

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

395

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 an 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 Signal Mountain Elementary School
other names/site number Mountain Arts Community Center; Signal Mountain Grammar School

2. Location

street & number 809 Kentucky Avenue N/A not for publication
city or town Signal Mountain N/A vicinity
state Tennessee code TN county Hamilton code 065 zip code 37377

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 for 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.)

Herbert L. Huger 3/2/01
Signature of certifying official/Title Date
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Tennessee Historical Commission
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
- removed from the National Register.
- other,

(explain:)

Edson H. Beall 4.19.01
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Choose as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Choose only one box)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in count)

- private, public-local, public-State, public-Federal, building(s), district, site, structure, object

Table with 2 columns: Contributing, Noncontributing. Rows for buildings, sites, structures, objects, Total.

Name of related multiple property listing
(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)

RECREATION AND CULTURE: auditorium

RECREATION AND CULTURE: museum

EDUCATION: school

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Craftsman

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE: coursed fieldstone

walls STONE: coursed fieldstone

BRICK

roof ASPHALT; Slate

other WOOD

CERAMIC TILE

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 N/A

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

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** moved from its original location.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property
- G** less than 50 year of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE
EDUCATION

Period of Significance

1926-1950

Significant Dates

1926

Significant Person

(complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Crutchfield & Gosnell--Architects
Arnold, Raymond W.--Builder

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): N/A

- 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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 5.2 acres Fairmount 105-NE and Chattanooga 105-SE

UTM References

(place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>16</u>	<u>650760</u>	<u>3887960</u>	3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2				4			
					<input type="checkbox"/> 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 Karen L. Daniels/Historic Preservation Planner
 organization Southeast Tennessee Development District date December 2000
 street & number 25 Cherokee Blvd./P. O. Box 4757 telephone 423/266-5781
 city or town Chattanooga state TN zip code 37405-0757

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 Dr. Jesse Register, Superintendent of Schools, Hamilton County Schools
 street & number 6703 Bonny Oaks Drive telephone 423/209-8400
 city or town Chattanooga state TN zip code 37421

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 listing. 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 20303.

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Signal Mountain Elementary School
Hamilton County, Tennessee

DESCRIPTION

The Signal Mountain Elementary School in Signal Mountain, Hamilton County, Tennessee is a 1-½ story, irregularly shaped Craftsman style building. Resting on a concrete foundation, the building is highlighted with coursed fieldstone walls, and capped with a series of steeply pitch gable roofs covered in asphalt shingles. Designed by the Chattanooga architectural firm of Crutchfield and Gosnell in 1926, the school includes a 1949 addition that is made of brick and coursed fieldstone, which harmonizes with the original structure. Located in a residential neighborhood, the school grounds contain the school building, four metal portable buildings, a playground, a ball field and two stone retaining walls. The resources that contribute to the site are the school, ball field, and the two retaining walls. Non-contributing resources include the four portable buildings and the playground.

The school was originally constructed as a "V" shaped building with classrooms along the outside of the "V" with an auditorium in the middle. An increase in Signal Mountain's population after World War II led to the construction of the 1949 addition, which gave the building its irregular shape. Attached to the original building at the north end of the east arm of the "V" is the 1949 addition. Composed of coursed fieldstone and brick, the addition is covered by a gable roof with asphalt shingles. Some portions of the roof, however, are still covered with original slate shingles.

The main (south) façade is highlighted by a centrally located half-round portico constructed of fieldstone that is supported by five arches. The name "Signal Mountain Grammar School" is on the portico above the arches. The floor of the portico is brick and the interior walls are covered with stucco. Rising above the portico is a gable covered in stucco with a wood louvered vent. Located within the vestibule of the portico is a pair of five-light, double leaf doors at the entrance, which are capped with a five light transom. Two window openings with four-over-four, double-hung, wood sashes flank the doors, which are capped with stone lintels accented by a flared roofline. Located on either side of the portico is a pair of window openings with six-over-six, double-hung, wood sashes. On the east end of the south façade is a boiler room with a metal chimney that comes through the roof. Blending in with the stonework is a series of small ventilation openings where the boiler room is located. The façade of the school reveals two chimneys. The first rises above the east leg of the "V" of the original building and is constructed of brick and stucco. This chimney is highlighted with brick quoins with stucco panels in the lower half, while the upper half is brick. The second is a simple metal pipe chimney that rises from the boiler room at the east end of the façade.

The east elevation of the building consists of coursed fieldstone walls; window openings with six-over-six and four-over-four, double-hung, wood sashes and an asphalt shingle gable roof. The north end of this elevation is part of the 1949 addition, which is stone sided with nine light metal awning windows and a slate shingle roof.

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Signal Mountain Elementary School
Hamilton County, Tennessee

The north elevation of the building is the 1949 addition, which displays a plain double leaf door and nine light metal awning windows.

The west elevation of the building was inaccessible due to the stone retaining wall and heavy vegetation.

Highlighting the interior of the building, are wood floors and baseboards in the original building, while glazed terra cotta tile floors and baseboards accent the addition. The walls are plaster with wood chair rails in parts of the building. The doors have plain wood moldings, as do the windows. The ceilings are plaster, but several rooms have suspended ceilings. There are some original milk glass light fixtures, but most of the light fixtures are fluorescent.

The entry foyer in the building has three arches, one to each wing, and a center niche for displays.

As a 75-year-old building, the school still maintains its architectural integrity. The classrooms each have cloakrooms and two walls of chalkboards with wood frames. Some classroom floors have been carpeted.

The lunchroom, in the 1949 addition, has a vinyl floor, metal windows and entry into the kitchen.

There are four classrooms and two offices in the original part of the building, eight classrooms and the lunchroom and kitchen in the 1949 addition, and four classrooms and the library in the portable buildings.

The portable buildings are located at the rear of the school; the breezeway between the building and the portable buildings has a metal roof.

The portable buildings are built on concrete foundations, have metal siding and metal gable roofs. They have rectangular plans, and were installed in the 1980s.

The ball field is located in the northeast corner of the property and contains only a backstop.

There are two stone retaining walls on the lot, one encloses a circle created by the driveways, the other is along the west side of the lot. Both walls were built in 1925-26 and are constructed of the same stone as the building.

In the southwest corner of the lot is a playground containing equipment that dates from the 1980s.

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Signal Mountain Elementary School
Hamilton County, Tennessee

SIGNIFICANCE

The Signal Mountain Elementary School in Signal Mountain (population 7,034; 1990 census), Hamilton County, Tennessee is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under criteria A and C. Under criterion A, the building is locally significant in social history and education. Erected in 1926 as the Signal Mountain Grammar School, the building was utilized as a community center for various civic and religious groups in the town. For example, the garden club and local churches held meetings here, and for many years, the school building was used as the town library. The school closed upon the construction of Nolan Elementary School in 1998. Under criterion C, the building is architecturally significant as a local example of Craftsman architecture. The creative use of stone and wood on the exterior, especially in the openwork grill on the façade and the setting of the building against the hillside on Signal Mountain reflect the basic ideas of the Craftsman style. The circa 1949 addition, made of brick and fieldstone, is in keeping with the character of the original building. The building has undergone few alterations; therefore, retaining a high degree of integrity.

Charles James purchased 4,400 acres of land on Walden's Ridge to build a hotel and a year-round community in 1912. By 1913, an electric streetcar line and a gravel road came up the ridge, and the hotel was completed. The town was ready for development by individuals who purchased property from James. By 1919, there were 200 permanent residents in the town of Signal Mountain. The town was chartered on April 4, 1919, and all the land included in the town limits was the property James had purchased.

Between 1923 and 1925, school for the children of the mountain community was informally held in a small brick building known as the Hollywood School, located near the Hollywood trolley station. The facility quickly became obsolete as the population of the community increased, prompting the town to build the Signal Mountain Grammar school building on Kentucky Avenue in 1926. This building was the first building in Signal Mountain for community use. Because it was going to be for general use, the architects included an auditorium capable of seating 200 people in the plan. Various civic and religious groups met in the school.

In 1926, the Town of Signal Mountain contained a hotel, a golf course and private homes. There were no churches, town hall or library. Since there were no other public buildings the school was used for church services and by civic groups. The first church congregation in town, the Signal Mountain Presbyterian Church, began meeting in the school in 1925, and met there until the congregation was able to construct a chapel circa 1928. Civic groups, including the Garden Club, used the school building until the town center complex was built in the 1970s.

The building also contained the town library from 1930 until 1970 when a library board was named and a building constructed on Signal Mountain Boulevard. The library was located near the

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Signal Mountain Elementary School
Hamilton County, Tennessee

entrance to the building and was open to the public and the school children. In the first month, the library opened it circulated over 2000 books. (*Chattanooga Times* [Chattanooga], 13 April 1930).

Before the construction of the Wilkes T. Thrasher School in 1957, all the children who grew up in the Town of Signal Mountain between 1926 and 1957 attended the Signal Mountain Grammar School. As the Town of Signal Mountain developed as a suburb of Chattanooga, Tennessee, the population of the school grew until an addition was necessary. In 1949, an addition containing eight classrooms, a cafeteria and a kitchen were constructed. The population of Signal Mountain in 1919, at the time of its incorporation was 419; by 1930, the population had more than doubled to 966. In 1950, reflecting the nationwide postwar "baby boom", and just one year after the addition was completed, the population of Signal Mountain had almost doubled again to 1,786, a 60% increase, which prompted the construction of the Wilkes T. Thrasher School.

In 1975 the Signal Mountain Elementary School, the Thrasher School and the Nathan L. Bachman School in neighboring Walden divided the class loads. Grades K-3 would be held at Signal Mountain Elementary and Bachman, while the 4-6 grades were held at Thrasher. All three schools were part of the Hamilton County School system.

After the 1997-1998 school year, the students from Signal Mountain Elementary School began to attend the newly constructed Nolan School. The Town of Signal Mountain leased the building from the Hamilton County School Board to house an arts center for Walden's Ridge and Signal Mountain.

The building is architecturally significant for its Craftsman styling that was popular in housing in the 1920s. The Arts and Crafts movement was popular in the early twentieth century and included principles of simple design, natural materials and fine craftsmanship. One of the most influential proponents of the movement in the United States was furniture designer Gustav Stickley. He promoted the ideals of the movement in his magazine *The Craftsman*, which included examples of furniture and housing designs.

The architectural firm of Crutchfield and Gosnell designed the Signal Mountain Elementary School in 1926. The firm practiced in Chattanooga from 1920 to 1926. William Crutchfield II, a native of Chattanooga was the grandson of renowned East Tennessee builder Thomas Crutchfield. After graduating from Chattanooga High School in 1907, Crutchfield attended Colorado State Agricultural College and later worked as a draftsman for the Converse Bridge Company of Chattanooga from 1910 to 1912. In 1916, he graduated from the University of Illinois at Urbana with a B.S. in Architecture. Before opening his own office in Chattanooga, Crutchfield worked summers with noted architect R. H. Hunt. During his partnership with Gosnell, they worked primarily on residences. Crutchfield later designed the Alfred Duane Pell Library at the Dubose Training Center in 1930 (NR 1980). Wilson A. Gosnell was born in Baltimore where he gained his

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Signal Mountain Elementary School
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architectural education as an apprentice with the firm of Pritchard and Newman. Between 1901 and 1919, Gosnell took on several positions ranging from Walter T. Downing's chief draftsman in Atlanta, to working as an assistant to H.H. Wheeler in New York. Gosnell arrived in Chattanooga in 1919 to work for R.H. Hunt as his chief draftsman. After his partnership with Crutchfield ended in 1926, Gosnell formed Gosnell and Beadbury in 1930 and worked predominately on expensive homes, in addition to commercial, industrial, and public buildings in Chattanooga.

In architecture, the Craftsman movement influenced the bungalow and Prairie styles. The bungalow was the dominant style in residential design from 1905 into the 1920s, but few were built after 1930. (Wiffen and McAlister 1998, 454). The Signal Mountain Elementary School embodies the style's character defining features. This is evident in the use of natural materials, such as the coursed fieldstone walls and the slate roof, which provides the school with a simple design that is free of cumbersome architectural details. In addition, the building is low to the ground and nestled into the hillside, blending into the surrounding residential neighborhood. The 1949 addition continues the design of the original structure through its scale and use of natural materials. Even after 75 years of use as an educational facility and community center, the building exhibits a high degree of integrity as many of the original interior and exterior elements have been retained.

The building is also the only Craftsman style public building in the community. The churches, which developed in the community, were built in the Gothic Revival styles. The town hall and town center complex were developed in the 1970s in modern styles. The school building was designed to fit into the residential character of the community through its architectural style and use of natural materials. The town, including the area around the school, contains a wide variety of architectural styles, and the one story, stone building blends into the character of the community.

The Signal Mountain Elementary School derives its historical significance as the first public school in the Signal Mountain community. For 34 years, the school served as the only educational institution for the community, until the Wilkes T. Thrasher School was completed in 1957. Accordingly, it played a significant role in the development of the educational system of the Signal Mountain community. Furthermore, the school also served as the town's community center and library for over 47 years. Architecturally, the Signal Mountain Elementary School is significant as an excellent example of a Craftsman style building. The use of natural materials such as coursed fieldstone and slate, combined with its simple design and massing, exemplifies the style completely.

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Signal Mountain Elementary School
Hamilton County, Tennessee

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Signal Mountain Elementary School
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U. S. Census, 1950

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Signal Mountain Elementary School
Hamilton County, Tennessee

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description:

The property included in this nomination is a triangular lot bounded by Kentucky Avenue and Maryland Avenue and a rear property line. The area is identified on accompanying Hamilton County, Tennessee tax map (scale: 1' = 100') number 107-L as batch A lot 7, containing 5.2 acres.

Boundary Justification:

The boundaries are the town lot historically associated with the Signal Mountain Elementary School. The lot is still associated with the building.

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Signal Mountain Elementary School
Hamilton County, Tennessee

Photo Log

Signal Mountain Elementary School
Hamilton County, Tennessee

Photography by: Karen Daniels

Date: September 6, 2000

Location of Negatives: Tennessee Historical Commission, Nashville, Tennessee

#1 of 29

South façade

#2 of 29

South façade

#3 of 29

East elevation

#4 of 29

East elevation, 1949 addition

#5 of 29

North elevation and portable building

#6 of 29

North elevation, portable building, breezeway

#7 of 29

West elevation

#8 of 29

West elevation

#9 of 29

Interior, entry

#10 of 29

Interior, east hallway

#11 of 29

Interior, auditorium

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Signal Mountain Elementary School
Hamilton County, Tennessee

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Interior, auditorium

#13 of 29

Interior, classroom

#14 of 29

Interior, classroom

#15 of 29

Interior, restroom

#16 of 29

Interior, classroom

#17 of 29

North hallway

#18 of 29

Interior, classroom in 1949 addition

#19 of 29

Interior, cafeteria

#20 of 29

Interior, kitchen

#21 of 29

Interior, west hallway

#22 of 29

Plaque

#23 of 29

Portable building

#24 of 29

Ball field

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Signal Mountain Elementary School
Hamilton County, Tennessee

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Retaining walls and playground

#26 of 29

Main lobby

#27 of 29

Northwest elevation of 1949 addition

#28 of 29

Chimney detail

#29 of 29

Detail of auditorium chair

SANBORN FIRE INSURANCE COMPANY 1951

6" W.P. PIPE
TEXAS AV.

YEAR 822

SCALE 100 FT TO ONE INCH
100
50
0
100
200

Revised 1939 by the Sanborn Map Co.

JAMES BLEVD
6" W.P. PIPE

801 50' OUT
810 50' OUT
815 50' OUT

CIN BL BR FACED
BUILT 1949
CAFETERIA
(S.M.G.S.)

SIGNAL MOUNTAIN GRAMMAR SCHOOL
(S.M.G.S.)

654

MARYLAND

KENTUCKY AV.

6" W.P. PIPE
812

AVG.

TELEPHONE EXCHANGE

FAIRMOUNT AV. (ST.)
816 FAIRMOUNT
818

803
30E

803
312
11
808

813
31C
810

30



