holmes, Interview by Jennifer Baughn, Mt. Moriah School, October 25, 2012, pp.13-15.

⁷ Annie Bell Holmes, Interview by Jennifer Baughn, Mt. Moriah School, October 25, 2012.

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Training School are the most intact survivors. The 4-classroom concrete-block classroom building at St. Paul, built in 1951, is still standing northwest of Tylertown, but its windows have been blocked in and exterior doors replaced. No other rural black schools are known to survive in Walthall County.

Architecture

Mt. Moriah's four-classroom floorplan appears to be based on a standardized plan by the State Department of Education's Division of School Building Service. The School Building Service (SBS) was established in 1928 and its staff and travel costs were funded by the General Education Board, a John D. Rockefeller philanthropy based in New York City. Mississippi was one of the last states to establish a state agency with review authority over school building design. One of the primary efforts of longtime director W.G. Eckles was developing standardized plans for small rural schools that would be as easy to build as previous "miserably planned schoolhouses," yet more functional and hygienic, and, he argued, often less expensive.⁸

The SBS Plan #4-EM-8 (Exhibit 1) is rectangular and is shown on the standard plan with a side-gabled roof and a recessed center entrance sheltered by a gabled portico on wood columns or posts. Inside, a short hallway is flanked on two sides by classrooms and terminates at a double-leaf entrance into the classroom/assembly space which consists of two classrooms separated by a folding-door partition wall. Each of the four classrooms has an exterior entrance on the side elevations, and groups of five windows, shown on the standard plan as 9/9 double-hung sash, light the classrooms on the east and west walls. In keeping with the lighting standards of the day, no windows are shown on the side elevations, so that light would only enter each classroom on one side. Lighting from two or more sides of a classroom was shown in lighting studies of the time to produce glare that made close reading work difficult and caused eye strain.

Mt. Moriah varies in several respects from the state's standard plan besides the lack of a portico at the E entrance and the hipped rather than gabled roof. Window openings that appear to be original are located on both side elevations, bringing light into each classroom from two directions. Inside, the biggest change from the plan was the shifting by a few feet of the folding door partition wall between the two classrooms on the W side so that the two doors at the end of the short hallway lead into the separate classrooms rather than into only the northwest classroom.

About 30 other school buildings around the state were built to the State Department of Education's plan 4-EM-8, most of them between 1946 and 1955. Only two of these are known to still survive: the elementary building at Big Creek School (White) in Calhoun County, built 1950 and with its windows covered or replaced with large garage doors; and Ruckersville Negro School (also known as Falkner High School) in Tippah County, also built in 1950. It retains most of its original wood double-hung sash windows and is intact inside and was designated a Mississippi Landmark in 2009.

⁸ Jennifer V.O. Baughn, "A Modern School Plant: Rural Consolidated Schools in Mississippi, 1910-1955," *Buildings & Landscapes: Journal of the Vernacular Architecture Forum* 19, No. 1 (Spring 2012): 56-58.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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

Baughn, Jennifer V.O. "A Modern School Plant: Rural Consolidated Schools in Mississippi, 1910-1955," *Buildings & Landscapes: Journal of the Vernacular Architecture Forum* 19, no. 1 (Spring 2012): 43-72.

Holmes, Annie Bell. Interview by Jennifer Baughn, Mt. Moriah School, October 25, 2012.

Mississippi Department of Education. School Photograph Scrapbooks. Jackson, Miss.: Mississippi Department of Archives and History, RG 50, Series 1513. Online at http://www.mdah.ms.gov/arrec/digital_archives/series/schoolphotographs/browse/1513+-+School+Photograph+Scrapbooks/Mississippi/Walthall/.

"Mount Moriah Elementary School, Grades 1-8, History," Remembering the Past, Looking to the Future. Open House Program, November 13, 2010. On file at Historic Preservation Division, MDAH.

"Survey, Walthall County Public Schools, 1955." RG 50, Series 1653: School Building Surveys from the Act of 1953. Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Miss.

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: _____

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Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): 147-TYL-5013

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property roughly 2 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 31.057222 | Longitude: -90.094722 |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

See Continuation Sheet.

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927 or ☐ NAD 1983

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

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

The nominated property comprises a polygon including the rectangular Mt. Moriah School building, the fenced playground on the west side, and the grassy lawn on the south and east sides, with Mt. Moriah Road as the southern boundary. The property is included in the rural parcel described in the Walthall County, Mississippi land records as:

Beginning at the Northeast corner of Northwest Quarter of Northeast Quarter, run thence South 610 feet to the point of beginning, run thence West 450 feet; run thence South to the North line of the Mt. Moriah Road; run thence Northeasterly along said North line of Mt. Moriah Road to the East line of the Northwest Quarter of Northeast Quarter; run thence North along said East line to the point of beginning, Section 16, Township 1 North, Range 11 East.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The nominated property includes the Mt. Moriah School building and its immediate environs.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Jennifer Baughn, Chief Architectural Historian
organization: Mississippi Department of Archives and History
street & number: P.O. Box 571
city or town: Jackson state: MS zip code: 39205-0571
e-mail jbaughn@mdah.ms.gov
telephone: 601-576-6956
date: January 25, 2017

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

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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: Mt. Moriah School

City or Vicinity: Tylertown vicinity

County: Walthall County State: Mississippi

Photographer: Jennifer Baughn, MDAH Chief Architectural Historian

Date Photographed: February 3, 2017

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

- 1 of 8: E façade, view to W
- 2 of 8: E façade and N elevation, view to SW
- 3 of 8: W and S elevations, view to NE
- 4 of 8: Classroom entrances on S elevation, view to N
- 5 of 8: Double classroom/auditorium on W half of school, view toward N stage
- 6 of 8: NW classroom with stage, view to N
- 7 of 8: Double classroom/auditorium on W half of school, view to S
- 8 of 8: Hallway, view from entrance to W, with double classroom in background seen through two doors, and doors to other two classrooms on each side of the hallway.

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

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

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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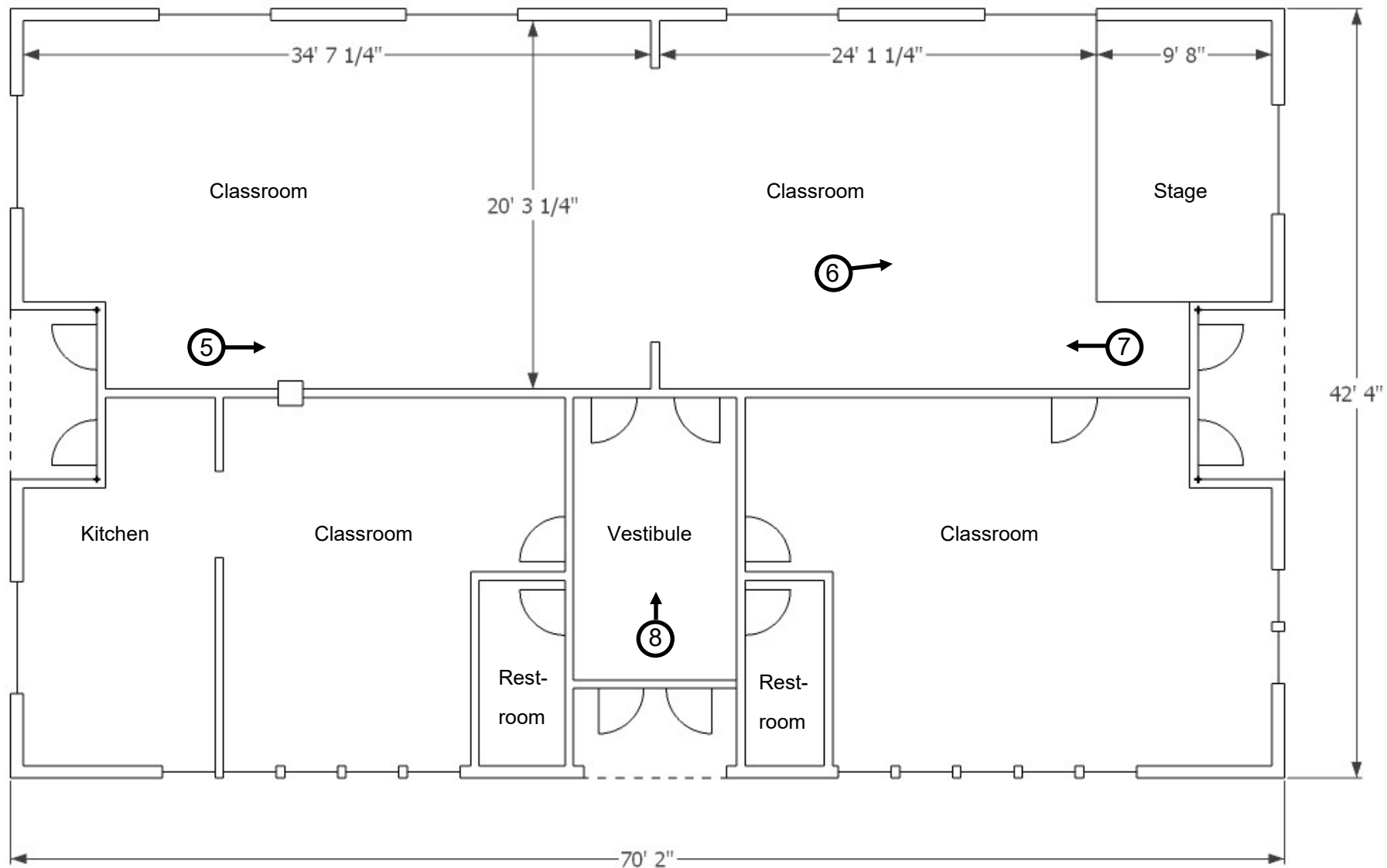
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

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1 ↑

Mount Moriah School
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Photo Number and Direction

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**MT. MORIAH
COMMUNITY
CENTER**













