

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

SG 2458

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.



### 1. Name of Property

Historic name: Lockesburg High School Gymnasium

Other names/site number: Lockesburg Gym, SV0107

Name of related multiple property listing:

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

### 2. Location

Street & number: 128 East Main Street

City or town: Lockesburg State: AR County: Sevier

Not For Publication:  Vicinity:

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination     request for determination of eligibility 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 X meets     does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

    national     statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A     B X C     D

	April 4, 2018
Signature of certifying official/Title:	Date
<u>Arkansas Historic Preservation Program</u>	
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

In my opinion, the property <u>   </u> meets <u>   </u> does not meet the National Register criteria.	
Signature of commenting official:	Date
Title :	
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

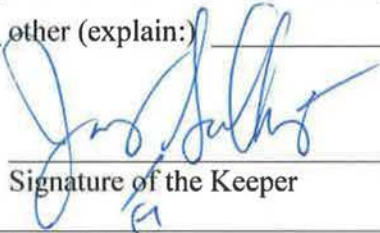
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**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register  
 determined eligible for the National Register  
 determined not eligible for the National Register  
 removed from the National Register  
 other (explain: \_\_\_\_\_)

  
Signature of the Keeper

5-18-2018  
Date of Action

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:   
Public – Local   
Public – State   
Public – Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)   
District   
Site   
Structure   
Object



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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER: Vernacular

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**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

Foundation: Concrete

Walls: Concrete (block)

Roof: Asphalt

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### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

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### Summary Paragraph

The original Lockesburg High School gymnasium, built between 1952 and 1953, is located at 128 East Main Street in Lockesburg, AR, approximately one-quarter mile east of the intersection of US Highways 71 and 371. It is typical of the gymnasiums built in Arkansas during this time period, with its rectangular shape and cinder block construction featuring a flat entry façade on the north side of the building. The entire building rests on a poured concrete slab. There are two skinny concrete block buttresses along the east and west sides of the gymnasium. The gymnasium is a utilitarian construction, built to meet the needs of the Lockesburg school system during the post-World War II era. The building appears to be two stories in height; however, the interior is mostly one large gymnasium space with flanking, integrated, tiered grandstand seating with four smaller spaces on the south end of the building. On either side of the front entry are single porthole windows with original frames present. The east and west walls each feature 19 windows, twelve located near the top and seven located near ground level. Many of the window openings include original brick sills. The interior features the original wood tongue-and-groove

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wall boards, wood court surface, and wood flooring on the stage area as well as the original wooden bleachers to the east and west of the central gym floor. The south end of the gymnasium also includes two rooms on either side of the stage. The six window frames in each of these two rooms are original. The old cafeteria space for the school was located beneath the stage area, accessible from an exterior entrance near the southwest corner of the building as well as an entrance on the south side. This large open space remains under the stage and small classroom spaces on the upper level. Many of the light fixtures on the interior are original to the building and have been updated with modern wiring. Some light-fixtures have also been repurposed in areas throughout the interior.

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## **Narrative Description**

### **Front (North) Façade**

The front façade faces north, toward East Main Street. The gym sets back just over 80 yards from East Main Street, leaving a large space in front that was generally used for event parking. The front façade includes a central double-door entry flanked by two porthole style round windows. The modern double doors replicate the original entry doors as seen in c. 1960 photographs of the exterior of the gymnasium. A small set of concrete stairs, lined with metal railings allows access to the front doors which are slightly above the surrounding ground level. The two porthole window openings are lined in brick surrounding the round window frame. A single window opening, previously blocked-in and now re-opened and restored, is located directly above the central entry doors. This original window frame survived within the block wall and was restored with new panes of glass. Two period-typical lamps have been installed above the porthole windows to provide exterior lighting. The front façade is topped by a small parapet with a central section flanked by two slightly lower sections of concrete block. This parapet is topped by a metal cap. The front parapet hides the slight gable form of the roof which allows for water to be shed to the gutter system along the east and west facades.

### **Side (East) Façade**

The east façade of the gymnasium includes twelve windows along the upper level, located behind the upper row of interior grand-stand seating. There are also seven smaller windows along the lower level that provide light to the interior restrooms and dressing rooms located under the interior bleachers. The south end of the east façade includes a single doorway, located at the main level of the interior, and a set of concrete steps that provides a secondary exit for the building. To the south of the secondary exit, there is a large, low, window opening which provides light to the lower level original cafeteria space. Above this large window are three smaller, vertical window openings that include original five-pane, metal, awning windows that provide light to the original eastern classroom space. Also present in the rooms to the left and right of the stage are the original window frames. These windows have panes that tilt to provide ventilation, and all but two of these windows are operational. Metal gutters extend the length of both the east and west facades.

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### **Rear (South) Façade**

The rear façade mirrors the front façade, with a stepped parapet topped with a metal cap. The upper level of this façade, which includes the south wall of the two interior original classrooms spaces, includes three large vertical window openings, three to each side of the façade with a large blank section of façade in-between. These windows include original, five-pane, metal, awning windows. The lower section of this façade, which includes the south wall of the lower cafeteria space, includes a central single door and two large window openings to each side of the central door. The large lower level windows openings were enclosed during the 1980s and have been recently restored with new windows mimicking the window pane arrangement of the original metal windows. A new sidewalk and ramp now leads to the central doorway to allow for handicap accessibility to this lower level.

### **Side (West) Façade**

The east façade of the gymnasium includes twelve windows along the upper level, located behind the upper row of interior grand-stand seating. There are also seven smaller windows along the lower level that provide light to the interior restrooms and dressing rooms located under the interior bleachers. These windows are mirrors of the windows located along the eastern façade. The southern edge of the west façade also includes three upper five-pane, metal, awning windows and a low large window that mirror the southern windows along the eastern façade. This façade also includes a secondary exit door for the main gymnasium space flanked by a set of concrete stairs that mirrors the secondary exit along the eastern façade. One additional single door is located along the lower level of this façade, to the north of the large window opening at the lower level along the southern edge of this façade. This doorway is an original doorway that served as a secondary exit for the lower level cafeteria space.

### **Interior**

The interior of the Lockesburg Gymnasium is divided into several spaces including the large central gymnasium space with flanking wooden bleachers along the eastern and western sides. These bleachers are raised several feet above the gymnasium floor level and include metal railings and interspersed wooden steps between the bleacher levels. Under each set of bleachers are restroom spaces that were originally also used for locker rooms for the various teams that used the gymnasium. The northern end of the gymnasium space is flanked by a narrow entry hall. The southern section of the building includes a raised stage that opens into the central gymnasium space. This central stage area is flanked by two small original classroom spaces. The lower level at the south end of the gymnasium is a large open space that was originally included in the plans for the gymnasium as the schools new cafeteria space.

The interior of the gymnasium features the original tongue-and-groove wall boards throughout as well as original wood court surface and stage-area flooring. The central wood-floor of the gymnasium is set above the poured concrete slab foundation on wooden stringers with vents along the front of the gym floor that allow for ventilation to keep the floor from buckling or

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warping. Evident above the court and in the attic spaces are original custom-made ceiling braces. All of the interior wall surfaces have been re-stained or repainted to preserve the original wood and the interior exposed block surfaces have also been preserved. The sinks and commodes in the locker room areas are original fixtures from the 1950s and 1960s with modern components and fixtures to allow them to continue in use. A private bathroom was added to the classroom space at stage-right since this space is currently used as a waiting room for event performers and organizers. The old cafeteria, located at the lower level along the south end of the gymnasium, includes a separate space under the stage that was used as a storm shelter for the building and as an area for additional food storage; this space has been left undisturbed and is only accessible by a small door along the north wall of the lower level space.

### **Integrity**

The historical integrity of the old Lockesburg High School gymnasium has been preserved. The gym boasts almost all of the original wall boards in all of the interior spaces, with all wood receiving a fresh coat of varnish or paint during the recent restoration of the building. The original window frames were kept in place where possible. All doors and windows not original to the gym are period-appropriate to the 1950s and based on the gym's appearance in pictures from that time. The building's structure, constructed from concrete-block throughout is unaltered from its 1952-1953 construction.

The exterior of the gymnasium has been restored to the building's original appearance in the 1950s, with the demolition of a 1980s-era lobby addition that had been added to the front façade. After demolition of the lobby addition, an original, rectangular window frame was found blocked up along the front facade. The blocks were removed, the surviving original metal window frame was restored and new glass was installed, further adding to the original 1952 appearance of the gym. Awnings have been added at the entrances to shelter the doors and patrons from the weather as much as possible. All exterior doors are new but styled after the original doors. The 38 windows along the east and west walls are modern construction but period-appropriate to the 1950s and 1960s. The original frames were removed during asbestos abatement. The original windows in the old cafeteria were removed and the spaces boarded up in the 1980s; however, they have recently been replaced with new, period appropriate windows, which returned this space to an appearance very similar to the original. All cracks and holes in the exterior and interior block work have been filled. All exterior work was based on surviving pictures of the gymnasium from the 1950s.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years



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**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION

ARCHITECTURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1952-1968

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Lockesburg High School Gymnasium was built using a simple, plain architectural style commonly found at rural schools during the 1950s with flat, unornamented walls on all four sides. Since the 1950s this gymnasium has served as the educational, social, and cultural hub of the community through various educational, athletic, and community events. The Lockesburg High School Gymnasium is being nominated to the National Register under **Criterion A**, with **local significance**, for its associations with the educational history in Lockesburg and Sevier County. The Lockesburg High School Gymnasium is also being nominated to the National Register under **Criterion C**, with **local significance**, as an example of a vernacular gymnasium designed to fit the needs of the local community focusing on function over stylistic concerns. The period of significance for the building, from 1952 to 1968, encompasses the construction of the gymnasium and the continued operation of the school campus up to fifty years ago. The building continued in use as the school's gymnasium until 2010 when the Lockesburg School was closed due to low student enrollment. The gymnasium is again in use as an educational and community event space under the ownership of University of Arkansas Cossatot, a local community college.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

### **Lockesburg, Arkansas**

The town of Lockesburg, Arkansas, was created to serve as the county seat for Sevier County after the previous county seat of Paraclifta was found to be inconveniently located. The Paraclifta community was unfortunately relegated to a far corner of the county after part of the previously larger Sevier County was used to create adjacent Little River County in 1867.<sup>1</sup> The citizens of Sevier County petitioned the state legislature to move the location of the county seat and in 1868 the Locke family, including James, William, and Matthew Locke, and Royal Appleton donated 180 acres to the county for this purpose. The Sevier County Court accepted the offer of land for the new county seat and Lockesburg was officially declared the new seat in January of 1869.<sup>2</sup> By October of 1869, contracts had been awarded for the construction of a new two-story brick courthouse and jail which were completed by 1871. The city of Lockesburg was officially incorporated in 1878, following several years of significant growth in population and commercial activity. Many of the residents of Paraclifta moved their families and businesses to Lockesburg, some even dismantled and moved their existing buildings from the earlier county seat. Soon, the community had several businesses, churches, a masonic group, and a hotel.

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<sup>1</sup> Mike Polston, "Lockesburg (Sevier County)," *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*, Butler Center for Arkansas Studies, 21 December 2016, <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net>, Accessed 8 January 2018.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

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In the last few years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Lockesburg was bypassed by the route for the Kansas City, Pittsburg and Gulf Railroad.<sup>3</sup> During the railroad's route survey and development, several Lockesburg residents were unwilling to sell a right-of-way to the railway. This resulted in the town being bypassed by about fifteen miles to the northwest, now the site of the city of De Queen. Soon, families began to leave Lockesburg for De Queen. Also, after the county quorum court voted to build a new courthouse in 1905, the citizens of the new community of De Queen campaigned heavily for the new courthouse to be relocated to their town. This campaign succeeded and after a special election, the county seat was again moved further north to De Queen. Although the city suffered two quick blows to its prestige and economy, the city's population remained steady from 1910 through the 1950s.

The city's rural economy was based mostly on local agricultural production and the timber industry led in the area by the Dierks Forest, Inc., company.<sup>4</sup> In 1900 the Dierks company built a short-line railroad near the city of Lockesburg to allow for the extraction of the abundant timber in the area. During the 1920s, the introduction of truck farming to the area allowed for more profitable land management and helped to stabilize the local economy during the Great Depression.<sup>5</sup> The latest blow to the community was the decline in the timber industry in the 1960s, which led to a decade of population decline before the economy of the area stabilized. Today, the area benefits from local recreational and natural tourism along the Cossatot River and at the nearby Cossatot River State Park – Natural Area.

### **Lockesburg Schools**

In 1871, the first known school in the area was established in a log building just outside of town.<sup>6</sup> In 1893, M. W. Locke gave land for the creation of the county's first high school, named Hesperian High School. This high school was led by J. B. Martin and would support various sports teams and a well-respected curriculum.<sup>7</sup> Although referred to in contemporary historic records as "Hesperian High School" or "Hesperian Public School", the number of grades and curriculum offered is unknown. In 1895, the school employed five teachers and had a student

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<sup>3</sup> Now known as the Kansas City Southern Railway.

<sup>4</sup> Local agricultural production included cotton, corn, peanuts, hay, peas and a variety of vegetables and fruits. Betty McCommas, *The History of Sevier County and Her People (1803-1936)*, Dallas, Texas: Taylor Publishing Company, Sevier Co. Historical Society Inc, 1980.

<sup>5</sup> McCommas, *The History of Sevier County and Her People (1803-1936)*, p. 105. Truck farming is the practice of growing one or more vegetable crops on a large scale for shipment to distant markets as opposed to market gardening which would be more focused on what a local area could consume. The use of the railroad and eventually large refrigerated trucks helped to expand the possible market for local farmers; opening up regional and national commercial opportunities for local crops.

<sup>6</sup> Polston, "Lockesburg (Sevier County)," *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture. Railroad-Era Resources of Southwest Arkansas (Lafayette, Little River, Miller and Sevier Counties) 1870-1945*, Little Rock, Arkansas: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, 1995, p.16.

<sup>7</sup> Polston, "Lockesburg (Sevier County)," *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture. McCommas, The History of Sevier County and Her People (1803-1936)*, p. 222.

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enrollment of 284 students.<sup>8</sup> A surviving advertisement for the school from c. 1897 and recreated in *Lockesburg: The First One Hundred, 1878-1978*, states that “in addition to the studies in the regular grades, optional courses in Book-keeping, Latin and Psychology” are offered.<sup>9</sup> In the list of fees included in the advertisement, it appears the “regular grades” included first through seventh grade with options to take higher grade classes. In 1910, members of the local community created a group known as the School Improvement Association in order to promote better education for the children of Lockesburg. This group seems to have seen success as a new school building was soon constructed. During the 1912-1913 school year local students moved into a new two-story, red brick building. In 1924 the Lockesburg school started its first program to offer an official High School curriculum. This created four years of available high school education as well as the previously available standard eight grades of elementary education.<sup>10</sup> The name of the school was also officially changed to Lockesburg High School. The school’s sports teams were also officially named the “Blue Darters” after a suggestion by Mrs. Pearl Coulter, who would later become the school’s principal. After the implementation of the standard High School curriculum in Lockesburg, the parents of the several students formed the Lockesburg Parent Teacher Association in 1925. During the years 1928-1930, several smaller school districts were consolidated into the Lockesburg school district, including McHorse, New Bethel, Provo and Red Colony schools.<sup>11</sup> This led to a further increase in the student population over the 1930s and 1940s. This student population increase led the district to renovate basement areas in the 1913 school building into new classroom spaces.<sup>12</sup>

In the spring of 1944, Pearl Coulter became the new principal of Lockesburg High School after the resignation of W. A. Sanders.<sup>13</sup> In 1948, Robert Bishop became the Lockesburg School District superintendent. According to the local history provided in *Lockesburg: The First One Hundred, 1878-1978*, Superintendent Bishop helped the school to regain its footing after several years of poor performance.<sup>14</sup> Under Superintendent Bishop’s leadership, the district would build a new gymnasium, a new high school classroom building and a new elementary building on the Lockesburg High School campus. He would also oversee the desegregation of the local school district when the Sevier County Training School, the area’s black high school, was integrated with Lockesburg High School in 1969.<sup>15</sup> Mr. Bishop continued as the Lockesburg School District Superintendent until his retirement in 1973.

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<sup>8</sup> Josiah H. Shinn, A. M., *History of Education in Arkansas, US Bureau of Education Circular of Information No. 1, 1900*, Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1900, p. 60.

<sup>9</sup> *Lockesburg: The First One Hundred 1878-1978*, Delight, Arkansas: Alexander Printing Company, Inc. 1978, p. 68.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> McCommas, *The History of Sevier County and Her People (1803-1936)*, p. 223.

<sup>12</sup> *Lockesburg: The First One Hundred 1878-1978*, p. 68.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> The Sevier County Training School was created after the consolidation of the Silver Ridge and Holly Springs schools, both area schools for black children. Both Silver Ridge and Holly Springs existed in the area prior to the late 1920s. The Sevier County Training School graduated its first class in 1936 with three girls and five boys. The training school was moved to Lockesburg in 1956, before its integration with the Lockesburg High School. *Lockesburg: The First One Hundred 1878-1978*, pp. 37, 68.

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By 1953, the student enrollment at Lockesburg was 417 students, with 296 students in elementary grades and 121 students in the high school grades. With most of the high school students only in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade and the large and growing elementary school population, the Lockesburg School District was experiencing the effects of the baby boom post World War II. The last new building built on the Lockesburg school campus was in c. 1929 when a one-story, wood-frame, four classroom elementary building was built. The growing student population necessitated the expansion of space at the school's campus. New classrooms were needed and new and updated facilities were definitely needed for the school's students.

In the early 1950s, Lockesburg began a large-scale project to update their school campus with plans to construct a new large gymnasium and cafeteria building and update their existing classroom buildings. In 1952, the Lockesburg school campus included the High School building, built in 1912, an elementary building, built in c. 1929, and a teacherage, which may either be a small teacher's or principal's office or a reference to a local home where teachers were offered board as part of their pay.<sup>16</sup> There was also a small two classroom elementary school building in the nearby community of Provo to the northeast of Lockesburg. The new gymnasium would include a dedicated cafeteria space and two additional classrooms for the growing school population. The gym space would also serve as an auditorium and allow the school to reconfigure their previous auditorium space into two additional new classroom spaces. Before the construction of the new gymnasium, all of the sports teams at the Lockesburg High School held every practice outside. The basketball team, which was well-regarded locally as a winning team, held practice on an outdoor court located to the west of where the gymnasium now stands. The new gymnasium would also provide new restrooms for the campus, as previously the bathrooms were located in separate buildings, one for boys and one for girls. The new gymnasium building would allow the school to continue to grow while plans were being made for new classroom building to be constructed later in the decade. In an article in the newspaper for the nearby town of De Queen, the completion of the new gymnasium was forecasted for the beginning of the 1952-1953 school year:

### **Lockesburg Students to Begin Year With New Gymnasium Building**

Lockesburg schools will begin the 1952-53 term on September 8, according to recent announcement from Robert Bishop, superintendent....

A new gymnasium, now under construction, is expected to be ready for use by mid-September, the superintendent said. The 126 by 90 foot building contains four complete dressing rooms, stage, two class rooms and a lunch room besides the playing floor.

Extensive repairs have been made on old buildings, petitions (sic.) have been removed between class rooms, the auditorium has been converted into two class

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<sup>16</sup> "Sevier County," County School Supervisor's Annual Reports, 1950-1958, Microfilm, Arkansas State Archives, Little Rock, Arkansas.

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rooms, the hall ceiling and roof repaired or replaced and a fresh coat of paint added to the grade school building.<sup>17</sup>

On December 4<sup>th</sup>, 1952, the newly opened gymnasium was lost to fire after a gas blower-type heater exploded, burning the building to the ground. The financial loss to the district due to the fire in the new gymnasium was estimated at \$60,000 dollars.<sup>18</sup>

According to reports, the gymnasium was being heated by the two gas blower-type heaters in preparation for a Lions club minstrel to be held there Thursday night. Superintendent Bishop said he had left the building only a short time before the flames were seen at about 5:30. The De Queen fire department was summoned and Lockesburg residents fought the rapidly spreading flames with one house until the local fire crew reached the scene about 6 o'clock.

Bonds said every hose in the truck was put to use but the building was almost demolished when they began aiding the Lockesburg firefighters. The local firemen helped in preventing the spread of the blaze to the high school building located just to the east of the gym.

The contractors' price for constructing the building was near \$47,000 and it was completed only last month. During that time between \$2,000 and \$3,000 worth of lunchroom facilities had been set up in the building in addition to sports and stage equipment and curtains. New folding chairs, purchased last month and used only once before, had been set up for the Lions performance. They were valued at \$1,500 Bishop said.

The building was used as an auditorium as well as a gymnasium and two classrooms were used in it daily. Prior to the construction of the gym, the three Lockesburg basketball teams played all games on the opponents' courts. ... The Lockesburg superintendent said arrangements are being made today for a lunchroom to be set up in another of the school buildings. Also, rearrangement of classes will have to be made in order to make room for those which were held in the gym.<sup>19</sup>

Unfortunately, only about 40% of the financial loss due to the gym fire was covered by the school district's insurance policy.<sup>20</sup> This left a large financial deficit in the school district's budget and left them with no funds to replace the burned gymnasium building. By early March of 1953 a new local property tax increase was proposed to raise money to off-set the loss caused by the fire and raise money to pay for the ongoing rebuilding of the new gymnasium. This new tax increase would also help pay for a new classroom building for the high school students. To promote the proposed new tax increase before the March 21<sup>st</sup> election, the local high school boys and girls basketball teams visited local civic groups, including the Lions club, and displayed their

<sup>17</sup> *De Queen Bee*, Thursday, 25 August 1952, p. 5.

<sup>18</sup> *De Queen Bee*, Thursday, 11 December 1952, p. 1.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

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trophies from recent victories.<sup>21</sup> During the 1952-1953 school year both of the boys and girls basketball teams had been very successful and won local tournaments as well as county wide tournaments as well as several invitational tournaments.

The new gymnasium under construction in 1953 is an excellent example of a mid-century, rural school gymnasium. The gym's concrete block structure and interior wood construction is similar in design to other gyms built in rural Arkansas during this time period, including at Gillham in Sevier County, Umpire in Howard County, Little River Training School in Ashdown in Little River County, and Mena in Polk County. All three of these gyms have been heavily altered in the years since their construction and two are constructed of hollow clay tile, which was also a common construction technique across Arkansas during the 1940s and early 1950s. The Mena gymnasium was constructed with a barrel vaulted roof and has since been heavily altered after being abandoned by the local school district to serve as a church. Also of note, the known surviving rural gymnasiums noted in the area are utilitarian structures, but lack even the small decorative elements seen in the Lockesburg gymnasium; including the raised parapet and porthole windows. Also, it was unusual for gyms in the area to include classroom space at construction, although classrooms were sometimes added as additions to existing gymnasiums.

Although other examples of concrete block and wood gymnasiums do exist, many have been heavily altered as facility needs of rural schools have changed. One local example is the Langley Gymnasium along Highway 84 West in Pike County. This building is the last remnant of the local school but was altered heavily with the addition of large concrete-block additions to an early stone structure.<sup>22</sup> Also, after the multiple school consolidations of the early 2000s, which resulted in the closing of schools with enrollments of less than 350 students, many rural gymnasiums have been abandoned, demolished or sold for new uses.<sup>23</sup> The recent projects undertaken by the University of Arkansas Cossatot at the Lockesburg High School Gymnasium have restored the building to its 1953 grandeur. The gymnasium is now open and used as a center for education and community events again, continuing the legacy of the educational history on this specific Lockesburg property.

The new high school classroom building proposed for construction in 1953 was to be a one-story brick structure with six classrooms and a combination study hall and library to cost approximately \$40,000 dollars. On March 21<sup>st</sup>, 1953, the new millage increase was readily approved by Lockesburg citizens.<sup>24</sup>

Lockesburg's voters overwhelmingly paved the way for construction of a new high school building as the result of voting in the school election there Saturday.

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<sup>21</sup> *De Queen Bee*, Thursday, 21 March 1953, p. 1.

<sup>22</sup> Langley Gymnasium, Arkansas Register Nomination, August 2014, Files of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, Little Rock, Arkansas.

<sup>23</sup> For more information on the complex history of school consolidations during the 2000s in Arkansas: Laura Choate, "Lake View School District No. 25 v. Huckabee," *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*, Butler Center for Arkansas Studies, 15 February 2017, <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net>, Accessed 8 January 2018.

<sup>24</sup> *De Queen Bee*, Thursday, 26 March 1953, p. 1.

Lockesburg High School Gymnasium  
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Voters in the district favored an increase of from 32 to 40 mills by a 214 to 33 margin. This would permit reconstruction of the school's gymnasium, destroyed last fall by fire, and the building of a new structure to replace the outdated High School building.

The ease with which the millage proposition passed at Lockesburg came as a surprise to some observers, who had anticipated a close ballot.

In fact, the voting had been expected to be so close that an optional proposition for rebuilding the gymnasium alone, was placed before the voters. This, too, passed, but was unnecessary when the 40-mill levy was okayed.<sup>25</sup>

After the election, the school district immediately announced that bids for the construction of the new high school building will be accepted until April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1953, with construction to start as soon as possible. Also, the gymnasium was reported as almost complete:

The school's gymnasium, now under construction, is scheduled for completion soon.

An almost exact duplicate of the one destroyed by fire last fall, the gym is to be near enough to completion that the school will present its senior play there in five weeks, and graduation exercises are scheduled in nine weeks.<sup>26</sup>

In the same newspaper edition on March 26, 1953, it was also reported that a local carpenter, Mr. E. E. Dowdle of De Queen, was injured in a fall from scaffolding while working on the new Lockesburg gymnasium.<sup>27</sup> He and several of the workmen at the new gymnasium lived in De Queen and commuted daily to Lockesburg for work. By April of 1953, the gym was complete enough for use by the school and local community. The first event held in the new gymnasium was the annual Senior play which was presented on April 30<sup>th</sup>, 1953.<sup>28</sup> On May 27<sup>th</sup>, 1953, the first graduation ceremony for the 1952-1953 senior class was celebrated in the new gymnasium.

During the next school year, the new high school classroom building was started on the land previously used for the outdoor basketball court to the west of the new gymnasium building. The new high school building was completed by 1954. This building was simple in design, with large expanses of the exterior given over to windows to provide natural lighting to the classrooms. The interior includes several classrooms and an office space for the school's administration. The classrooms were arranged along a central hallway. The 1954 high school building includes very simplistic Art-Deco style linear buttress detailing around the two main entrances. This building still stands to the west of the gymnasium but has been heavily altered on the exterior with smaller windows being inset into the enclosed area of the larger original windows. By the end of the 1950s, the Lockesburg High School campus included the early two-story, red brick classroom building from 1924 as well as the c. 1929 elementary and music building nearby. The two new buildings were located in front of the older buildings, closer to

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<sup>25</sup> *De Queen Bee*, Thursday, 26 March 1953, p. 1.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> The Senior play was "While Wifey's Away", *De Queen Bee*, Thursday, 30 April 1953, p. 1.



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East Main Street to the north. In 1963, the 1924 red-brick school building was demolished to make way for a new elementary and middle school building that echoed the design of the 1954 high school classroom building. In 1985, the final construction project on the site was completed with the addition of a large lobby space to the front of the 1953 gymnasium. This late addition added a new concession area, trophy cases, and restrooms to the building. This campus configuration remained until after the school's closure in 2010.

After the construction of the new high school classroom building, graduating classes started to etch their names in the sidewalks around the building. Soon, earlier graduating classes returned to campus to add their names to the sidewalks. Today senior class names, some dating back to the 1930s, are seen in the sidewalks through the campus, organized by year. In 2006, due to low enrollment, the Lockesburg school district was forced to consolidate with the De Queen school district. During this consolidation, the De Queen school district promised to keep the Lockesburg School open for at least a few years. Continued low enrollment in Lockesburg eventually led to the closure of the Lockesburg High School campus in 2010. This school closure ended the 117 years of educational history on the property dating back to 1893 and the founding of Hesperian High School. During the next four years, the school remained closed and the site was abandoned. In September of 2014, the De Queen School Board deeded the land and buildings of the former Lockesburg High School to the University of Arkansas Cossatot. The University of Arkansas Cossatot is a two-year community college. Founded in 1975 at De Queen as Cossatot Vocational-Technical School, it gained accreditation in 1998 as Cossatot Technical College.<sup>29</sup> In 2001, Cossatot joined the University of Arkansas system as a community college focusing on serving students in Sevier, Little River, Howard and Pike counties with some students from across the region utilizing the resources of the schools various campuses and online courses.

The wood-framed classroom building built in c. 1929 was demolished in 2015 after it was determined that the building was beyond repair due to extensive mold and termite damage.<sup>30</sup> The building was demolished in a controlled burn by the Lockesburg Volunteer Fire Department in May of 2015. Also in 2015, University of Arkansas Cossatot began an extensive process to restore and repair the 1953 gymnasium to put it back into use as an event space for the school and community. The 1985 lobby addition was removed from the front façade of the gymnasium and the original double-door entry was restored and a window that had been previously infilled along the front façade was restored. The original windows in the old cafeteria were removed and the spaces boarded up in the 1980s; however, they have recently been replaced with new, period appropriate windows, which returned this space to an appearance very similar to the original. The interior original tongue-and-groove wall boards throughout have been retained and repaired where needed. Also the original wood court surface and stage-area flooring have been retained and restored. At some point, the stage area was enclosed to provide an additional classroom space. The stage was reopened so that the gym could also be again used as an auditorium space.

<sup>29</sup> "About UA Cossatot," UA Cossatot, [www.cccua.edu/about-ua-cossatot](http://www.cccua.edu/about-ua-cossatot), Accessed 26 January 2018.

<sup>30</sup> K. Coffman, "Renovation of Former Lockesburg School Continues with Demolition," *Nashville News Leader*, 4 June 2015, [www.swarkansasnews.com/2015/06/renovation-of-former-lockesburg-school-continues-with-demolition/](http://www.swarkansasnews.com/2015/06/renovation-of-former-lockesburg-school-continues-with-demolition/), Retrieved 5 February 2018.

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Also, the sinks and commodes in the locker room areas are original fixtures from the 1950s and 1960s with modern components and fixtures to allow them to continue in use. A private bathroom was added to the classroom space at stage-right since this space is currently used as a waiting room for event performers and organizers. Interesting interior features have been retained wherever possible; including the home-made light fixtures that were used as the personal foul counter, original hand-painted signs, original clamshell backboards for the basketball goals and a climbing peg board. The gymnasium continues to be used as a center for education and community events and the surrounding surviving school buildings are currently being repaired to offer additional classroom and educational spaces for the University of Arkansas Cossatot. At this time, a major restoration of the other surviving buildings on the site is not planned.

### **Statement of Significance**

The Lockesburg High School Gymnasium is being nominated to the National Register under **Criterion A**, with **local significance**, for its associations with the educational history in Lockesburg and Sevier County. The gymnasium was completed in 1953 and is currently the only remaining building associated with the Lockesburg school system with historic integrity. The property in Lockesburg where the gymnasium is located has been the central location for education in Lockesburg and the surrounding area since the creation of the Hesperian High School on the site in 1893. As a site of sporting events and a plethora of community events and celebrations, the Lockesburg High School Gymnasium has been an important community center and gathering place for the Lockesburg population since its completion in 1953, sixty-five years ago. The gymnasium is also a physical representation of the growing student population and need for expanded space as the post-World War II baby-boom affected the local school district.

The Lockesburg High School Gymnasium is also being nominated to the National Register under **Criterion C**, with **local significance**, as an example of a vernacular gymnasium designed to fit the needs of the local community focusing on function over stylistic concerns. There is no known architect or designer associated with the gymnasium in the surviving historic record. It is known that local craftsmen, including carpenters from Lockesburg and De Queen constructed the building. The building is typical of the time-period in its concrete block and wood construct and simple shallow gable roof form. The building includes many handmade features including an improvised roof truss and brace system as well as an improvised personal foul counter constructed from individual light sockets behind a section of pierced holes in the original horizontal wood board wall of the gymnasium.

Lockesburg High School Gymnasium  
Name of Property

Sevier County, Arkansas  
County and State

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

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Lockesburg High School Gymnasium  
Name of Property

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County and State

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**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- 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 # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State agency
  - Federal agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** SV0107

Lockesburg High School Gymnasium  
Name of Property

Sevier County, Arkansas  
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## 10. Geographical Data

**Acree of Property** Less than 1 acre (<1 acre)

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

### Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- |              |            |
|--------------|------------|
| 1. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

**Or**

### UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or  NAD 1983

- |               |                 |                   |
|---------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| A. Zone: 15 S | Easting: 392325 | Northing: 3759123 |
| B. Zone: 15 S | Easting: 392323 | Northing: 3759007 |
| C. Zone: 15 S | Easting: 392289 | Northing: 3759008 |
| D. Zone: 15 S | Easting: 392291 | Northing: 3759125 |

### Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Starting at a point (A) with UTM coordinates: Zone 15 S, Easting 392325, Northing 3759123; then south to a point (B) with UTM coordinates: Zone 15 S, Easting 392323, Northing 3759007; then west to a point (C) with UTM coordinates: Zone 15 S, Easting 392289, Northing 3759008; then north to a point (D) with UTM coordinates: Zone 15 S, Easting 392291, Northing 3759125; then back to the starting point (A).

Lockesburg High School Gymnasium  
Name of Property

Sevier County, Arkansas  
County and State

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

This boundary includes all of the property currently associated with the Lockesburg High School Gymnasium within the larger Lockesburg school campus.

---

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Barry Reed  
organization: UA Cossatot, Director – Ashdown Campus

name/title: Callie Williams, National Register Historian  
organization: Department of Arkansas Heritage, Arkansas Historic Preservation Program  
street & number: 1100 North Street  
city or town: Little Rock state: Arkansas zip code: 72201  
e-mail callie.williams@arkansas.gov  
telephone: 501.324.9789  
date: February 9, 2018

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**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Lockesburg High School Gymnasium  
Name of Property

Sevier County, Arkansas  
County and State

### **Photographs**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

### **Photo Log**

Name of Property: Lockesburg High School Gymnasium

City or Vicinity: Lockesburg

County: Sevier State: Arkansas

Photographer: Callie Williams

Date Photographed: March 12, 2018

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 16: AR\_SevierCounty\_LockesburgGym\_0001  
Front (North) Façade, camera facing south.

2 of 16: AR\_SevierCounty\_LockesburgGym\_0002  
Front (North) Façade and Side (West) Façade, camera facing southeast.

3 of 16: AR\_SevierCounty\_LockesburgGym\_0003  
Side (West) Façade, camera facing east.

4 of 16: AR\_SevierCounty\_LockesburgGym\_0004  
Side (West) façade and Rear (South) Façade, camera facing northeast.

5 of 16: AR\_SevierCounty\_LockesburgGym\_0005  
Rear (South) Façade, camera facing northeast.

6 of 16: AR\_SevierCounty\_LockesburgGym\_0006  
Rear (South) Façade and Side (East) Façade, camera facing northwest.

7 of 16: AR\_SevierCounty\_LockesburgGym\_0007  
Side (East) Façade, camera facing northwest.

Lockesburg High School Gymnasium  
Name of Property

Sevier County, Arkansas  
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8 of 16: AR\_SevierCounty\_LockesburgGym\_0008  
Side (East) Façade and Front (North) Façade, camera facing southwest.

9 of 16: AR\_SevierCounty\_LockesburgGym\_0009  
Detail of interior of gym space, camera facing southwest.

10 of 16: AR\_SevierCounty\_LockesburgGym\_0010  
Detail of interior gym space, camera facing northwest.

11 of 16: AR\_SevierCounty\_LockesburgGym\_0011  
Detail of interior gym space, camera facing northeast.

12 of 16: AR\_SevierCounty\_LockesburgGym\_0012  
Detail of interior restroom space (former locker-room under gym bleachers), camera facing north.

13 of 16: AR\_SevierCounty\_LockesburgGym\_0013  
Detail of southeast classroom space, camera facing southeast.

14 of 16: AR\_SevierCounty\_LockesburgGym\_0014  
Detail of southwest classroom space, camera facing northeast.

15 of 16: AR\_SevierCounty\_LockesburgGym\_0015  
Detail of southwest classroom space, camera facing southwest.

16 of 16: AR\_SevierCounty\_LockesburgGym\_0016  
Detail of lower-level conference space (original cafeteria space), camera facing northeast.

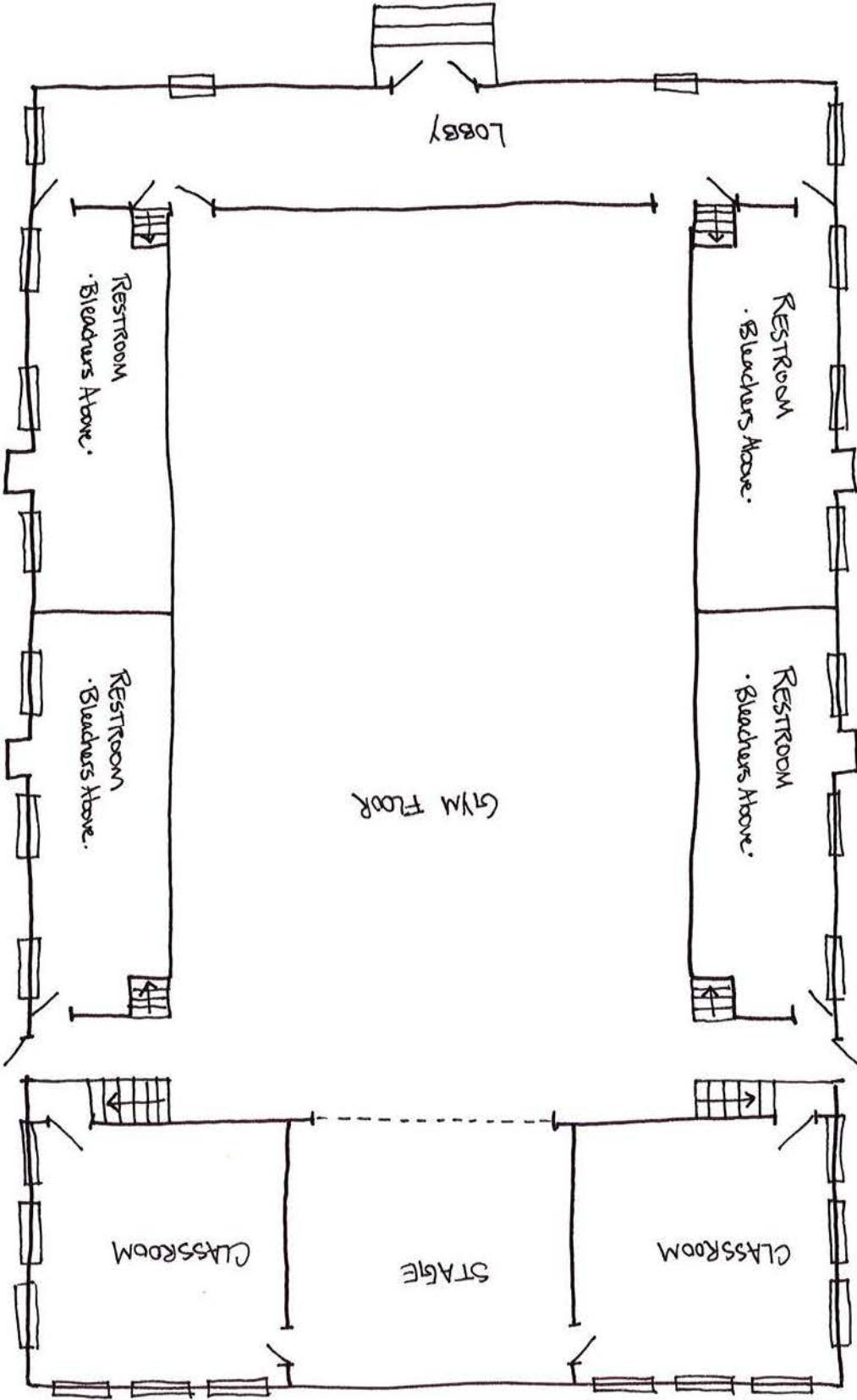
**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.



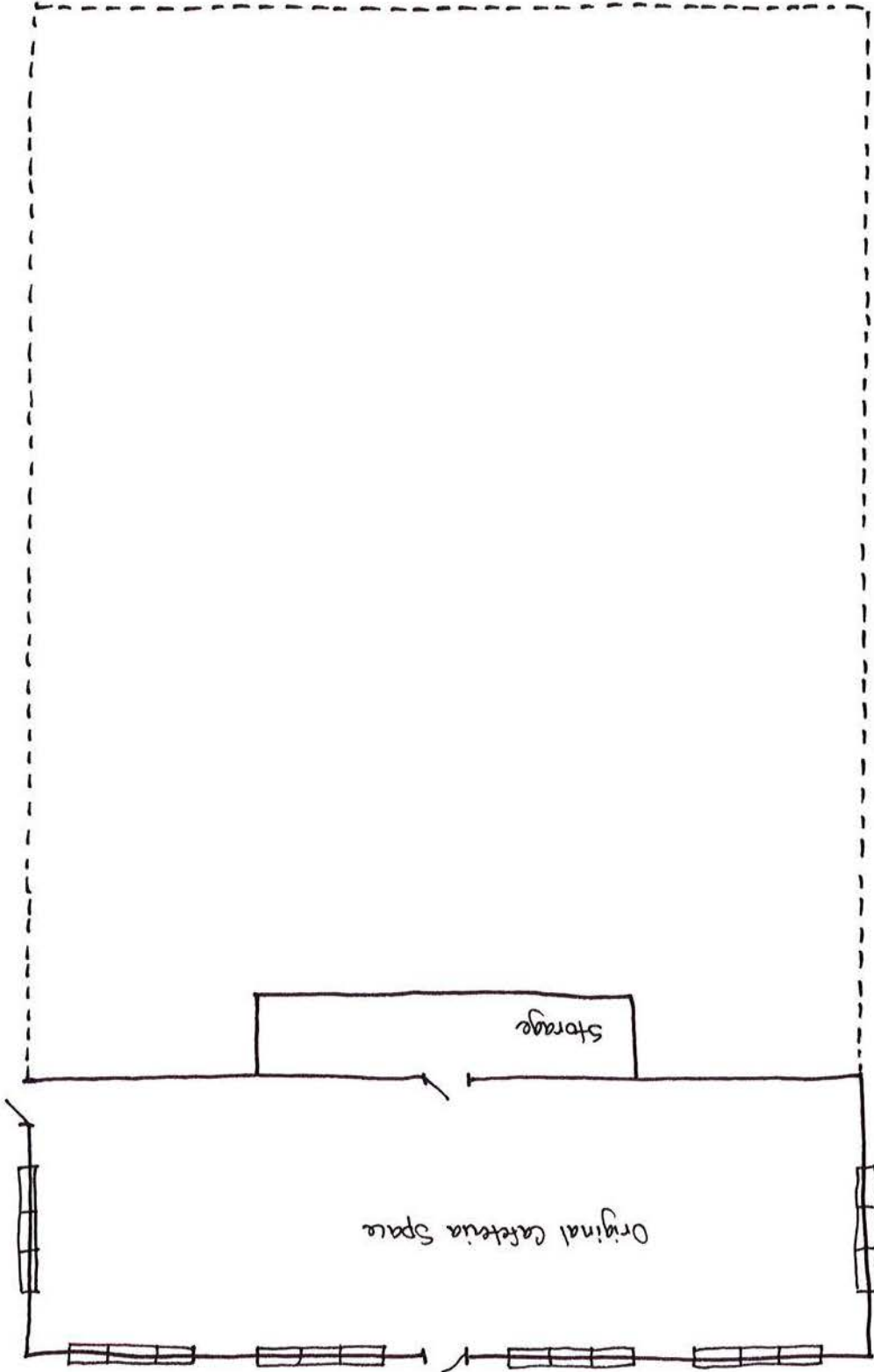
LOCKESBURG GYMNASIUM  
LOCKESBURG, SEVIER COUNTY  
ARKANSAS

Not to scale.



NORTH ↑

LOCKESBURG GYMNASIUM  
LOCKESBURG, SEVIER COUNTY  
ARKANSAS  
• Not to scale •



↑ NORTH

# Lockesburg High School Gymnasium

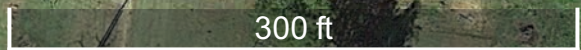
Lockesburg  
Sevier County  
Arkansas

UTM NAD 1983

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C: Z: 15 S, E: 392289, N: 3759008  
D: Z: 15 S, E: 392291, N: 3759125



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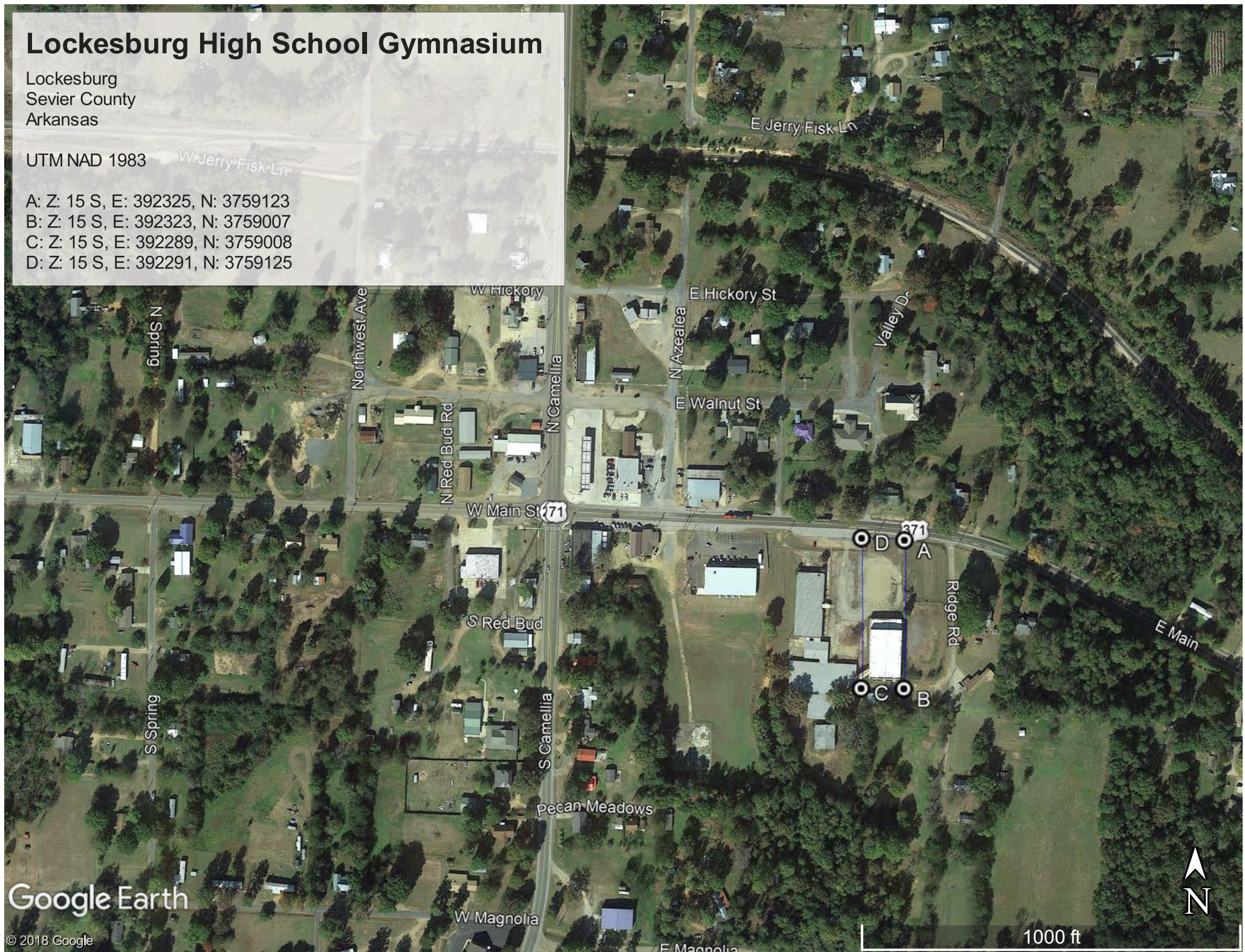


# Lockesburg High School Gymnasium

Lockesburg  
Sevier County  
Arkansas

UTM NAD 1983

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B: Z: 15 S, E: 392323, N: 3759007  
C: Z: 15 S, E: 392289, N: 3759008  
D: Z: 15 S, E: 392291, N: 3759125



Google Earth

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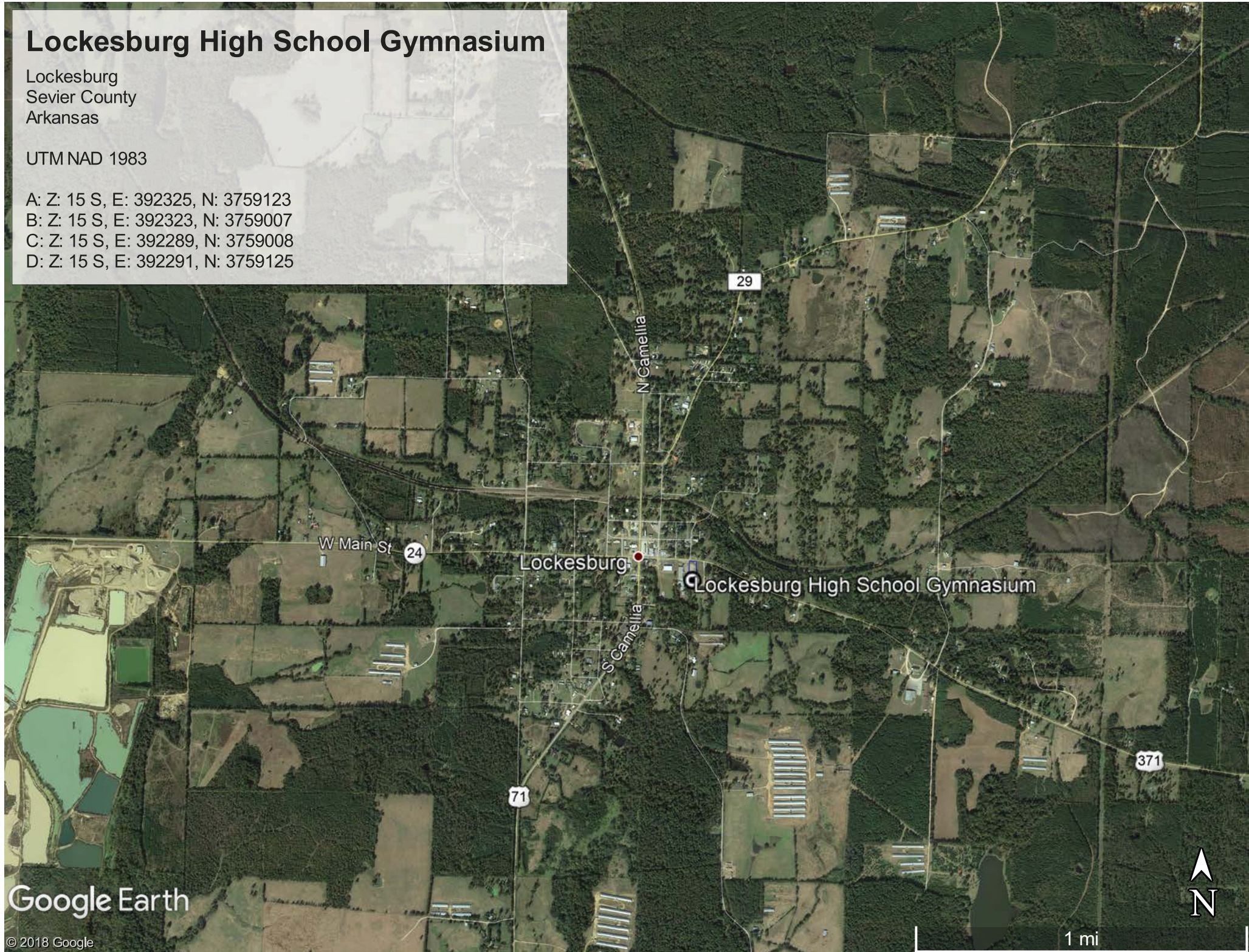
1000 ft

# Lockesburg High School Gymnasium

Lockesburg  
Sevier County  
Arkansas

UTM NAD 1983

A: Z: 15 S, E: 392325, N: 3759123  
B: Z: 15 S, E: 392323, N: 3759007  
C: Z: 15 S, E: 392289, N: 3759008  
D: Z: 15 S, E: 392291, N: 3759125



Google Earth

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1 mi



JA  
Cossatot





















BANK OF  
LOCKESBURG

EXIT



NO SMOKING

EXIT







RESTROOM







UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: 4/10/2018      Date of Pending List: 5/3/2018      Date of 16th Day: 5/18/2018      Date of 45th Day: 5/25/2018      Date of Weekly List:

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

Accept       Return       Reject      5/18/2018 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments:

Recommendation/ Criteria:

Reviewer Jim Gabbert      Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2275      Date \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION:    see attached comments : No    see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



THE DEPARTMENT OF ARKANSAS  
**HERITAGE**

Asa Hutchinson  
*Governor*

Stacy Hurst  
*Director*

Arkansas Arts Council

Arkansas Natural  
Heritage Commission

Arkansas State Archives

Delta Cultural Center

Historic Arkansas Museum

Mosaic Templars  
Cultural Center

Old State House Museum

April 4, 2018



J. Paul Loether, Deputy Keeper and Chief  
National Register and National Historic Landmark Programs  
National Register of Historic Places  
1849 C Street., NW  
Mail Stop 7228  
Washington D.C. 20240

RE: Lockesburg High School Gymnasium – Lockesburg, Sevier  
County, Arkansas

Dear Mr. Loether:

We are enclosing for your review the above-referenced nomination. The enclosed disk contains the true and correct copy of the nomination for the Lockesburg High School Gymnasium to the National Register of Historic Places. The Arkansas Historic Preservation Program has complied with all applicable nominating procedures and notification requirements in the nomination process.

If you need further information, please call Callie Williams of my staff at (501) 324-9789. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,

Stacy Hurst  
State Historic Preservation Officer

SH:clw

Enclosure



ARKANSAS HISTORIC  
PRESERVATION PROGRAM



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Little Rock, AR 72201

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tdd: 711

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