North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources

State Historic Preservation Office

Ramona M. Bartos, Administrator

Governor Roy Cooper
Secretary Susi H. Hamilton

Office of Archives and History
Deputy Secretary Kevin Cherry

July 28, 2020

Edward Dzierzynski
Alpha Environmental
PO Box 2155
Asheville, North Carolina 28802

admin@alphaenviron.com

Re: Demolish Buildings & Consolidate 5 Schools into 2, Cerro Gordo and Tabor City, Columbus County, ER 19-3123

Dear Mr. Dzierzynski:

Thank you for your letter of June 1, 2020, regarding the above-referenced undertaking. We have reviewed the documentation and offer the following comments. We apologize for the delay in our response and any inconvenience it may have caused.

We note your determination of "No Historic Properties Affected" and disagree. A thorough assessment of the Cerro Gordo Elementary School and the Tabor City Elementary School in 2020 determined that both are in fact eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A and C. Thus, the project will have an adverse effect on historic properties. We are currently in consultation with the Columbus County Board of Education and the USDA Rural Development to resolve the adverse effect through a Memorandum of Agreement.

The above comments are made pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's Regulations for Compliance with Section 106 codified at 36 CFR Part 800.

Thank you for your cooperation and consideration. If you have questions concerning the above comment, contact Renee Gledhill-Earley, Environmental Review Coordinator, at 919-814-6579 or environmental.review@ncdcr.gov. In all future communication concerning this project, please cite the above referenced tracking number.

Sincerely,

Renee Gledhill-Earley

for Ramona Bartos, Deputy
State Historic Preservation Officer

cc Larry Sampson, USDA larry.sampson@usda.gov
Jonathan Williams, Asst. Sup. jwilliams@columbusk12.nc.us
Anthony High, USDA Anthony.high@usda.gov

Architectural Survey
Consolidation of Schools
Columbus County, North Carolina
ER 19-3123

May 2020

Commonwealth Heritage Group

ARCHITECTURAL EVALUATION, CONSOLIDATION OF SCHOOLS, CERRO GORDO AND TABOR CITY, COLUMBUS COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

ER 19-3123

PREPARED FOR:
SZOSTAK DESIGN, INC.
310 ½ W. FRANKLIN STREET
CHAPEL HILL, NORTH CAROLINA 27516

PREPARED BY:
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Architectural Historian

NCR-0816

MAY 2020

ABSTRACT

The Columbus County Board of Education proposes to consolidate five schools into two new schools in Columbus County, North Carolina. The project will include the closure of three schools, Chadbourn Middle School, Evergreen Pre-K - 8th Grade School, and Tabor City Middle School, and the demolition and replacement of two schools, Cerro Gordo Pre-K - 8th Grade School (Cerro Gordo School, CB0067) and Tabor City Elementary School (Tabor City School, CB1365). Two new schools, which will house the students from the closed and demolished schools, are planned to be constructed on the campuses of the demolished schools.[1] The project will be partially funded by a USDA loan or grant and thus is subject to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

The campuses of Cerro Gordo Pre-K - 8th Grade School and Tabor City Elementary School both include educational buildings that were constructed in the 1920s and are the subject of this report. In addition to the 1920s buildings, the campuses include buildings constructed in subsequent years with a 2014 classroom wing at Cerro Gordo Pre-K - 8th Grade School being the most recent addition. A previous architectural survey conducted in 1999 identified the Cerro Gordo Pre-K - 8th Grade School or Cerro Gordo School as potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), and it was subsequently added to the North Carolina NRHP Study List.[2] Tabor City Elementary School has not been previously evaluated for listing on the NRHP.

Commonwealth conducted fieldwork for the in-depth architectural evaluations of these resources for Szostak Design, Inc., the architecture firm overseeing the construction project, on January 16 and 17, 2020. The current report contains the results of the architectural evaluations.

The study was undertaken in a manner consistent with compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's regulations for compliance with Section 106, codified as 36 CFR Part 800. The investigation was conducted according to the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards and Guidelines for Historic Preservation Projects*[3], and the current evaluation report was prepared according to project review guidelines issued by the State Historic Preservation Office (HPO).

As a result of the current study, both the Cerro Gordo School and the Tabor City School are recommended eligible for the NRHP under Criteria A and C (Table 1).

Table 1: Summary of Evaluated Resources.

PROPERTY NAME	HPO SSN	ELIGIBILITY RECOMMENDATION	CRITERIA
Cerro Gordo School	CB0067	Eligible	A and C
Tabor City School	CB1365	Eligible	A and C

[1] Columbus County Board of Commissioners Planning Retreat, April 16, 2019, http://www2.columbusco.org/Minutes/2010s/2019-04-16.pdf, accessed January 9, 2020.
[2] HPOWeb, Cerro Gordo School (CB0067), https://nc.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=d2d04d8d7e03403f889419526e682529, accessed January 9, 2020.
[3] Federal Register, Vol. 48, No. 190, September 1983, P. 44716-44742, et seq.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Columbus County Board of Education proposes to consolidate five schools into two new schools in Columbus County, North Carolina. The project will include the closure of three schools, Chadbourn School, Evergreen School, and Tabor City Middle School, and the demolition and replacement of two schools, Cerro Gordo Elementary School and Tabor City Elementary School. Two new schools, which will house the students from the closed schools, are planned to be constructed on the campuses of the demolished schools.[1] The project will be partially funded by a USDA loan or grant and thus is subject to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

A previous architectural survey conducted in 1999 identified the Cerro Gordo School (CB0067) as potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and it was subsequently added to the North Carolina NRHP Study List.[2] The second school, Tabor City Elementary School, has not been previously evaluated for its eligibility for listing on the NRHP. In a letter dated November 19, 2019, the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (HPO) recommended both schools be surveyed to determine if they are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) so that a final determination of effects can be made.

The Areas of Potential Effects (APEs) for the project were defined as the two school campuses, Cerro Gordo Elementary School and Tabor City Elementary School, including all architectural resources within their parcel boundaries.[3]

1.2 COMPLIANCE

The study was undertaken in a manner consistent with compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's regulations for compliance with Section 106, codified as 36 CFR Part 800. The investigation was conducted according to the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards and Guidelines for Historic Preservation Projects* (Federal Register, Vol. 48, No. 190, September 1983, P. 44716-44742, et seq.), and the current cultural resources report was prepared according to project review guidelines issued by the HPO.

[1] Columbus County Board of Commissioners Planning Retreat, April 16, 2019, http://www2.columbusco.org/Minutes/2010s/2019-04-16.pdf, accessed January 9, 2020.
[2] HPOWeb, Cerro Gordo School (CB0067), https://nc.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html ?id=d2d04d8d7e03403f889419526e682529, accessed January 9, 2020.
[3] The ca. 1870 Mt. Tabor School, which is located on the Tabor City Campus, was excluded from the evaluation due to its separation from the twentieth-century buildings that are planned for removal. It is not expected to be affected by the undertaking.

1.3 PROJECT STAFF AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Commonwealth conducted fieldwork for the in-depth architectural evaluations of the Cerro Gordo Elementary School and Tabor City Elementary School for Szostak Design, Inc., the architecture firm overseeing the construction project, on January 16 and 17, 2020. Megan Funk, M.S.H.P, was the architectural historian, principal researcher and author; D. Allen Poyner assisted with GIS recordation; and Susan E. Bamann, Ph.D, was the project manager. Jimmy Ward, the Columbus County Schools Board of Education's Maintenance Director, assisted by providing access to the campuses and their buildings and by sharing information about how spaces were used, past renovations, and other general information about the county's schools including possible comparable buildings.

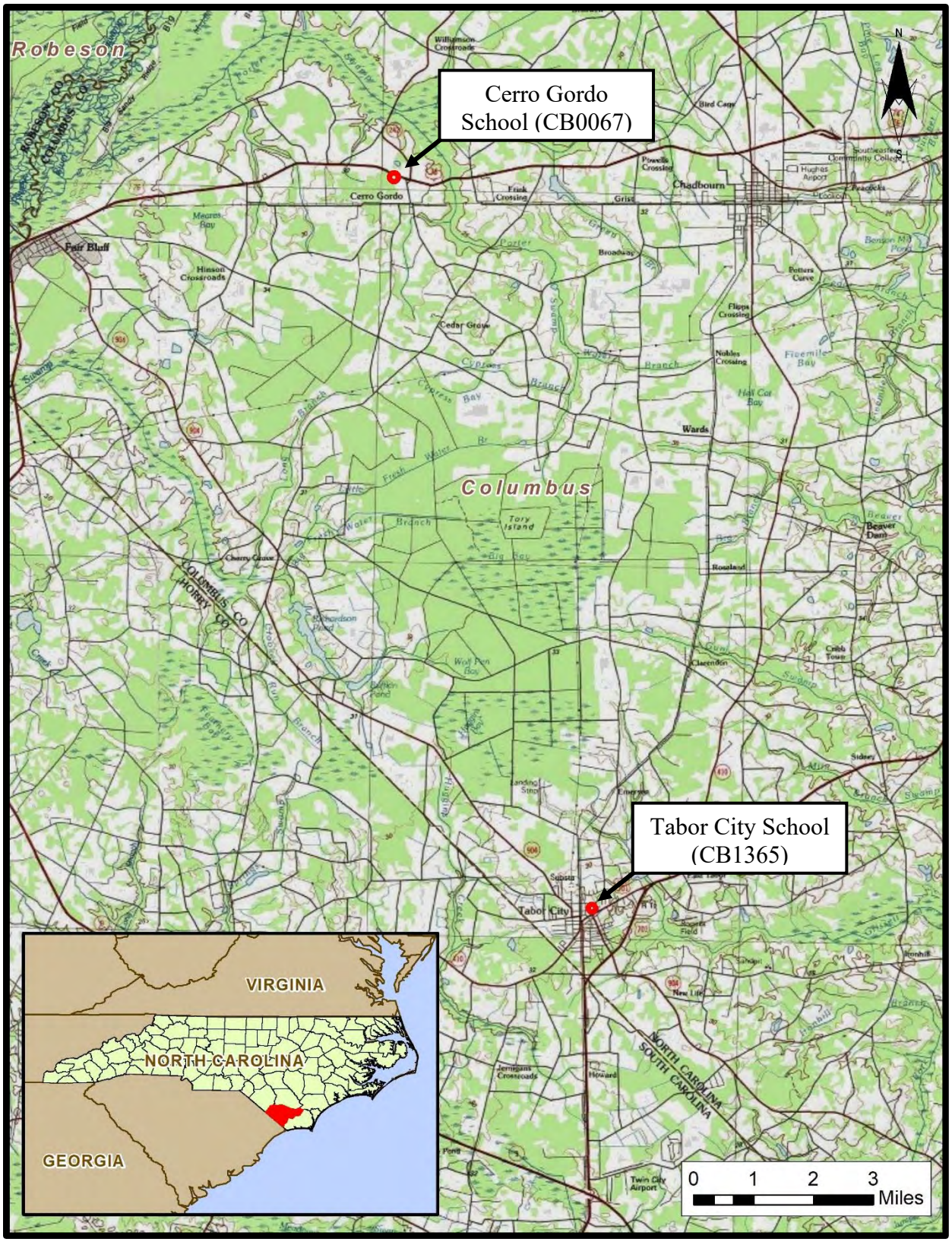

Figure 1: Project Location.

2.0 HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The initial European settlement of the region spread from the coast along the Cape Fear River through what is now southeast North Carolina. Land patents were issued to settlers in modern-day Columbus County as early as 1735. This initial stream of settlers was primarily English, though a small number of Scots and French also settled the region.[1] Early houses were located along the waterways since the settlers depended on them as the primary method of transportation and trade before the establishment of roadways.[2]

During the settlement period, the Columbus County area experienced slower settlement than the surrounding region. This was due primarily to the area's imposing swamps, which made it more difficult to access. Other factors that hindered settlement included hostile Native Americans and confusion over the border between North and South Carolina, which led to overlapping claims and conflicting land grants.[3] The swampy geography of the region also led to the earliest plantations in the region being established along the Cape Fear River, north of modern-day Columbus County. Farther away, like in Cerro Gordo and Tabor City where the evaluated resources are located, the farms that comprised the majority of the agricultural economy were small in acreage.[4]

As settlers moved inland, building houses and establishing farms, it became necessary to establish counties capable of governing them. Modern day Columbus County began as part of southern Bladen County, formed in 1739, and western Brunswick County, formed in 1764. In 1808, Columbus County was carved from the two counties and named in honor of Christopher Columbus. Whiteville, one of the two oldest towns in the county, was designated as the seat of the new county.[5] It was named for James B. White, who donated the land for the county courthouse and was also the county's first state senator.[6]

Early Columbus County residents not only engaged in farming, but also harvested tar, pitch, resin, turpentine, etc. from the vast pine tree forests. These industries attracted the railroad, which first established itself in Wilmington, east of Columbus County, in 1846. Named the Wilmington & Manchester Railroad, it was 170 miles long and connected Wilmington to Manchester, South Carolina. It was completed in 1853 and passed through the northeastern corner of the county. A second railroad was incorporated as the Wilmington & Charlotte in 1855, though it quickly changed its name to the Wilmington, Charlotte & Rutherfordton Railroad. The line passed through the town of Cerro Gordo

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[1] Ann Courtney Ward Little, eds., *Columbus County, North Carolina: Recollections and Records* (Whiteville, N. C.: Columbus County Commissioners and Columbus County Library, 1980), viii and Mrs. J. Clark Braddy, *Bladen County Heritage, Volume 1* (Waynesville, N. C.: County Heritage, Inc., 1999), 46.
[2] Little, viii.
[3] Edward F. Turberg, *Carver's Creek Methodist Church*, National Register Nomination Form (2007), Manuscript on file, North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, Raleigh and Little, 7.
[4] Little, 346.
[5] David Leroy Corbitt, *The Formation of the North Carolina Counties* (1987), Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, 71.
[6] William S. Powell, eds., *Encyclopedia of North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 257.

less than a mile south of the then-future site of the Cerro Gordo School and is greatly responsible for the growth of the small town.[7]

Following the heyday of the naval stores industry, lumber became a large part of the economy and resulted in the harvesting of long leaf pine, other softwoods and even some hardwood trees. Clearing the land also assisted many farmers in transitioning from subsistence farming to the cash crop cotton during the nineteenth century and supportive businesses, such as cotton gins, were established in the county. Once the cotton was ginned, farmers shipped it to Wilmington, likely via the Wilmington, Charlotte & Rutherfordton Railroad, to be sold at market.[8]

For the most part, the area was spared from the direct impact of battle during the Civil War. However, General William T. Sherman's advancing Union army marched through Whiteville in March of 1865. Residents of Whiteville hid their valuables as well as their food as the army approached. The soldiers took what they wanted and some barns were burned.[9]

Reconstruction through the Present

Naval stores and lumbering continued to be important to the economy of the area following the Civil War and well into the twentieth century. Small private rail lines (spurs) were constructed in the area to haul the naval stores and lumber and cut logs were also rafted down the Cape Fear to market. Small sawmills were also in operation during the early twentieth century, providing even small communities with additional industry.[10]

Agricultural pursuits in the region at the beginning of the twentieth century centered on cash crops that included cotton and tobacco, and later sweet potatoes. Cotton was grown throughout the nineteenth century while tobacco, particularly as a cash crop, did not come about until the end of the nineteenth century.[11] Sweet potatoes began to take hold in the county, particularly in the area of Tabor City, in the early to mid-twentieth century eventually spurring the small town to host the Yam Festival or "Tater Day."[12]

Cerro Gordo

Following the Civil War, in 1874, the town of Cerro Gordo was incorporated in western Columbus County. The town was named for the successful Mexican-American War battle of Cerro Gordo, where General Winfield Scott's troops were able to overcome the

[7] Scull, 344.
[8] Little, 346 and C. E. Crawford, *A History of Bladen County, North Carolina* (Elizabethtown, N.C.: Bladen County Historical Society, 1987).
[9] Little, 20-21.
[10] Ibid, 345.
[11] Crawford.
[12] Watts, 160.

Mexican army.[13] The town owes its presence to the railroad which crosses through its center and by 1860 served the community with a mail train and an express train.[14]

Similar to the rest of Columbus County, the small community was active in the naval stores and lumber industries. In 1905, the Williamson and Brown Land & Lumber Company opened a mill in the area. The mill and its employment opportunities attracted many new residents, including people of Russian descent, to the community raising its population to a peak of 2,634. The mill was responsible for the manufacturing of 75,000 board feet of lumber per day as well as for constructing a number of dwellings for employees before succumbing to fire after roughly ten years of operation.[15]

The community saw the establishment or growth of a number of other commercial enterprises during this time as well. These included general stores, a drugstore a shoe store, a hotel, a barbershop, a millinery, a skating rink, and barrooms. Larger entities included gristmills, a furniture factory and a maintenance crew from the state highway department.[16]

Despite the departure of the mill, the town continued to thrive, and new businesses continued to be established through the 1950s. Today the town of roughly 200 persons still centers on the railroad line and offers services such as a fire department and a post office, though it is primarily rural in character.

Tabor City

As Cerro Gordo developed in the western part of the county, Tabor City was getting its start in southwest Columbus County along the South Carolina border. Originally conceived as a logging settlement for the Chadbourn Lumber Company in the 1830s, the community owes much of its growth to the placement of a tram road operated by the lumber company in 1883 and the Wilmington, Chadbourn, and Conway Railroad in 1887.[17] The lumber company used the tram to transport freshly harvested timber to their mill in Chadbourn, roughly 20 miles north of present-day Tabor City. The tram as well as the railroad led to the growth of the lumber and agricultural industries in the vicinity of Tabor City and the establishment of other businesses in the area, many of which centered around the lumber industry. This includes a sawmill and turpentine still owned by Charles C. Pridgen, who also owned land in the vicinity of the future school.[18]

The town was incorporated in 1905. It was originally called Mount Tabor, after Mount Tabor Baptist Church, but was changed to Tabor City in 1935.[19] Following

[13] William S. Powell, *The North Carolina Gazetteer, A Dictionary of Tar Heel Places* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1968), 98.
[14] Little, 185
[15] Ibid, 185-187
[16] Ibid, 187.
[17] Heather Slane and Sunny Stewart, *Tabor City Commercial Historic District*, National Register Nomination Form, Manuscript on file, North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, Raleigh, 2015.
[18] Houston T. Watts, *Up Date History of Tabor City, North Carolina* (Tabor City, N. C.: DiggyPOD, 2012), 2.
[19] Slane.

incorporation, the small town began to grow and additional businesses were established including a number of general stores as well as the first bank in the town, The Bank of Tabor, which was organized in 1909. Charles C. Pridgen was involved in this enterprise as well, acting as the president.[20]

As time passed, the farms in the area came to be some of the most productive in the county growing primarily tobacco and strawberries. Other major industries included a crate factory that manufactured strawberry crates and other food distribution products as well as a number of tobacco warehouses. While these industries continued to succeed into the mid-twentieth century, sweet potatoes became the town's largest cash crop in the 1940s and spurring the construction of potato storage warehouses and a dehydrating plant.[21]

Like many small towns, Tabor City experienced some decline during the second half of the twentieth century. The town, however, still boasts of a strong downtown core with a well-preserved commercial district that was placed on the NRHP in 2015 and is located just southwest of the Tabor City School's campus.

Education in Columbus County

Prior to North Carolina's adoption of a public school system, children in Columbus County were most likely taught at home by their mother or an older sibling. At the same time, families that could afford it often hired private tutors or sent their children to private schools. Private schools in this era ranged from small schools that were funded by multiple families in a community to boarding schools operated by their instructors. The small community-oriented schools formed the basis of Columbus County's early educational system. These were primarily small, one-room buildings that could be found scattered throughout the county.

Though the county school system was slower to organize in Columbus County than in more populated areas of North Carolina, by 1885, 46 years after the state's first public education law passed in 1839, the county had 121 schools. At the time, the schools offered an average of nine and a half weeks of instruction per year. The year before the system served just over 2,200 white students and 1,400 African American students.[22]

Over the next two decades, the school system developed and strengthened with the establishment of school libraries in 1901 and the appointment of Reverend F. T. Wooten as superintendent in 1902. Over his 19-year tenure, he grew the school system's property holdings from roughly $9,000 to over $238,000, increased the school term from two-and-a-half months to six months, established 50 school libraries, and a number of health clinics. Enrollment had increased to nearly 8,000 students.[23]

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[20] Watts, 2.
[21] Slane.
[22] Gordon Lewis, *Facts About Columbus County* (Chadbourn, N.C.: The Columbus County News, 1945), 10.
[23] Lewis (1945), 10.

As the school system became more organized, the county began to consolidate its smaller schoolhouses. This feat was aided by the advent of the automobile and school buses which allowed students in remote areas to be transported to more centrally placed schools. The larger schools, which were more equipped to provide for lower, middle, and upper-class students, were also able to provide more diverse and specialized curriculum, including home economics, business, and agriculture classes, as well as extracurricular activities and sports. By the 1932-33 school year, the Columbus County school system was serving 11,588 students with 68 schools and 305 teachers.[24] At the time, the school system was still segregated with 38 schools serving roughly 3,800 African American students and 30 schools serving just over 7,600 white students.[25] The county had eight high schools including those at Cerro Gordo and Tabor City.[26]

By 1945, the county boasted of twelve standard high schools that were described as "handsome brick buildings, steam heated and modern throughout, equipped with standard libraries."[27] Over the next 50 years the school system continued to grow serving additional students and incorporating new programs and means of technology into each of its campuses. Accomplishing this required the construction of and expansion of campuses across the county and resulted in campuses that are representative of an array of twentieth-century architectural styles.

[24] Lewis (1933), 4.
[25] Ibid, 24.
[26] Ibid, 20.
[27] James A. Rogers, ed., *Columbus County, North Carolina: A Review of Columbus County from an Historical, Agricultural, Commercial, Industrial, Municipal, and Photographic Standpoint*. Whiteville, NC: *The News Reporter*, 1946, 14. http://digital.lib.ecu.edu/16931, accessed January 2020.

3.0 RESULTS OF THE ARCHITECTURAL EVALUATION

3.1 METHODS

Cerro Gordo School (CB0067) and Tabor City School (CB1365) were visited and exterior and interior photographs were taken. Background information on each resource was obtained and deed research was undertaken. Research was conducted at the Carolyn T. High Memorial Library and the Columbus County Register of Deeds in addition to using online resources.

Both schools (CB0067 and CB1365), the locations of which are shown in Figure 1, were assessed against the criteria of eligibility for the NRHP. These criteria state that "the quality of significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association" and that

A. are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history;
B. are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past;
C. embody the distinctive characteristic of a type, period, or method of construction or that represent the work of a master, or possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
D. have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.[1]

3.2 RESULTS

The Cerro Gordo School (CB0067) and Tabor City School (CB1365) were evaluated for eligibility for the NRHP. Descriptions and recommendations for each resource are presented in the following section.

HPO SITE SURVEY NUMBER: CB0067
RESOURCE NAME AND ADDRESS: Cerro Gordo School, 7685 Andrew Jackson Highway, Cerro Gordo
DATE(S): 1926, 1936, ca. 1940, ca. 1950, 1955, 1999, and 2014

Setting: The Cerro Gordo School is located on the south side of Andrew Jackson Highway (US 76). The original 1926 school stands approximately 90 feet back from the road at the center of a complex with two historic structures (the 1936 Agricultural Building and 1955 Gymnasium) to its east, three historic and non-historic structures (the ca. 1950, 1999, and 2014 classroom buildings) to its west, and 1939 field house to its south. Though the surrounding area is primarily agricultural, five residences line the road on the opposite side of Andrew Jackson Highway as well as a warehouse associated with RBR Enterprises. Each stand on a relatively

[1] National Park Service 2015.

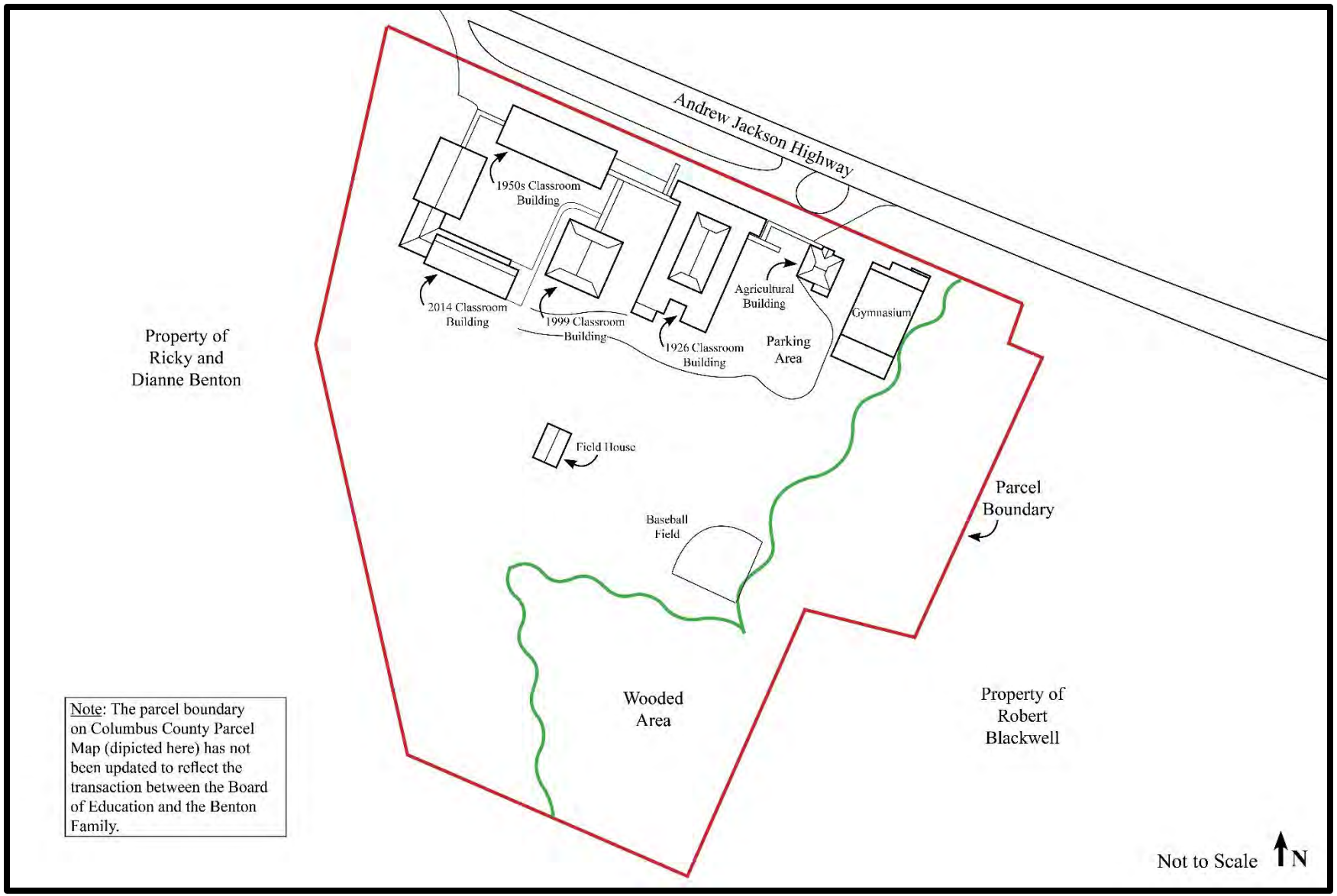

Figure 2: Cerro Gordo School, Site Plan.

large parcel and agricultural or wooded land extend beyond their boundaries. A similar landscape exists on the south side of Andrew Jackson Highway as well.

Description: The original 1926 brick school consists of an auditorium with a roof that is predominantly hipped but with small gables that rise above the hipped sections on the front and rear. The auditorium is wrapped by flat-roofed classroom wings, two of which extend from the rear of the school forming a small open space between them (Figure 2).

The school's façade is symmetrical with a flat-roofed portico that was once supported by slender paired columns and square pilasters. Above the portico is a long cast stone signage panel inscribed with "Cerro Gordo School." Paired steel-framed windows flank the double leaf entrance, which consists of metal doors with single-pane side lights and transom. Beyond the paired windows there are tripled steel-framed windows, and beyond these the façade is bookended by slightly projecting bays (Figure 3). The bays contain a tripled steel-framed window flanked by individual steel-framed windows (Figure 4). All of the façade windows are three panes in height.

The east and west (side) elevations of the projecting bays project forward of the east and west elevations of the main body of the school as well. These ends, as well as the façade, are wrapped by a stepped parapet that rises and falls across the elevations and is capped with concrete or stone that appears to have been painted white. Similar details include small diamonds set in the brick above each window, a band course that spans the upper portion of the elevations, and keystones placed at the center and upper corners of each bank of windows, which are finished with jack arches. A belt course of soldier bricks spans the elevations roughly mid-way between the windows and ground. The east and west elevations of this section are blind but are finished with brick and stone details (Figure 5).

The east and west (side) elevation of the main body of the school are lit by individual and tripled steel-framed windows in an irregular pattern. A small section at the south end of each elevation projects slightly forward. Both sections are finished with brick and stone details similar to the bays at the north end of the elevation though the details on the west elevation are interrupted by two steel-framed windows. A white cornice and a belt course like the one on the north section spans both elevations as well. The east and west elevation of the auditorium are visible above the main body of the school revealing multipaned clerestory windows (Figures 6 and 7).

The south (rear) elevation is defined by extensions of the east and west wings that project from the school and form an open space in the center. The open space has been encroached upon by small shed-roofed additions that likely provided additional storage. The rear of the west wing houses a kitchen and was expanded with a flat-roofed porch and additional interior space ca. 1970. Clerestory windows that light the auditorium and a brick chimney are also visible above the wings (Figure 8).

The interior of the school features a U-shaped corridor that wraps the north, east and west sides of the auditorium and has classrooms on the outside. The interior has been remodeled at least twice with paneling added over the original plaster walls in the 1960s or 1970s and drywall

added sometime after 1990.[2] The school system made other updates to the building as well including adding acoustic tile ceilings and tile and carpet flooring and enlarging or dividing classroom and office spaces to accommodate the changing needs of the school. Classroom space at the southwest corner of the building was converted to a kitchen and cafeteria ca. 1970 or possibly earlier. Despite multiple remodels, some original elements remain including most of the seating in the auditorium, wooden moldings and baseboards, and other original materials concealed or partially concealed by new materials (Figures 9 through 16).[3]

[2] Timmy Ward (Maintenance Director, Columbus County Schools Board of Education), personal conversation with author, Cerro Gordo and Tabor City, NC, January 17, 2020.
[3] Note: Some of the seating in the auditorium was sold at a memorabilia sale held by the school system.

Figure 3: Cerro Gordo School, Looking South.

Figure 4: Cerro Gordo School, Looking South-Southwest.

Figure 5: Cerro Gordo School, Looking Southwest.

Figure 6: Cerro Gordo School, Looking Northwest.

Figure 7: Cerro Gordo School, Looking South.

Figure 8: Cerro Gordo School, Looking North-Northeast.

Figure 9: Cerro Gordo School, Auditorium.

Figure 10: Cerro Gordo School, Detail of Auditorium Seating.

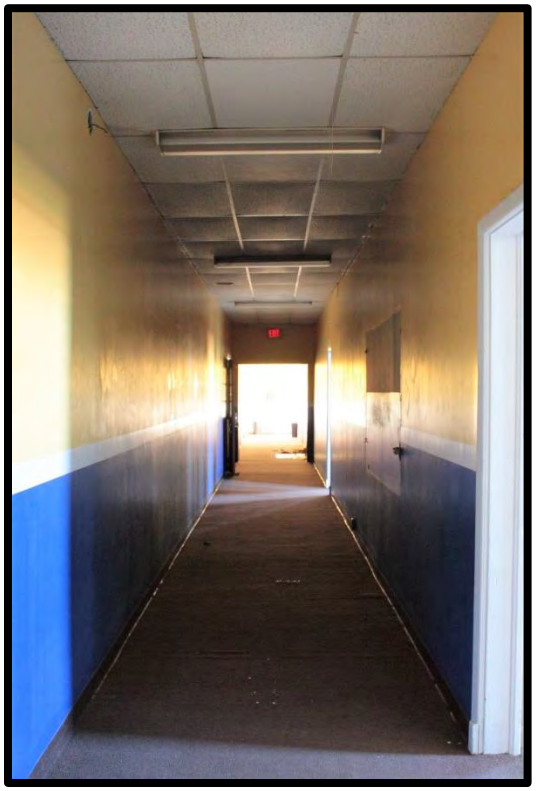

Figure 11: Cerro Gordo School, Corridor with Classrooms on West Side.

Figure 12: Cerro Gordo School, Cafeteria, Originally Two Classrooms.

Figure 13: Cerro Gordo School, Kitchen.

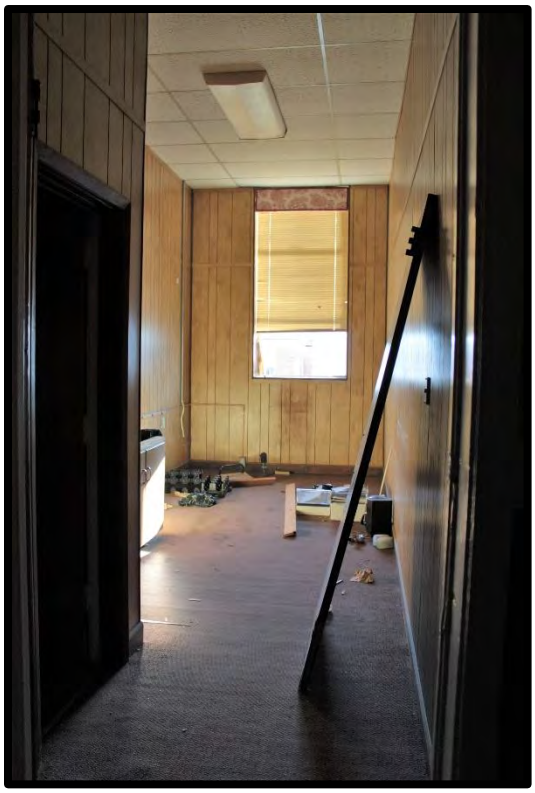

Figure 14: Cerro Gordo School, Divided Office Space with Paneling.

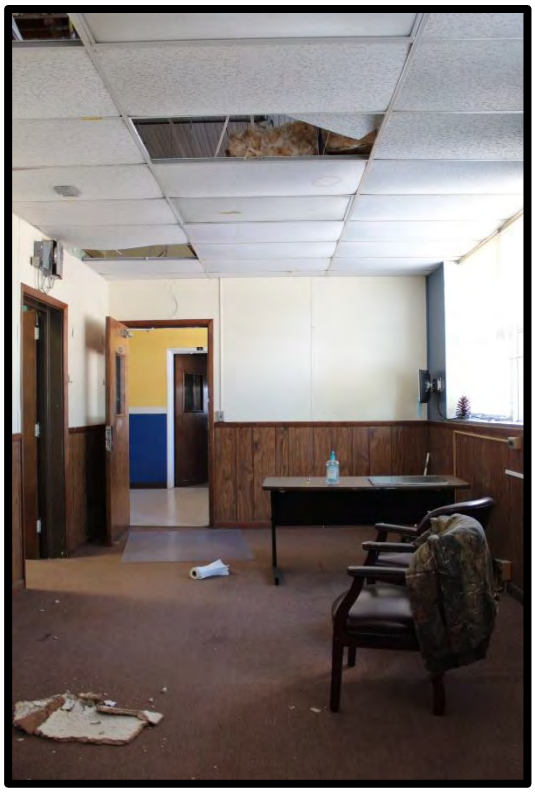

Figure 15: Cerro Gordo School, Divided Office Space with Paneling and Drywall.

Figure 16: Cerro Gordo School, Classroom with Original Wooden Flooring, Plaster Walls, and Wooden Beadboard Ceiling Exposed.

The 1936 Agricultural Building stands to the east of the original school building and is a one-story brick structure with a hipped asphalt shingle roof. Like the auditorium of the original school, two small vented gables rise from the east and west (side) slopes of the roof. The façade is symmetrical with a gabled portico supported by slender square posts and sheltering a single-leaf entry door with a multi-pane window and a square boarded-over transom. A small fanlight is placed in the gable, and a shallow pent roof slopes from below the window to the cornice. The deck of the portico is accessed by steps on the east and by a ramp on the west. Both are lined with a lattice structure layered over a simple balustrade, and the ramp is sheltered by a metal canopy that leads to the east elevation of the original school building. The portico is flanked by four windows that were likely six-over-six, double hung, wooden sashes. The upper sashes, however, have been covered to accommodate a lower acoustic tile ceiling on the interior. A deep cornice wraps the building above the windows (Figure 17).

The east (side) elevation is pierced by four evenly spaced apertures—three windows, similar to those on the façade, and a door at the southern end. An addition, used for storage and to accommodate restrooms, extends from the south (rear) elevation and is flush with the east elevation. It is pierced by two covered windows. A ramp extends from the door on the original portion of the elevation along the side of the addition then angles east, perpendicular to the building. It is lined with unpainted lattice. The south elevation of the addition contains a double-leaf wooden door, and a brick chimney rises from the rear slope of the roof (Figure 18).

The portion of the south (rear) elevation that is not covered by the addition contains an entry door flanked by two windows on its east. A transom over the door and the upper sash of the first window are boarded over while the second window is completely boarded over. This door is also accessed by a ramp that follows the south elevation of the building and west elevation of the addition. The west elevation of the addition contains a bricked-over entrance. The west (side) elevation of the building is lit by four evenly spaced windows that are similar to those on the façade (Figure 19).

The interior of the building has been rearranged and is now divided into two large classrooms with a small room at the front and restrooms and storage at the rear. It has also been remodeled with tile and carpet flooring, drywall, and an acoustic tile ceiling. The upper sash of the windows was covered with drywall, and the ceiling was significantly lowered during the remodel (Figures 20 and 21).

Figure 17: Cerro Gordo School, Agricultural Building, Looking Southwest.

Figure 18: Cerro Gordo School, Agricultural Building, Looking North.

Figure 19: Cerro Gordo School, Agricultural Building, Looking Southwest.

Figure 20: Cerro Gordo School, Agricultural Building, Classroom, Small Front Room and Entry Bay.

Figure 21: Cerro Gordo School, Agricultural Building, Classroom and Rear Storage Area.

The 1955 Gymnasium stands to the east of the Agricultural Building and is constructed of brick laid in a common bond pattern and has a barrel roof that faces north toward Andrew Jackson Highway. A one-story, flat-roofed entry wing spans the eastern two-thirds of the façade and contains a bank of three entry doors on the eastern half of the elevation. The doors are sheltered by a flat, cantilevered awning and approached by concrete steps on the north and a ramp on the west that is parallel with the elevation. The western half of the entry wing is lit by three pairs of steel-framed windows. The remaining one-third of the façade also contains a bank of three entry doors that are sheltered by a flat roof supported by slender posts (Figure 22).

The east and west (side) elevations are lit by six pairs of steel-framed clerestory windows separated by brick pilasters. A one-story, flat-roofed wing extends from the south (rear) elevation. It has a recessed entry door on its west (side) elevation that is flanked on the south by a bank of five steel-framed windows. The east (side) elevation is similar, though its entry door is not recessed. The wing's south (rear) elevation has a roughly centered, recessed entry door, and a tall brick chimney rises near the center of the wing's roof (Figures 23 and 24).

The gymnasium has been sold to a nearby property owner and the interior of the building could not be accessed.

Figure 22: Cerro Gordo School, Gymnasium, Looking South.

Figure 23: Cerro Gordo School, Gymnasium, Looking Southwest.

Figure 24: Cerro Gordo School, Gymnasium, Looking South.

A 1939 building referred to as a field house, storage shed, and elective building stands southwest of the original school building.[4] The brick structure faces east toward a baseball field at the southeast corner of the school property and has a side-gabled asphalt shingle roof with exposed rafter tails. The façade is symmetrical with a single leaf entry door flanked by three windows on each side. The sashes have been removed from the window openings. The north (side) elevation is lit by four windows, three of which are either fully or partially covered and one of which is also missing its sash. The west (rear) elevation has an entry door placed near the center of the elevation and flanked on the south by two windows that are fully or partially covered and one that is missing its sash. A small cornice-height window or vent is also covered north of the entry door. The south (side) elevation is blind (Figures 25 and 26).

The interior of the building contains a small vestibule that leads to two classrooms divided by a concrete block wall that is likely not original. The interior walls are finished with an uneven coat of plaster or stucco and are painted while the ceilings appear to be drywall with a textured coating. The classrooms were last used for band and art classes and the floors are finished with low-pile carpet and painted concrete, respectively.[5] The windows retain molded surrounds and sills while the doors have simple flat frames (Figures 27 and 28).

[4] NCHPO Survey File, CB0067, North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, Raleigh; Szostak Design, Inc., Preliminary Architectural Feasibility Report, West Columbus Pre-K – 8 School, Chapel Hill, 2019, 4; and Ward, personal communication.
[5] Szostak, 4.

Figure 25: Cerro Gordo School, Field House, Looking North.

Figure 26: Cerro Gordo School, Field House, Looking South.

Figure 27: Cerro Gordo School, Field House, Art Classroom.

Figure 28: Cerro Gordo School, Field House, Band Classroom.

A ca. 1950 classroom building stands to the west of the original school building. The one-story building is clad with brick in a common bond pattern, has a flat roof, and is entered by double-leaf doors with narrow lights and large transoms on the east and west (side) elevations. The façade faces north toward Andrew Jackson Highway and is lit by banks of steel-framed windows. The south (rear) elevation is similarly lit but also has two small multi-light windows, a single-leaf entry door, and some bricked-in openings. The eave of the building has an interesting upward angle reflective of its 1950s design, and a tall interior brick chimney rises from the roof (Figures 29 through 32).

The interior of the building consists of a double-loaded corridor with classrooms and offices. Originally designed for lower-grade students, the classrooms once shared small restrooms between them. Over time, those spaces were converted to storage, and shared restrooms were added off of the corridor. The spaces are finished with tile flooring or carpet, acoustic tile ceilings, and painted concrete block walls. Original wooden doors with windows and large transoms have been retained as have additional transom-height windows that allow extra light to pass between the classrooms and hallway (Figures 33 through 35).

Figure 29: Cerro Gordo School, Ca. 1950 Classroom Building, Looking South.

Figure 30: Cerro Gordo School, Ca. 1950 Classroom Building, Looking North.

Figure 31: Cerro Gordo School, Ca. 1950 Classroom Building, Exterior Doors Below Metal Canopy.

Figure 32: Cerro Gordo School, Ca. 1950 Classroom Building, Typical Windows.

Figure 33: Cerro Gordo School, Ca. 1950 Classroom Building, Double-Loaded Corridor.

Figure 34: Cerro Gordo School, Ca. 1950 Classroom Building, Typical Classroom with Attached Restroom.

Figure 35: Cerro Gordo School, Ca. 1950 Classroom Building, Typical Interior Door and Transom.

Non-Historic buildings on the campus include a one-story, brick, “pod” -style building with a predominantly hipped roof with gables that rise from the north and south hips. Constructed in 1999, the four-classroom building stands west of the original school and south of the ca. 1950 school. It is accessed by exterior doors on each elevation, though a double-leaf entry door on the north façade serves as the main entrance. Like the other entrances, it is recessed. It is also flanked by tall three-light windows. Two single-leaf entry doors are located on each of the side and rear elevations. The doors on the east and west (side) elevations have single-pane windows, and their recess is flanked by four paired windows like those on the façade. The doors on the south (rear) elevation are separated by a storage area that has its own entry door. None of these doors have windows and the remainder of the elevation is blind. Like on the facade, the gable that rises above the south elevation is clad with wide, board-and-batten-like panels and has a large vent in its peak. The slope of the gable is steeper along the edge of the vent and slightly flatter below it (Figures 36 through 38).

Figure 36: Cerro Gordo School, “Pod” -Style Classroom Building, Looking South.

Figure 37: Cerro Gordo School, “Pod” -Style Classroom Building, Looking East.

Figure 38: Cerro Gordo School, “Pod” -Style Classroom Building, Looking Northeast.

The second non-historic building was constructed in 2014 and is the westernmost building on the campus. It is L-shaped and is composed of two red-bricked sections connected by an L-shaped hyphen clad with off-white brick. The red-brick sections both have gabled asphalt shingle roofs. The first section faces north toward Andrew Jackson Highway and has a façade with a centered recess with two entry doors divided by a single-pane sidelight and spanned by a large, single-pane transom. The doors are lit by large, single panes of glass and a metal canopy extends from the façade and turns east to connect to the ca. 1950 classroom building. Its east and west (side) elevations are lit by six large, fixed-pane windows, each with two small, transom-like windows above four large panes. The center four windows are arranged as pairs. The hyphen connects to the south (rear) elevation of the first section and has a hipped roof that is not as tall as the red brick sections. Its west (side) elevation has two panels that appear to be part of the ventilation system, a tall window composed of three horizontal panes, and two single-pane windows that are placed high on the elevation and replicate the pane size of the tall window. Its south (rear) elevation has an off-center, double-leaf entry door below a single-pane transom. The hyphen wraps the northeast corner of the third section, which is oriented roughly east-west, and extends across a large portion of its north (front) elevation. This section of the hyphen has a shed roof, is lit by large, fixed-pane windows and has a recessed entrance on its east elevation. The third section of the building rises above the shed roof and has a row of wide, paired and tripled, single-pane windows that act as clerestory windows. This section is similar in scale to the first section, but has an asymmetrical roof created by pushing the north elevation back and allowing space for the hyphen. Its east (side) elevation is blind and its south (rear) elevation is lit by windows like those on the east and west (side) elevations of the first section (Figures 39 through 42).

Figure 39: Cerro Gordo School, 2014 Classroom Building, Looking South.

Figure 40: Cerro Gordo School, 2014 Classroom Building, Looking West-Northwest.

Figure 41: Cerro Gordo School, 2014 Classroom Building, Looking Northeast.

Figure 42: Cerro Gordo School, 2014 Classroom Building, Looking Southwest.

Historic Context: Prior to the construction of the studied property, the Cerro Gordo community was served by a ca. 1880 school. Indicative of how other schools in the county were designed, the school was clad with vertical board-and-batten siding, lit by six-over-six double-hung windows, and heated by a fireplace with a brick chimney (Figure 43). This school was replaced in the early 1900s by a frame building with four classrooms and an auditorium (Figure 44). Due to the rise in population spurred by the mill established by the Williamson and Brown Land & Lumber Company, this larger school was remodeled and enlarged twice. It served 1st through 10th grade students with some upper-level students attending from nearby community schools that did not offer high school curriculum. The school served the community for roughly 25 years, during which time it acted as more than just an educational facility but also as the center of the town's social activity. During this time, its auditorium hosted plays, piano recitals and community dinners. It even served as the headquarters for the local Red Cross during WWI.[6]

Though it is uncertain who the original portion of the Cerro Gordo School lot was purchased from, it was likely purchased in the 1920s shortly before construction of the school began. Likely around the same time, the Wilmington architect Leslie N. Boney was hired to design the Classical Revival school, and Jewell-Riddle Co. was hired as the contractor.[7] Boney, who specialized in the design of educational facilities, was also the architect of at least six other schools in Columbus County including Acme-Delco School (CB0006), Hallsboro School (CB0024), Williams Township School (CB0088), Old Dock School (CB0148), Whiteville High School (CB0205), and Tabor City School (CB1365), some that have floorplans and architectural details similar to Cerro Gordo, and nearly 1,000 other educational facilities in the state.[8]

Figure 43: Ca. 1880 One-Room School Building for Cerro Gordo Community (Little, 191).

[6] Little, 191-192.
[7] NCHPO, Survey File CB0067.
[8] Catherine W. Bisher, "Boney, Leslie N., Sr. (1880-1964)," *North Carolina Architects and Builders: A Biographical Dictionary,* https://ncarchitects.lib.ncsu.edu/people/P000529, accessed January 14, 2020.

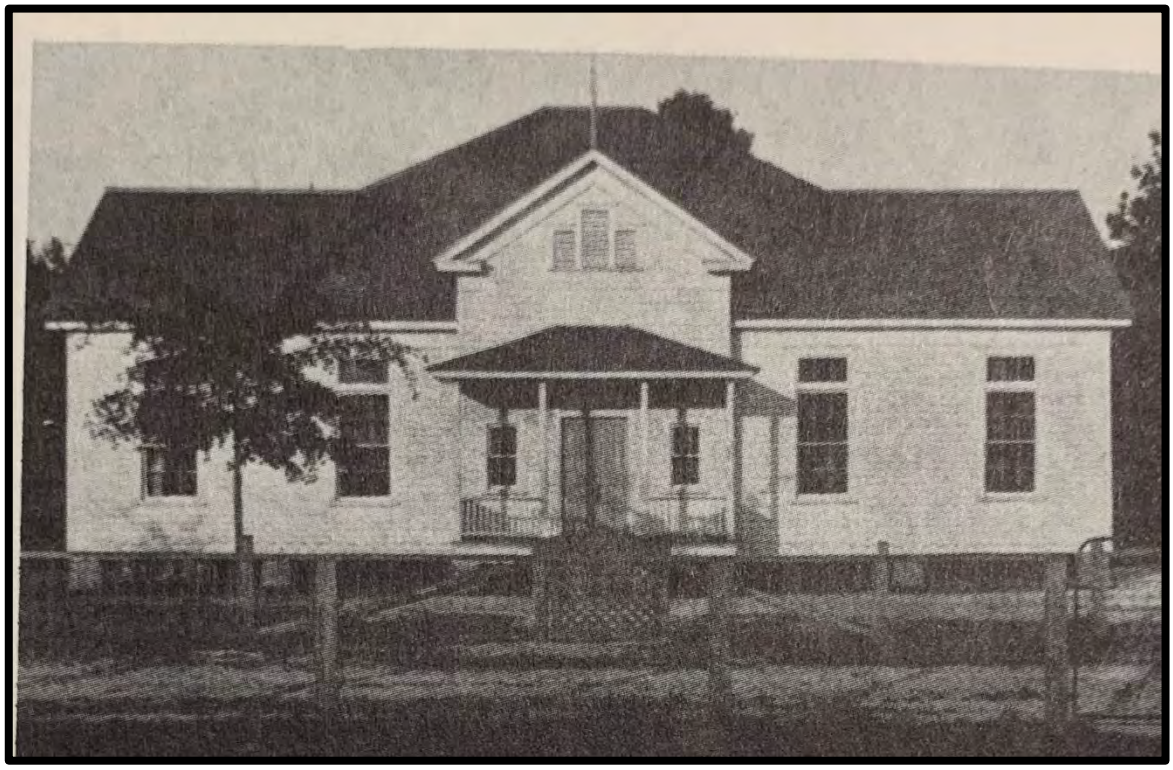

Figure 44: Early 1900s Cerro Gordo School (Little, 192).

The original portion of the current Cerro Gordo School was constructed in 1926 and consisted of the auditorium and a small rear courtyard flanked by classroom wings. The new school dwarfed the 1900s school with fourteen classrooms, a library, and a principal's office. Its auditorium boasted of a projection booth for showing movies and the building was equipped with electric lights and indoor plumbing.[9]

The school accommodated white students from Cherry Grove, Cedar Grove, Porter Swamp, and Hinson's Crossroads schools as well as those in its own community. It offered 11 grades and operated for eight months. Unlike the smaller school, which offered a limited curriculum in the areas of home economics and agriculture, the new school introduced full-time home economics and agriculture teachers as well as the subjects of biology and civics and offered basketball teams for both boys and girls.[10]

Ten years later, in 1936, Boney designed the Agricultural Building. Smaller than the original building, this structure complimented its Classical Revival details with a small round arch above its pediment and a hipped roof like that of the central auditorium. Like many education projects completed in the 1930s, the Agricultural Building was funded by Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works.[11]

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[9] Thomas A. Nance, compiler, "Cerro Gordo Elementary School," in Paschal, *A Historical View of the Columbus County Schools, 1808-1977* (Whiteville: Columbus County Board of Education, 1977), 46.
[10] Little, 192-193.
[11] NCHPO, Survey File CB0067. Note the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works became the Public Works Administration in 1935. This undertaking was assigned Project No. NC-1026-R.

Figure 45: 1938 Aerial Image of Cerro Gordo School Showing the 1926 School, the 1936 Agricultural Building, and a Smaller Structure to the West, Possibly the Home Economics Building (http://www2.columbusco.org/OldAerials).

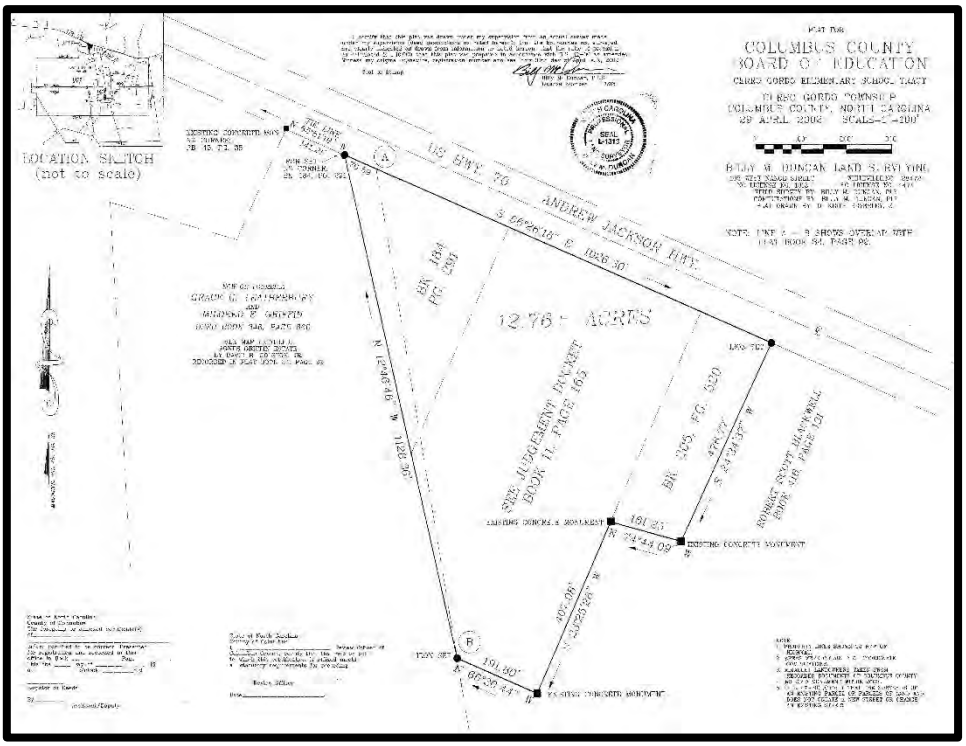

Figure 46: 2002 Plat Showing the Three Tracts that Comprise the Core of the Cerro Gordo School Campus (Columbus County Register of Deeds, Plat Book 76, Page 93).

In 1937, a frame structure that once stood west of the main building and is no longer extant was adapted for use as a home economics building (Figure 45). Next, in 1938, a corrugated tin gymnasium that is also no longer extant was constructed with funding from the Works Progress Administration (WPA).[12] In 1939, a building that served as a lunchroom was constructed southwest of the school. It had a wood burning stove, tables and benches and allowed the students to enjoy hot lunches on the campus. This building was later remodeled and used for vocational training classes, a field house, and most recently art and band classrooms. The second lunchroom was housed in a frame building to the east main building that was originally used for first grade classrooms. Then, in 1965, the lunchroom was moved into the west wing of the main building where three classrooms were combined and remodeled.[13]

In 1949 and 1955, the property was expanded west and east with the addition of parcels purchased from A. W. Williamson and his wife and M. O. Blackwell, respectively (Figure 46).[14] The western portion was likely purchased to facilitate the construction of the ca. 1950 school building while the eastern portion was likely purchased for the construction of the current brick gymnasium in 1955. The standalone ca. 1950 building has a flat roof and banks of multi-light steel-frame windows. Its eave details and tall brick chimney make it very similar to a classroom building on the Tabor City School (CB1365) campus. The building was designed for lower-grade students and has small restrooms between the classrooms, presumably to facilitate quick access by young students and increased supervision of teachers.

A 1950 aerial shows the original school and agricultural building, at least four smaller buildings including the field house, and a baseball diamond (Figure 47). After the construction of the classroom building and gymnasium, it appears that two of the smaller buildings were removed from the property and the parking area was extended to the eastern side of the original school building (Figure 48).

Over time, the school expanded with business and band courses and libraries for elementary and high school students.[15] In 1965, West Columbus High School opened roughly one-half mile east of the studied school on Andrew Jackson Highway, and Cerro Gordo School transitioned to serve elementary school students. Shortly thereafter, the school integrated with African American students from Westside High School in Chadbourn joining the school in 1966.[16]

Floor plans drafted after the addition of the 1950s buildings show the arrangement and use of the interior spaces. Though the scan of the plans is of poor quality, it provides a glimpse of the classroom sizes and how the interior spaces related to one another at the time (Figure 49).

Aside from the addition of metal canopies that connect the buildings, the campus remained much the same into the 1990s (Figure 50). In 1999, the "pod" style classroom building was added between the original building and the 1970s classroom building. A few years later, in 2004, Williams Township School, another elementary school in Columbus County, caught fire and

[12] Little, 193.
[13] Nance, 48.
[14] Columbus County Deed Book 184, page 291 and Deed Book 205, page 520.
[15] Little, 193.
[16] Ibid, 194.

Figure 47: 1950 Aerial Image of Cerro Gordo Campus (Earth Explorer).

Figure 48: 1974 Aerial Image of Cerro Gordo Campus (Earth Explorer).

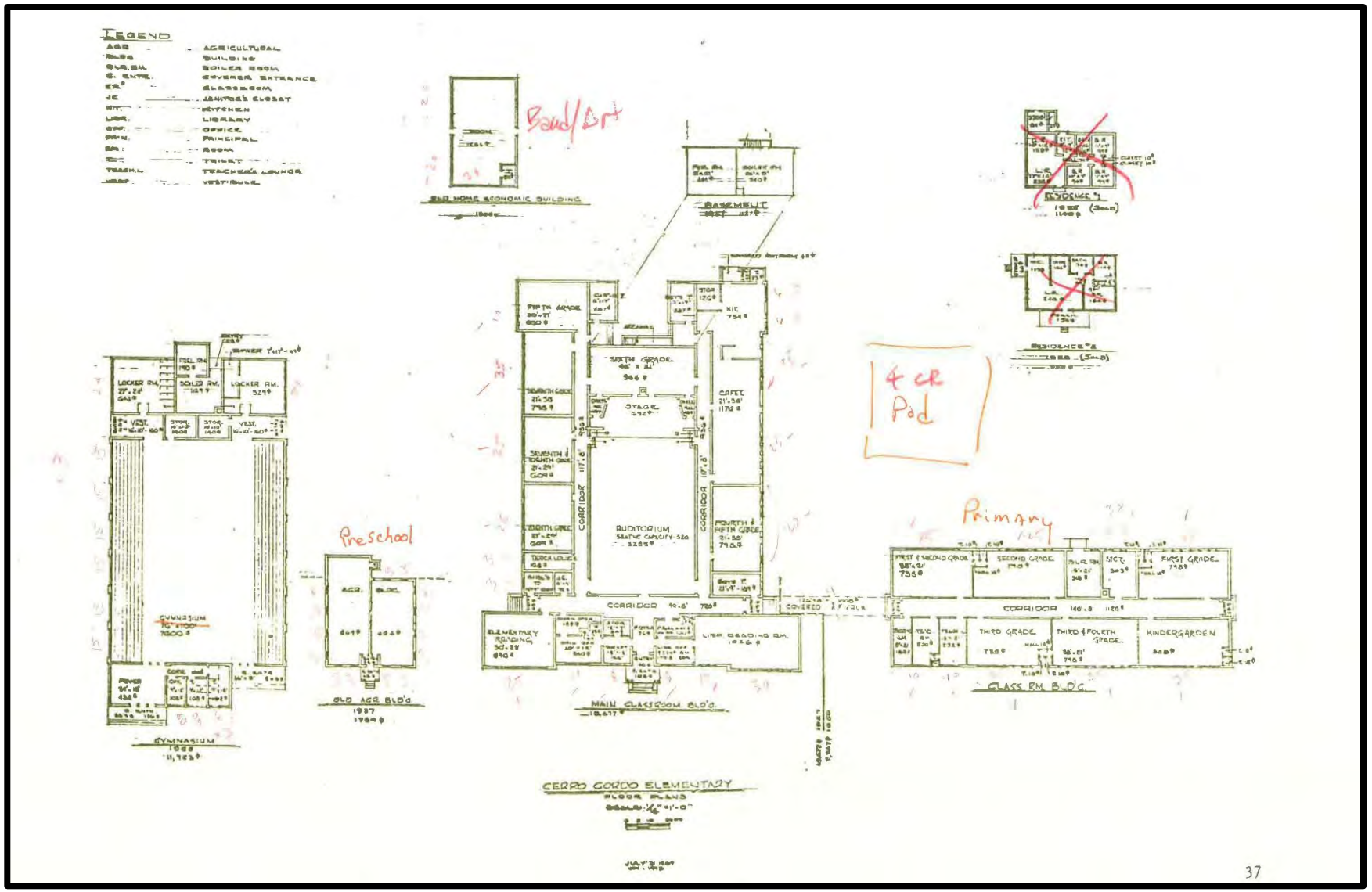

Figure 49: Cerro Gordo School, Floor Plans. Note Inclusion of a Residence (Upper Right) that is No Longer Extant (Szostak Design, Inc.).

Figure 50: 1993 Aerial Image of Cerro Gordo Campus (Google Earth).

students were relocated to Cerro Gordo School.[17] To accommodate the extra students, at least ten modular classroom units were set up between the original classroom buildings and the field house.

In 2012, the Columbus County School Board, through the County Commissioners, gave the gymnasium building and a small parcel of land to Ricky J. and Dianne B. Benton, nearby property owners, in exchange for 3.77 acres along the western edge of the campus.[18] The additional land increased the school's campus to just under 17 acres, which is the amount stipulated by the state school system for school properties, and also made room for the 2014 Classroom Building. The purchase brought the total size of the property to approximately 16.47 acres.

[17] Ward, personal communication.
[18] Szostak, 4 and Columbus County Deed Book 1037, page 37.

Recommendation: The Cerro Gordo School was evaluated under Criteria A, B, C and D and is recommended eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criteria A and C.

In regard to Criterion A (event), the Cerro Gordo School is associated with the development of public education in Columbus County and in North Carolina, particularly in relation to the early twentieth-century consolidation of small rural schools. The school's campus is also indicative of how campuses were expanded over time to accommodate further consolidation of schools, the growth of the community, and integration. Due to this, the campus displays buildings that are exemplary of the evolution of educational designs from the 1920s through the early 2000s. Though only the earliest of these buildings have achieved historic significance, the later buildings contribute to the understanding of how the campus and school system grew in the twentieth century. Furthermore, because they are freestanding buildings, the later buildings do not detract from the historic structures or diminish their integrity. For these reasons, Cerro Gordo School is recommended eligible under Criterion A.

To satisfy Criterion B (person) the school must be associated with the lives of persons demonstrably significant to our past, whether on a local, state, or national level. While the school and agricultural building were designed by notable architect Leslie N. Boney, they stand as only two of many examples of his work in the county and the greater Eastern North Carolina region. No other persons of significance were identified in relation to the school's history or development and the school is therefore recommended not eligible under Criterion B.

Criterion C (design/ construction), requires that a building retain integrity and embody distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction; represent the work of a master; possess high artistic value; or represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction. The original school and agricultural building were both designed by the notable architect, Leslie N. Boney, in the Classical Revival style, which was a popular choice for educational facilities in the early twentieth century. The main building displays this style through its use of a dentilled entry portico (originally supported by columns), keystones, a capped parapet, a belt course above the windows and various other stone and decorative details. The agricultural building displays the style through a gabled portico with a small circular fanlight, a deep cornice with a frieze, and multi-light wooden sash windows (though the upper sashes have been covered). The design of both buildings has been compromised by subsequent renovations but is still easily recognizable due to the elements that have been retained.

Two other examples of Boney's educational buildings can be found in Columbus County: Tabor City School (CB1365) and an auditorium at Whiteville High School (CB0205). The building on Tabor City School's campus was constructed around the same time as the original building on Cerro Gordo's campus and has a nearly identical façade and plan. It is the subject of the following section of this report. The ca. 1927 auditorium (Figure 51) and potentially a ca. 1921 agricultural building are the surviving buildings designed by Boney on the Whiteville High School campus. Other buildings that stood on the campus include a ca. 1921 two-story school with a full-height, pedimented entry bay and a ca. 1936 gymnasium, which were demolished in

Figure 51: Whiteville High School Auditorium, Looking Southwest.

1976 and 2020, respectively.[19] The two-story auditorium also has classical details including a stepped parapet and a flat-roofed entry portico that retains its original columns and emulates the design of the Cerro Gordo School's portico before its columns were removed. Though the auditorium's windows and entry doors have been replaced, the windows retain their original configuration.

Additional schools designed by Boney once existed throughout Columbus County. These include Acme-Delco School (CB0006), Hallsboro School (CB0024), and Williams Township School (CB0088), which were on North Carolina's NRHP Study List, and Old Dock School (CB0148), which was determined eligible for the NRHP. Acme-Delco and Hallsboro Schools were removed from their campuses between 1998 and 2004, as indicated by a review of aerial images provided by Google Earth Pro, while Williams Township and Old Dock Schools were lost to fires in 2004 and 2015, respectively.[20] A reconnaissance survey of architectural resources in Columbus County states that the Cerro Gordo and Acme-Delco schools, which were both constructed in 1926, were "almost identical" and that both campuses had "federally funded

[19] Jeroen van den Hurk, Amanda Stamper, and Lindsay Flood, *Historic Architectural Resources Survey Report, Improve US 701 Bypass in Whiteville, Columbus County, Final Identification & Evaluation*, Coastal Carolina Research, Submitted to North Carolina Department of Transportation, Manuscript on file, North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, Raleigh, 2014, 35-52.

[20] Sherry Jones, "Electrical Problems Caused School Fire," *Star News Online*, January 10, 2004, https://www.starnewsonline.com/news/20040110/electrical-problems-caused-school-fire, accessed April 28, 2020 and "Investigators Unable to Determine Cause of Old Dock Elementary Fire," *WECT News*, January 7, 2015, https://www.wect.com/story/27780128/investigators-unable-to-determine-cause-of-old-dock-elementary-fire/, accessed April 28, 2020.

(WPA) agricultural annexes dating to 1936, and 1950s Gymnasiums."[21] Aerial images of Hallsboro School indicate that its floorplan was similar to Cerro Gordo and Acme-Delco Schools and it would be reasonable to believe that its façade was composed of similar elements as well.

Examples of Boney's educational buildings that are located outside of Columbus County include two schools in Lenior County: Moss Hill Elementary School (LR1012), which was added to the NRHP Study List in 1994, and Contentnea School (LR0800), which was determined eligible for the NRHP in 2010 (Figures 52 and 53). Though both schools appear to have replacement windows they still exhibit Boney's characteristic use of tripled windows flanked by individual windows and detailed with keystones at the center and corners. Moss Hill Elementary School stands as a particularly significant example as it is still in use as a school. These schools, however, are examples of some of Boney's larger schools and are more indicative of Lenoir County's growth and educational development than of trends within Columbus County.

A consolidation-era school in the county that was not designed by Boney is Evergreen School (Figure 54). Located roughly seven miles north of Cerro Gordo, the 1924 school is a linear two-story building with a one-story rear wing that was likely added in the 1950s. Unlike the schools designed by Boney, Evergreen is not as detailed. The school's design also leans more towards the then-emerging Art Deco style with a façade that is made up of slightly projecting bays bookended by bays with brick patterning, brick pilasters between window bays, and an abstracted keystone at the center of the parapet. Classical details that are similar to the main school on Cerro Gordo's campus include a stepped parapet capped with white stone and clustered windows. It is also uncertain if the school's steel-framed windows are original. Nonetheless, the school is still a strong example of the type of buildings that characterized rural educational design in North Carolina in the early twentieth century. Due to its architectural details, however, it is not as strong of an example as Cerro Gordo School of education designs in Columbus County during that time period.

While the original school and agricultural building on Cerro Gordo's campus do not retain as high a level of integrity as the schools in Lenoir County, nor are they as stately, they still stand as strong examples of Boney's work, and, in particular, as two excellent examples of Classical Revival-style, rural educational buildings. As exhibited by the schools discussed above, this type was once common within the borders of Columbus County with almost all of the county's towns constructing larger, more-modern schools in the 1920s and 1930s. However, the building type has become increasingly rare in Columbus County. This is due in part to the destruction of the four schools that were lost between 1998 and 2015, as well as to the obsoletion and replacement of schools following integration in the 1960s. This has led to the early buildings on Cerro Gordo's campus remaining as some of the last consolidation-era, Classical Revival-style educational buildings in the county and being significant at both the county and state level for their ability to convey this era of educational development. The original building on the Cerro Gordo campus is also particularly representative of the building type, as articulated in Columbus County, and of the era due to being replicated on three other campuses that span the lengthy county. Similarly, the additional buildings on the campus, some of which do not qualify as historic due to age, exhibit the evolution of school building design during the twentieth century

[21] Edward F. Turberg, *Columbus County Reconnaissance Survey*, Manuscript on file, North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, Raleigh, 1998, 24.

Figure 52: Moss Hill Elementary School (LR1012), Looking Northwest.

Figure 53: Contentnea School (LR0800), Looking South.

Figure 54: Evergreen School, Looking Southeast.

and how campuses in Columbus County were expanded to accommodate additional students and educational programs. For these reasons, the Cerro Gordo School is recommended eligible under Criterion C.

As for Criterion D (potential to yield information), the buildings and campus are not likely to yield any new information pertaining to the history of building design and technology and are therefore recommended not eligible under Criterion D.

The proposed NRHP Boundary is based on the historic tax parcel as depicted in Columbus County plat book 76, page 93 minus a small section that was sold to the Town of Boardman. The boundary contains the original classroom building, agricultural building, gymnasium, field house, 1950s classroom building, 1999 classroom building, and baseball field as well as a portion of the 2014 classroom building (12.71 acres; part of Columbus County Parcel ID 062062) (Figure 55).

Figure 55: Proposed NRHP Boundary for Cerro Gordo School.

HPO SITE SURVEY NUMBER: CB1365
RESOURCE NAME AND ADDRESS: Tabor City School, 203 Stake Rd, Tabor City
DATE(S): 1927, 1948, 1950 and 1970s

Setting: The Tabor City School campus spans multiple parcels between North Wall, Stake, East 8th, and East 5th Streets. The campus is centered around a 1927 classroom building that is oriented southwest toward Stake Road, which crosses in front of the campus at a north-northwest angle. The angle provides the school with a generous, though asymmetrical, front lawn that is roughly 100 to 200 feet deep in front of the 1927 classroom building and is deeper in front of a ca. 1950 classroom building that stands parallel with the original building's west elevation. The lawn in front of the ca. 1950 building contains a playground, and the ca. 1870 Mt. Tabor School stands at the lawn's southwest corner. A 1948 high school building is oriented perpendicular to the east elevation of the original classroom building. It is set back significantly from the original building's facade providing it with a spacious front lawn as well. A sidewalk extends perpendicular to its façade and leads to a circular brick landscape feature that is filled with bushes but may have once contained a fountain. East of the 1948 building and slightly set back is a ca. 1950 gymnasium, and east of the gymnasium is an occupational trades building that was constructed in multiple phases between 1950 and 1970. Two 1970s buildings constructed as a science building and media center stand behind the 1948 classroom building and a lawn and parking areas fill the northwest corner of the campus.

The campus is placed in an urban setting, less than one block east of Main Street and north of East 5th Street, which serves as a main thoroughfare in Tabor City. The southern half of the campus is surrounded by early to mid-twentieth century dwellings and commercial properties. Those dwellings on Stake Road face the campus while others are situated on adjoining parcels and primarily face away from the school. A metal warehouse stands on a parcel that adjoins the western boundary of the campus, and Emmanuel Holiness Church and a small dwelling occupy the parcels along its northwest boundary. A large parcel with only a small paved lot that is used by the school system for bus parking exists on the north side of East 8th Street (Figure 56).

Description: The original 1927 brick school consists of an auditorium with a roof that is predominantly hipped but has small gables that rise above the front and rear slopes. The auditorium is wrapped by flat-roofed classroom wings, two of which extend slightly beyond the rear of the school.

The school's façade is symmetrical with a flat-roofed portico supported by slender paired columns. The below entry doors have been removed but a long transom is still present above the boarded over opening. Paired steel-frame windows flank the entry bay and beyond the paired windows are tripled steel-frame windows. The windows are five panes in height, which is typical of all the windows. Beyond these, the façade is bookended by slightly projecting bays with tripled steel-frame windows flanked by individual steel-frame windows. A stepped parapet spans the façade and wraps around the corners of the projecting bays, which project forward of their respective side elevations as well. The parapet is capped with concrete or stone that appears to have been painted white. Other concrete or stone details include small diamonds set in the brick above each window, a wide belt course that spans the upper portion of the elevations, and angled stones and keystones placed in the jack arches of each window. A belt course of

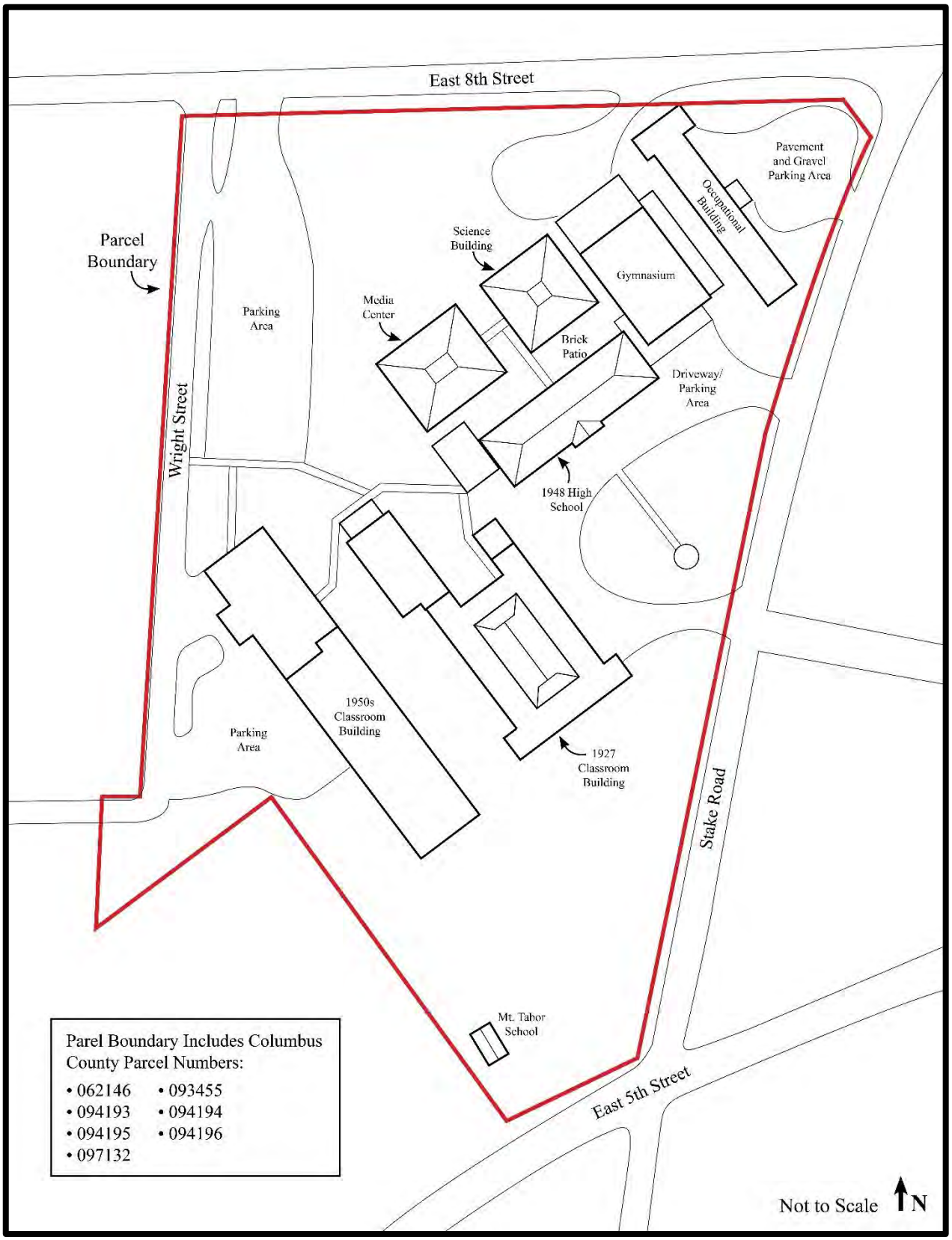

Figure 56: Tabor City School, Site Plan.

soldier bricks spans the elevations roughly mid-way between the windows and ground as well (Figure 57).[22]

The northeast and southwest (side) elevations of the projecting bays project forward of the northeast and southwest elevations of the main body of the school and are finished with brick and stone details. North of the bays, the side elevations are lit by windows that are similar to the façade. The northeast elevation is more orderly, with a double-leaf, recessed entry door, a single individual window, four bays of tripled windows flanked with individual windows, and entrance that accesses a rear addition and was once covered by a large roll-top door. The southwest elevation contains a recessed entry door and a less orderly arrangement of individual, paired and tripled windows before ending with a second set of entry doors and a rear addition that projects forward of the elevation and contains three bays of tripled windows flanked by individual windows. The windows on the addition have one large sash over a small sash and appear to be vinyl. A parapet with a single crenellated step between each bay of windows caps the elevations of the original portion, and similar diamond and keystone details exist above each window. There is also a course of header and soldier bricks in place of the façade's white belt course (Figures 58 and 59).

Two additions extend from the northwest (rear) elevation of the school and have a small open space between them. The east addition was added in 1966 and is blind on each elevation, except for the previously mentioned entrance, and has a tall brick chimney. The portion of the original school that is visible between the additions is lit by paired windows that are typical of the original block. The west addition was added shortly after the construction of the building, likely in the 1930s, and has tripled windows flanked by individual windows on its northeast elevation. The windows are like those on other elevations except they have one large sash over a small sash and appear to be vinyl. A small hip-roofed addition with a recessed entrance flanked by one-over-one, metal sash windows projects from its northwest elevation (Figure 60).

The interior of the school features a U-shaped corridor that wraps the northeast, southeast and southwest sides of the auditorium with classrooms and offices arranged along the exterior walls. The interior has been remodeled at least twice with paneling added over the original plaster walls in the 1960s or 1970s and drywall added sometime after 1990.[23] Other updates to the building include adding acoustic tile ceilings and tile and carpet flooring and enlarging or dividing classroom and office spaces to accommodate new functions. Some original elements remain including the stage and most of the seating in the auditorium, some wooden moldings and baseboards, and other original materials concealed or partially concealed by new materials (Figures 61through 64).

[22] The composition of the building, particularly its façade, is very similar to the 1926 Cerro Gordo School (CB0067). The only noted differences to the façade are the absence of a signage panel, an additional step at the center of the parapet, slight variations in the stone details around the windows, and five- versus three-pane windows.
[23] Ward, personal communication.

Figure 57: Tabor City School, Looking Northwest.

Figure 58: Tabor City School, Looking Southwest.

Figure 59: Tabor City School, Looking North.

Figure 60: Tabor City School, Looking Southeast.

Figure 61: Tabor City School, Auditorium.

Figure 62: Tabor City School, Typical Classroom Showing how Exterior Window Pattern Relates to Classrooms.

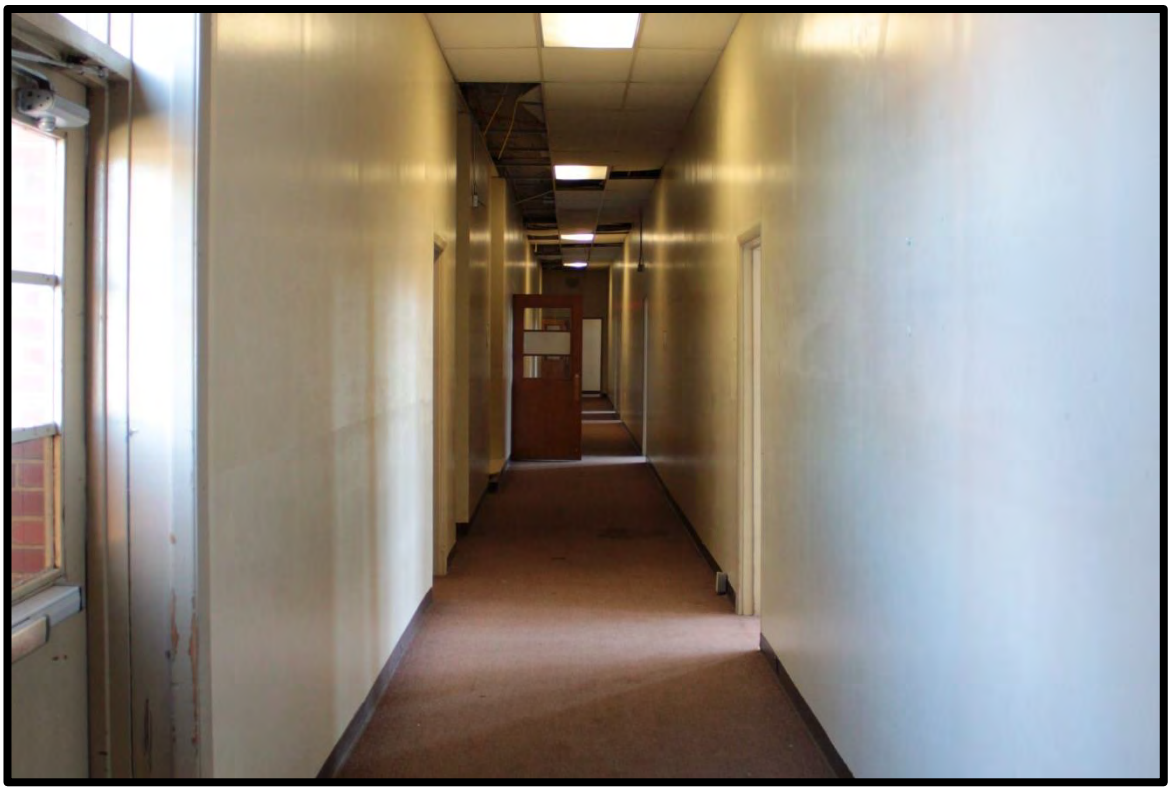

Figure 63: Tabor City School, Hallway. Note Drywall, Acoustic Tile Ceiling, Carpeting and Absence of Transoms from Classrooms.

Figure 64: Tabor City School, Original Beadboard Ceiling, Wooden Trim, and Transom Concealed by Modern Materials.

East of the 1927 classroom building is the 1948 Tabor City High School building. The two-story building is constructed with brick laid in a common bond pattern and sheltered by a hipped, asphalt shingle roof. It has a symmetrical, seven-bay façade that is classically inspired and centers on a full-height, portico with four stone Doric columns and engaged pilasters that support a gabled pediment. The pediment is finished with plain weatherboard siding, a small fanlight, and a dentilled cornice. The portico shelters a recessed double-leaf entry door flanked by three-pane sidelights over panels and toped with a tall multi-light transom. Above the recess is a cast stone signage panel inscribed with "Tabor City High School 1948." The recess is flanked by large multi-light, steel-frame windows that are five panes tall and three panes wide with cast stone sills. Four identical windows span the upper portion of the façade below the pediment. The portico is flanked on each side by two bays of four windows. The bays are composed of two windows like those flanking the entry flanked by narrower (two panes wide) windows on each story. The final bays contain simple double-leaf doors with a single large light that are sheltered by a minimal, flat awning below large steel-frame windows that are six panes tall and three panes wide. Four arched, dormer vents span the forward slope of the roof (Figures 65 and 66).

The southwest (side) elevation contains a recessed bay that accesses a semi-exterior stairwell, restrooms, and a double-leaf door that leads to the first-floor classroom corridor. A metal canopy that connects the building with other buildings on the campus shelters the recess though a flat awning is still present above the canopy. Above this, an opening provides ventilation for the stairwell. The opening was once completely open but is now filled with two-by-fours and chicken-wire. A single arched, dormer vent rises from the side slope of the roof (see Figure 65).

The home economics wing attaches to the west corner of the building. It is a one-story, flat-roofed building clad with brick laid in a common bond pattern. Three banks of paired steel-frame windows and a recessed entry bay span its front façade. The windows have wide, horizontal lights and a substantial cast stone or steel lintel. A flat-roofed, metal canopy spans the façade and may be original or may relate to when other canopies were added across the campus. Its southwest (side) elevation contains individual, paired, and tripled windows that are similar to those on the façade but are short (two panes tall) and located just below the cornice. The northwest (rear) elevation has three banks of tripled windows like those on the façade, and the northeast (side) elevation of the wing is blind (Figures 67 and 68).

The northwest (rear) elevation of the main block of the building mirrors the façade, but with a simpler entry bay composed of a double-leaf door below a transom and a simple, flat awning. It is flanked by narrow (two panes wide) windows. This pattern is reflected on the upper story with only one window above the entry door. The bay immediately north of the entry bay differs as well with a wooden entry door that accesses a boiler room in place of the right-most window. The left-most widow is also missing, replaced by a small opening or chute. The exterior bays have one narrow (two panes wide) window on each story. Five arched dormer vents and one brick chimney rise from the rear slope of the roof (Figure 69).

The northeast (side) elevation reflects the southwest (side) elevation with a brick hyphen in place of the recessed bay (See Figure 76).

The interior of the building is composed of a double-loaded corridor that is intersected by a shorter corridor that connects the front and rear entrances. Classrooms, a teacher's lounge, and the boiler room are located along the double-loaded corridor while offices (now used for storage) were located near the front entrance. The classrooms have an unusual arrangement with two entry doors, both with transoms, and an additional transom centered between them. The wooden doors have nine lights of frosted glass over horizontal panels, and along with the transoms, served as a passive method for lighting the interior hallway. Unlike the 1927 classroom building, this building's plaster walls have not been covered and more of the original woodwork (trim, moldings, etc.) has been left exposed as well. It is unclear what the original ceiling material may have been, but the second story, which was abandoned in the 1990s due to the difficulty and expense of making it handicap accessible, displays small square tiles, while the first story has a drop ceiling with acoustic tiles. Tile (both stories) and carpeting (first story) covers the floor. Over time, some spaces have changed in function or configuration, including removing a wall to create a library on the second floor and creating additional storage space. At each end of the school is a semi-exterior space with a stairwell on the southeast side and restrooms (first and second story) on the northwest side. Due to its semi-exterior state, these areas are not heated (Figures 70 through 75).

Figure 65: Tabor City School, 1948 High School, Looking North.

Figure 66: Tabor City School, 1948 High School, Looking Northwest.

Figure 67: Tabor City School, Home Economics Wing, Looking North.

Figure 68: Tabor City School, Home Economics Wing with 1948 High School in Background, Looking East.

Figure 69: Tabor City School, 1948 High School, Looking South-Southwest.

Figure 70: Tabor City School, 1948 High School, Double-Loaded Corridor.

Figure 71: Tabor City School, 1948 High School, Double-Leaf Front Entry Flanked by Offices.

Figure 72: Tabor City School, 1948 High School, Original Layout with Two Entry Doors, a Transom, and a Built-In Lesson Board.

Figure 73: Tabor City School, 1948 High School, Interior of a Classroom Showing how Outside Window Configuration Relates to Interior Spaces.

Figure 74: Tabor City School, 1948 High School, Interior of Second Floor Library Which was Created by Combining Two Classrooms. Also Note Earlier Materials.

Figure 75: Tabor City School, 1948 High School, West Stairwell. Note Entrance to Restroom in Background.

The gymnasium is connected to the northeast (side) elevation of the high school by a one-story, flat-roofed hyphen clad with brick laid in a stretcher bond pattern. The hyphen has plain double-leaf doors with a large, two-light transom near the classroom building; two paired, steel-framed windows set near the cornice; and a recessed bay with two double-leaf doors that is roughly centered with the gymnasium. The doors are separated by a space that may have once held an additional door or a window, and a long transom spans the space above them. The doors and windows are painted the same shade of cream. The blind façade of the barrel-roofed gymnasium, which is constructed of brick laid in a common bond pattern and has a metal-truss roof system, rises from behind the hyphen. A small, flat-roofed wing that houses locker rooms spans its northeast (side) elevation and is lit by six steel-frame windows that are located just below the enclosed eave. A small addition at the north end (rear) of the wing has been tampered with, revealing a concrete block structure clad with brick. It has a small steel-frame window and may have served as an auxiliary space or additional entrance. Above the wing, the gymnasium is lit by four banks of tripled, steel-frame windows. At the center of the windows is an announcer's box that projects from the elevation. It is clad with aluminum siding. An exterior brick chimney rises from the elevation just past the north bank of windows (Figure 76).

A one-story, brick addition dominates the northwest (rear) elevation of the gymnasium. The addition does not have any windows but does have a large, off-center, recessed bay that once contained a glass and metal entrance on its northwest (rear) elevation. The recess is accessed by a concrete deck accessed by steps on the northwest and a ramp on the southwest. An additional door exists on the southwest (side) elevation as well. It is accessed by a small concrete stoop with steps and a flat, suspended awning. The southwest (side) elevation of the gymnasium is lit by five banks of tripled, steel-frame windows like those on the northeast (side) elevation. A one-story structure, possibly a part of the hyphen, fills the space between the elevation and the 1948 classroom building. It has an entrance on its northwest (rear) elevation and is blind on its southwest (side) elevation (Figures 77 through 79).

The southeast entrance originally served as the primary entrance to the gymnasium and opens into a foyer with a concession stand that also connected to the 1948 building. Later, an addition, which provided a handicap-accessible entrance, updated restrooms and additional storage, was constructed on the northwest elevation. The gymnasium itself is largely unaltered retaining its original hardwood floor and wooden, built-in bleachers. One alteration is the addition of a small announcer's box on the northeast elevation (Figures 80 through 82).[24]

[24] Ward, personal communication.

Figure 76: Tabor City School, Gymnasium, Looking Northwest.

Figure 77: Tabor City School, Gymnasium, Looking South.

Figure 78: Tabor City School, Gymnasium, Looking Southeast.

Figure 79: Tabor City School, Gymnasium, Looking Northeast.

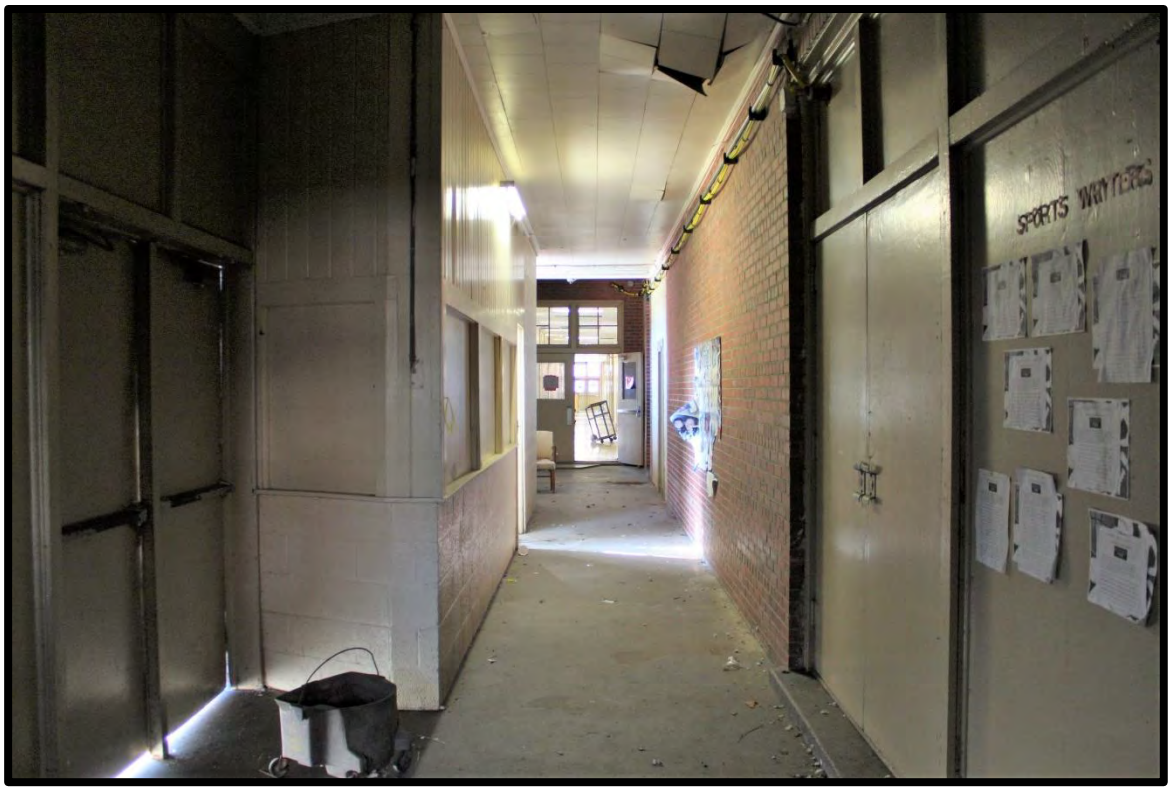

Figure 80: Tabor City School, Hyphen Between Gymnasium and 1948 High School Showing Interior and Exterior Entry Doors and Concession Stand.

Figure 81: Tabor City School, Gymnasium, Rear Addition Added to Provide a Handicap-Accessible Entrance and Restrooms.

Figure 82: Tabor City School, Gymnasium Showing Hardwood Floor, Built-In Bleachers, and Added Announcer's Box (Right Elevation).

East of the gymnasium is a one-story, flat-roofed, building that is constructed of concrete block and clad with brick. The building was constructed in multiple phases between 1950 and 1970 and was originally used for occupational trade and woodwork classes but most recently for pre-kindergarten classes.[25] The south block of the building was constructed first and contained two classrooms, each with an exterior entrance on the southwest (rear) elevation, offices, and storage space.[26] Overall, the southwest elevation contains, from south to north, an entry door with a transom and flat awning, a narrow steel-frame window, a second similar entry door, and two banks of tripled steel-frame windows. A seam in the brick pattern indicates the second building phase. From there the elevation contains a small, cornice-height window; an entry door that is similar to the first two; and a second cornice-height window. A second seam and change in brick pattern indicate the third addition. This elevation contains an entry door that is paired with a large window and sheltered by a flat awning. A pipe, possibly associated with an exhaust or gutter system, protrudes from the elevation above and to the right of the entry door. North of the door is a steel-frame window and north of this is a garage/shop section that projects forward of the elevation and has an entry door sheltered by a flat awning on its southeast (side) elevation. This section was used at some point for mechanics classes, but most recently by the maintenance department (Figures 83 and 84).[27]

The southwest (rear) elevation of the garage/shop section is blind, and its northwest (side) elevation is lit by a long bank of steel- or possibly aluminum-frame windows. Its northeast (front) elevation projects forward and is blind, and the resulting southeast (side) elevation contains a garage door paired with an entry door and transom. Like the southwest (rear) elevation the remainder of the northeast (front) elevation is a composite of multiple building phases. From north to south this includes an entry door; a tripled bank of steel- or aluminum-frame windows; a small one-over-one window (building break); two paired steel-frame windows (one altered); a projecting bay clad with cream colored brick and containing an aluminum-and-glass door, sidelight, and transom component; an entry door below a flat-roofed porch; and two tripled steel-frame windows, one of which is altered and the other nearly entirely removed. Two similar windows light the southeast (side) elevation (Figures 85 and 86).

The interior of the building consists of four classrooms with doors that lead from one to another and have their own exterior entrances. Most of the classrooms have painted concrete block walls, acoustic tile ceilings, and tile floors, though one of the southern rooms displays a beadboard ceiling. Constructed for trade and woodworking classes, it is likely that the concrete floors remained uncovered until the space was converted for pre-kindergarten students. Originally, the classroom spaces were divided by office and storage spaces but has been remodeled to accommodate more classroom spaces. The garage/shop section remains utilitarian in finish with exposed concrete floors and ceiling structure (Figures 87 through 89).

[25] Ward, personal communication.
[26] EarthExplorer, Aerial Images from 1951 through 1972, https://earthexplorer.usgs.gov, accessed January 2020.
[27] Ward, personal communication.

Figure 83: Tabor City School, Occupational Trades Building, Looking North.

Figure 84: Tabor City School, Occupational Trades Building, Looking Southeast.

Figure 85: Tabor City School, Occupational Trades Building, Looking West.

Figure 86: Tabor City School, Occupational Trades Building, Looking Northwest.

Figure 87: Tabor City School, Occupational Trades Building, Classroom.

Figure 88: Tabor City School, Occupational Trades Building, Original Portion of Building Showing Exposed Original Material.

Figure 89: Tabor City School, Occupational Trades Building, Garage/Shop Rear Addition.

Two nearly identical buildings stand northwest of the 1948 classroom building. The first, which is situated to the east, along the side of the gymnasium, was constructed for science labs in 1970, and the second, which is situated to the west, was constructed in 1977 as a media center with a large library.[28] Both buildings have hipped, asphalt shingle roofs with deep eaves and are clad with brick in a stretcher bond pattern (Figure 90). The science building is slightly smaller and faces west toward the media center. Its centered entry door has been removed but likely mirrored the media center's double-leaf metal doors with two-pane lights and side lights (Figure 91). Deep brick pilasters flank the entry bay and windows with a large pane over a small pane exist at the corners of the façade. The windows are also flanked by deep brick pilasters. The northwest and southeast (side) elevations mirror one another with entry doors placed near the center of the elevations. The doors, which have almost full-height lights, are flanked by deep brick pilasters and separated by a projecting bay that may relate to an interior storage area or office. The southeast elevation faces a courtyard and is lined with wooden benches (Figure 92). The northeast (rear) elevation has a bay that projects from the center and is wrapped with a ribbon of windows and flanked by windows like those on the façade.

The interior of the science building contains a foyer/corridor that accesses four classroom/lab spaces divided by storage and office spaces. The interior finishes, which include painted drywall and concrete walls, tile flooring, and a ceiling with exposed I-beams, appear to be original (Figures 93 and 94).

The façade of the media center faces west to the science building and mirrors its door and window configuration. Its northwest and southeast (side) elevations also mirror the science building's side elevations, except that they are longer, and the east doors are replaced by windows similar to those on the façade. The doors are also different with two-pane lights and a thin sidelight over a panel (Figure 95). The southwest (rear) elevation reflects the side elevations but with two windows instead of a door and window (Figure 96).

The interior of the media center is defined by a large open space with offices, a classroom, storage space, and a dark room along the northwest elevation. Its interior finishes include painted concrete block and drywall walls, carpet and tile flooring, and a ceiling with exposed I-beams (Figure 97).

[28] Szostak Design, Inc., Preliminary Architectural Feasibility Report, Tabor City Pre-K – 8 School, Chapel Hill, 2019, 3.

Figure 90: Tabor City School, Media Center (Right) and Science Building (Left), Looking East.

Figure 91: Tabor City School, Media Center, Looking Northwest.

Figure 92: Tabor City School, Science Building, Looking North.

Figure 93: Tabor City School, Science Building, Laboratory/Classroom.

Figure 94: Tabor City School, Science Building, Laboratory/Classroom. Note Sliding Lesson Board and Pass-Through Between the Supply Room and Laboratories.

Figure 95: Tabor City School, Media Center, Typical Exterior Door (Side Elevations), Looking Northwest.

Figure 96: Tabor City School, Media Center, Looking Northeast.

Figure 97: Tabor City School, Media Center, Library Space Looking Toward Office.

The last building on the campus is a linear classroom building that was constructed in the mid-1950s and stands to the west of the 1927 classroom building. It is a one-story, flat-roofed building clad with brick laid in a stretcher bond pattern. Indicative of its mid-century design, it has few decorative details but does have interesting eaves that angle up to meet the edge of the roof. Its façade faces southwest and is composed of four overall sections. The first section relates to a hallway of classrooms at the south end of the building and is defined by eight bays of steel-frame windows with a solid panel entry door and a transom on the south side of each bay. Each bay is separated by a brick pilaster. The next section contains a recessed entry bay with a double-leaf, wooden entry door with two square lights on each leaf and surrounded by sidelights and a transom. Deep pilasters frame the recess and a bank of three steel-frame windows exist to its north. The third section is a 1973 addition that projects from the façade and is blind on its southeast (side) and southwest (front) elevations. The addition provides extra storage for the kitchen.[29] On the northwest elevation, it has an entry door with two panels that is flanked on the west by a tall vent and sheltered by a flat awning. The remaining section of the façade contains, from south to north, a one-over-one steel-frame window, an entry door with two panels, paired one-over-one steel-frame windows, an entry door, and a slatted gate that fills an opening the size of a garage door. Brick pilasters divide the section into three parts (Figures 98 through 100).

The north end of the building contains a cafeteria and its northwest (side) elevation has three bays. The two eastern bays are filled with banks of windows that appear to have aluminum or vinyl sashes and the center bay also includes a door with a large light on its east side. The westernmost bay is blind. The northeast (rear) elevation of the cafeteria is lit by three bays of similar windows. An entry door exists on the north side of the northernmost bay. On both elevations, the bays are separated by brick pilasters. A tall brick chimney rises from this portion of the building as well (Figure 101).

Just south of the cafeteria is a recessed entrance that is similar to the façade entrance. South of the recess, the elevation contains bays of steel-frame windows like those on façade but without entry doors. The southeast (side) elevation contains a centered recessed entrance with an entry door and surround like that on the façade except that it is not flanked by brick pilasters (Figure 102).

The interior of the building is broken into three primary spaces, a cafeteria at the north end, an office section, and classrooms at the south end. The cafeteria was not observed due to students eating lunch, but the offices and some classrooms were. These spaces display interior finishes including painted concrete block walls, acoustic tile ceilings, and tile and carpet flooring. The classrooms and offices are arranged along a double-loaded corridor. An interesting feature of this section is the incorporation of window- and door-sized openings with an operable transom, a large pane of textured glass, and a vent. These units serve to passively light the hallway and to provide ventilation between the hallway and classrooms. The classrooms are accessed by doors with two horizontal lights and a transom (Figures 103 through 106).

[29] Szostak, 3.

Figure 98: Tabor City School, 1950s Classroom Building, Looking West. The surveyor could not take an overall photograph of the elevation due to temporary classroom units on the property (Google Street View).

Figure 99: Tabor City School, 1950s Classroom Building, Looking Northeast.

Figure 100: Tabor City School, 1950s Classroom Building, Looking Northeast.

Figure 101: Tabor City School, 1950s Classroom Building, Looking South.

Figure 102: Tabor City School, 1950s Classroom Building, Looking East-Northeast.

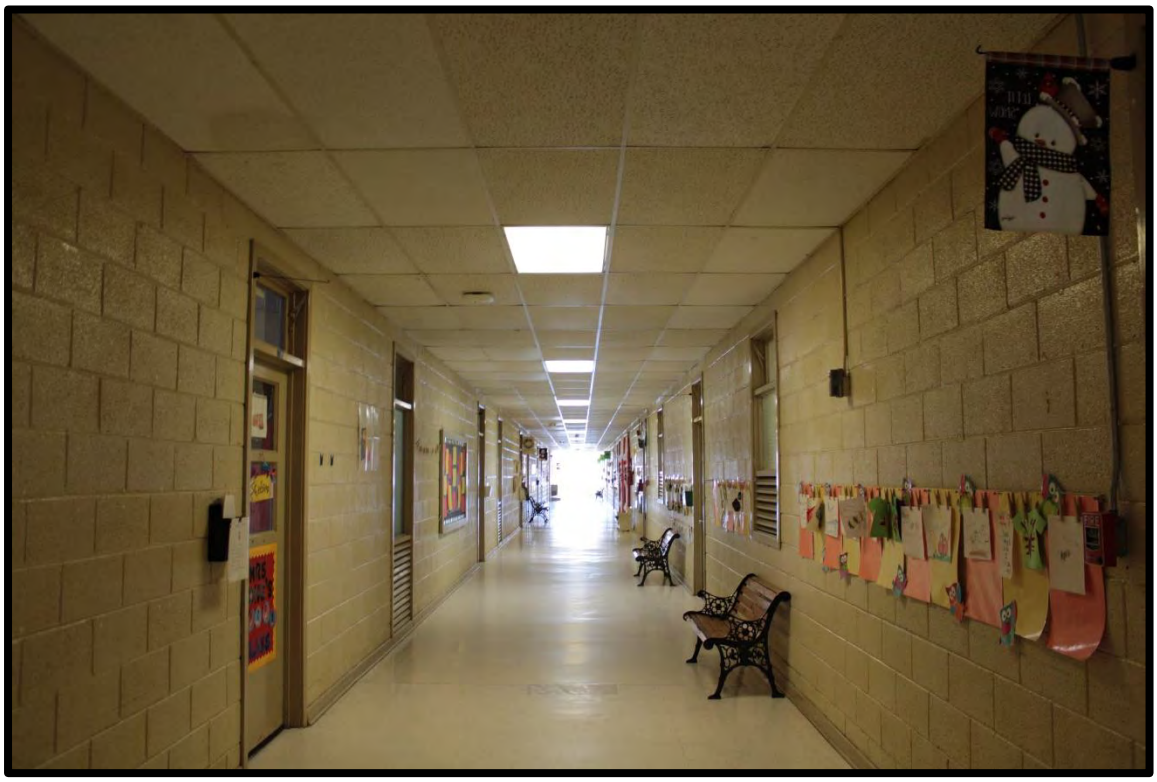

Figure 103: Tabor City School, 1950s Classroom Building, Double-Loaded Corridor.

Figure 104: Tabor City School, 1950s Classroom Building, Typical Classroom. Note Exterior Door at Far Corner.

Figure 105: Tabor City School, 1950s Classroom Building, Vent/Transom Unit.

Figure 106: Tabor City School, 1950s Classroom Building, Vent/Transom Unit.

Historic Context: Prior to incorporating as a town in 1905, the Tabor community and its surrounding area was served by a number of small schools including Black Creek School, Boggy Hill School, Gapway School, and Iron Hill School. Most of these schools were simple single-room structures that were constructed and funded by their respective community.[30] The Tabor community, specifically, provided an educational facility for its students in 1899 with the conversion of a small dwelling to a schoolhouse (Figure 107). The frame structure, which has been moved to the southeast corner of the school lot, consists of a single interior room and is clad with unpainted weatherboard siding. It was originally heated by a centrally placed, wood burning stove, and students sat on benches facing the front of the classroom. W. C. Graham was the first teacher-principal of the school where he taught roughly 25 students.[31]

In 1906, one year after incorporating, Tabor City voted to collect a special tax to fund the construction of a new school building.[32] This building was possibly the two-story, frame structure described by Thomas L. Lewis in *A Historical View of the Columbus County Schools*, which in additional to being a classroom building also served as a dormitory for the principal and teachers. The special tax, however, could also have been used in 1914 when a two-story, brick building was constructed on the same property. This building was constructed solely for use as a school and appears to have first operated as the Tabor Graded School (Figure 108).[33]

Figure 107: Mt. Tabor School, Looking North.

[30] Thomas L. Lewis, compiler, "Tabor City Primary/High School," in Paschal, *A Historical View of the Columbus County Schools, 1808-1977* (Whiteville: Columbus County Board of Education, 1977), 152-155.
[31] Watts, 221.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Lewis (1977), 158.

Figure 108: Tabor Graded School (Paschal, 158).

In 1926, the community consolidated its smaller schools, leading to the need for more classroom space and resulting in the construction of the studied property in 1927. The land for the new school was purchased by the Board of Education from Pridgen & Pridgen, Inc. The associated deed outlines the conveyance of 3.14 acres for the price of $2,000 and references the Tabor High School building (likely one of the pre-existing buildings).[34] The deed does not share how Pridgen & Pridgen, Inc. obtained the land, but a 1938 plat suggests the Pridgen family owned a considerable amount of land in the area (Figure 109). Furthermore, the deed is signed by C. C. Pridgen, who is denoted as the president of the incorporation. It is unclear, but possible, that C. C. Pridgen is Charles C. Pridgen who owned the sawmill and turpentine still and was president of the first bank in Tabor City.[35]

Soon after purchasing the land, the school board constructed the 1927 classroom building. The school is nearly identical to Cerro Gordo School (CB0067) which was constructed the year before and is located roughly 20 miles north of Tabor City. Both schools were designed by Wilmington architect Leslie N. Boney who specialized in the design of educational and institutional facilities. Boney was also the architect of the 1921 Whiteville High School as well as many other education facilities in Eastern North Carolina.[36]

Like Cerro Gordo and other schools in the state, the 1927 school was part of a movement to consolidate small schools and to provide a more full-range curriculum for students in the vicinity of Tabor City, particularly upper level students. The school grew quickly and by the 1932-33 school year served 908 students.[37] This growth necessitated the construction of the six-classroom wing at the rear of the school in 1937. The school also benefitted from the WPA

[34] Columbus County Register of Deeds, Deed Book 130, page 562.
[35] Watts, 1-2.
[36] Bisher, "Boney."
[37] Lewis (1933), 24.

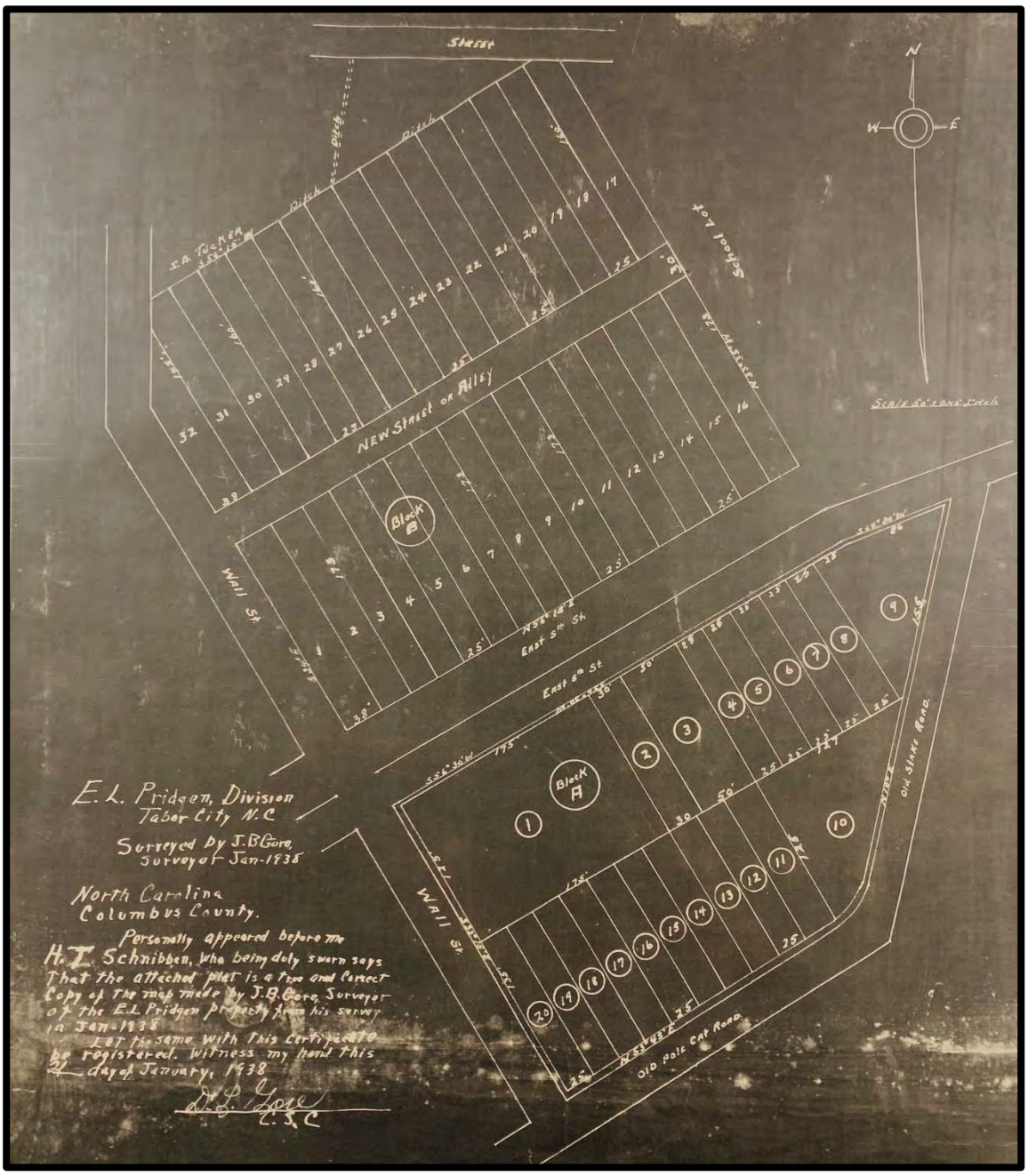

Figure 109: E. L. Pridgen Division. Note "School Lot" to East (Columbus County Register of Deeds, Plat Book 2, Page 40).

program through the receipt of a tin-roofed gymnasium in either the late 1920s or 1930s.[38] An aerial image from 1938 shows the campus including the 1927 classroom building with the six-classroom rear wing and the 1914 school (Figure 110).

[38] Lewis (1977), 158.

Figure 110: 1938 Aerial Image Showing the 1927 Classroom Building and the 1914 School to its West (http://www2.columbusco.org/OldAerials).

Figure 111: 1951 Aerial Image Showing the 1927 Classroom Building, 1948 High School, Gymnasium and the 1914 School (http://www2.columbusco.org/ OldAerials).

To further accommodate the growing campus, the Board of Education purchased additional parcels from Pridgen & Pridgen in 1936 and 1939.[39] It also purchased less than one acre from Forney Norris in 1939 and six acres from J. O. and Myrtie McKaskill Prince in 1944.[40] These parcels were purchased in preparation for the construction of the 1948 high school, but also came to accommodate the current gymnasium and the occupational trades building (Figure 111).

In the late 1940s the original gymnasium was destroyed by a fire and in 1954 the current gymnasium was constructed east of the 1948 high school.[41] The 1914 school was also lost to fire around this time.[42] In 1955, the campus was enlarged again with the first portion of the occupational trades building east of the new gymnasium and a one-story elementary school building, which housed a new cafeteria, constructed on the site of the 1914 school. The first stages of this expansion are visible on a 1955 aerial image of the campus, while a 1958 aerial shows the completed elementary school building and the home economics wing, which also contained administrative offices and a storeroom (Figures 112 and 113).[43]

In the mid-1960s, the 1927 classroom building was remodeled. The remodel included the rearrangement of several rooms, the rewiring of the business department to accommodate more equipment, and the enclosure of the auditorium, which had previously been open to the surrounding hallways. The occupational trades building was expanded in the 1970s with an additional classroom and the garage and the science building and media center were added to the campus in 1973 and 1976, respectively.[44]

The expansion of the campus, particularly the addition of the home economics wing, which originally contained three kitchen set-ups, and the occupational trades building, displays the school system's efforts to offer more specialized curriculum for its students.[45] Likewise, the 1970s science building and media center are reflective of that era's emphasis on scientific study and access to modern technology. A set of floor plans provides a glimpse of the campus and the interior arrangements of its buildings including their uses (Figure 114).

In 1992, the high school combined with Nakina and Williams Township High Schools to form South Columbus High and the high school building became a part of the elementary school.[46] Despite this change in use, the campus appears to have stayed relatively the same from the 1970s through the 2000s. Known changes include the addition of canopies that connect the buildings, at least some of which were present by the early 1990s or possibly much earlier, and the abandonment of the high school building's second floor due to handicap-accessibility issues in the 1990s.

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[39] Columbus County Register of Deeds, Deed Book 147, page 284 and 285 and Deed Book 156, page 396
[40] Columbus County Register of Deeds, Deed Book 156, page 359 and Deed Book 171, page 473.
[41] Lewis (1977), 158.
[42] Watts, 22.
[43] Lewis (1977), 159.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Ward, personal communication.
[46] Facebook.com, "Tabor City High School," https://www.facebook.com/pg/TaborCityHighSchool/about/?ref=page_internal, accessed January 2020.

Figure 112: 1955 Aerial Image Showing the Addition of the Occupational Trades Building to the Campus (http://www2.columbusco.org/OldAerials).

Figure 113: 1958 Aerial Image Showing the Addition of the 1950s Classroom Building (EarthExplorer).

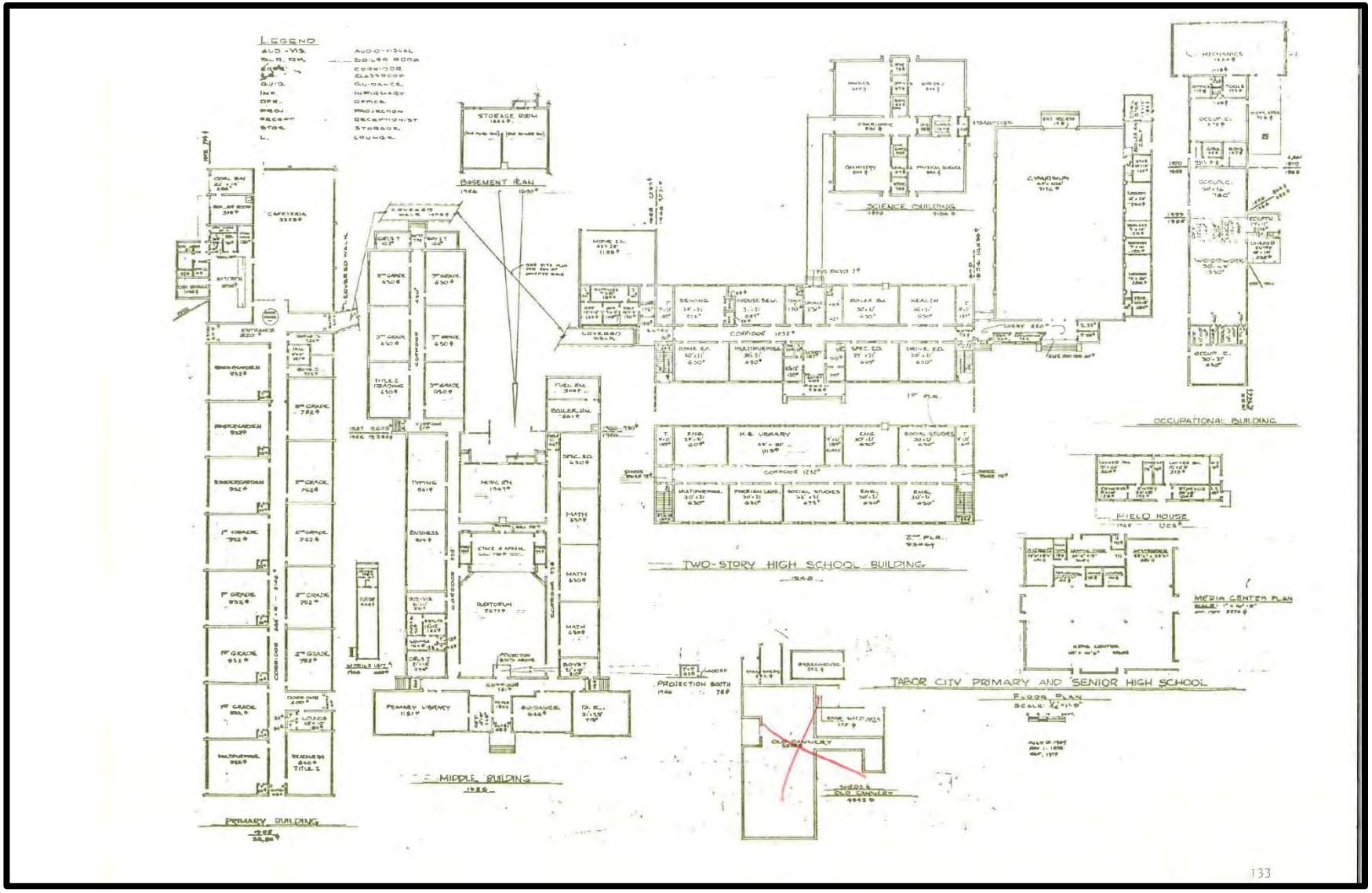

Figure 114: Tabor City School, Floor Plans. Note Inclusion of "Sheds & Cannery" that are No Longer Extant and a "Field House" that was not Identified During the Survey (Szostak Design, Inc.).

Recommendation: The Tabor City School was evaluated under Criteria A, B, C and D and is recommended eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criteria A and C.

Regarding Criterion A (event), the Tabor City School is associated with the development of public education in Columbus County and North Carolina, particularly in relation to the early twentieth-century consolidation of small rural schools. The campus, however, also contains a collection of buildings from the 1920s through the 1970s, making it an example of how educational designs evolved to facilitate not just the consolidation of smaller schools, but also the growth of Tabor City and Columbus County, and integration efforts in the 1960s. For these reasons, the campus contributes to our understanding of twentieth-century educational development in Columbus County as well as North Carolina and is therefore recommended eligible under Criterion A.

Regarding Criterion B (person), though the campus, particularly the 1927 classroom building, is associated with the architect Leslie N. Boney, it is not his only work in the county or within the greater Eastern North Carolina region. No other persons of significance were identified in relation to the school's history or development and the school is therefore recommended not eligible under Criterion B.

Under Criterion C (design/construction) a building must retain integrity and embody distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction; represent the work of a master; possess high artistic value; or represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction. The earliest extant buildings on the Tabor City School campus are examples of Classical Revival-style architecture, which was a popular choice for educational facilities in the early twentieth century. The buildings display this style through their symmetrical facades with keystones and other brick or stone details and columned porticos. Though the buildings are not outstanding examples of the Classical Revival style when compared with larger, more detailed buildings, they are outstanding examples of the Classical Revival style applied to rural educational buildings. Furthermore, the campus contains additional buildings that date from the 1940s through the 1970s and displays the evolution of rural educational design from the period of early-twentieth century consolidation through integration.

The number of early twentieth century, classically designed educational buildings in Columbus County has decreased over the past twenty-five years due to fires and replacement. Five of these buildings were works of Boney. They include Acme-Delco School (CB0006), Hallsboro School (CB0024), and Williams Township School (CB0088), which were on North Carolina's NRHP Study List, Old Dock School (CB0148), which was determined eligible for the NRHP, and a gymnasium on the campus of Whiteville High School (CB0205). Up until 1976, the Whiteville campus also included a ca. 1921 two-story school that was designed by Boney. Today it retains only a ca. 1927 auditorium (Figure 115) and possibly a small ca. 1921 agricultural building.[47] Two of the lost schools, Acme-Delco and Hallsboro, and one extant school, Cerro Gordo, which

[47] Jeroen van den Hurk, Amanda Stamper, and Lindsay Flood, *Historic Architectural Resources Survey Report, Improve US 701 Bypass in Whiteville, Columbus County, Final Identification & Evaluation*, Coastal Carolina Research, Submitted to North Carolina Department of Transportation, Manuscript on file, North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, Raleigh, 2014, 35-52.

Figure 115: Whiteville High School Auditorium, Looking Southwest.

is the subject of the first half of this report, had designs that were similar to the 1927 classroom building at Tabor City School.[48] This duplication suggests that Boney worked with the school system to create a design that fulfilled the needs of multiple schools, and likely saved the school system time and money, rather than tailoring individual designs to each community. The replication of its design on multiple campuses also makes the 1927 classroom building a particularly good representation of consolidation era schools in the county.

An example of a school building that is similar to both the 1927 classroom building and the Tabor City High School building is Contentnea School (LR0800, Figure 116). Located in Lenoir County, the 1924 school was designed by Boney and was determined eligible for the NRHP in 2010. Though two stories, the school displays the same arrangement of tripled windows flanked by individual windows and finished with contrasting stone details as the 1927 classroom building. It also has a similar parapet, though composed of brick instead of stone, and bays that projecting and recess across the façade. Contentnea, however, is a more fully executed example of the Classical Revival style with six-over-six, double-hung window sashes that, though they appear to be replacements, better embody the architectural style.

Contentnea is similar in form to Tabor City High School with its full-height, pedimented entry portico supported by four columns. The schools also share entry bays at the far ends of their façades with interior stairwells indicated by large windows placed between the first and second story. This similarity in form displays the commonality of the Tabor City High School building,

[48] Turberg, 35.

Figure 116: Contentnea School (LR0800), Looking South.

while their differences, such as the previously mentioned stone details and double-hung windows, set Contentnea apart as a more finely detailed Classical Revival-style school.

The 1927 classroom building and 1948 high school, however, stand as examples of educational buildings in a less prominent, more rural community. In this regard, their architectural details, though simple, distinguish them as some of the best examples of Classical Revival-style architecture in the county and, in particular, as two of the more outstanding examples of early to mid-twentieth century educational buildings. This assertation is supported by site visits, which confirmed the demolition and/or replacement of many of the county's earlier schools. During site visits, no other historic schools that were two stories with pedimented entry bays were observed. Instead, most of the school campuses were defined by buildings constructed in the latter part of the twentieth century and early twenty-first century. These buildings are predominately one-story and exhibit more modern designs. A two-story, historic school that was observed is Evergreen School (Figure 117). The 1924 school, however, is more simple in its design and is a better example of subtle Art Deco details applied to a rural educational building rather than Classical Reivival details.

The additional buildings on the Tabor City School campus, such as the gymnasium and 1950s classroom building, stand as examples of mid-twentieth century educational design and are representative of the types of educational buildings that were constructed throughout the county during that period. For example, similar barrel-roofed gymnasiums can be viewed on the campuses of Acme-Delco Elementary School (Figure 118), Acme-Delco Middle School, Hallsboro-Artesia School, and West Columbus High School. The form and character defining

Figure 117: Evergreen School, Looking Southeast.

features of the 1950s classroom building—one story, flat roofed with large banks of steel-frame windows—can be observed on the campuses of Acme-Delco Middle School, Evergreen Elementary School, and Hallsboro-Artesia School (Figure 119) as well. Together, the campus's collection of buildings exhibits the evolution of educational building design from the era of consolidation through the integration of the school system.

In summary, though the early buildings on the Tabor City School campus are not high-style examples of the Classical Revival style, they are excellent examples of the style applied to rural educational buildings. Furthermore, they survive as rare examples of the type. This is due in part to the destruction of multiple schools in the past twenty-five years as well as to the obsoletion and replacement of schools following integration in the 1960s. Today, the 1927 classroom building remains as one of roughly four consolidation-era education buildings in the county. The others being Cerro Gordo School (CB0067), Evergreen School, and the auditorium at Whiteville High School (CB0205). The 1927 classroom building and Cerro Gordo School remain as particularly significant examples of the type due to being designed by the architect Leslie N. Boney and for sharing almost identical plans, which were also replicated on two no longer extant schools in the county. Lastly, the campus's architecture is indicative of the growth of Tabor City and the school system from the 1920s through the 1970s, a period that began with the consolidation of rural schools and ended with the desegregation of the school system. For these reasons, the campus is significant at both the county and state level for its ability to holistically convey this era of educational development and is therefore recommended eligible under Criterion C.

Figure 118: Acme-Delco Elementary School, Looking East.

Figure 119: Hallsboro-Artesia School, Looking East.

As for Criterion D (potential to yield information), the buildings and campus are not likely to yield any new information pertaining to the history of building design and technology and is therefore recommended not eligible under Criterion D.

The proposed NRHP Boundary is defined by the current tax parcels and contains the 1927 classroom building, 1948 high school, gymnasium, occupational trades building, media center, science building and 1950s classroom building as well as the associated front lawns, parking areas, and Mt. Tabor School (10.52 acres; Columbus County Parcel ID 062146, 093455, 094193, 094194, 194195, 094196, 097132) (Figure 120).

Figure 120: Proposed NRHP Boundary for Tabor City School.

3.3 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

An architectural evaluation of two resources, one previously recorded and one previously unrecorded, was undertaken for the proposed school consolidation project in Columbus County, North Carolina. Both of the resources surveyed, the Cerro Gordo School (CB0067) and Tabor City School (CB1365), are significant for their association with the development of education in Columbus County and in North Carolina and as rare surviving examples of rural educational facilities designed in the Classical Revival style.

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