

**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 Lincoln School

and/or common Lincoln Elementary School

2. Location

street & number 1110 N. Meridian Street N/A not for publication

city, town Huntsville N/A vicinity of congressional district 5th

state Alabama code 01 county Madison code 089

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational <input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<u>N/A</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Huntsville City Board of Education, c/o Mr. Bill Daniels

street & number 714 Bob Wallace Avenue

city, town Huntsville N/A vicinity of state Alabama

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Probate Records Office

street & number Madison County Courthouse

city, town Huntsville state Alabama

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Huntsville Architectural Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1982 federal state county local

depository for survey records Huntsville Planning Department

city, town Huntsville state Alabama

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Lincoln School is a rectangular, three-story, monolithic cast-in-place, heavily-reinforced concrete mill village structure with the same materials and detailing as the late 1920s mill whose village it was built to serve. These mills and mill village structures are said to have been designed by an English amateur engineer, although no documentation is known to exist on this. The designer's amateur status seems to be confirmed by the considerable oversizing of the structural elements and the absence of any expansion joints in the over 600-foot long nearby mill buildings. Amateurs tend to oversize structural elements, and it does not seem conceivable that a professionally trained engineer would omit something as basic as expansion joints in a long building. It is not too much of an exaggeration to say that Lincoln School could probably be rolled end-over-end without significant damage, since it is a cellular structure in which all planes are heavy reinforced concrete.

Lincoln School has three stories, with the ground floor depressed about three feet below grade to reduce the climb up to the twin entry porticoes at the mid (main) floor. The central portion of the facade is raised about six feet higher than the flanking wings to produce both a high ceiling at the third-floor central auditorium and a central visual emphasis to the facade.

The front and back walls are almost entirely glass, with windows of large-panel, divided light, steel projected industrial sashes, apparently original. The large windows are separated only by alternating concrete pilaster-columns and mullions, about three feet and two feet wide respectively. The concrete pilaster-columns are rusticated with deep-formed square reveals to produce an effect of masonry. The concrete spandrels below the windows have recessed rectangular panels with small quarter-circle inset corners for a faintly classical effect. The classical idea is carried through at the concrete porticoes which each have two pairs of concrete columns of a vaguely Tuscan design. (These same columns occur on a small structure at the adjacent Lincoln Mills.) The porticoes and the main walls are topped by parapets with concrete caps with raised portions directly above each pilaster-column; these parapets seem to function as abstracted classical balustrades where the balusters have become a solid capped wall and the piers are simply a raised portion of the wall. The design idea is apparently an industrial version of Beaux-Arts classicism. Recently about half of the windows were closed with insulated stucco panels when air conditioning was installed in the building.

The flat roofs are composed of asphalt, felt and gravel and concealed behind the parapets. The portico roof drainage consists of a pipe cast into the center of one of the columns at each portico.

Concrete steps with concrete-capped cheek-walls ascend to the porticoes, while side steps descend about three feet to the ground floor entry areaways under the porticoes. The narrow yard between the porticoes is fenced from the driveway by heavy concrete posts strung through with a heavy iron chain, said by an elderly former student to be original to the school building.

While the front and rear facades are mostly glass, the endwalls contain only one small window centered on each floor which is used to ventilate the restrooms. The concrete panels are inset at the endwalls where windows and spandrels would occur, thus carrying through the facade pattern of pilaster-columns, mullions, belt-courses, parapets and spandrel panels.

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All of the rooms have thick reinforced concrete floors, walls and ceilings as their original finished surface. Most rooms now have post-1950 types of acoustically-absorbent suspended fiber ceiling tiles, and asphalt or vinyl-asbestos tile floors. The auditorium retains what may be the original incandescent lights, although most rooms have more recent fluorescent fixtures. All the rest rooms were rebuilt after 1960.

Each floor features a long central hallway terminating in a rest room at each end and being flanked by rows of identical classrooms. Only the third floor varies from this arrangement since the large auditorium occupies the center of this level. The stage is in excellent original condition, but the seating has been removed, and the auditorium is now used principally as a library. One rear corner has been enclosed by temporary, eight-foot high partitions to create a room approximately twenty feet square. There are two stairways, one at each end opposite the entrances; they too are constructed of solid concrete.

Other alterations to the school include moving the small principal's office to a main floor classroom and converting three basement classrooms into a cafeteria in 1948. Otherwise the school survives in remarkably original condition.

The school was originally surrounded by a tall chain-link fence which was locked each night at 8. Today only the concrete posts marking the rear and south gates remain.

Planned Addition:

The board of education is currently planning to build a small addition on the south end of the school which will serve as the new kitchen. This addition, constructed of concrete block, will measure 39 feet across the front and extend back 52 feet and will consist of one floor on a raised foundation. The front wall of the addition will be in line with the west wall of the main corridor and is designed to be in harmony with the existing school facade by repeating the pattern of pilasters, belt courses, and parapet, although there will be no windows. A hedge which runs along the south side of the property will be continued in front of the addition to minimize its visual impact. The two southeast classrooms on the main floor will be converted to a new lunchroom. The present cafeteria will become the new library, which will free the auditorium to revert to its original function. Addition designed by Jones and Herrin, Architects, AIA.

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The original metal framed windows are still in place behind the stucco panels on Lincoln School. Metal studs were riveted to either the existing metal frames or the concrete wall and the panels were then attached to these studs. Insulation was installed between the windows and the panels. The panels were stuccoed on the exterior, and the windows were covered on the interior with sheetrock. These panels were installed for energy conservation when the school was air conditioned. (The two prodominantly glass walls of Lincoln School face east and west respectively.) It seems likely that the panels could be removed with very minor damage to the structure.

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 type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1929

Builder/Architect _____

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Lincoln School is significant because it is intimately associated with both local industrial and educational history and also because it embodies the characteristics of a distinctive building type and period as well as a distinctive method of construction. Lincoln School was erected in 1929 by Lincoln Mills of Alabama which became one of the largest textile mills in Huntsville. It was located just north of the city limits and typified the paternalistic mill system which provided for all the needs of its employees. Lincoln Village was a self-contained community of housing, stores, community hall, churches, school, and mill buildings--all owned by the company. Although Lincoln School was a company school attended by the children of the operatives, it was staffed and administered through the Madison County Board of Education. When the mill finally closed, the school was sold to the Huntsville City Board of Education which has operated it since then as a city school. Lincoln School has been in continuous use since 1929 and is the oldest school building in the city, as well as the only mill school still functioning.

* * * * *

At present, panels obscure the fenestration pattern and detract from the architectural significance. Should the panels be removed, the building would be architectural significant.

Architecturally Lincoln School is a forerunner of school design of the 1930s when Collegiate Gothic styling was discarded and the major influence came from the Modern movement which dictated flat roofs, steel frames, metal windows, and a layout of repeated, identical classrooms. The similarities of construction and design shared by the mill building and school at Lincoln indicate that the style of the school was chiefly influenced by local industrial design rather than by the burgeoning International style, although the end results were similar. However, enough classical refinements--such as the elevated central parapet, symmetrical facade, main floor reached by columned porticoes, and rusticated pilasters--were included to set the school apart from the mill structures and endue it with a handsome presence. The method and material of construction of Lincoln School also contribute to its significance. Although reinforced cast-in-place concrete construction was no longer a novelty, its frank, undisguised use for every structural element in a school building at that period was unusual and progressive. Probably it is this feature that has most contributed to the preservation of the building.

9. Major Bibliographical References

N/A

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 1

Quadrangle name Huntsville

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A 16 538085 3844680
Zone Easting Northing

B
Zone Easting Northing

C

D

E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification This property is a trapezoid that begins at the intersection of the east boundary of Meridian St. and north boundary of Abingdon St. (extended); thence slightly north of east 205'; thence south 238'; thence slightly north of west 207' to Meridian St.; thence along Meridian 186' to the beginning.

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

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Linda Bayer, Planner and Harvie Jones, FAIA

organization Huntsville Planning Department

date July 2, 1982

street & number P. O. Box 308

telephone (205) 532-7353

city or town Huntsville

state Alabama

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.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *[Signature]*

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 11-18-82

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the
National Register

date 12/27/82

[Signature]
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Lincoln Mills of Alabama was incorporated in 1918 when William Lincoln Barrell of Lawrence, Massachusetts, purchased a small bankrupt textile company, Abingdon Mill, which had begun in 1900 as Madison Spinning Company. A small, two-story brick school was constructed about 1921 for the children of the operatives. However the great period of growth for the mill took place during the latter 1920s when an extensive expansion program was undertaken which increased the size of the mill complex to 750,000 square feet. With the expansion of the manufacturing plant came the development of Lincoln Village when more than 500 cottages were constructed to house the additional employees needed to work in the new mills. As a result, the first school building was soon overcrowded, and in 1929 the new school opened immediately behind the first which was then razed. According to county board records, the new school and its equipment cost \$60,000.

Although the mill owned the building, the school was operated by the Madison County Board of Education which hired the teachers and supervised administrative matters. The mill contributed the salaries of a full-time music teacher and a janitor and supplied the heat for the building, which was pumped from the mills through underground pipes.

Lincoln School opened with grades 1 through 9 and added one grade each year, with its first senior class graduating in 1935. In 1952 the three upper classes were assigned to a new high school, and in 1960 the junior high grades were zoned to another school, leaving Lincoln with grades 1 through 6. By this time Lincoln was part of the city school system and had ceased to be a mill school. The sixth grade was transferred to a middle school in 1975, so that Lincoln now functions purely as an elementary school offering kindergarten through the fifth grade.

While Lincoln was a mill school, it placed a heavy emphasis on music as evidenced by the presence of a full-time music teacher, and its glee clubs and quartets won nearly every competition. Spelling, government fundamentals, oratorical contests and public speaking were stressed, and extra-curricular activities included a dramatics club and two literary societies. The school also supported basketball and football teams and even published two yearbooks, one in 1935 and the other in 1946.

Although Lincoln School continues to serve the pupils of Huntsville, Lincoln Mill ceased operation in the 1950s, and the mill complex was purchased in 1957 by the Huntsville Industrial Associates which leased it to the aerospace industries which held NASA contracts. Most of these companies later moved to quarters in Research Park, and the HIC building (as the mill came to be called) was rented by a variety of small local businesses. On the morning of February 19, 1980, four of the six mill buildings were destroyed by fire.