

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections



1. Name

historic Lenox School

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 519 S. Edgewood Avenue not for publication

city, town Memphis vicinity of congressional district Eighth

state Tennessee code 047 county Shelby code 157

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<u> </u> district	<u> X </u> public	<u> </u> occupied	<u> </u> agriculture
<u> X </u> building(s)	<u> </u> private	<u> X </u> unoccupied	<u> </u> commercial
<u> </u> structure	<u> </u> both	<u> </u> work in progress	<u> </u> educational
<u> </u> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<u> </u> entertainment
<u> </u> object	<u> </u> in process	<u> X </u> yes: restricted	<u> </u> government
	<u> </u> being considered	<u> </u> yes: unrestricted	<u> </u> industrial
		<u> </u> no	<u> </u> military
			<u> X </u> other: Vacant

4. Owner of Property

name Memphis Board of Education

street & number 2597 Avery

city, town Memphis vicinity of state Tennessee 38117

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Shelby County Administration Building

street & number 160 N. Mid America Mall

city, town Memphis state Tennessee 38103

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Lenox School faces east on a relatively flat grassy site containing a few mature trees. The grounds of the school occupy approximately one-third of a city block and are bounded on the east by S. Edgewood Avenue, south by Tunis Avenue, west by S. Cox Street, and north by residential property. The main school building is located in the center of the eastern half of the site. A custodian's house is situated immediately to the north of the school building.

The school is a two-story brick building on a raised basement. The multiple gable roof is covered with slate and has metal coping over the ridges of the gables. In plan the building consists of central, lateral wing parallel to Edgewood Avenue and a pair of transverse wings extending from both the east and west facades. The hallways and classrooms are utilitarian and have no architectural detailing. Windows most commonly occur in bands with continuous concrete lintels and sills and are predominantly one over one double hung sash.

The principal architectural features of the main building are on the front (east) facade and are in the form of terra-cotta columns, voussoirs, keystones, cartouches, and bay leaf garlands. Gabled parapets are located on each gable end. Semi-circular panels decorate the front and side parapets. On the other facades, concrete bands provide the main architectural ornamentation. The six concrete eagles which were originally at the peak of each gable are now in storage.

Attached to the southwest corner of the school and parallel to Tunis Avenue is a ca. 1920 auditorium building. It is a simple one-story brick structure with decorative buttresses along the north and south facades and concrete pilasters at the western entrance.

The custodian's house is a ca. 1910 one-story clapboard building with a jerkin-head roof and eyebrow dormers. The other features of the building are twelve-over-one windows and simple porch. Redevelopment plans call for the structure to be moved to another site in the city for possible use as an office for a local preservation organization.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1909, ca. 1910, 1920 **Builder/Architect** John Gaisford (main building)

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Built in 1909, the Lenox School is an excellent example of early twentieth century eclectic architecture in Memphis. The designer of the building, John Gaisford, was one of the city's most prominent architects at the turn of the century. He designed many churches throughout the South, numerous private residences in Memphis and the Leslie Stratton YMCA (1909), also in Memphis. Gaisford was also supervising architect for the Shelby County Courthouse, now listed on the National Register as part of the Adams Avenue Historic District. Unique in its locale is the Lenox School's skillful employment of Classical, Romanesque and Gothic features in one building. Classical architectural details include the bay leaf garland, prominent keystones of the school's front (east) facade and the Corinthian pilasters and acroteria of the west entrance of the auditorium. Among Romanesque design elements are the entrance columns and the semicircular arch of the school's main entrance. Gothic influence is evident in the tympanums and multi-gabled roof of the main building and the buttresses of the auditorium wing.

Lenox School was one of seven Memphis elementary schools constructed between 1908 and 1910 as a result of the rapid expansion of the city to the east in the early twentieth century. Although all seven buildings contained similar facilities, they were constructed in various architectural styles by different architects, the design of Lenox School being unique among them. Only one of the elementary schools has been demolished, and except for the Lenox facility are still used as public schools.

Lenox was incorporated as a town on October 7, 1896, and became part of Memphis on September 1, 1909. As the elementary school for the community from 1909 to 1973, the Lenox School was central to the social and educational life of the area. In addition to the daily use of the classrooms, the auditorium served for local dances, plays, and meetings. After the building was closed as an elementary school in 1973, it functioned as a center for special education until 1977. Having been used intermittently for several years for short-term Board of Education activities, the school is being purchased by Elkington and Keltner, Inc. for conversion to condominiums, which will maintain the building's architectural integrity and save an important part of the community's history.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Chamblin, James H. (resident of 218 S. Cox, Memphis). Interview, December, 1980.
 Gaisford, John. How to Build the Church. Memphis: Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1911.
 Hilliard, David Moss. "The Development of Public Education in Memphis, Tennessee, 1848-1945."
 Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1946.

10. Geographical Data

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED
UTM NOT VERIFIED

Acreege of nominated property 2.19 acres
 Quadrangle name Northeast Memphis Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A	<u>16</u>	<u>227840</u>	<u>3891520</u>	B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated property includes the original grounds, school building, and custodian's house. See area outlined in red on the attached Tax Assessor's map.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Lloyd Ostby, Preservation Planner
 organization Memphis Landmarks Commission date December 8, 1980
 street & number 22 North Front Street telephone (901) 528-2834
 city or town Memphis state Tennessee 38103

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

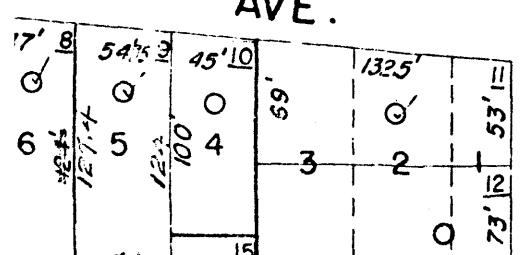
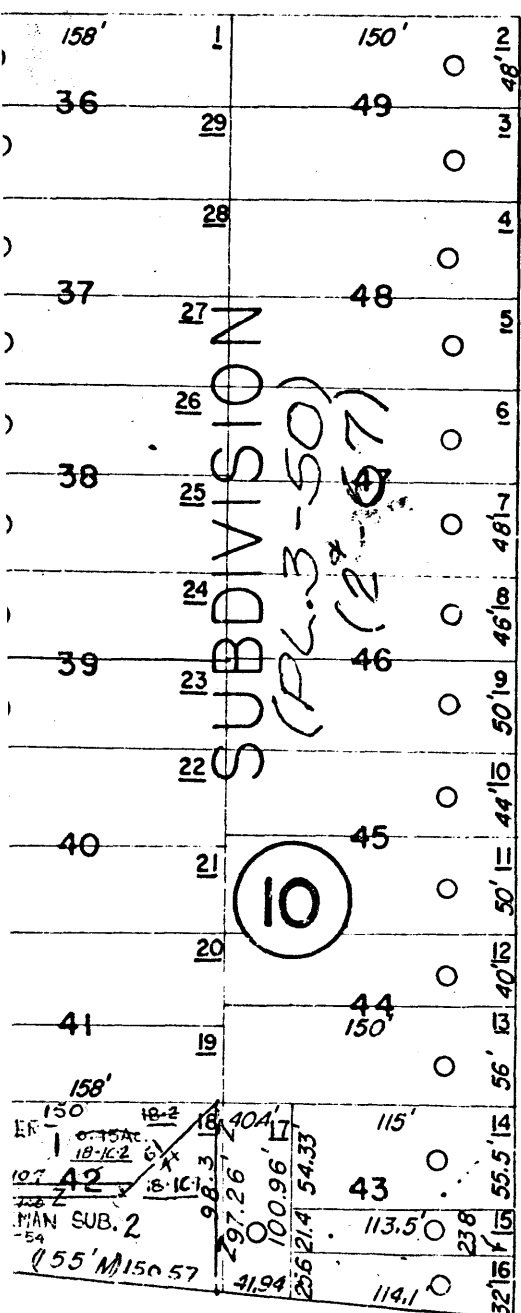
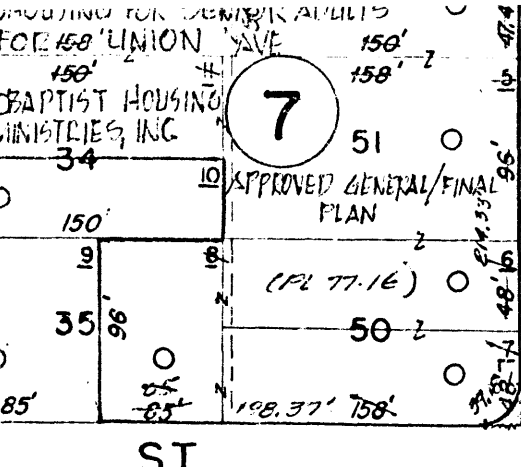
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer signature Herbert L. Hyzer

title Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission date 6/29/81

For HCRS use only
 I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Bell Gussman date 7/30/81
 Keeper of the National Register

Attest: Anna D. Baker date 7/29/81
 Chief of Registration



ST. → N

