

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

MP3000

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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



1. Name of Property

Historic name: St. George Rosenwald School

Other names/site number: St. George Colored High School, St. George Colored School, St. George High School, Williams Memorial High School

Name of related multiple property listing:

The Rosenwald School Building Program in South Carolina 1917-1932

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

2. Location

Street & number: 205 Ann Street

City or town: St. George State: SC County: Dorchester

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

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

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

 national statewide x local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

 x A B x C D

	<u>8/22/2018</u>
Signature of certifying official/Title:	Date
Elizabeth M. Johnson, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer	
_____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

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

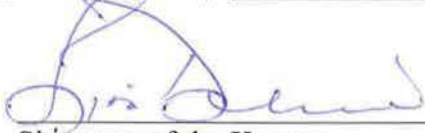
Signature of commenting official: _____ **Date** _____

Title : _____ **State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government** _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

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


Signature of the Keeper

10/2/18
Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

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

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site

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Structure

Object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>2</u>	<u> </u>	buildings
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u>1</u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

- EDUCATION/school
- RECREATION AND CULTURE/auditorium
- SOCIAL/meeting hall
-
-
-
-

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

- WORK IN PROGRESS
-
-
-
-

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH and 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/Craftsman

OTHER: Rosenwald Fund Schools

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: _____

School Building:

Foundation: BRICK

Walls: WOOD/Weatherboard

Roof: METAL

Outdoor Privy:

Foundation: CONCRETE

Walls: CONCRETE

Shop:

Foundation: BRICK

Walls: WOOD/Weatherboard

Roof: METAL

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Narrative Description

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

Summary Paragraph

The St. George Rosenwald School is a one story, H-shaped, wood-framed building located in St. George, Dorchester County. It sits on the southeastern portion of the 3.03 acre rectangular plot of land owned by the Town of St. George and bordered by Ann Street, Gavin Street, Metts Street and Wamer Drive.¹ The school was originally built in 1925 according to the Rosenwald Fund's Community School Plan "Floor Plan No. 6-A" for a six teacher school.² Later additions to the building added five additional rooms: one room to each wing c. 1935, two rooms to the southwestern wing c. 1950, and one room to the northeastern wing c. 1954.³ Wooded overgrowth has been cleared from around the school to better reflect the original setting. Despite some changes to the school and some deterioration, it retains its historic integrity through the maintenance of significant design features, location and association. Now owned by the Town of St. George and managed by the non-profit, St. George Rosenwald School, Inc., the school is currently in the process of undergoing restoration and rehabilitation so that it may be utilized as a community center.

¹ According to the Fisk University Rosenwald Fund card Database, the original property was 2 acres. Research in Dorchester County's deed books did not reveal the exact historical boundaries, but based upon images from the Fisk Database and alumni recollections, they are encompassed by the current property boundaries of the 3.03 acre parcel owned by the Town of St. George.

² Julius Rosenwald Fund, Fletcher B. Dresslar, and Samuel L. Smith, "Community School Plans No. 3" (Nashville, TN), 5, accessed September 27, 2017, <http://digital.ncdcr.gov/cdm/ref/collection/p16062coll13/id/4554>. (Hereafter cited as Community School Plans);

Fisk University Rosenwald Fund Card Database, "St. George School," accessed September 27, 2017, http://rosenwald.fisk.edu/?module=search.details&set_v=aWQ9Mjc=&school_historic_name=st.%20george&button=Search&o=0. (Hereafter cited as Fisk University Database).

³ Glenn Keyes Architects. *St. George Community Center Existing Floor Plan* (Building survey prepared for the Town of St. George, October 4, 2017). While exact dates for the additions are unknown, building inspectors familiar with historic construction and employed by Glenn Keyes Architects, the firm managing the restoration and rehabilitation project, have investigated the framing to determine the approximate dates for the additions. For the final room was added to the rear of the wing on the Wamer Drive (northeast) elevation, while building inspectors have estimated this date as 1957, alumni believe it was added to the school before its close in 1954. For ease of use, even though these dates are approximate, they are hereafter referred to as the 1935 addition, 1950 addition, and 1954 addition.

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Narrative Description

Exterior (School Building)

The St. George Rosenwald School is a single story, H-shaped building. It sits on a brick foundation and is a wood-frame building clad in wood weatherboard with a cross-gabled metal roof. The school is oriented to the southeast, facing Ann Street. It has two front-gabled wings joined by a recessed, side-gabled section. The central section joining these two wings sits toward the front of the building so that each wing protrudes further behind the central section than in front of it. In the original construction, the school was symmetrical, but additions to the school have made the rear section of the southwest wing longer than the rear section of the northeast wing.

The school is painted white, which matches the suggested exterior colors in the Rosenwald Fund's Community School Plans, as well as the historic photograph in the Fisk University's Rosenwald Fund Card Database.⁴ Alumna Edith Oldham recalls that the school was painted white throughout her tenure there as well.⁵

The Ann Street or southeast (front) elevation features the recessed side-gabled central section of the building, flanked on either side by the front-ends of the two wings. From the original school plans and the historic photograph, the central section originally featured a full-width porch with a flat metal roof and four square columns.⁶ Much of the porch is no longer extant, but two of the columns remain as well as the northeastern portion of the roof and brick foundation. Originally, there were three sets of stairs leading up to the porch. The stairs are no longer extant, but the brick foundation for the eastern most set of stairs remains. Above the porch roof there are six six-light clerestory windows grouped in sets of two. The main entrance is a centered double door topped by a two-light transom window. On the eastern side of the front entrance is a small room, originally the library, with three six-over-six double-hung windows. A corresponding room on the opposite side originally housed the principal's office, but it is no longer extant.⁷ The side gabled roof also features two brick chimneys, one on the south corner and the other on the north corner of the roof. On either side of the porch there is a single door entering the front rooms on either wing. The southeast elevation also features the front of the two wings. Each wing features a front gabled roof with a rectangular gable vent. The northeastern wing features two double-hung nine-over-nine windows. The southwestern wing originally matched the

⁴ Community School Plans, 29; Fisk University Database. The Fisk University's database includes an historic photograph of the school. The photograph is undated, but shows the school in the original construction: with three rooms in each wing. The first additions to the building were added circa 1935, so the photograph likely dates to between 1925 (the school's construction) and 1935 (the approximate date of the first addition).

⁵ Edith Oldham and Ralph James, interview by Jennifer Melton, September 28, 2017. Oldham attended the school from 1947 until its close in 1954.

⁶ Fisk University Database.

⁷ Community School Plans, 17; Oldham and James interview.

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northeastern wing with two nine-over-nine windows, but the top halves of the windows on this wing have been infilled with weatherboard.

The Gavin Street or southwestern elevation contains the southwestern wing of the school: the three rooms of the 1925 construction towards the front of the building, the additional room from the 1935 addition, and the additional two rooms of the 1950 addition at the rear of the building. There is a seam in the weatherboard and brick foundation between the original 1925 building and the 1935 addition as well as between the 1935 addition and the 1950 addition. There is also a change in roof height between the 1935 addition and the 1950 addition. As is a common and significant aspect of Rosenwald schools, the southwestern wing features banks of tall, narrow windows on this elevation. The windows in the 1925 portion are nine-over-nine double hung windows. The two larger rooms on either end of the 1925 section of the wing each have a group of six windows, while the slightly smaller middle room features a grouping of five windows. The one room of the 1935 addition follows to the rear with five nine-over-nine double-hung windows. The 1950 addition (two rooms on this wing) contains four sets of two six-over-six double-hung windows, two sets for each room. The southwestern elevation also contains four brick chimneys protruding from the portion of the roof that slopes towards Gavin Street. Two of these chimneys are along the roof line of the 1925 construction, one is between the 1935 addition and the 1950 addition, and one is centered over the 1950 addition. The gable from the roof of middle section (entrance) of the school is centered over the 1925 construction and contains a gable vent.

The Wamer Drive or northeastern elevation contains the northeastern wing of the school and is very similar to the southwestern elevation. Like the southwestern elevation, it contains original 1925 construction and a 1935 addition, distinguishable by a seam in the weatherboard. However, instead of a 1950 addition, this elevation has a one room addition added c. 1954. This addition is also distinguishable by the seam in the weatherboard, but the roof height for this addition is the same as the 1925 construction and 1935 addition. The windows for the 1925 construction and 1935 addition on this elevation match those of the southwestern elevation. The 1954 addition contains a bank of five nine-over-nine double-hung windows. The northeastern elevation contains four brick chimneys placed roughly where each classroom meets, two of which are in the 1925 construction, one between the 1925 construction and the 1935 addition and one between the 1935 addition and the 1954 addition. Like the southwestern elevation, the gable from the roof of the middle section (entrance) of the school is centered over the 1925 construction and contains a gable vent.

The rear of the school contains a courtyard bordered by the northwest elevation of the building (the auditorium of the school) and the two wings of classrooms. The courtyard originally contained a basketball court throughout the years the school was open. The northwest elevation contains a bank of nine-over-nine double-hung windows. These are grouped in a set of four and three; however, according to the Community School Plans, this was originally a bank of eight windows, and one has since been replaced with weatherboard.⁸ As is common and significant in Rosenwald schools, the wings of the building do not contain windows facing the courtyard as an

⁸ Community School Plans, 17.

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important design element was to have light coming in from only one side of each classroom.⁹ From the courtyard, there are entrances into the auditorium as well as into individual classrooms. At the juncture of each wing and auditorium, there is a raised platform landing of concrete atop a brick foundation. From these landings there are two doors, one leading into the cross section of the building into the auditorium and another leading into the classroom in the wing of the building. Neither of these landings contain the original stairs. Similar landings with entries into the classrooms are at the entries to the classrooms of the 1935 additions on both wings and the 1954 addition on the northeastern wing. There is also a shared platform with two doors leading into each of the rooms on the 1950 addition of the southwestern wing. Stairs are missing from all of the landings, except for the entry into the 1935 addition on the southwestern wing. The extant stairs are of brick construction.

Interior (School Building)

The original main entrance to the building is at the center of the southeastern (front) elevation. The front entrance opens into a small vestibule. The vestibule is deteriorated and in poor condition with parts of the floor and the foundation no longer extant.

The vestibule leads to the auditorium, a large, open space at the center of the school. The northwestern wall of the auditorium features nine-over-nine double-hung windows in groups of three and four as well as two doors leading out into the courtyard (described above). The dado of the auditorium walls is covered in wainscoting, which corresponds to the design recommendations in the Community School Plans.¹⁰ The southeastern side of the auditorium contains the double-door main entry and six six-light clerestory windows. On either side of the double-door, there are two additional single doors, the northeastern one of which leads into the library. The door on the opposite side previously led to an office, but that room is no longer extant. Alumni Edith Oldham and Ralph James remember it was used as the principal's office.¹¹

There is a stage on the northeastern side of the auditorium. There are walls on either side of front of the stage, separating the areas to the side of the stage from the rest of the auditorium. The front of the stage is flanked by two arched openings. The use of arched openings is unusual for a school of this type and does not match the original Community School Plans, suggesting it may have been added after the 1925 construction; however, it is unclear if it was added during the period of significance or after. Behind the arched openings and flanking the rear of the stage are two side-by-side doors on each side. On the southeastern side of the stage, these doors enter the front class room and the middle classroom on the 1925 construction. On the northwestern side of the stage, these doors entered the middle classroom and the rear classroom of the 1925 construction.

The southwestern side of the auditorium contains three doors, each entering into the front, middle, and rear classroom of the 1925 construction. The door to the middle classroom is

⁹ Mary Hoffschwelle, *The Rosenwald Schools of the American South* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2006), 95-96.

¹⁰ Community School Plans, 26.

¹¹ Oldham and James interview.

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flanked by two large pass-throughs, underneath which is wainscoting. All doors leading from the auditorium into classrooms or the courtyard are topped by single-light transoms.

The southwestern wing of the building contains six classrooms with windows as described in the exterior description. The front classroom contains what was originally a cloakroom and now contains a bathroom, likely added c. 1975 when the building was used as a Head Start Center after its use as a school and community center.¹² The second classroom from the front has built-in cabinetry likely added when the school was used as a Head Start Center. The third classroom from the front also contains a bathroom that was originally a cloak room.

The northeastern wing of the building contains five classrooms with windows as described in the exterior description. Like the southwestern wing, the northeastern wing contains several bathrooms that were likely added when the school was used as a Head Start Center. The front classroom has a cloakroom that has been converted into a bathroom. The second classroom from the front also has a bathroom that has been added. The third classroom has retained its cloakroom but added a bathroom in front of the cloakroom. The fourth classroom, from the 1935 addition, also has a space that likely served as a cloakroom.

The classrooms all contain hardwood floors and walls with vertical wainscoting and horizontal bead board. While some of the floor is rotted and some of the bead board and wainscoting is missing, the majority is intact.

Outdoor Privy (c. 1925) – Contributing Site

Northwest of the school there is an extant outdoor privy. While there is no roof, the walls of the privy, constructed of concrete block remain. There is a partial wall dividing the structure, and there is a doorway on both the southwestern elevation and northeastern elevation. This privy does not match the plans put forth in the Rosenwald Fund Community School Plans; however the plans indicate that privy design is not required to match the Fund's plans and may instead utilize plans provided by State Boards of Health.¹³ Given this, it is not clear whether the privy dates from the original construction or was built later. Alumni interviewed remember it being in use when the school closed in 1954.

Shop (c. 1945) – Contributing Building

Northwest of the school, and to the northeast of the privy, there is a small building. This building was originally part of a larger building built c. 1945 to house the 5th and 6th grades and the shop used for vocational education. Circa 1957, after the school was closed and turned into a community center, the building was modified to remove the classrooms that had housed the 5th and 6th grades and retain the room that had held the shop. A pool was added to the grounds and the shop was turned into a canteen for the pool.¹⁴

¹² Oldham and James interview; Mayor Anne Johnston, interview by Jennifer Melton, September 28, 2017.

¹³ Community School Plans, 23.

¹⁴ Edith Martin Williams-Oldham, *What Grandma Forgot to Tell You: A Story of Forgotten Treasures in St. George, South Carolina* (Summerville: EWO Publications, 2017); Edith Oldham, interview by Jennifer Melton, June 10, 2018.

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The shop is a one-story one-room rectangular building with a hipped roof. It has a brick foundation with wood weatherboard walls and a metal roof. All doors and windows are boarded up. The southwestern elevation contains three boarded up windows. The southeastern elevation contains one boarded up door and three boarded up windows. The northeastern elevation contains two boarded up windows and one boarded up door. The northwestern elevation contains two boarded up windows.

Temporary Cover (2016) – Non-contributing Structure

The St. George Rosenwald School is undergoing restoration and rehabilitation. As such, it is currently covered with a large, temporary, shed-like structure to preserve and protect the school while plans are approved and before the work begins. The temporary structure is constructed from metal frame and wood and covered in black tarp. The shed follows the shape of the main building and is H-shaped with a gabled roof. The structure is a temporary component of ongoing restoration efforts and will be removed after the building is stabilized.

Integrity

Despite some deterioration and the addition of bathrooms after the period of significance, the St. George Rosenwald School is still easily recognizable as a school of its type due to its retention of its H-shape, gabled roof, building materials, exterior paint color, and distinctive banks of large, narrow windows. Additions were made to the original construction, but they were made within the period of significance and are not unusual for Rosenwald Schools. Indeed, the Rosenwald Fund anticipated that schools they funded would require additions as more and more students began to attend such schools.¹⁵ Additionally, the school has retained its original location and rural setting.

¹⁵ Community School Plans, 1.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

Criteria Considerations

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

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

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

EDUCATION

ETHNIC HERITAGE: BLACK

Period of Significance

1925-1965

Significant Dates

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Smith, Samuel L.

Dresslar, Fletcher B.

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

The St. George Rosenwald School served as a school from its opening in 1925 to its closing in 1954, providing important educational services during the period of Jim Crow when discriminatory state funding meant that African American children had far fewer educational opportunities. During its use as a school, it was also an important part of the Black community of St. George, serving as a meeting and gathering place for the local neighborhood. After it closed, the school continued to be utilized as a community center, used for both social events and political events, including classes and meetings held by the Congress of Racial Equality in 1965. It is significant under Criterion A for its contributions to broad patterns of history, namely African American education and community organizing related to the civil rights movement. It is further significant under Criterion C for its architecture, which is representative of the distinctive styles created by the Rosenwald Fund's Fletcher Dresslar and Samuel Smith. One of only two Rosenwald Schools built in Dorchester County, it is the only one that survives today.

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

Criterion A: Education

As the twentieth century dawned, African Americans in the South faced widespread discrimination, including in the area of education. After an expansion of rights and access to public education during Reconstruction, African Americans in South Carolina saw many of those rights rescinded after Reconstruction's end. In South Carolina, the state's post-Reconstruction constitution of 1895 enshrined discrimination into law by effectively disenfranchising Black men and prescribing segregated schools.¹⁶

School segregation resulted in large discrepancies of funding and quality of education for Black and white children. In 1920, for example, just five years before the St. George Rosenwald School was built, census records indicate that African Americans represented 51.4% of total population of South Carolina, yet public school expenditures and facilities were far from equal.¹⁷ In the 1924-25 school year, 156,000 Black children were attending school while 169,000 white children were. The average pupil to teacher ratio for Black children was 42:1, double that of the average white pupil to teacher ratio of 21:1, and the average per capita expenditure for a white

¹⁶ S.C. Const. art XI §7.

¹⁷ US Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Fourteenth Census of the United States: 1920 Bulletin (Population: South Carolina)*, Washington: Government Printing Office, 1921, accessed November 9, 2017.
<ftp://ftp.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1920/bulletins/demographics/population-sc-number-of-inhabitants.pdf>.

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child attending school was \$68.31 compared to an average per capita expenditure of \$9.00 for a Black child.¹⁸

Seeing the need for better education for African Americans after Reconstruction's end, philanthropists sought to fill this gap. One of these philanthropic efforts, the Rosenwald Fund, had its roots in Booker T. Washington's Tuskegee Institute. An advocate for African American education and self-help, Washington promoted and facilitated the building of African American schools, particularly in rural areas, in the early twentieth century.¹⁹ Seeking additional philanthropic funding, Washington sought support from Julius Rosenwald, northern philanthropist and president of Sears and Roebuck. Between 1912 and 1917, Rosenwald supported the Tuskegee Institute in their school building project, and in 1917, the Julius Rosenwald Fund was incorporated as a separate entity and operated until 1932.²⁰ The Rosenwald Fund was responsible for building nearly 5,000 schools across the South, 481 of which were in South Carolina.²¹ This had a dramatic effect on the cultural landscape, and by 1928, one third of African American children in the South were educated in Rosenwald Schools.²²

The Rosenwald Fund did not fund the construction of new schools entirely. Instead they functioned as seed money, providing grants but also requiring funds from the local private community members (Black and white) as well as public funding. This strategy and requirements were an outgrowth of Washington's advocacy of self-help and Washington and Rosenwald's belief that education should be a public responsibility. These funds were collected and recorded as public funds, funds collected from Black community members, and funds collected from white community members. The self-help emphasis meant that these building projects were often grassroots efforts, making African American community members, as scholar Mary Hoffschwelle states, "the driving force behind the Rosenwald program and the arbiters of its meaning for southern communities."²³

The St. George School was built in 1925, and received \$1,500 from the Rosenwald Fund, \$4,800 of public funding, and \$2,000 from the Black community.²⁴ No funds are listed as coming from the private white community. The original school was built according to the Rosenwald Fund's Community School Plan 6-A, which is a design to accommodate six teachers. This layout contains a main auditorium with a stage, a library, an office, five classrooms, and an industrial

¹⁸ *School Directory of South Carolina* (Columbia, SC: State Superintendent of Education, 1925-1926), accessed November 9, 2017.

<http://digital.tcl.sc.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/schldirect/id/578/rec/1>.

¹⁹ Hoffschwelle, *The Rosenwald Schools of the American South*, 18-26

²⁰ Hoffschwelle, *The Rosenwald Schools of the American South*, 69.

²¹ Lindsay C.M. Weathers, "The Rosenwald School Building Program in South Carolina, 1917-1932," National Register for Historic Places Nomination Form, December 3, 2008, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, 11.

²² Mary Hoffschwelle, *Preserving Rosenwald Schools*, 2nd ed (Washington: National Trust for Historic Preservation, 2012).

²³ Mary Hoffschwelle, *Preserving Rosenwald Schools*.

²⁴ Fisk University database.

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room, used for vocational education. As time progressed, attendance at the school grew, necessitating additions to the building for more classrooms in 1935 and 1950. Even these additions were not enough to accommodate the burgeoning school attendance. Alumna Edith Oldham remembers that when she attended the school from 1947 – 1954, the school day was split in half with a morning session and an afternoon session to accommodate all of the students. Even with this accommodation, some grades, like the first and second grade classes, had to be housed off site at the Good Hope Baptist Church across the street.²⁵

The St. George Rosenwald School provided both primary and secondary education, and it was uniquely situated in the area as one of only two high schools for African Americans in Dorchester County. In the 1949-1950 school year, the earliest for which detailed data is available, there were thirteen schools for white children serving 2,392 students, and four of these schools provided secondary education. For African American students, there were twenty-eight schools, serving 3,574 students, and only two of these provided secondary education. White schools were typically larger and had a longer school year. In the 1949-1950 school year, six white schools had 1-5 teachers, two schools had 6-10 teachers, and the remaining four schools had more than 10 teachers with the largest schools having 27 and 30 teachers each. All white schools ran for nine months. African American schools in Dorchester County during the same period were typically smaller and often ran for a shorter school year. All but three of the African American schools (twenty-five in total) had less than 5 teachers and only two had more than 10 teachers with the largest schools having 16 and 24 teachers. The St. George Rosenwald School was the second largest African American school in the county with 16 teachers. In addition, two thirds of African American schools that year ran for eight months rather than nine months with the St. George Rosenwald School running for nine months. The St. George Rosenwald School was significant in that it was a larger school providing secondary education that ran for a nine month school year.²⁶

Given the fact that there were so many elementary schools for African American children in Darlington County, but only two schools providing secondary education, the St. George Rosenwald School attracted students from throughout the county. Oldham remembers that students would travel from neighboring towns to attend the high school in St. George.²⁷ An October, 1938 article in *The Palmetto Leader*, an African American newspaper based in Columbia that often featured local news, describes this, stating that “The enrollment in the high school department has increased because of the coming of pupils from the elementary schools in the county to the school this term.”²⁸

²⁵ Oldham and James interview. The School Directories of South Carolina began listing African-American schools in the 1939-1940 school year and demonstrate an increase in pupils attending each year between 1939 and its close in 1954.

²⁶ “Annual Report of the County Superintendent of Dorchester County” (South Carolina State Department of Education, June 30, 1950), South Carolina Department of Archives and History.

²⁷ Oldham and James interview.

²⁸ “St. George High School,” *The Palmetto Leader*, October 8, 1938, accessed November 4, 2017. <http://historicnewspapers.sc.edu/lccn/sn93067919/1938-10-08/ed-1/seq-4/>.

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For students attending school, especially those coming from outside of St. George, traveling to and from school presented a number of challenges during the era of Jim Crow, and students worked to navigate those systems. While white students often had state-provided bus services, African-Americans were not afforded the same opportunities and, in Dorchester County, were not provided with state school buses until 1951.²⁹ Instead, prior to that point, they engaged in cooperative measures to travel to the school. Some community members would assist in providing rides to and from school for a small fee. Other students from outside St. George would board with family members or rent rooms from other community members during the week.³⁰ In this way, the school fostered community development, providing education for students throughout Dorchester County and receiving support from community members.

The St. George Rosenwald School provided not only academic instruction, but also vocational instruction. These were important parts of Rosenwald Schools given Booker T. Washington's advocacy for vocational education. The original school plans call for a vocational instruction or "industries" classroom. However, as attendance at the school grew, this room was turned into an academic instruction classroom and the shop was moved to a separate building that also housed the fifth and sixth grades.

In the early part of its tenure, the St. George Rosenwald School was referred to variously as the St. George High School, the St. George Colored School, and the St. George Colored High School.³¹ In 1944, a contest was held to come up with a new name for the school, and a student suggested "Williams Memorial High School" after the first principal of the school.³² The school closed in 1954 and the student body and faculty moved to a new building in a new location, though it retained the name of Williams Memorial High School.³³ This closure, like many Rosenwald schools in South Carolina, corresponded to the proliferation of Equalization Schools, an attempt by the South Carolina legislature to prevent integration by building new schools for African-American students that would be "equal" to those of white students.³⁴

Criterion A: Ethnic Heritage - Black

The St. George Rosenwald School was not only a site of education, but it also served larger community needs. The Rosenwald Fund anticipated its use as a community center and the opening paragraphs of its Community School Plans state that "the best modern school is one which is designed to serve the entire community for twelve months in the year."³⁵ Alumni remember Christmas programs and May Day celebrations at the school that the entire community would attend.³⁶ Articles in *The Palmetto Leader* reported choir concerts and

²⁹ "Annual Report of the County Superintendent of Dorchester County" (South Carolina State Department of Education, June 30, 1951), South Carolina Department of Archives and History.

³⁰ Helen T. Lewis, "Ms. Clara Dixon Britt Update," *Williams Memorial Alumni Newsletter*, Summer Edition – 2017.

³¹ Articles in *The Palmetto Leader* refer to it by all these names throughout the 1930s.

³² Oldham and James interview.

³³ Oldham and James interview.

³⁴ *The Rosenwald School Building Program in South Carolina, 1917-1932*, 13.

³⁵ Community School Plans, 1.

³⁶ Oldham and James interview.

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advertised a search for a “traveling motion picture man to show pictures at the St. George High auditorium.”³⁷ After the school closed, it continued to serve a social function in the community. A pool was added behind the school, and there would be dances and record hops in the auditorium.³⁸

In the segregated South, residents and alumni of the school remember it as the nucleus of the Black community – it was the center of uptown St. George, what alumnus Ralph James called “Little Harlem.” It was surrounded not only by residences, but also by churches and commercial venues, like lunch counters. During the time of segregation it was also a point of safety for members of St. George’s Black community. James remembers that a siren would blow at 9pm on Saturday nights, and while there was not an explicit curfew, it was understood that that meant that “all people of color were expected to be in their communities,” and if the siren blew “and you were anywhere else except around that school, you were out of place.”³⁹

In the Jim Crow South, the school served as what Robert Weyeneth describes in “The Architecture of Racial Segregation” as an alternative space. Where African Americans were restricted from white only spaces, they worked to resist white supremacy through the formation of their own, oftentimes parallel, spaces.⁴⁰ The school was built to fill the gap and confront the educational disparities resulting from segregated schools. It continued to serve this function throughout its use as a community center, providing recreation, socialization, and safety as an alternative to segregated white spaces.

As a community center for the African American population of St. George, the school also served an important purpose during the civil rights era. Ralph James remembers that of the major civil rights organizations, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) was the one most active in St. George.⁴¹ In the summer of 1965, CORE organized economic boycotts of segregated businesses as well as voter registration drives.⁴² As a part of that activity, organizing meetings and trainings were held at the former school. James remembers non-violence trainings where CORE officials would hold mock sit-ins and mock demonstrations. In addition to non-violence trainings, CORE officials would hold meetings and classes in the former school. In a letter from CORE official Mary Robinson, addressed to an unknown recipient and dated July 14, 1965, she gives a report of her work in St. George. She writes “We have a community center here where we have adult education classes, youth meetings, mass meetings, and voter

³⁷ “Saint George News,” *The Palmetto Leader*, February 22, 1930, accessed December 7, 2017. <http://historicnewspapers.sc.edu/lccn/sn93067919/1930-02-22/ed-1/seq-4/>

³⁸ Oldham and James interview.

³⁹ Oldham and James interview.

⁴⁰ Robert Weyeneth, “The Architecture of Racial Segregation,” *The Public Historian* 27, no. 4 (2005): 34, accessed September 1, 2017. <http://www.jstor.org/pallas2.tcl.sc.edu/stable/10.1525/tph.2005.27.4.11>

⁴¹ Oldham and James interview.

⁴² “Voter Project Has Busy Day in State.” *The State*. August 3, 1965.; “CORE Continues Stores’ Boycott at St. George.” *The State and The Columbia Record*. August 29, 1965.

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registration classes.” She writes of both youth meetings and adult meetings and that community members at the meetings are “very sincere with us and they are with us all the way.”⁴³

Criterion C: Architecture

The St. George Rosenwald School is significant for its adherence to the Rosenwald Fund’s Community School Plans. These plans were developed by Samuel Smith and Fletcher Dresslar, who believed that the schools should be models of rural school buildings. Building upon progressive ideas of the era that drew a connection between health and learning, careful attention was paid to issues of light, sanitation, and ventilation. The prioritization of light and ventilation led to one of the most distinctive features of Rosenwald Schools: the banks of large narrow windows. Dresslar and Smith wanted to reduce eye strain and maximize natural light, so plans specified certain designs for east/west orientations and certain designs for north/south orientations, and plans were designed so that windows were placed on only one side of the class room and faced either east or west. Windows were also double-hung so that they could be opened for ventilation. The emphasis on sanitation meant that the Community School Plans also required sanitary privies to be built. While they included plans for such privies, they did not require that communities utilize their plans for privies, just that they include them.⁴⁴

The St. George Rosenwald School’s original 1925 construction was built according to the Community School Plan 6-A and retains its distinctive features including structure, building materials and windows. While it utilized a plan for a north/south orientation, it is actually oriented to the southeast, in order to orient it to Ann Street. The Community School Plans specify a brick or stone foundation and a weatherboard exterior as well as wainscoting and lathing in the interior, all of which are present in the St. George Rosenwald School. Its exterior white paint color also matches the preferred paint color in the Plans. As mentioned in the narrative description, the original school was added to over the years, but this does not detract from its architectural significance. Indeed, Dresslar and Smith anticipated the need for additions, and the Community School Plans suggest that communities choose plans that “may be added to without affecting the sanitary conditions or marring the beauty of the building.”⁴⁵ Its privy does not match the one in the Community School Plans, but as mentioned above that was allowable under the Plans.

⁴³ Letter from Mary Robinson, July 14, 1965, Reel 24, Congress of Racial Equality Records, 1941-1967 (Microform), University of South Carolina Libraries.

⁴⁴ Hoffshwelle, *The Rosenwald Schools of the American South*, 95-96.

⁴⁵ Community School Plans.; Lindsay C.M. Weathers, “The Rosenwald School Building Program in South Carolina, 1917-1932,” National Register for Historic Places Nomination Form, December 3, 2008, South Carolina Department of Archives and History.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 3.03 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 33.187121 Longitude: -80.582796
2. Latitude: Longitude:
3. Latitude: Longitude:
4. Latitude: Longitude:

St. George Rosenwald School
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Or
UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

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

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

The property is the 3.03 plot of land in the Town of St. George in Dorchester County bounded on the southeast by Ann Street, the southwest by Gavin Street, the northwest by Metts Street, and the northeast by Wamer Drive.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries were selected to encompass the school, privy and surrounding areas and correspond to the plot of land currently owned by the Town of St. George.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Jennifer Melton
organization: University of South Carolina Public History Program
street & number: Gambrell Hall, Room 245, USC , 817 Henderson Street
city or town: Columbia state: SC zip code: 29208
e-mail jm44@email.sc.edu
telephone: 336-978-1875
date: 6/11/2018

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Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

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

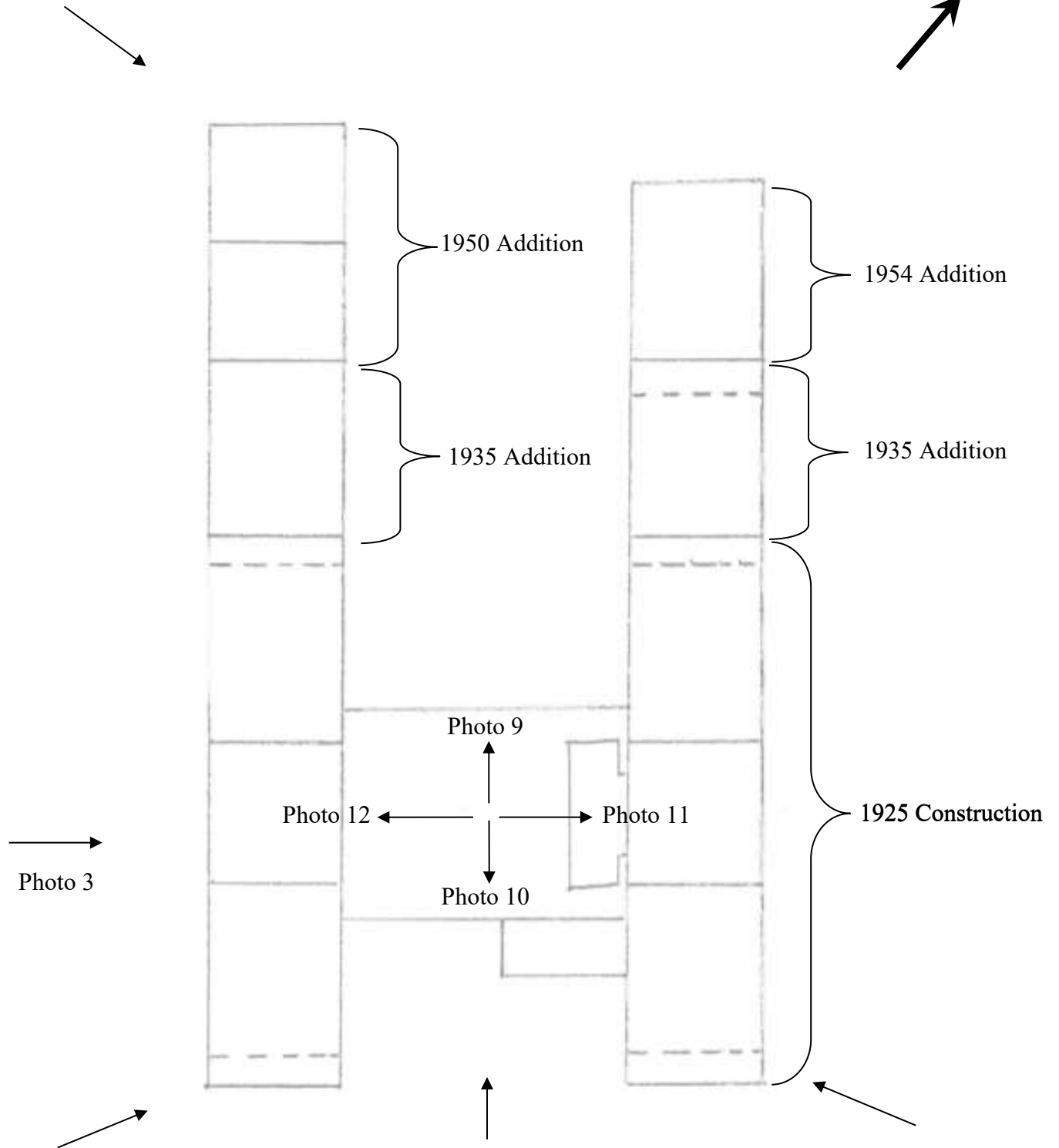
St. George Rosenwald School
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Dorchester Co., S.C.
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Photos 4 and 5

Sketch Map: School

North



St. George Rosenwald School
Name of Property

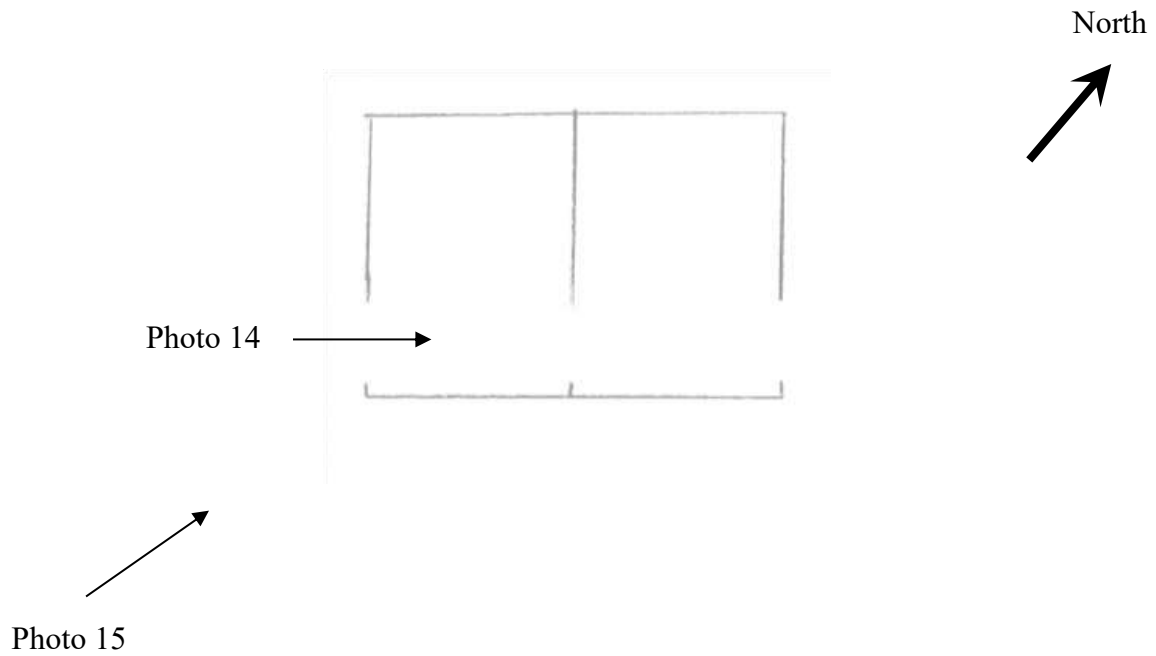
Dorchester Co., S.C.
County and State

Photo 2

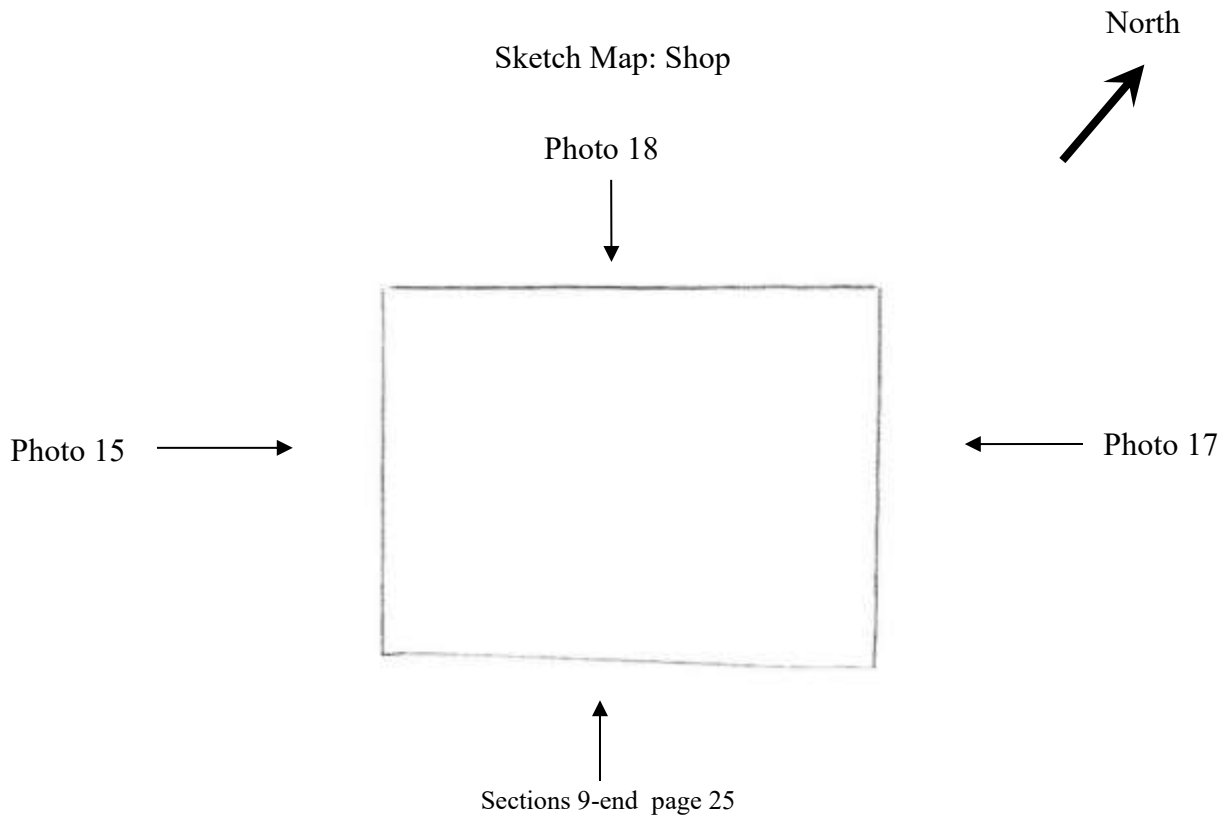
Photos 1, 7 and 8

Photo 6

Sketch Map: Outdoor Privy



Sketch Map: Shop



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Photo 16

Photographs

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

Photo Log

Name of Property: St. George Rosenwald School

City or Vicinity: St. George

County: Dorchester

State: SC

Photographer: Brandon Coffey (Photographs 1 – 6)

Date Photographed: 2016

Photographer: Jennifer Melton (Photographs 7 – 14)

Date Photographed: September 27, 2017

Photographer: Jennifer Melton (Photographs 15 – 18)

Date Photographed: June 11, 2018

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

1 of 18: Exterior of the school, southeast elevation, camera facing northwest.

2 of 18: Exterior of the school, south oblique, camera facing north.

3 of 18: Exterior of the school, southwest elevation (1925 construction), camera facing northeast

4 of 18: Exterior of the school, west oblique (Addition A and Addition B), camera facing east

5 of 18: Exterior of the school, west oblique, camera facing east

6 of 18: Exterior of the school, east oblique, camera facing west

7 of 18: Exterior of the school (cover), southeast elevation, camera facing northwest

8 of 18: Exterior of the school (cover), southeast elevation, camera facing northwest

9 of 18: Interior of the auditorium, camera facing northwest (towards the courtyard)

10 of 18: Interior of the auditorium, camera facing southeast (towards the main entrance)

11 of 18: Interior of the auditorium, camera facing northeast

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- 12 of 18: Interior of the auditorium, camera facing southwest
- 13 of 18: Outdoor Privy, southern oblique, camera facing north
- 14 of 18: Outdoor Privy, interior, camera facing northeast
- 15 of 18: Shop, Southwestern Elevation
- 16 of 18: Shop, Southeastern Elevation
- 17 and 18: Shop, Northeastern Elevation
- 18 of 18: Shop, Northwestern Elevation

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

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

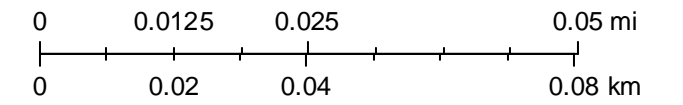
St. George Rosenwald School



July 6, 2018

1:1,128

- Addresses SITUS
- Merged Parcel Line
- Municipality**
- COUNTY
- HARLEYVILLE
- NORTH CHARLESTON
- REEVESVILLE
- RIDGEVILLE
- ST GEORGE
- SUMMERSVILLE



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St. George, Dorchester Co.

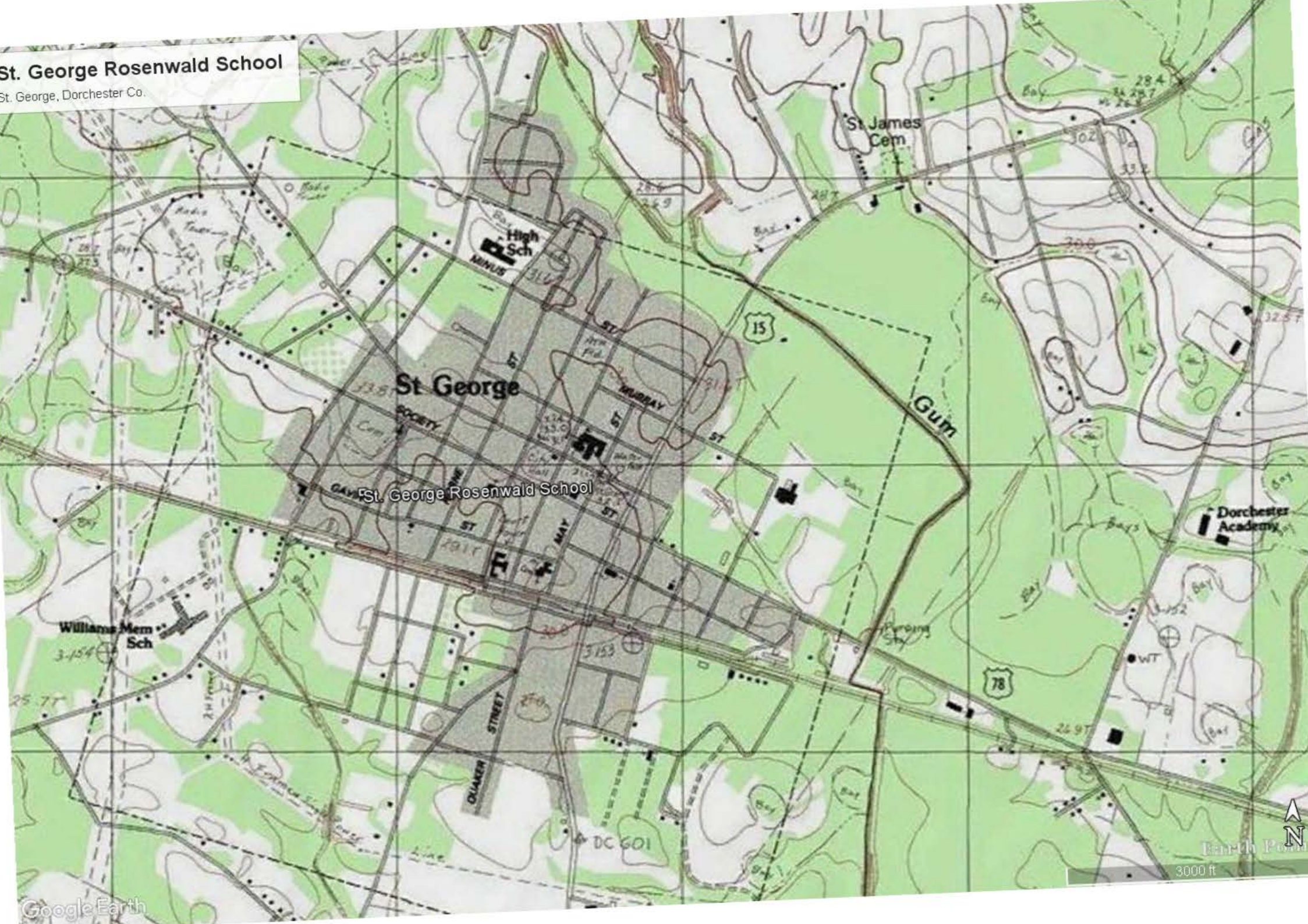


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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: 8/24/2018 Date of Pending List: 9/14/2018 Date of 16th Day: 10/1/2018 Date of 45th Day: 10/9/2018 Date of Weekly List: 10/4/2018

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appeal | <input type="checkbox"/> PDIL | <input type="checkbox"/> Text/Data Issue |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SHPO Request | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Photo |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waiver | <input type="checkbox"/> National | <input type="checkbox"/> Map/Boundary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resubmission | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Resource | <input type="checkbox"/> Period |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other | <input type="checkbox"/> TCP | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 50 years |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> CLG | |

Accept Return Reject 10/2/2018 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments:

Recommendation/ Criteria:

Reviewer Lisa Deline Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2239 Date _____

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF
ARCHIVES & HISTORY



August 7, 2018

Dr. Julie Ernstein
Deputy Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places
National Register of Historic Places
1849 C Street NW, Mail Stop 7228
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Dr. Ernstein:

Enclosed is the National Register nomination for the St. George Rosenwald School in St. George, Dorchester County, South Carolina. The nomination was approved by the South Carolina State Board of Review as eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C at the local level of significance. We are now submitting this nomination for formal review by the National Register staff. The enclosed disk contains the true and correct copy of the nomination for the St. George Rosenwald School to the National Register of Historic Places.

If I may be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me at the address below, call me at (803) 896-6182, fax me at (803) 896-6167, or e-mail me at efoley@scdah.sc.gov.

Sincerely,

Ehren Foley
Historian and National Register Coordinator
State Historic Preservation Office
8301 Parklane Rd.
Columbia, S.C. 29223