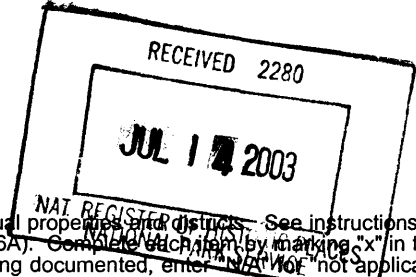


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

825



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. 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. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Liberty Hill Schoolhouse

other names/site number /AL04863

2. Location

street & number 7600 N W 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue N/A  not for publication

city or town Gainesville N/A  vicinity

state Florida code FL county Alachua code 001 zip code 32606

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  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  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Barbara C. Mattick / DSHPO for Survey & Registration 7/11/03  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Florida State Historic Preservation Officer, Division of Historical Resources  
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

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

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register
  - See continuation sheet
- determined eligible for the National Register
  - See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register
  - See continuation sheet.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Entered in the National Register AUG 28 2003

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)

- buildings
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include any previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	1	total

Name of related multiple property listings

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION/School

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/Not In Use

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

FRAME VERNACULAR

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK PIERS

walls WOOD: Drop siding

roof METAL

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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.)

Property is:

- 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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 36) 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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE
EDUCATION
ETHNIC HERITAGE: Black

Period of Significance

1892-1952

Significant Dates

1892

Significant Person

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

BUILDER: Eddins, J. T.

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
Other State Agency
Federal agency
Local government
University
Other

Name of Repository

#

Liberty Hill Schoolhouse  
Name of Property

Alachua, Florida  
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property Approx. 3.8 acres

UTM References

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1	7	3	6	2	2	7	0	3	2	8	3	5	5	0
	Zone		Easting						Northing						
2															

3															
	Zone		Easting						Northing						
4															

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Murray D. Laurie, Consultant; Gary V. Goodwin, Historic Preservation Planner

organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date June, 2003

street & number R.A. Gray Building, 500 S. Bronough Street telephone (850) 245-6333

city or town Tallahassee state Florida zip code 32399-0250

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Greater Liberty Hill United Methodist Church

street & number 7600 N. W. 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town Gainesville state Florida zip code 32606

**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 amend 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. 470 *et seq.*).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 1

**LIBERTY HILL SCHOOLHOUSE  
Gainesville, Alachua County, Florida**

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**Summary**

The Liberty Hill Schoolhouse is a one-story, one-room school located about 8 miles northwest of downtown Gainesville, Florida, on NW 23 Avenue. Built by the Alachua County School Board in 1892, it is on its original site, just east of the Greater Liberty Hill United Methodist Church and its adjacent cemetery. The present schoolhouse replaced the original Liberty Hill School, which was in operation as early as 1869 as a rural elementary school for African American children. Although vacant, the school retains its historic appearance and character. The school contributes to the sense of time, place, and historical development through its location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

**Setting**

Originally called Hogtown, the City of Gainesville is located in North Central Florida, in Alachua County. Other towns in Alachua County, such as Micanopy, Archer, Newberry, High Springs, Alachua, Waldo, Melrose, Hawthorne, Campville, Windsor, Rochelle, and Cross Creek were developed around the same time. With the exception of Micanopy, an important Indian settlement named after a Seminole Chief, and the oldest inland town in Florida. Each of the surrounding towns became busy crossroads and known for various goods. Archer, a Quaker settlement, became the county's main machine works by 1905, Newberry was the hub of a booming phosphate industry and later an agriculture center, High Springs emerged as the headquarters for the Plant Railroad System, and Alachua replaced the former county seat of Newnansville. After World War I, Waldo became a shipping depot and served as a Seaboard Railway center and it still maintains its, railroad ties as a current Amtrak stop servicing the east coast of Florida and destinations to the north and south. The City of Gainesville's population is 95,400 and encompasses 53.30 square miles.

**Physical Description**

Exterior

The wood-frame schoolhouse has a rectangular plan, approximately 24.5 feet wide by 30.5 feet deep. The original brick piers support the building with some additional concrete piers on the north side. The front-gabled roof is clad in 5-V crimp metal roofing. The brick chimney that handled smoke from the wood burning stove is still intact. The exterior of the building is clad in drop siding. Originally painted red, the exterior was over painted with white paint. The building faces west and two separate wood paneled doors provide access to the interior. There are concrete steps leading to the south door, but the steps to the north door are missing (Photo 1, 5-6). The original windows remain intact. Four double hung windows with six-over-six panes are on the north facade (Photo 2). There are no openings on the rear or east facade and the three small openings set just under the eaves on the south facade are unglazed (Photo 3-4). There are no other windows on the south facade.

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CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 2

**LIBERTY HILL SCHOOLHOUSE  
Gainesville, Alachua County, Florida**

Interior

The interior of the building, which is undivided, is paneled with narrow tongue and groove, as is the ceiling. The cream-colored paint appears to be original and is in fairly good condition. The unpainted wood floor is in fairly good condition also (Photo 7), with one small hole in the southeast corner. The small sheet of metal that was placed in front of the wood stove to catch sparks is still nailed in place in this corner. A few panes are missing from the four double hung windows on the north side, but most of the panes appear to be original glass (Photo 8). A chalkboard with a decorative border at the top is fixed to the rear wall, and the framed hole in the ceiling beneath the chimney that received the stovepipe is still visible (Photos 9-10).

According to the men and women who attended the Liberty Hill School as children, there were two wooden outhouses to the northeast of the schoolhouse. They are no longer there. The schoolyard where the children played was mostly open, sandy ground, and they ate lunch beneath the large oak tree that is just south of the school entrance. The building had no lights, and drinking water had to be brought from a spring some distance from the school.

The building was in use as a schoolhouse for about sixty years, from 1892 until 1952, when the Alachua County School Board closed it. Since then it has been used for storage by the adjacent Greater Liberty Hill United Methodist Church (Photo 4). Although worn by time, the school building, now 110 years old, is in fairly good condition.

**Noncontributing building**

The Greater Liberty Hill United Methodist Church, a noncontributing resource, was constructed in 1962, replacing a wood frame church that stood on the same site (Photo 4). The church is an L-shaped building constructed of concrete block. A steeple is set above the small entrance porch. The interior space contains the main sanctuary, a small office, a kitchen, and a Sunday school room that doubles as a dining room. To the west of the church is the Liberty Hill cemetery. The grounds encompassing the schoolhouse, church and cemetery are fenced.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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Section number 8 Page 1

**LIBERTY HILL SCHOOLHOUSE  
Gainesville, Alachua County, Florida**

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**Summary**

The Liberty Hill Schoolhouse is historically significant at the local level under Criterion A in the areas of Education and Ethnic Heritage: Black for its 110-year association with education and for its importance to the cultural heritage of the African American community in Gainesville. The present building, constructed by the Alachua County School Board in 1892, replaced an earlier Liberty Hill School, first mentioned as a school for black children in the county school records in 1869. The building is also significant at the local level under Criterion C as an excellent example of a one-room schoolhouse. The only one-room schoolhouse in the county still on its original site, served generations of African American pupils from primary to sixth or seventh grade until it was closed by the school board in the early 1950s. The simple, vernacular wood frame structure, which has been used for storage since then, is fairly well preserved.

**Historical Context**

Prior to the Civil War, Alachua County attracted a significant number of settlers from South Carolina who established cotton plantations on the fertile plains surrounding the county seat in Gainesville.<sup>1</sup> When the war ended, many freed slaves from these plantations moved into Gainesville where better opportunities were available, including education. The Union Academy, established by the Freedmen's Bureau and taught at first by white teachers from New England, was built by blacks on land purchased by blacks to bring the benefits of education to their people.<sup>2</sup>

However, not all blacks moved into town; many began farming on their own, forming scattered, rural communities. Small churches such as the Liberty Hill Methodist Church, located about eight miles northwest of downtown Gainesville, anchored emerging settlements such as Fort Clark, Bennington (originally Brevards), and Rutledge.<sup>3</sup> Some of the churches been built on plantations prior to the Civil War. A number of the founders of the Liberty Hill church, including Alexander DeBose, an early member of the Alachua County School Board, originally came from the Liberty Hill area in Kershaw County, South Carolina, before the Civil War. H. M. And E. C. Brevard of Kershaw County officially deeded the land on which the church stood to the church trustees, Alexander DeBose and Stephen Taylor, in 1882.<sup>4</sup>

When the Alachua County School Board was formed to provide public schools for both black and white pupils in 1867, it had very few financial resources. The tax base was low and wealthier white voters, who sent their children to private schools, were not inclined to support public education. In 1869 the Florida legislature established by law the separate school systems for black and white pupils. By that date, twenty-six schools were listed in the school board records, almost half of them noted as "colored schools." At first the school board could only afford to pay for teachers' salaries, which averaged \$25 per month for a three-month term. It was left to the resources of a local board of trustees made up of parents to build these schools and furnish them.<sup>5</sup>

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 2

**LIBERTY HILL SCHOOLHOUSE  
Gainesville, Alachua County, Florida**

The first Liberty Hill schoolhouse, like the original Liberty Hill Church next to the school, may have been built of logs on this site.<sup>6</sup> The 1884 USGS map of the Arredondo section shows two buildings (the church and school) on the east-west road running just south of Rutledge, an African American community, that also appears on the 1994 Gainesville West USGS map.<sup>7</sup> After more than twenty years, the first school was replaced with a new building, this one built of heart pine and funded by the school board. Mr. J. R. Eddins, who owned a lumber mill in Gainesville, won the contract to build a new school at Liberty Hill in 1892, along with three others, each to cost no more than \$450.<sup>8</sup>

**Historic Significance**

The Liberty Hill School and dozens of one-room school like it, provided elementary education for several generations of Alachua County children, black and white. However, over the years the schools serving black students received far less support than those for white students. School board records reveal that black teachers were paid less than white teachers, and black schools had to rely far more on the resources of their local supporters.<sup>9</sup> According to interviews with black teachers, they had to make many of their teaching materials such as maps and chalkboards.<sup>10</sup> Black schools were given used text books, not new ones, and their teachers had fewer professional opportunities. The former pupils of Liberty Hill School confirm this: they made their playground equipment from vines, pine cones, and tree branches. Drinking water for the pupils had to be brought from a spring one-half mile from the school each morning by some of the older students, and they brought the wood for the stove that provided heat for the school. Despite these conditions, the alumni of Liberty Hill School agree that they received a good educational foundation. The school was a vital part of their community, and end-of-year exercises drew such a large attendance that the event had to be held in the church as the school was too small to hold the crowd.<sup>11</sup>

Busing of white students living in rural parts of the county began in 1920s as the Alachua County School Board moved toward consolidating schools in cities and towns.<sup>12</sup> However, black students either walked to school or relied on members of their own communities to drive them to distant schools for two more decades. During the 1930s, the condition of black schools in the county deteriorated as teacher salaries and terms were cut and schools were not built or maintained. In the early 1940s, the Liberty Hill School had sixty-eight children enrolled with one teacher. When the county began to bus black children to school at this time, the future of the one-room rural schools was doomed. The Alachua County School Board dropped support for the small schools and they soon closed.<sup>13</sup> The Liberty Hill students were reassigned to the one black school in Gainesville, Lincoln High School, the successor to the Union Academy. Some of the old schoolhouses were sold and removed to other sites, including the grounds of the city schools. Others burned, were demolished, or simply collapsed from neglect.



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**LIBERTY HILL SCHOOLHOUSE  
Gainesville, Alachua County, Florida**

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Many of the former students are also members of the Greater Liberty Hill United Methodist Church. They are currently working to restore the schoolhouse so that it can be used to interpret this important aspect of the cultural legacy of the African American community of Alachua County.

**Architectural Context**

Vernacular refers to buildings whose design is determined by an informal local tradition, rather than by a particular designer. Although not really a style, "Frame Vernacular" is a category of buildings, which are simply the products of their builders' experience. This term implies that a structure is similar in format to numerous others built in the same time period in the same general region. Their design relates to local customs, environment, and availability of building materials, usually with no allusion to academic architectural styles. The simple form of these buildings makes them no less important historically, since they portray the authentic construction modes of their locality. The 1892 Liberty Hill schoolhouse reflects the rural character of much of Alachua County at that time.

**Architectural Significance**

Because it was adjacent to the Liberty Hill Church, this school building survived. It is owned by the church and has been used as a storage building since it closed in the 1950s. The building has not been altered in any way and still does not have electricity or running water. It is a good example of the vernacular style, one-room frame schoolhouse built throughout the country in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

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**NOTES**

1. Murray Laurie. Sheltering the Past: The Matheson House in Gainesville, Florida. p. 17-30
2. Charles H. Hildreth and Merlin G. Cox. History of Gainesville, Florida: 1854-1979, pp. 51, 60-61, 95-96. Murray Laurie. "The Union Academy: A Freedmen's Bureau School in Gainesville, Florida." Florida Historical Quarterly, October 1986: 163-168.
3. Louise Perry Haile and Cornell Haile. Interviews recorded by Joel Buchanan, March 1983. Transcripts in the Samuel Proctor Oral History Collection, University of Florida, FAB 8A and FAB 49AB.
4. Alachua County Records, Deed Book S, page 193. The deed transfer took place in 1882, but the church and school had stood on the property since the 1860s. See also Eugene DeBose, "A Brief Biography of Alexander DeBose," 1908: 17. The DeBose biography states that Alexander DeBose and his family arrived in Alachua County before the Civil War as slaves of the Brevard family. The Brevards and other

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**LIBERTY HILL SCHOOLHOUSE  
Gainesville, Alachua County, Florida**

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planters in the area, many of them also Kershaw County families such as the Hailes, Chesnuts, Hawlins, and Whittkers, allowed their slaves to organize and build churches on their plantations.

5. Jeffrey Charbonnet. "The Public School System in Alachua County, Florida: 1821-1955," Masters thesis, University of Florida, 1991: 73-80, 92-93.
6. DeBose, p.17. DeBose states that his father, Rev. Alexander DeBose, helped build the first Liberty Hill Methodist Church of logs and was its first pastor.
7. Arredondo section, 1884 USGS map and Gainesville West section, USGS map, 1994.
8. Alachua County School Board Minutes, November 1892.
9. Alachua County School Board Minutes, 1870-1879.
10. Louise Perry Haile, interview, March 1983.
11. Oral histories
12. Charbonnet: 204.
13. Charbonnet: 223-229, 238-239.

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**LIBERTY HILL SCHOOLHOUSE**  
Gainesville, Alachua County, Florida

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**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Alachua County Records, Deed Book S, page 193

Alachua County School Board Minutes: 1867-1954. On file at the Alachua County School Board, Gainesville, Florida.

Charbonnet, Jeffrey. "The Public School System in Alachua County, Florida," University of Florida, Masters thesis, 1991.

DeBose, Eugene. "A Brief Biography of the Rev. Alexander DeBose." Pepper Publishing Co. Gainesville, 1908.

Haile, Louise Perry and Cornell Haile. Interviews recorded in March, 1983, by Joel Buchanan. Interviews are transcribed and on file in the Samuel Proctor Oral History Collection, University of Florida. FAB 8A and FAB 49AB

Hildreth, Charles H. and Merlin G. Cox. History of Gainesville, Florida: 1854-1979. Alachua County Historical Society, Gainesville, 1981.

Laurie, Murray D. Sheltering the Past: The Matheson House in Gainesville, Florida. Alachua Press, Gainesville, 1990.

Laurie, Murray D. "Union Academy: A Freedmens' School in Gainesville, Florida." Florida Historical Quarterly. October 1986. Pp163-174.

Oral Histories of former students of Liberty Hill School recorded in February, 2003, by Murray D. Laurie. Joan Boston Ferguson, McKinley Cook Alberta Duncan Rivers, Altamese Johnson Bell, Serena Duncan Hillberry, Glorida Johnson Flood.

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CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 10 Page 1

**LIBERTY HILL SCHOOLHOUSE  
Gainesville, Alachua County, Florida**

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**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

Commence at the Southeast corner of Section 29-T9S-R19E and run west S 89°50'29" W, along the South line of Section, 272.66'. Thence run N 2°36'29" W, 593.41', thence east 292.55', thence south 592.52' to the point of beginning, as shown on accompanying site plan (Figure 1).

**VERBAL BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The parcel of approximately 3.8 acres includes the school building and schoolyard historically associated with the Liberty Hill Schoolhouse.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number PHOTOS Page 1

**LIBERTY HILL SCHOOLHOUSE  
Gainesville, Alachua County, Florida**

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**PHOTOGRAPHS**

Note: numbers 1-5 are the same for all photographs

1. Liberty Hill Schoolhouse, 7600 N. W. 23 Avenue, Gainesville, Florida
2. Alachua County, Florida
3. Murray D. Laurie
4. February 1, 2003
5. Murray D. Laurie
6. Front facade, photographer facing east.
7. Photograph 1 of 10
  
6. North side and rear facade, photographer facing west
7. Photograph 2 of 10
  
6. South side facade, photographer facing north
7. Photograph 3 of 10
  
6. East and south facades of schoolhouse with Liberty Hill Church in distance.
7. Photograph 4 of 10
  
6. Front door to the south on west facade, photographer facing east
7. Photograph 5 of 10
  
6. Front door to the north on west facade, photographer facing east
7. Photograph 6 of 10
  
6. Interior view of floor and front door to the north, photographer facing north
7. Photograph 7 of 10
  
6. Interior view of north side, photographer facing north
7. Photograph 8 of 10
  
6. Interior view, east wall with blackboard (note hole for stovepipe in ceiling), photographer facing east
7. Photograph 9 of 10
  
6. Interior view of south wall, photographer facing south
7. Photograph 10 of 10

LIBERTY HILL SCHOOLHOUSE  
Gainesville, Alachua County, Florida

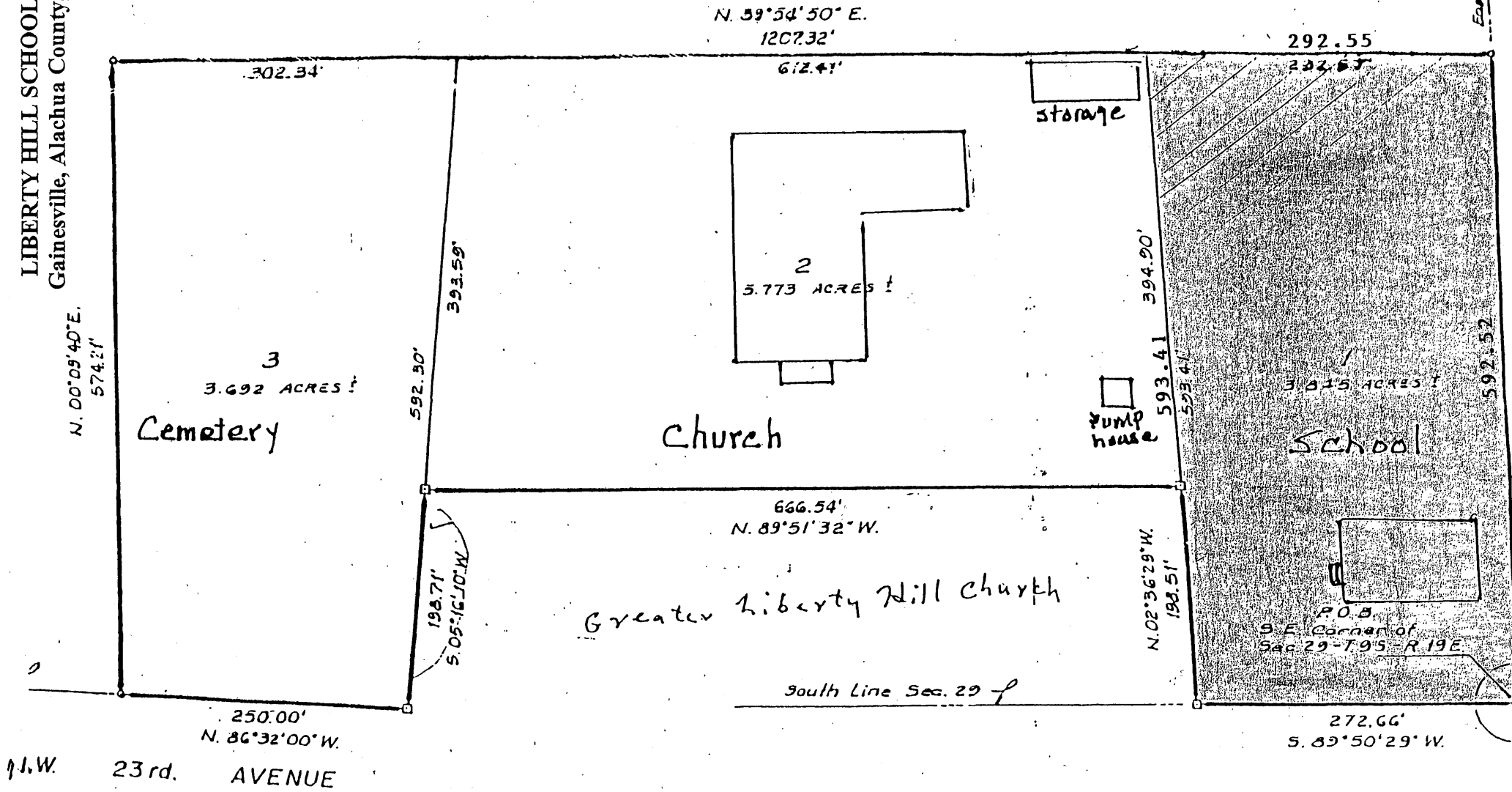


Figure 1 Site Map.... NR proposal includes only shaded portion