

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

<b>FOR NPS USE ONLY</b>	
RECEIVED	MAY 30 1975
DATE ENTERED	NOV 12 1975

**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 Converse College Historic District

AND/OR COMMON Name Same

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER 580 East Main Street

CITY, TOWN Spartanburg

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT #4

STATE South Carolina

VICINITY OF CODE 045

COUNTY Spartanburg

CODE 083

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" 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	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<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
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME Board of Trustees

STREET & NUMBER Converse College

CITY, TOWN Spartanburg

VICINITY OF

STATE South Carolina

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Spartanburg County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER Magnolia Street

CITY, TOWN Spartanburg

STATE South Carolina

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE Inventory of Historic Places in South Carolina

DATE 1973

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS South Carolina Department of Archives and History

CITY, TOWN Columbia

STATE South Carolina

## 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

Converse College was chartered in 1889 and incorporated in 1896. During its first session it had only one building. In September 1891 an additional structure, a 4-story brick building, known as the Annex was completed. It was located near Main Building and connected to it by a covered passageway on the first, second, and third floors. In January 1892 the Main Building was destroyed by fire; however, the Annex was saved. The cornerstone of the present Main Building was laid April 21, 1892 on the site of the burned structure. The exterior of Main Building, renamed Wilson Hall in 1929 in honor of the first president of Converse, B. F. Wilson, is similar in design to that of the original Main Building. During Converse's formative years Main Building served as a center for the school's activities as well as providing dining facilities, faculty and student living quarters, classrooms, and administrative offices. The Annex, which served as classroom, dormitory, and dining area until the erection of Main Building, is today a dormitory. In 1941 it was named Pell Hall in honor of Converse President Robert P. Pell.

Over the years Converse's enrollment has increased, and the facilities of the school have expanded to meet the growing needs of the campus. Today Converse consists of some 27 structures and has an enrollment of approximately 750 students. The historic district is comprised of six buildings on the Converse front campus, the Towne House behind Pell Hall, and the alumni house (Cleveland House) located across the street from the college.

#### Historic Structures within the Converse College Historic District:

1. Annex (Pell Hall): 1891, 4 stories, brick, central tower; oldest structure within district; connected by 3-storied passageway to west wing of Wilson Hall.
2. Wilson Hall (Main Building): 1892, Richardsonian Romanesque, 3 stories with elevated basement, brick; central portico; east & west corner towers have hipped roofs & 2-storied bay windows; towers repeated on either side of central portico with eastern tower containing bell.
3. Twichell Auditorium: 1898-1899, 2 stories, brick; arches, designed by Charles Hook; auditorium enlarged in 1908; interior renovation in 1957; connected by one-story bridge to east wing of Wilson Hall.
4. Dexter Hall: 1899, 4 stories, brick, entrance porch; originally contained dormitory suites, gymnasium and later swimming pool and was originally connected to Wilson Hall by covered passageway. Renovated in 1960 and converted into dormitory.

(see continuation sheet)

# 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" 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 checked="" 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 1889, 1896

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

In March, 1889 a group of citizens met in Spartanburg to discuss the formation of a "female school."<sup>1</sup> Concerned with the lack of educational opportunity for young women in the Spartanburg community, these citizens spearheaded a movement which led to the establishment of Converse College. Included among these interested citizens was Dexter E. Converse, an influential leader of the textile industry in South Carolina and the benefactor for which the college was named. Also attending was Reverend Benjamin Franklin Wilson, Converse's first president. Designed to provide a liberal arts education for young women, Converse was founded during the years in which the importance of education for women was being supported in the South through the founding of such institutions as Agnes Scott (1889), Sweet Briar (1901), and Randolph-Macon (1891). Today Converse, with an enrollment of approximately 750 students, is a liberal arts college with a professional School of Music.

Although located in an urban area and within a modern campus complex, the Converse College Historic District preserves the character of the original campus. The district contains the oldest structure built on the campus, Pell Annex, as well as other buildings which reflect the school's early history. Main Hall, a focal point of the college both in its formative years as well as today, still remains. Main Hall is an example of Richardson Romanesque architecture, a style not generally seen in South Carolina. Judd Science Hall represents Gothic revival influence while Carnegie reflects a classic design. Dates of construction on buildings within the district range from 1891 to 1915. All but one are of brick. Situated in a carefully landscaped area, the district possesses compatibility of scale and material.

<sup>1</sup>

Landrum, Dr. J.B.O. History of Spartanburg County, 1900. p.62.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Gee, Mary Wilson. Yes Ma'am Miss Gee. Charlotte, N.C.: Heritage House, 1957.  
 Kibler, Lillian Adele. The History of Converse College. Spartanburg, S.C.:  
 Converse College, 1973.  
 (see continuation sheet)

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY ca. 20 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	17	411,645,0	3,816,840,0	B	17	411,645,0	3,816,805,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	17	411,605,0	3,816,805,0	D	17	411,605,0	3,816,840,0

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

Mary Ann Eaddy (Georgianna Graham--Appalachian Council of Governments)

ORGANIZATION

South Carolina Department of Archives and History

DATE

5/2/75

STREET & NUMBER

1430 Senate Street

TELEPHONE

(803) 758-5816

CITY OR TOWN

Columbia

STATE

South Carolina

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

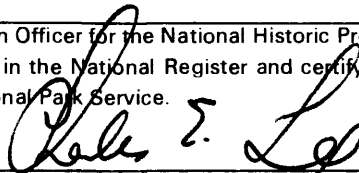
NATIONAL

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 National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE



TITLE

Charles E. Lee  
 State Historic Preservation Officer

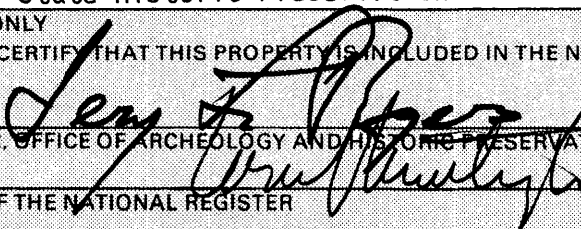
DATE

5/19/75

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Acting



DATE

11/12/75

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

NOV 7 1975

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE one

5. Carnegie (Library): 1905, 2 stories, brick, entrance porch with pediment, fluted columns with ionic capitals, central dome; today houses Development, Alumni Affairs, and Public Relations offices.
6. Judd Science Hall: 1915, Gothic influence; 2 story brick with central tower, window labels.
7. Towne House: 1898, 2 stories, brick, originally watercloset connected to Main Hall; presently used as day-student center.
8. Cleveland House: East Main Street; ca. 1905, 3 stories, frame, one-story porch; hip roof; converted into alumni house in 1974.

Also included within the district is Gwathmey Library. Opened in May, 1951, this 3 story contemporary brick structure is compatible with other buildings within the district and is not considered an intrusion.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE two

Landrum, Dr. J.B.O. History of Spartanburg County. Atlanta, Ga.: The Franklin Printing and Publishing Co., 1900.

Woody, Thomas. A History of Women's Education in the United States. Vol.II. New York: Octagon Books, Inc., 1969.

Converse College Alumni Bulletin, Fall, 1974.

Converse College Bulletin, 1974-1975.

Visitors Guide, Converse College.

Information received from Georgianna Graham, Historic Preservation Coordinator, Appalachian Council.

U.S. 585 and 176

St. John Street

East Main Street

N. Fairview Avenue

PARKING

STUDENT PARKING

VISITOR PARKING

STAFF PARKING



### CONVERSE COLLEGE HISTORIC DISTRICT

- 1. Pell Hall (Annex)
- 2. Wilson Hall  
(Main Building)
- 3. Twichell Auditorium
- 4. Dexter Hall
- 5. Carnegie Library
- 6. Judd Science Hall
- 7. Towne House
- 8. Cleveland House  
(Alumni House)
- 9. Gwathmey Library

