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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 CUMMING PUBLIC SCHOOL/CUMMING HIGH SCHOOL
other names/site number n/a

2. Location

street & number 101 School St.
city, town Cumming (n/a) vicinity of
county Forsyth code GA 117
state Georgia code GA zip code 30040

(n/a) not for publication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:	<u>Contributing</u>	<u>Noncontributing</u>
buildings	3	0
sites	0	0
structures	0	0
objects	0	0
total	3	0

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 Cowles
Signature of certifying official

1-12-00
Date

for W. Ray Luce, Division Director and
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

Charles H. Beall 2/18/00

() determined eligible for the National Register _____

() determined not eligible for the National Register _____

() removed from the National Register _____

() other, explain: _____

() see continuation sheet

[Signature]
Keeper of the National Register

Date

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions:

EDUCATION: school

Current Functions:

GOVERNMENT: city multipurpose building

SOCIAL: historical society headquarters and meeting space

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

OTHER: with Gothic Revival details

Materials:

foundation	brick
walls	brick
roof	asphalt shingles
other	n/a

Description of present and historic physical appearance:

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION:

The Cumming Public School/Cumming High School is a one-story, red-brick school building built in 1927 in a utilitarian style/functional manner with its only ornamentation being Gothic Revival elements. The school is in an elongated H-plan with a central hallway, rooms on either side, and more rooms at the ends. Some original classrooms have been subdivided for offices. The roof type is cross gable, composed of shingle/asphalt shingle, and was replaced in 1993. The exterior chimney has been added.

Windows are 2/2 metal and are replacements, although the original window openings are unchanged. The exterior details include the use of stone around the front door creating a Gothic Revival main entrance. The foundation is brick.

The Gothic hood over the front door and surrounds is in the shape of a parapet. The original recessed entry with double doors has been infilled with reverse board-and-batten to form a vestibule.

A large auditorium is in the rear center of the building. Original radiators are still in use. Restrooms in the basement are no longer used; restrooms upstairs have been added.

The grounds consist of a yard setting with informal plantings. There are two outbuildings: a small wooden, c.1950, storage building; and another building originally used for bus servicing. The present school was constructed from some of the materials, especially brick, from the 1923 school that

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Section 7--Description

burned due to being struck by lightning. The old gym, built in 1940, was demolished in the summer of 1996.

The school is located in downtown Cumming. The school property fills the east half of the city block. Directly across the street from the front facade are the backs of buildings in a mini-shopping center. On the east are houses across Pilgrim Mill Road. To the rear across Ingram Avenue are Ingram Funeral Home and a flower shop. On the west is the back of the Bell South building, which fronts on Dahlonaga Street. Diagonally across from the front facade on the southwest side is the back of the new Forsyth County Administration Building.

The west side of the property, which was purchased from LaFayette Masonic Lodge in 1942, is separated from the Bell South building, which fronts on Dahlonaga Street, by a chain link fence. These boundaries are clearly defined.

The changes to the school include its conversion to offices and especially the conversion of the auditorium and stage to a board room and storage area.

8. Statement of Significance

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:

1927-1950

Significant Dates:

1927

Significant Person(s):

n/a

Cultural Affiliation:

n/a

Architect(s)/Builder(s):

unknown

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Section 8--Statement of Significance

Narrative statement of significance (areas of significance)

The Cumming Public School is significant in architecture because it was a community landmark building, the city's only school, covering all grades, 1-12, and thus served as elementary, middle and high school, for nearly thirty years. As a landmark, its simple, utilitarian style with modest Gothic Revival elements reflected the local community's ability to build the best school building they could afford and is similar to others in Georgia in the pre-Depression economic times and pre-New Deal Era building movement. The school retains the Gothic detailing and parapet form around the front entrance, its original red brick walls, the auditorium space, and the original floor plan with hallway and rooms. Its overall form and plan, its one-story height, and its large window openings all reflect prevailing standards for school design in the 1920s and 1930s, especially following school consolidations encouraged by the state after World War I.

The school is also significant in education as the only elementary school and high school in this county-seat town for nearly thirty years, twenty of them within the historic era. The land itself was a community education site from the 1880s. It was considered the main county school for pre-college education.

National Register Criteria

The Cumming Public School meets Criterion A because it is associated with events in the broad pattern of American history, namely education. This building served as the only school for elementary, middle and high school students for this county-seat town from 1927 to 1950 and beyond. In this role, it was the center of life for both the children and their parents. Because of its auditorium, it was also the scene of many important local events and gatherings. Since education until age 16 or so was compulsory during this era, this school building would have been a part of life for just about every family in the city.

The building also meets Criterion C because the school was designed to be and remains intact as a very modest, utilitarian school building due to the local economy in this north Georgia town and county. The area was never one of great prosperity until very recently. Thus this modest school, which served the city as the only school for many decades, was all the city could afford at that time and reflects the basic, utilitarian architecture found in other Georgia towns of the era with similar low economic bases. While other larger, magnificent school buildings were built in the same era in Atlanta and Savannah, Cumming had none of the resources for such a building, yet the building still reflects the basic architectural philosophy governing the design of early 20th century public schools in Georgia. The school retains many of its original features: central hall plan and room arrangement

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Section 8--Statement of Significance

on one-level; an auditorium, and the few ornamental Gothic Revival details around the front entrance.

Criteria Considerations (if applicable)

n/a

Period of significance (justification)

The period of significance runs from the construction of the school building in 1927 through 1950, the end of the historic period. The school building was in full use as a school the entire time, and served as the principal public school in the county.

Contributing/Noncontributing Resources (explanation, if necessary)

There are three contributing buildings, and no others. These are the school building itself, a small wooden outbuilding used for storage, and a bus servicing building.

Developmental history/historic context (if appropriate)

The Cumming Public School/Cumming High School that survives today was built in 1927 from the ruins of an earlier 1923 building which was destroyed by fire, presumed to be caused by lightning in March, 1927.

The land on which the school rests has had a long history of association with education in the city and county. Here is some of the early history of the land:

The western portion of the property was owned by the LaFayette Masonic Lodge F. & .M. An institution known as Piedmont College was chartered in 1888 and a building built shortly thereafter. Then in 1893 the Hightower Baptist Association leased the building from the lodge; its name was changed to Hightower Baptist College and later to Hightower Baptist Institute. In 1907 the Trustees of Cumming School District utilized the building of the Hightower Baptist Institute to house Cumming elementary and high school pupils and teachers. All of these earlier buildings are gone.

On August 18, 1908, the adjoining property---one acre on the east side---was purchased from E. L. Tatum for \$19.55 by the Trustees of the Cumming School District. On this land a new school was constructed c. 1923 and was struck by lightning and burned March 9, 1927. Using \$10,000 in insurance money and gains from fund raisers, the structure was rebuilt in 1927 with brick and other materials which could be salvaged from the original building.

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Section 8--Statement of Significance

The newspaper announcement of the fire indicated that the previous school which burned had been only four years old and had cost \$27,000. The insurance was only \$10,000. Hence the later school, the nominated property, was not as architecturally elaborate as the earlier one, although photographs do not indicate that much difference in the two buildings on the exterior. While the school was being rebuilt, classes were held at the county courthouse and two local churches.

The newspaper reported right away that there was some discussion about whether the community could afford to build a new school. In lobbying for the obvious that the school needed to be rebuilt, the author of the article, a 10th grader, stressed that without a school, people would have to move away. For many who could not afford to move or send their children to an out-of-town school, there would just be no education. There was a public meeting at the courthouse in April, 1927, to decide whether or not to keep the high school. The County Board of Education Minutes for March 6, 1926, indicated that the Cumming School was to be designated the County High School in order to receive High School Aid for 1926. A similar proposal was there for 1927, thus the county board voted to help pay for the rebuilding of the school. They paid \$500 in November, 1927, but voted to pay more money when it was available, pledging \$1250 in September, 1928.

Several of the fund raising events held included a cake auction, a "Negro Minstrel," and a "Blind Man's Concert."

Work on the new school began the week of June 16th, 1927, and school was able to reopen in the new building for the beginning of the new school year on September 5th, 1927. The newspaper indicated only the construction company, not an architect. No architect has been identified. From a 1925 photo, it would appear that the building was built back pretty much like it was before the fire.

After the Cumming Public School/Cumming High School reopened in this building in 1927, it continued to be used for all grades until the population grew and other schools were built and the effected grades moved out to attend school in the new facilities.

As in all Georgia school systems at the time this building was built in 1927, it was for white students only. Cumming and Forsyth County had a very low number of African-American residents by this time and tradition has it that the remaining African-Americans left the county soon thereafter.

Cumming School continued to serve pupils in grades one through high school until the Forsyth County High School on Tribble Gap Road opened in 1955. Then Cumming Lower Elementary School began classes in 1961. Only the middle grades remained at the old school (the nominated property) which was known during its final years as an educational institution as Cumming Upper Elementary. At the conclusion of the 1973-1974 school term, students were transferred to Otwell Middle School.

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Section 8--Statement of Significance

The Cumming Public School/Cumming High School building has been utilized by the Forsyth County Board of Education as its administrative office since its was closed to students. During that time it was referred to as the "County Office."

On the western portion of the lot, the old Hightower Baptist Institute was demolished and a new gym erected in its place in 1940. In 1941, LaFayette Lodge sold this property to school officials, but the lodge retained title to the upper story of the new building. In a land swap in the 1970s, the Board of Education gave the lodge land across from the new Lower Elementary School in return for relinquishing its claim on the upper story of the gym. The "Old Gym" was demolished in the summer of 1996 and the land is currently in use as a parking lot.

The City of Cumming purchased the school in 1999 for use as a multipurpose building by the city and related organizations. Since the city already has a city hall, the school will be used for other activities. The nomination was prepared by the Historical Society of Forsyth County who are vitally interested in the school's preservation and will use part of the school as their headquarters and for meetings.

9. Major Bibliographic References

Parrish, Donna, Bonnye T. Leary, and Garland C. Bagley. Census Indexes of Forsyth County, Georgia. Cumming: Parrish, 1981. Census Index for 1900 indicated that E.L. Tatum, who sold the acre lot to the Trustees of Cumming School District, was a resident of Cumming.

County Historian (unpublished works, interviews): Interview with County Historian, Don L. Shadburn, recorded in "101 School Street," included his recollections of teaching in the Cumming School in the 1960's.

County Records at County Courthouse - Deeds: From E.L. Tatum and LaFayette Masonic Lodge to the Trustees of Cumming School District.

Interviews: Interviews were conducted by Annette Bramblett in Cumming, Georgia during September, 1996 with Rupert Bramblett, Montree Hansard Martin, Ruth Hawkins Wallace, Marie Bagley Roper, Almon Hill, Clara Mae Redd Cox, Dorothy H. Otwell, Don Shadburn, and Robert Otwell. These individuals told of their memories of Cumming School.

Newspapers: Several issues of *The Forsyth County News*, published in Cumming, Georgia were consulted. A 1923 article indicated that a meeting would be held in the new school. An April 1, 1926 article contained the budget for the Forsyth County schools and listed the number of students by grade attending school. The Superintendent's report for the year 1926 was published in February, 1927. On March 17, 1927, a letter from a high school student implored Forsyth County to rebuild the school which had burned.

Photographs or post cards (historic): From Bagley Collection, now in possession of the Historical Society of Forsyth County, Inc., 1910 Old Hightower Baptist Institute Building; Student body in early 1900's; 1919-1920 first and second grades of Mrs. Gussie Tallant; 1955 album from Cumming School

Malone, Connie and Claudia Deviney. *Forsyth County, Georgia Historic Resources Survey Report. Cumming: 1996*. This report recommended that Cumming School be placed on the National Register of Historic Places and that the City of Cumming plan a historic walking tour.

Bagley, Garland C. History of Forsyth County, Georgia, Vol. I. Easley, S.C.: Southern Historical Press, 1985. This volume contained information on Land Lot 1251.

Bagley, Garland C. History of Forsyth County, Georgia, Vol. II. U.S.A.: Boyd Publishing Company, 1990. This volume contained information on the history of the Cumming School property.

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Continuation Sheet**

Section 9--Major Bibliographic References

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: Historical Society of Forsyth County, Cumming, Georgia.**

Georgia Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property two acres

UTM References

A) Zone 16 Easting 763800 Northing 3788740

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary is that land marked by a heavy black line on the attached tax map.

Boundary Justification

The nominated property is the east half of the city block on which the school and its auxiliary buildings rest and is all that remains associated with the school.

11. Form Prepared By

State Historic Preservation Office

name/title Kenneth H. Thomas, Jr., Historian
organization Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources
street & number 500 The Healey Building, 57 Forsyth Street
city or town Atlanta **state** Georgia **zip code** 30303
telephone (404) 656-2840 **date** December 16, 1999

Consulting Services/Technical Assistance (if applicable) (n/a) not applicable

name/title Ms. Annette S. Bramblett
organization Historical Society of Forsyth County
street and number P.O.Box 1334
city or town Cumming **state** GA **zip code** 30028
telephone 770-887-8464

- consultant**
 regional development center preservation planner
 other: President of the society and sponsor of the nomination

(HPD form version 02-24-97)

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Photographs

Name of Property: CUMMING PUBLIC SCHOOL/CUMMING HIGH SCHOOL
City or Vicinity: Cumming
County: Forsyth
State: Georgia
Photographer: James R. Lockhart
Negative Filed: Georgia Department of Natural Resources
Date Photographed: August, 1998

Description of Photograph(s):

- 1 of 17: Cumming Public School, front facade; photographer facing northwest.
- 2 of 17: Cumming Public School, front and west facades; photographer facing northeast.
- 3 of 17: West and rear/auditorium facades; photographer facing southeast.
- 4 of 17: Rear/auditorium facade/wing on right, east facade on left with bus building; photographer facing west.
- 5 of 17: East facade covered by bus building on left and storage building on right; photographer facing west.
- 6 of 17: Storage building on left, tip of bus building on right; photographer facing northeast.
- 7 of 17: Bus building and east wing of school; photographer facing southwest.
- 8 of 17: School, front or south facade, front entrance; photographer facing north.
- 9 of 17: Interior of school, auditorium now used as board room; photographer facing northeast.
- 10 of 17: Interior, central hall-east side with door to superintendent's office; photographer facing northeast.
- 11 of 17: Interior, mail room off central hall with wainscoting showing; photographer facing north.
- 12 of 17: Interior, break room off central hall; photographer facing northwest.

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Photographs

13 of 17: Interior, storage room with door to men's room, adjacent to break room; photographer facing northwest.

14 of 17: Interior, basement, stairway as seen from basement; photographer facing south.

15 of 17: Interior, basement, stairway as seen from beside it with rear entrance behind; photographer facing north.

16 of 17: Interior, basement, technical specialist's lab off of stairway above; photographer facing west.

17 of 17: Interior, basement, storage area under stage/auditorium/board room; photographer facing northwest.

Cumming Public School/Cumming High School

Cumming, Forsyth County, Georgia

Floor Plan

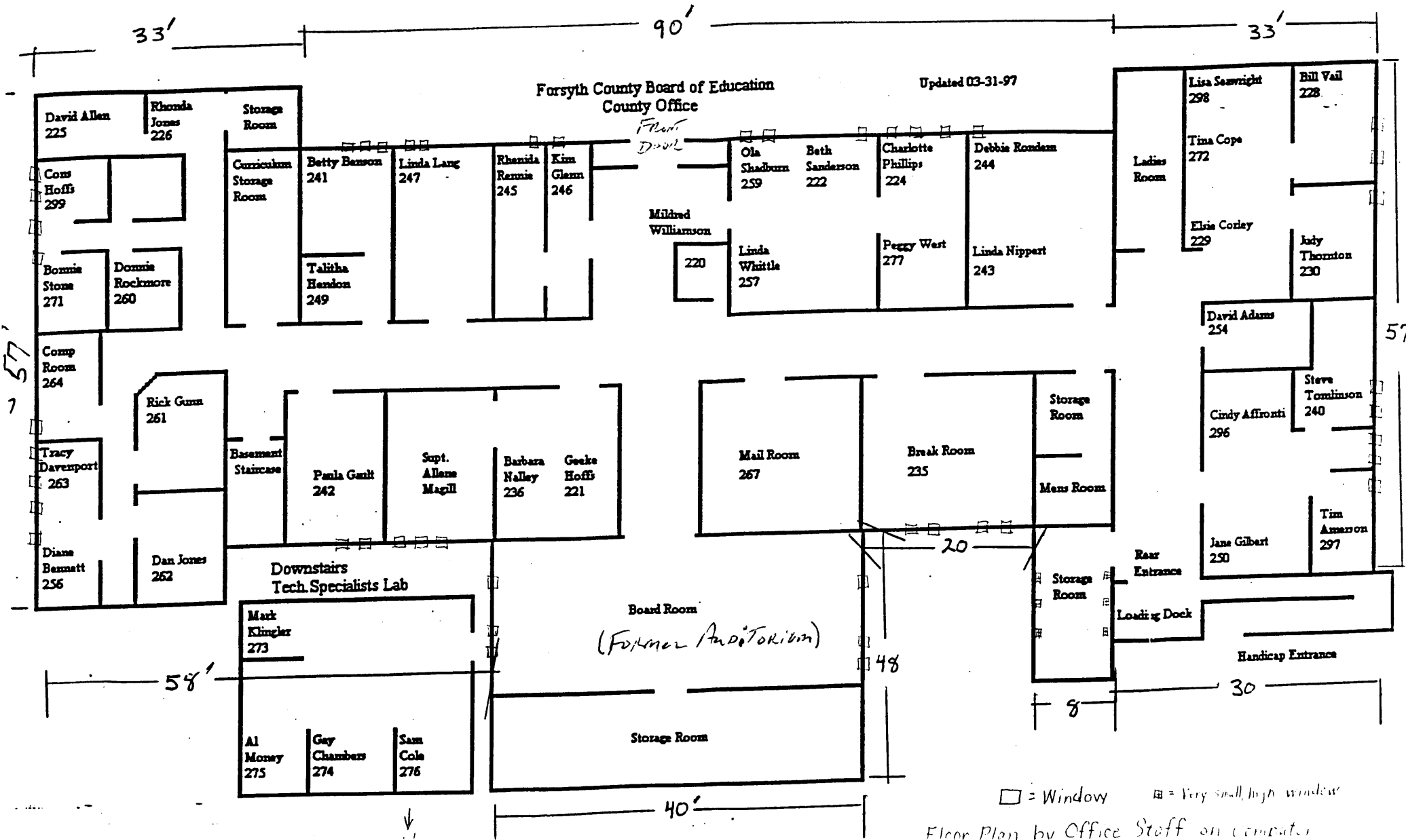
Scale: Not to scale

Source: drawn by School Board staff

Date: 1997

Key: Room uses or offices labeled directly on the plan

North: ↓



Cumming Public School/Cumming High School
Cumming, Forsyth County, Georgia
Site Plan/Tax Map
Scale: 1"=100'
Source: Forsyth County Tax Assessors Office, Map #C-16
Date: 1997
Key: The nominated property is marked/buildings are labeled
North: ↑

