

1595  
OMB No. 1024-0018

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in "Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms" (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

## 1. Name of Property

historic name      Leesburg High School  
other names/site number      Lee County High School

## 2. Location

street & number      100 Starkville Ave.  
city, town      Leesburg      (N/A) vicinity of  
county      Lee      code GA 177  
state      Georgia      code GA      zip code      31763

(N/A) not for publication

## 3. Classification

### Ownership of Property:

- private
- public-local
- public-state
- public-federal

### Category of Property:

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

### Number of Resources within Property:

#### Contributing

#### Noncontributing

|            |   |   |
|------------|---|---|
| buildings  | 5 | 1 |
| sites      | 0 | 0 |
| structures | 0 | 0 |
| objects    | 0 | 0 |
| total      | 5 | 1 |

Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: N/A

Name of previous listing: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

**4. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination 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 meets the National Register criteria. ( ) See continuation sheet.

Richard Claves  
Signature of certifying official

11-30-05  
Date

For W. Ray Luce  
Historic Preservation Division Director  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

In my opinion, the property ( ) meets ( ) does not meet the National Register criteria. ( ) See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency or bureau

**5. National Park Service Certification**

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register

Edson H. Beall 2/1/06

determined eligible for the National Register

determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National Register

other, explain:

see continuation sheet

For  
Keeper of the National Register Date

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## 6. Function or Use

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### Historic Functions:

EDUCATION/school

### Current Functions:

VACANT/NOT IN USE (for some of the buildings)  
WORK IN PROGRESS (for 1922 high school building)  
RECREATION/sports facility (for the 1938 gym)  
GOVERNMENT/government office (for 1964 media center)

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## 7. Description

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### Architectural Classification:

LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS/Colonial Revival/Georgian Revival

### Materials:

foundation brick  
walls brick  
roof asphalt shingles  
other N/A

### Description of present and historic physical appearance:

#### SUMMARY DESCRIPTION:

Note: Numbers relate to those used for the buildings on the plat/site plan/sketch map.

The Leesburg High School (no.1) consists of a main c.1922 two-story, brick school, with five additional buildings within the boundary of the nomination. These include a 1931 classroom building (no. 2), a 1938 gymnasium (no. 3), a 1942 cafeteria (no. 4), a 1955-1956 music room (no. 5), all contributing, and a 1964 non-contributing media center (no.6). The main school building (no. 1) is two-story, red-brick, with wood-frame windows. There is ornamental cast-concrete detailing above the front portico with its recessed entryway which contains columns, pilasters, and other decorative motifs. The center bay has a scalloped pediment. The main block is rectangular with an auditorium perpendicular to it at the rear. The main block is divided on each floor by a long central hall with classrooms on either side and teachers' lounges on either side of the entrance. The rooms retain their original wood floors although many are covered. Hardware is a combination of brass, brushed aluminum, and steel. Stairways on each end of the central hall are steel with original wooden handrails. Original school bells, wall sconces, chair rails, wooden transoms, built-in cabinets, blackboards, folding closet doors, and book shelves can be found throughout. The auditorium retains tongue-and-groove flooring, its original fixed, wooden folding theater seats, historic balcony, and its original stage with curtain. The grounds of the main building contain a mature magnolia tree and other plantings as well as a sidewalk. One change was the addition of a covered concrete awning

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 7—Description

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over the entry sidewalk. There are other metal and concrete walkway coverings linking all of the buildings in the complex. The auxiliary buildings found on the nominated property, as mentioned, include the 1931 one-story, brick, u-shaped classroom building (no. 2). The 1938 gymnasium (no. 3) was added to in 1965 and remodeled in 1970. It is a one-story, red-brick building with hipped roof and a pedimented portico with four columns as its entrance. The interior consists of a vestibule and a large, open gymnasium floor, with adjacent changing rooms. The 1942 building (no. 4) is a one-story, brick building connected to the main block by a covered connector. Built to be a cafeteria, it was adapted in 1982 to be an administration building. The 1955-1956 building (no. 5), located behind the auditorium, was built to be a music room and was later used as a technology center. It is a one-story, brick building. The 1964 non-contributing media center is a one-story brick building (no. 6) at the southwest corner of the campus. The school complex is located in downtown Leesburg near many historic houses.

**DESCRIPTION:**

The Leesburg High School complex consists of a number of separate buildings. The main building and the most historic building is the two-story, red-brick, original high school building (no. 1). The foundation and exterior walls are masonry, with wood-frame windows. The roof is wood framing with a combination of bituminous roofing and shingle roofing over the auditorium portion of the building. (Photos 1-3.)

Ornamental keystones above the front entryway to the building are indicative of the period in which the building was constructed and add detail to the building. (Photo 1.) Most of the exterior hardware is brushed aluminum, or brass. The exterior walls are constructed of masonry, brick veneer with rowlock, and brick inlay, cast stone, cast arches and columns, wood window frames with mullions and curved glass transom windows. Craftsmanship of the era is evident in the construction.

The organization of interior spaces is divided into classrooms, offices, corridors, faculty rooms, boys' and girls' restrooms, stairways, electrical, mechanical and janitorial closets. These interior spaces functioned as these descriptions indicate both historically and up until the building was closed for use as a school. The only noticeable modifications to these spaces are the addition in 1981 of handicap accessible restrooms and carpeting in the classrooms, offices and corridors. (Photos 6-10.)

The interior floors are constructed with wood sub-flooring covered with carpeting or vinyl tile, except in the auditorium where 1" x 2" tongue-and-groove wood flooring is located. The walls are wood-framed masonry with plaster on furring strips. The ceilings are plaster with acoustical lay-in below existing plaster.

The hardware found in the building is a combination of brass, brushed aluminum, and steel. The stairways are made of steel with rubber non-slip treads with the original wooden handrails, and protective steel mesh guards on the open sides of stairways to prevent falls. Original school bells are still attached to the corridor walls in some parts of the building. Wall sconce light fixtures are still located in the auditorium of the building. The entryway stairs are cast-in-place concrete with risers,

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 7—Description

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treads and landings. Doors are a wood-and-steel combination, with wood base moldings and trim. Chair rails located throughout the building are wood, as are the transom trim and crown molding. The walls and ceilings are plaster. A number of classrooms and faculty rooms have built-in cabinets and book shelves. (Photo 9.) Fixed wooden, folding, theater-style chairs are located in the auditorium of the building. The stage in the auditorium is also 1" x 2" tongue-and-groove wood flooring with some vinyl tile applied. The windows in the auditorium are wood with wood trim and arched transoms, and appear to be the original windows. Also found in the auditorium are wood chair rails and wainscoting on the walls which includes applied moldings. (Photos 14 and 15.)

The structural system is a wood-beam truss system, possibly with split-ring trusses.

The historical mechanical systems consist of conventional indoor electrical wiring in conformity with building codes of the era. There is conventional indoor plumbing. The heating system is a boiler with radiant heat. Large attic fans are located on the landings of the main stairways but there was no air conditioning in the original structure at the time of construction. Modern heating and air conditioning systems were installed in later years to provide air conditioning, and possibly more efficient heat to some areas of the building.

There are established lawn areas surrounding the building. On the front lawn of the building there is a large, mature magnolia tree to the left of the front entryway. (Photo 3.) Other plants located on the front of the building are numerous boxwood shrubs, large mature holly bushes, and one Bradford pear tree that is to the right of the front entryway. There is a concrete sidewalk providing access from the street to the front door, and a covered awning was added years after the original construction to provide shelter from inclement weather to students being loaded or unloaded from school buses. (Photo 3.) The building is connected to other additional buildings on the property that were constructed in later years by way of connecting covered concrete sidewalks. At the side of the building adjacent to the auditorium there are several native, mature dogwood and redbud trees, which appear to have come up from natural sources rather than intentionally landscaped, that offer a shady courtyard area adjacent to the North side entrance to the building.

Buildings within the nominated property, as marked on the enclosed map, with no. 1 being the main historic, c. 1922 school building, the others are:

1. 1922 historic high school building, described above.
2. 1931 Building was built to be the site of the classes for the Vocational Agriculture program, where Home Economics was also taught. Later it was used as the gifted center/special education classes. It is a one-story, brick, u-shaped building. (Photo 24.)
3. 1938 Gymnasium. Built initially as a basketball shell. It is a large, brick building, which consists of a vestibule and then a large gymnasium area with adjoining changing rooms. It was remodeled in 1965 and added to in 1970. (Photos 17-22.)

**National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

**Section 7--Description**

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4. 1942 one-story, brick, built to be the school cafeteria. It was remodeled in 1982, after a new cafeteria was built, to be an administration building. (Photo 16.) Previously, the lunchroom/cafeteria was operated in the basement below the auditorium in the original 2-story historic school structure.
5. 1956 Technology Center. It was begun in 1955 to be a music center and is directly behind the original school auditorium. Later it was converted into a technology center. It is a one-story, brick building. (Photos 12 and 23.)
6. 1964 Media Centre. This building is a one-story, brick building built between the original school building and the corner. It is non-contributing. (Photo 1, far right; photo 23, far left.)

There are three other buildings, all of which are non-historic, within the educational block surrounded on three sides by Starkville Street, State Route 32/Main Street, and Academy Street. These were all built much later than the historic period.

The historic main street/downtown area of Leesburg is located west of the school, on the west side of the railroad tracks, which run northwest to southeast. The commercial buildings face U. S. 19 that parallels the tracks before turning and heading due south. The Lee County Courthouse is northwest of the school complex as well, on the east side of the railroad tracks. Within a block of the nominated school buildings there are churches to the northwest, west, and southwest, as well as historic residences along Main Street near the school.

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**8. Statement of Significance**

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**Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:**

nationally       statewide       locally

**Applicable National Register Criteria:**

A       B       C       D

**Criteria Considerations (Exceptions):**  N/A

A       B       C       D       E       F       G

**Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions):**

ARCHITECTURE  
EDUCATION

**Period of Significance:**

1922-1956

**Significant Dates:**

1922

**Significant Person(s):**

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation:**

N/A

**Architect(s)/Builder(s):**

The cornerstone of the main 1922 school building lists:  
Crutchfield, Ivey P., later an architect, as contractor.  
Dennis and Dennis, of Macon, GA, as the architects.

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 8—Statement of Significance

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**Statement of significance (areas of significance)**

The Leesburg High School is significant in architecture because the main original building it retains most of the architectural features designed in 1922 for the main school building. The school retains its original entry portico with its columns, recessed entry vestibule, and various ornamentations including a shield above the door. On the interior it retains its original floor plan, wooden floors, plaster walls, and stairways, as well as an auditorium with its original seating, balcony, stage, and curtain. The school is a good, intact, local example of the kind of "main" school buildings built throughout Georgia during the first statewide school-consolidation movement following World War I (1917-1918). Its character defining features include a symmetrical main block with a central entry bay flanked by classroom wings; architectural detailing was largely confined to the central bay. This building type has recently been documented in Georgia's statewide historic context for public schools: *Public Elementary and Secondary Schools in Georgia, 1868-1971* (2004). The building is also significant as a work of Ivey P. Crutchfield (1878-1952), a Georgia-born architect who worked mostly in south Georgia and was noted for his schools and other public buildings until he moved to Florida during the boom there in the 1920s. The rest of his career was spent in Florida. For this building he was listed as contractor, while the architectural firm of Dennis and Dennis of Macon, Georgia, was listed as the actual architects. That firm has a long, distinguished career of designing thousands of buildings throughout central Georgia.

The school is significant in education because it was built to be one of two Lee County high schools for white students in the post-World War I era in which Georgia enhanced its educational opportunities with support from the returning soldiers who became legislators. Reflecting local and statewide curriculum developments, a smaller separate building was built in 1931 to house vocational agricultural education and home economics. The gymnasium was built in 1938 using New Deal funding, and a school cafeteria was provided in 1942. In 1947, the two white county high schools were consolidated into this building, which was then renamed the Lee County High School. Following consolidation, a dedicated music building was built in 1956. The enlarged school served as the Lee County High School until 1977 when it became an elementary school and an annex in 2002. Complete integration occurred in the 1970-1971 school term.

**National Register Criteria**

The Leesburg High School meets National Register criterion A because being one of two county high school, it fits well into the broad pattern of American education, later it became the county's only white high school and it reflects important state and local developments in public education in Georgia. The building complex meets criterion C because the main, original school building, built in 1922, retains the original form, floor plan, and ornamental details that make it look like a school from that era, with its red-brick exterior, central entryway with dedication plaque, attached auditorium wing, and classrooms radiating from a central hall on each floor.



National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 8—Statement of Significance

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**Criteria Considerations (if applicable)**

N/A

**Period of significance (justification)**

The period of significance runs from the construction of the building in 1922 until 1956, the end of the historic era. It extends to 1946 to include the music building, which was started in 1955 and completed in 1956.

**Contributing/Noncontributing Resources (explanation, if necessary)**

There are five contributing building: the main school building (1922), the 1931 Vocational Agricultural Classroom building, the 1938 gymnasium, the 1942 cafeteria/administration building, and the 1955-1956 music room. The one non-contributing building is the 1964 media center.

**Developmental history/historic context (if appropriate)**

**NOTE:** This narrative is essentially that provided by the sponsor of this nomination, the Lee County Board of Commissioners(County Commissioners), submitted by Pamela Thompson, Assistant County Administrator. The sponsor quoted some material from the county history without direct quotes or specific attribution. Some editing has been done by Kenneth H. Thomas, Jr., Historic Preservation Division, Atlanta.

The Leesburg High School complex is located in the city of Leesburg, Georgia, a small county seat town with a population of 2,630 according to the 2000 Census. Leesburg is part of the rural community of Lee County with a population of 24,757 in 2000. There are many historic homes along Main Street, which border the property where the Leesburg High School complex is located.

Leesburg began as a village known as Wooten's Station. When the railroad came through Lee County, Starksville had the only school of any size. It was an old building with no glass windows and poor ventilation. Desks and stools were made of slabs with pegs in each end. The enrollment was small due to limited space and a lack of interest in education. Many residents of Starksville relocated in Leesburg when the county seat was moved in 1872. Soon thereafter the town built a schoolhouse. It had crude plank floors and desks and was named Hillyer Institute. However, it was considered an accomplishment to earn a diploma from this school.

From this building, the school moved to a building that later became the Methodist Church. Although it had poor lighting and no indoor conveniences, it was larger and an improvement over the old facility. In 1905, the Board of Education built a new four-room school building at a cost of approximately \$4,000.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8—Statement of Significance

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The new building soon became overcrowded. When the new courthouse was built downtown the old courthouse was sold to the highest bidder, the Board of Education, to be used as additional classrooms for the school.

Upon the initiative of County Superintendent S. J. Powell, M. L. Duggan and Euri Belle Bolton of G.N.I. College [now Georgia College in Milledgeville, GA] and Supervisor F. E. Land of the State Department of Education conducted a survey of Lee County Public Schools in 1919. At that time the public school system consisted of sixteen school districts, containing nine white and thirty Negro schools. The white schools included two high schools, one at Leesburg and one at Smithville, and seven rural schools with one or two teachers each. The school at Leesburg had a faculty of six teachers and the Smithville School had five. Red Bone and New Chokee each had two teachers and the remainder of the rural schools had one teacher. At Leesburg, grades 1 through 6 were housed in the building constructed in 1905 and grades 7 through 11 were housed in the old Courthouse, which was abandoned several years earlier and condemned as "good for nothing but a public schoolhouse." The Negro schools were not in session when this survey was made and were therefore not included in the study. There were 600 white school age children in Lee County at the time.

**BOLL WEEVIL AND DEPRESSION (1920s – 1930s)**

As a result of this study, it was proposed to divide the county into four large school districts with four "live schools," properly housed and well equipped, with transportation provided where needed. The four school districts would be Leesburg, Smithville, Red Bone and Chokee. The study also recommended that bonds be issued to build adequate buildings to house consolidated schools in these districts.

In February of 1920, the Board ordered that the white schools be consolidated into four districts as recommended by the survey. The qualified voters in each school district would decide whether or not bonds would be sold to build consolidated schools in their district. Until new buildings were constructed, existing facilities would continue to be used.

Subsequent to this action, the Smithville School District voted on May 9, 1920, to sell bonds in the amount of \$60,000 to build and equip a consolidated school in Smithville to house grades 1 through 11. The Leesburg School District voted on May 19, 1920 to sell \$65,000 in bonds to construct and equip a similar facility in Leesburg. On June 3, 1921, a contract for a new school was given to I. P. Crutchfield of Macon, who was the contractor in 1917 for the Lee County Courthouse. The building was to be on the square where the old Callaway Hotel and Salter Building stood. The cost was \$65,000. This two-story brick building would be the Leesburg High School.

On February 6, 1922, dedication ceremonies for the new building were held under the direction of Prof. V. P. Folds, principal. Participants on the program included S. J. Powell, Superintendent, W. H. Lunsford, Chairman of the Board of Education, J. W. Pye, J. R. Cowart,

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 8—Statement of Significance

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S. J. Yeoman and Dr. O. W. Statham, members of the Board, Ware G. Martin, Board attorney and Hon. M. L. Brittain, State Superintendent of Schools. Dr. Brittain, in his speech, stressed consolidation, patriotism, respect and appreciation of good school buildings. He stated that Lee County had made more progress in consolidation than any other county unless it was Webster.

On November 29, 1922 voters in the Red Bone District passed a referendum to sell \$12,500 in bonds to build a consolidated school in that district. A bond referendum was never called to build a school for Chokey District. As the small rural schools were closed, one by one, for lack of adequate enrollment, the remaining students were transferred to the Leesburg School. The board later adopted a resolution designating Leesburg High School as the county high school for those districts not providing their own high school.

About 125 pupils were brought to Leesburg from Chokey, Palmyra, Philema, Adams Station, Red Bone, etc. by two new Ford school buses.

The school faculty for that first year (1922) in addition to Principal Folds, included Miss Leila Grimes, Miss Meriam Kittrell, Miss Bess Harris, Miss Flora Edwards, Mrs. Morgan M. Martin, Mrs. T. A. Fowler and Miss Mary Elizabeth Forrester. Seven students graduated in 1922.

Local boards of trustees took an active part in the operation of the schools after consolidation. The qualified voters of the school districts elected trustees.

Indications that the operation of the schools was becoming more complex appear in minutes dated July 1, 1926. At that time Superintendent S. J. Powell was authorized to employ a clerk to assist with the financial report and budget. A budget of \$46,402.01 was adopted that year.

Little was done towards the improvement of facilities for Negro students until 1928. During that period, the Rosenwald Fund was making grants to improve educational opportunities for Negroes throughout the South. Model schoolhouse plans and cash grants were made available to local school systems that would build new schools for Negro students. On April 3, 1928, the Board adopted plans and proceeded to build four-classroom schools in Leesburg and Smithville and a three-classroom school in Chokey. The Rosenwald grant was \$1,000 each for Leesburg and Smithville and \$700 for Chokey. The other money needed was provided from other sources: local donations as well as state funds. The Rosenwald fund was never the entire amount needed to build the school buildings.

The old school building, used in connection with the newer building, lasted until April 1928, when a force of carpenters demolished it to make room for school expansion.

**NEW DEAL/WPA (1933 - 1941)**

On September 6, 1938 a county-wide referendum was held to determine whether bonds in the

**National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

**Section 8—Statement of Significance**

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amount of \$20,000 would be issued for the purpose of erecting and equipping basketball shells (gymnasiums) and vocational agriculture shops at the Leesburg and Smithville white schools. The voters approved the bond referendum 493 to 28. In addition to the bond proceeds, Superintendent S. J. Powell applied for and received a Public Works Administration (PWA) grant in the amount of 45% of cost, not to exceed \$16,274 to help finance the building program. The firm, Harding and Ramsey, Inc. submitted the successful bid in the amount of \$26,818 to construct the two basketball shells. The \$6,060 bid of B. H. Butts, Jr. for the construction of the vocational shops was successful. Upon completion of the basketball shells, the Board voted to collect 50% of all gate receipts to pay for maintenance, lights and water. The basketball shells were necessary or brought on because of the growing interest in basketball in the 1930s.

**WORLD WAR II (1941 - 1945)**

During World War II, schools participated in the collection of scrap rubber and aluminum. A home defense program was authorized in Leesburg and Smithville. Basketball shells were made available for monthly drills by a home defense unit. Volunteers taught the fundamentals of close order drill to high school students and adults. Both students and staff felt very much a part of the war effort.

In 1942, Superintendent S. J. Powell died in office and the Board of Education elected Hugh T. Kearse as the new superintendent. He served in this capacity until his retirement on January 31, 1964.

In 1942 lunchrooms co-sponsored by the Board of Education and local PTAs began operating at the Leesburg and Smithville white schools. By using government provided commodities and charging 10 cents per meal, which could be paid in cash or with home grown meats, meal, flour or vegetables, and with assistance from the co-sponsors, a hot lunch at school was made available to the students. Later state and federal funds were put into the program, resulting in its rapid expansion.

In August 1944, the Board passed a resolution to discontinue operation of the Red Bone school because of low enrollment. The students were assigned and transported to the Leesburg School.

**MODERN (after 1945)**

In March 1946, the Board adopted a resolution expressing regret for the illness of Gus Homer who worked on the construction of the Leesburg School and who remained on as a faithful janitor for 24 years.

In the mid 1940's discussions began concerning the consolidation of the high school grades

**National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

**Section 8—Statement of Significance**

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of the Leesburg and Smithville white schools. Because of the small enrollment and limited programs offered at the two schools, and problems staying accredited, it was suggested that a county high school located at Leesburg could better serve the students.

This suggestion was met with strong opposition from many patrons of the Smithville School. Because of this opposition, no action to consolidate was made until August 5, 1947, when, at the urging of Superintendent H. T. Kearse, the Lee County Board of Education, by resolution, consolidated the two high schools at Leesburg, so as to have one accredited high school in the county. The name, Lee County High School, was given to the school. The decision to consolidate was appealed to the State Board of Education, the Superior Court and to the Georgia Supreme Court without success. Smithville students in grades 1 through 7 continued to attend school at the newly re-named Smithville Elementary School.

A group of Smithville residents, learning that the consolidated school would be in Leesburg, secured an injunction, signed by Judge W. M. Harper in Americus, delaying the opening of the schools until the matter could be resolved. The dispute was decided on September 12, 1947, by the State Board of Education, which, in a unanimous ruling, upheld the action of the Lee County Board of Education in merging the Leesburg and Smithville High Schools into one consolidated unit in Leesburg. The next day, the injunction was heard in Judge Harper's Court, which decreed that the two schools would consolidate in Leesburg as the Lee County High School, while the Smithville school would become the Smithville Elementary School. Schools opened immediately after the ruling. After a harmonious term, eighteen boys and girls, members of the largest graduating class in the history of Lee County, received their diplomas on May 28, 1948.

The 1947-48 term was the first for a countywide white high school. It also marked the beginning of the transition period for adding the twelfth grade to the high school program. This transition was completed four years later, with a consolidated high school and a 12 year program, the school began a period of growth that resulted in the construction of a number of new buildings on that campus over the next 30 years.

In June 1952, Superintendent Kearse presented the recommendations of a State Survey Committee to the Board. The committee recommended consolidating all white schools in Leesburg as soon as the Board deemed closing the Smithville Elementary School advisable. It also recommended consolidating all Negro schools into one center consisting of a combination elementary and high school to be located at Leesburg.

The Board adopted these recommendations and instructed the superintendent to apply for funds from the State School Building Authority to construct a new consolidated school for Negro students. The school was completed in 1955 and named Lee County Training School. It resulted in the consolidation of the following small schools: Adams, Chokee, Eagle, Pond, Haley, Hutchinson, Jordan Grove, Lee County Training, Macedonia, Mt. Able, Mt. Hope, Mt. Middleton, Mt. Pleasant, New Beulah, Palmyra, Philema, Philip Grove, Pine Grove,

**National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

**Section 8—Statement of Significance**

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Scrutchens, Smithville, St. John, St. Matthew, Stocks, Stovall, Waters Crossing and Jerusalem.

With the opening of Lee County Training School, bus transportation was provided for Negro students. E. R. (Red) Willie, of Blue Bird Body Co., conducted a transportation survey to aid in routing 16 new buses that the Board purchased to serve the new school.

On January 1, 1965, Hugh T. Kearse retired as superintendent and Robert A. Clay, Jr. was sworn in as his successor. It soon became apparent that the low enrollment at Smithville Elementary School would necessitate its closing. The Board agreed to close this school at the end of the 1964-65 term and transport the students to Leesburg. Also apparent in early 1965 was the determination of the federal government to integrate white and Negro schools. The first integration occurred in Lee County when three black senior girls enrolled in Lee County High School at the beginning of the 1965-66 term under a freedom-of-choice plan. This pattern continued for the next five years with a few more transfers occurring each year. During this period, the federal government initiated the Title I program, a multi-billion dollar program to aid in the education of disadvantaged students throughout the nation. Lee County participated in this program and in other programs designed to improve educational opportunities for its students. Programs to serve handicapped students were also started in the late 1960's.

The beginning of the 1970-71 term brought a dramatic change in the organization of Lee County Schools. Under a federal court order, the two existing schools, Lee County High School and Lee County Training School, were reorganized to bring about complete integration. Under the integration plan approved by the court, Lee County High School housed all students, both white and black, in grades 1 through 3 and 9 through 12. This campus was divided into two administrative units with grades 1 through 3 designated as Lee County Elementary School and grades 9 through 12 designated as Lee County High School. Each school had its own principal and staff and occupied separate classroom buildings. The Lee County Training School facility was renamed Lee County Upper Elementary School and housed grades 4 through 8. Although the complete integration of schools was faced with apprehension, it was accomplished with a minimum of difficulty. Responsible citizens of both races were instrumental in seeing that the reorganization was a success.

Soon after the schools were integrated it became apparent that additional classrooms would be needed. Faced with an increase in enrollment nearly every year and with the initiation of new programs in vocational education and special education and the beginning of public kindergarten for 5 year olds, the Board requested the State Department of Education to conduct a Comprehensive Survey of Lee County's educational needs. The survey was completed and the resulting recommendation was to construct a new comprehensive high school to house grades 9 through 12. Grades 5 through 8 would be housed at Lee County Upper Elementary School. The old facilities were occupied by Lee County Elementary School that at this time included grades K through 4.

**National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

**Section 8—Statement of Significance**

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The Board adopted these recommendations. Through the assistance of Oscar Joiner, Associate State Superintendent of Schools, Lee County qualified for slightly over \$1,600,000 in State funds to construct the proposed facility. A bond referendum for \$975,000 was passed in 1974 to provide the required local participation in the cost of the project. Architect Richard V. Richard developed plans and specifications for the building. Alcon Associates, Inc. submitted the low construction bid and was awarded a contract to build the facility. It was completed and first occupied at the beginning of the 1977-78 school term. [This is not on the nominated property.]

Continued growth in the system has made additional new construction and renovation necessary. In 1981, a new cafeteria was completed at Lee County Elementary School, a new music facility and library at Lee County Upper Elementary School and a 10-classroom addition at Lee County High School. Also in that year, the old library at the Upper Elementary School was renovated for use as an art room. In 1982 renovation was completed on the original two-story building (completed in 1922) at Lee County Elementary School. The old cafeteria was also renovated for use by the school administration.

The Lee County Elementary School, before it closed, consisted of kindergarten through fourth grade. Its facilities include the old two-story Lee County High School building constructed in 1921-22, many additions that were added with the growth of Lee County, and a new lunchroom built in 1981-82. [Not part of nominated property.] The offices are housed in the original lunchroom that was renovated in the spring of 1982. (Building no. 4)

Before it closed, approximately eleven hundred sixty-five students attended Lee County Elementary School. Sixty-eight teachers and seventeen aides ably taught there.

The curriculum helped prepare the children for the times in which they lived. It included reading, math, language, spelling, handwriting, science, health, social studies, art, music, and physical education with emphasis on reading and math.

The school met the needs of children with special learning problems with classes for the handicapped. The child was constantly re-evaluated and challenged to progress at his or her own rate. A child's individual progress was the school's prime concern. Improvement each year in state test scores seemed to indicate that the school was meeting the needs of the children.

The Lee County Board of Education is the original owner of this structure, which was built as an educational facility in 1922. The building was used for educational purposes until 2002, when the building no longer met federal guidelines for use as a school.

The Lee County Board of Commissioners took ownership of the Historic Leesburg High School in 2002. A historically sensitive rehabilitation and renovation for use as office and meeting space is

**National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

**Section 8—Statement of Significance**

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planned before the building is occupied again

In 2004, the school received a Georgia Heritage Grant in 2004 for a preservation plan for the main school building.



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## 9. Major Bibliographic References

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Historic Preservation Division, DNR. *Public Elementary and Secondary Schools in Georgia, 1868-1971*. (Atlanta: Historic Preservation Division, 2004.)

Lee County Historical Society. *Lee County, Georgia, A History*. Atlanta: W. H. Wolfe Associates, 1983.

Records of the Lee County Board of Education

Interviews with various local people involved in the school's history.

**Previous documentation on file (NPS): (X) N/A**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested**
- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been issued  
date issued:**
- 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 #**

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State historic preservation office**
- Other State Agency**
- Federal agency**
- Local government**
- University**
- Other, Specify Repository:**

**Georgia Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A**

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## **10. Geographical Data**

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**Acreage of Property**      approximately 2.5 acres

### **UTM References**

A)    Zone 16      Easting 768377      Northing 3514006

### **Verbal Boundary Description**

The nominated property is marked on the enclosed Tax Map/Plat Map.

### **Boundary Justification**

The nominated property includes the main historic high school and auxiliary historic buildings that form a historic core campus. Later non-historic buildings and parking lots have been excluded with the exception of one non-historic building, built in 1964, which occupies the southwest corner of the historic campus at the intersection of Starkville Street and Main Street.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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**State Historic Preservation Office**

**name/title** Kenneth H. Thomas, Jr., Historian  
**organization** Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources  
**mailing address** 34 Peachtree St., NW, Suite 1600  
**city or town** Atlanta **state** Georgia **zip code** 30303  
**telephone** (404) 656-2840 **date** November 30, 2005  
**e-mail** ken\_thomas@dnr.state.ga.us

**Consulting Services/Technical Assistance (if applicable)** ( ) not applicable

**name/title** Pamela Thompson, Assistant County Administrator  
**organization** Lee County Board of Commissioners  
**mailing address** P. O. Box 889  
**city or town** Leesburg **state** GA **zip code** 31763  
**telephone** 229-759-6000  
**e-mail** N/A

- ( ) **property owner**  
( ) **consultant**  
( ) **regional development center preservation planner**  
(X) **other: Assistant County Administrator, works for the owners**

**Property Owner or Contact Information**

**name (property owner or contact person)** Langford Holbrook, county administrator  
**organization (if applicable)** Lee County Commissioners  
**mailing address** P. O. Box 889  
**city or town** Leesburg **state** GA **zip code** 31793  
**e-mail (optional)** N/A

**National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

Photographs

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**Name of Property:** Leesburg High School  
**City or Vicinity:** Leesburg  
**County:** Lee  
**State:** Georgia  
**Photographer:** James R. Lockhart  
**Negative Filed:** Georgia Department of Natural Resources  
**Date Photographed:** April 2004

**Description of Photograph(s):**

Number of photographs: 24

1. Front façade, with media center Building 6, at right; photographer facing northeast.
2. Front façade; photographer facing east.
3. Front façade; photographer facing southeast.
4. Close-up of entrance to main building; photographer facing east.
5. Cornerstone/dedication plaque within entranceway; photographer facing south.
6. Classroom, first floor, main building; photographer facing southeast.
7. Second floor hallway with balcony of auditorium to right; photographer facing northeast.
8. Classroom interior; photographer facing north.
9. Classroom, first floor, near front entrance; photographer facing southwest.
10. Original staircase; photographer facing north.
11. Rear of original school building no. 1, showing auditorium wing; photographer facing northwest.
12. Rear of original school, building no. 1, with Building no. 5, the music room, on the left; photographer facing southwest.
13. Side entrance to original school; photographer facing south.
14. Interior of auditorium taken from the state facing the balcony; photographer facing west.


**National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

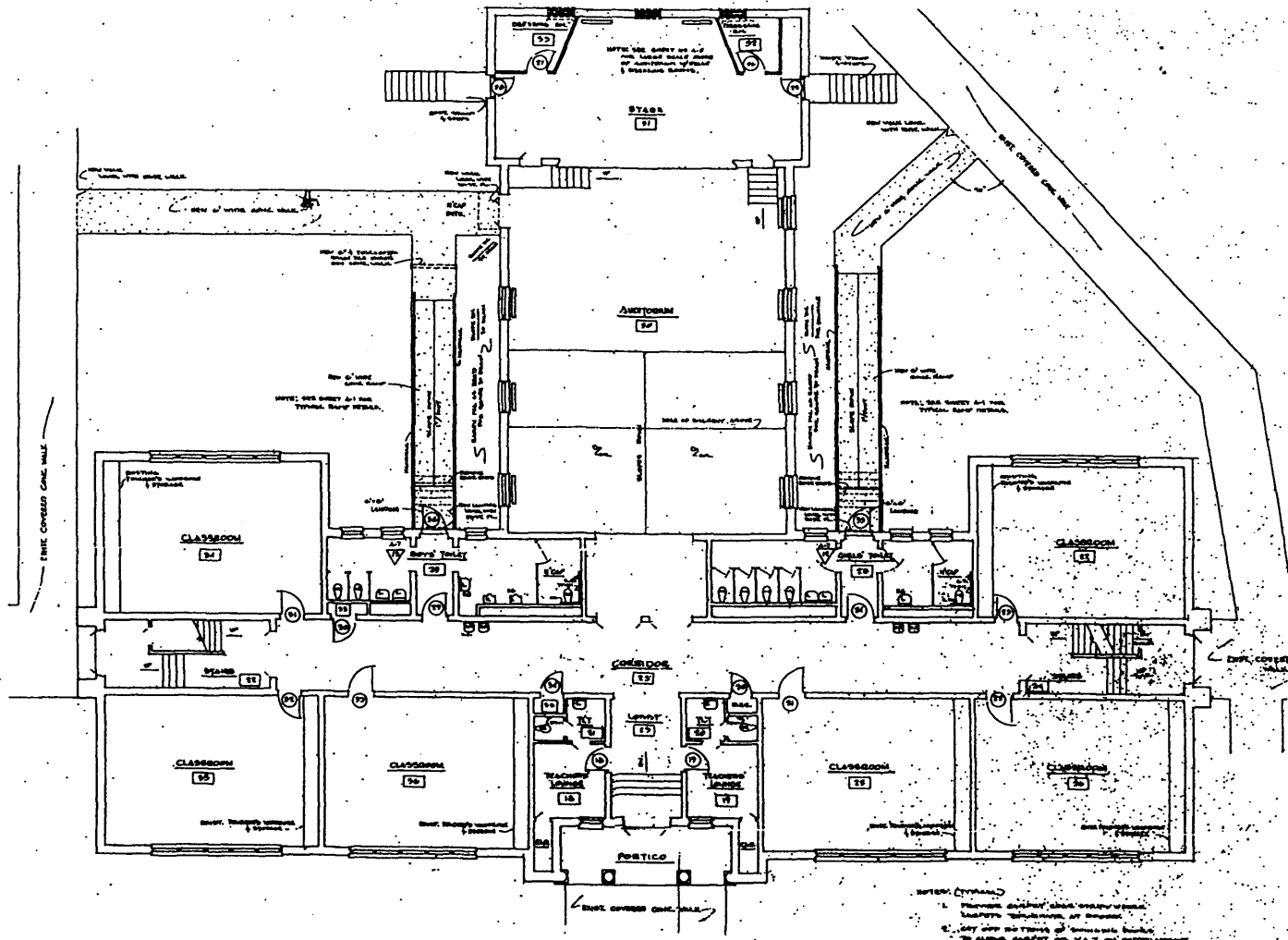
**Photographs**

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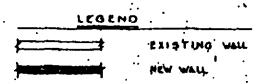
15. Interior of auditorium facing the stage; photographer facing east.
16. Building no. 4, 1942 cafeteria/administration; photographer facing northeast.
17. Building no. 3, 1938 gymnasium; photographer facing northeast.
18. The gymnasium (building 3), the administration building (no. 4) and the main school (no. 1); photographer southeast.
19. Vestibule of gymnasium Building no. 3; photographer facing northeast.
20. Interior of gymnasium (building no. 3) facing entrance doors; photographer facing west.
21. Interior of gymnasium (building no. 3) facing the changing room doors; photographer facing east.
22. Exterior rear of gymnasium (building no. 3), building to the right not being within the nomination; photographer facing northwest.
23. Rear of campus with main school building (building no. 1) in center, media center (building no. 6 to left), and 1931 Vocational Building (no. 2) to the right; photographer facing northwest.
24. 1931 Vocational Building (no. 2); photographer facing northwest.

(HPD WORD form version 11-03-01)

**LEESBURG HIGH SCHOOL  
LEE COUNTY, GEORGIA  
FIRST FLOOR PLAN  
SOURCE: R. V. RICHARD, ARCHITECT  
SCALE: NOT TO SCALE  
NORTH. **



**FIRST FLOOR PLAN** OLD "C"  
SCALE 1/4" = 10'




REVISIONS & RENOVATION TO  
**LEE COUNTY ELEMENTARY  
SCHOOL & CAFETERIA OLD  
BUILDING**  
LEESBURG, GEORGIA

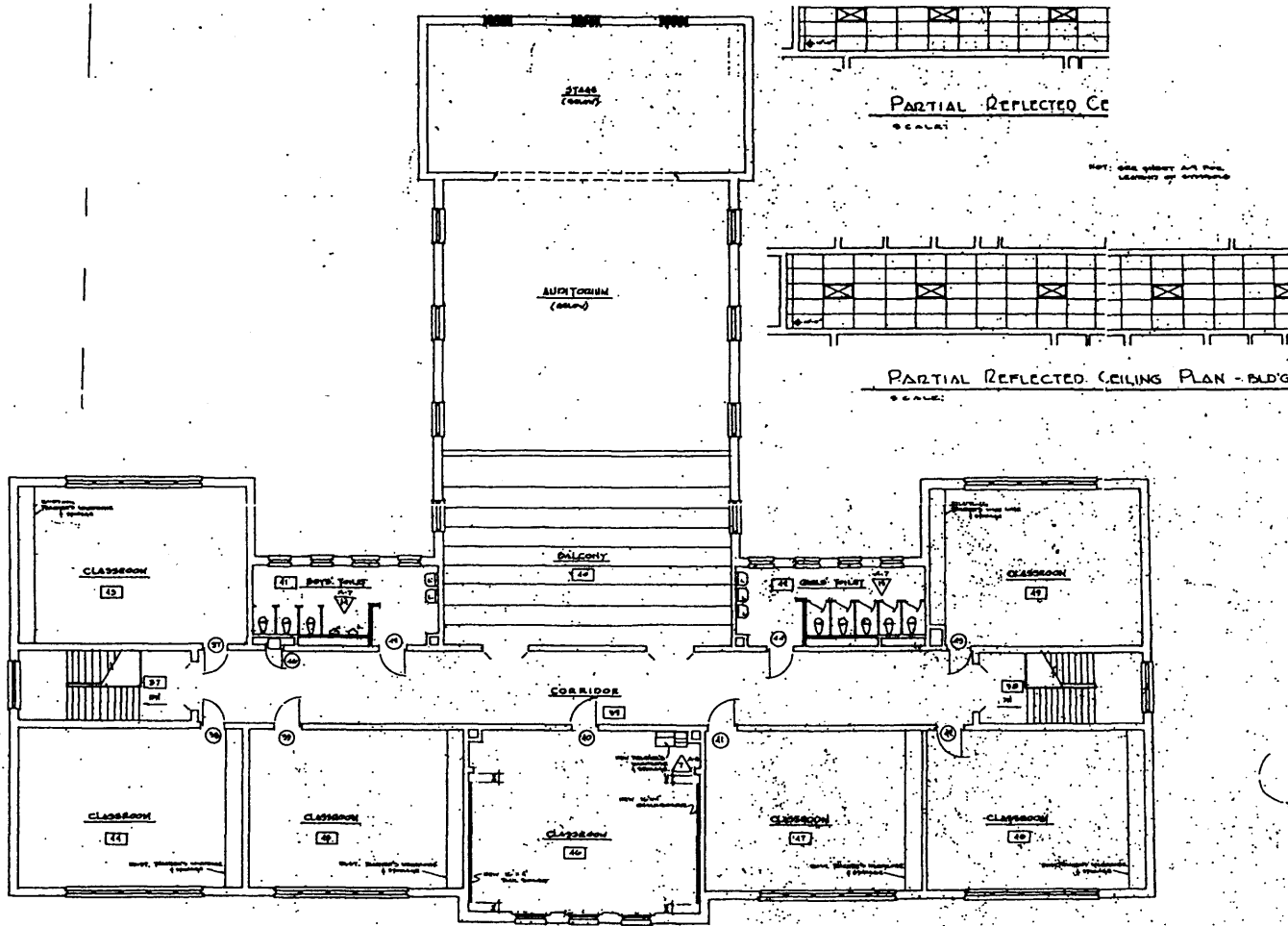
**RICHARD V. RICHARD**  
ARCHITECT

PLANNED BY  
LEE COUNTY BOARD OF  
EDUCATION

DATE  
1964

**A3**

**LEESBURG HIGH SCHOOL**  
**LEE COUNTY, GEORGIA**  
**SECOND FLOOR PLAN**  
 SOURCE: R. V. RICHARD, ARCHITECT  
 SCALE: NOT TO SCALE  
 NORTH: 



**SECOND FLOOR PLAN - BLDG. C.**  
 SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"