

**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 Sayre Street School

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 506 Sayre Street ___ not for publication

city, town Montgomery ___ vicinity of congressional district # 2nd.

state Alabama code 01 county Montgomery code 101

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" 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 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 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 Mouron and Upchurch

street & number 2160 Rosemont Drive

city, town Montgomery ___ vicinity of state Alabama

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Montgomery County Courthouse

street & number 142 Washington Avenue

city, town Montgomery state Alabama

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Alabama Inventory has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1970-present federal state county local

depository for survey records Alabama Historical Commission

city, town Montgomery state Alabama

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input 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 date _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Situated in a once-prominent middle-class neighborhood four blocks from the downtown business district, the Sayre Street School occupies a large corner lot and is set close to the street. Stylistically, the two-story masonry building is a local interpretation of the Victorian Romanesque with round-arched entrances, gabled pavillions defined by flat buttresses, decorative stone bands, corble tables, and polychromatic brickwork accenting the gables and the openings. The building rests on a brick basement which is almost fully exposed on the rear (west side) of the building due to the slope of the lot. A belfry with a pyramidal roof was blown down by a storm in the 1940s and the caps of the buttresses were probably lost at the same time (see Photo #3). Windows, which have round or segmental arched heads, are all 4/4 now boarded over with plywood. Double doors consist of single lights over horizontal panels and are topped with regular transoms. Two tall chimneys, corbled beneath the crown, are set on the sides near the rear. One has been severely damaged.

INTERIOR: The 13,500 square feet of the two floors retain most of the original detailing and features. Wide halls divide both floors with cross halls containing the two sets of stairs. The staircases are adorned with turned newel posts and balusters. The walls throughout have beaded wainscotting. Four large classrooms with cloakrooms open off the halls on each floor. On the second level, partition walls have been added in the front and back halls to provide more rooms. There is a large tiled bathroom on each floor. Students originally went home for lunch, but a lunchroom and kitchen were added in the basement in 20th century. The furnace is also located in the basement. Many of the older homes in the neighborhood have been demolished to make way for parking lots.

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 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 1891 **Builder/Architect** J. B. Worthington

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

EDUCATION: The Sayre Street School, the oldest remaining public school building in Montgomery, is significant for its associations with the growth of public education in the city during the late 19th century. Although Montgomery had established a free school in the early 19th century, it was not until 1870, when the state legislature passed an act establishing the Montgomery City School system, that public education was firmly established as a city function. In operation in a rented building by 1885, the Sayre Street School was an outgrowth of the Chilton School, a private girl's school which had been gradually absorbed by the city system -- a pattern typical of the early public schools in the city. Of the five public elementary schools (three white and two black) in Montgomery in 1885, only one was not, directly or indirectly, associated with an earlier private institution. In 1891, the present structure was built. At the time of its construction, The Sayre Street School served a prosperous middle-class neighborhood.

ARCHITECTURE: The Sayre Street School is architecturally significant as a very good local example of a Victorian Romanesque school building, and one of the few surviving examples in the city of late 19th century polychromatic brickwork.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property c. 1.3

Quadrangle name Montgomery South

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	6
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5	6	4	8	6	0
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3	5	8	1	5	3	0
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 Zone Easting Northing

B

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 Zone Easting Northing

C

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Verbal boundary description and justification

The North half of lot lying at the SW angle of the junction of Sayre and Mildred Street, measuring 270 feet along Mildred and 208.3 feet along Sayre.

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

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title (Ellen Mertins) Mary Ann Neeley, Landmarks Foundation

organization Alabama Historical Commission

date Sept. 1981

street & number 725 Monroe Street

telephone 832-6621

city or town Montgomery

state Alabama

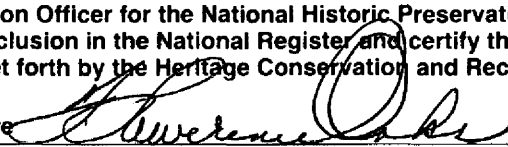
12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

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



title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 1-6-82

For HCRS use only

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

Entered in the National Register

date 2/19/82

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Since before the Civil War, the Sayre Street site had been connected with education. A private boys' school, the Franklin Academy, was located there and, in 1863, advertised for sale. In 1871-72, Mrs. Louise Bradford Chilton opened the Chilton School, a private school for girls, on the property. This institution, also known as the Montgomery Female College, was housed in a rectangularly massed structure with a frieze below the eaves and, possibly, bracketing. Its interior rooms opened off a wide central hall; a chapel was on the second floor. The building was deeper than the Sayre Street School which was later constructed north of it.

The City Council, short on funds and unable to construct new buildings, in the late 1870s rented Mrs. Chilton's property for classrooms. With the improving economy of the 1880s, the financial assets of the City began to rise and, in 1882, the School Committee purchased the lot, building, and all shares in the incorporated Montgomery Female College. The price for the structure, stocks and a 270 x 220 feet lot was \$6000.00. In 1885, a large building was constructed behind the Capitol on Union Street which housed the Boys High School and the Capitol Hill Grammar School.

On June 24, 1885, the School Committee recommended that the upper floor of the Chilton School, now designated Girls High School, be renovated by placing partitions in the chapel to provide more classrooms. By this time, the City was renting a structure adjacent to Chilton School, utilizing this frame building as the Sayre Street Grammar School. The Committee's report on its condition was "that it is safe is the best that can be said of it.... every room needs repairs....only three of the ten are large enough." In 1888, the Council purchased a 136 feet lot south of Chilton School for \$4000.00. The price indicates that a building was on it and, presumably, was the ten room frame structure.

In 1888, the Committee reported that the increased enrollment at Sayre Street Grammar School necessitated the hiring of another teacher. Frequent references were made also to the physical condition of the building and its need for repairs.

At the end of the 1890 school year, on May 6, the Committee stated that the buildings within the system were "totally inadequate" for the demands and recommended that since there was more than enough land around the Chilton School for another building, the lots on Sayre Street with the "frame schoolhouse" be sold. Committee Chairman, Alderman T. H. Watts, Jr., urged the construction of a "handsome and modern" structure on the corner of Sayre and Mildred Streets. In December, the property was sold with the stipulation that the school could continue to use the frame building until the end of the school year.

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Alderman Watts, on February 2, 1891, presented plans to the Council for a new building and asked for approval to open bids. This was granted, and on March 2, 1891, contractor J. B. Worthington, at a bid of \$17,066.90, was awarded the contract. The Council, operating under a newly passed state law, required Worthington to post a \$2500.00 bond, making him liable for the quality of materials and labor.

The new school served grades One-Five, and the Girls High School Six-Eight. At the time of its construction, Sayre Street School was located in a prominent middle-class neighborhood and educated students from the area west of Union Street. At about the same time as its construction, the Board was giving consideration to the building of another grammar school on Herron Street, about eight blocks northwest. This facility, the Herron Street School was in service in 1893. In 1900, Decatur Street School opened and siphoned off a portion of Sayre Street's student body.

In the realm of higher education, the Girls High School continued in the Chilton Building and a private Boys High School served older boys. In 1895, Central High School, at the corner of Lawrence and High Street was built and use of the Chilton Building was discontinued as the Girls High School. The private Boys High School was still in service.

In 1899, the Boys High School, now publicly operated, was located in the same building as the Capitol Hill Grammar School on Union Street; the school building at the corner of Lawrence and High was known as the Girls High School. In 1906, the School Board began construction of Sidney Lanier High School on McDonough Street. Upon its completion in 1910, co-educational secondary schooling was initiated in the City.

The Sayre Street Grammar School, at its closing in 1976, was integrated and served grades one-six. Its demise came about because of a shifting population and laws regarding integration.

Recently, the Board of Education sold the structure to private investors who plan an adaptive restoration.

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page 745; February 2, 1891, Page 773; March 2, 1891, page 783; March 16, 1891.

Records of Conveyances, Montgomery County Court House: Book 5, page 59;
Book 19, page 627.