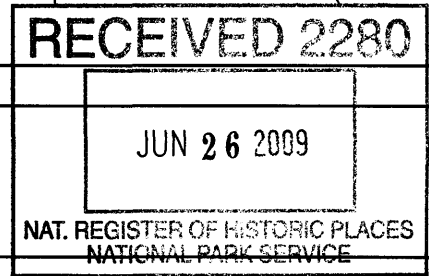


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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

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



1. Name of Property

historic name Buford Public School Auditorium
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 4975 Little Mill Road
city, town Buford () **vicinity of**
county Gwinnett **code** 135
state Georgia **code** GA **zip code** 30518

() not for publication

3. Classification

Ownership of Property:

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

Category of Property:

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

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing

Noncontributing

buildings	1	0
sites	0	0
structures	0	0
objects	0	0
total	1	0

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

Name of previous listing: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets the National Register criteria. () See continuation sheet.

Richard L. Luce 6-19-09
Signature of certifying official Date

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

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

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency or bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register

determined eligible for the National Register

determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National Register

other, explain:

see continuation sheet

John H. Beal 8.5.09

for
Keeper of the National Register Date

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions:

Education: Education-related
Recreation and Culture: Auditorium

Current Functions:

Commerce/Trade: Business

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

Late 19th and Early 20th Century Revivals: Italian Renaissance

Materials:

foundation	Concrete
walls	Brick
roof	Asphalt
other	Metal

Description of present and historic physical appearance:

The Buford Public School Auditorium was built at the head of Church Street (now called Little Mill Road) in Buford, a small industrial town laid out along the Southern Railway line in northern Gwinnett County, 35 miles northeast of Atlanta. The auditorium is located at the south end of downtown Buford between the former tanning and harness factory and the shoe and horse collar factory. The Buford Public School campus included classroom buildings and a water tank, but the auditorium is the only surviving campus building.

Built in 1926, the auditorium is a two-story brick building with a Renaissance Revival-style arcaded entrance porch (photos 1-4). The double-door entrance features the original fanlights. The original front doors were replaced with wood-and-glass doors. The arched ticket window is located between the entrances (photos 3-4). The deteriorated hip roof that covered the projecting porch was replaced by a metal shed roof. Windows on the second floor of the porch were heavily damaged by water and have not been replaced (photos 26-27). These include rectangular-shaped openings and round windows that retain some glass. Recently, a concrete handicap-accessible ramp was added to the main entrance (photo 2).

The main façade includes two arched windows on either side of the entrance porch. The original windows have been replaced with windows with heavier mullions. The brick arched openings remain intact. The shallow-pitched gable roof is concealed behind stepped parapets in the front and rear (photos 1-2).

The side elevations remain mostly intact. Each side is lined with four, large arched windows set

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 7--Description

within recessed brick panels. The steel-framed windows are original to the building (photos 5-7 and 9-10).

The site, which slopes toward the rear of the lot, allows for wide utility entrances near the stage at the back of the building (photos 8-10). Three solid-brick walls form the rear elevation, which includes a projecting center section that provides space for the backstage area. Two small windows on either side light the boys' and girls' dressing rooms (photo 11).

The interior, which retains portions of the most significant spaces, was altered when the building was converted to office and storage beginning in 1956. The seats were removed from the auditorium, which is now used for storage. The auditorium is a single open space illuminated by the four arched windows along each side (photos 16-18 and 22-23). The brick walls support exposed wood rafters that frame the roof. The stage remains in place, although a wall was built across the proscenium arch (photos 16-17, 19, and 22-23). The proscenium arch is still clearly visible. The dressing areas are located backstage (photos 20-21).

In 2006, the property was purchased by Exterior Concepts, which rehabilitated the building to serve as its offices and warehouse. As part of its rehabilitation, the company added a wall across the back of the theater (photos 22). The firewall, which runs the full height and width of the auditorium, separates the company offices under the balcony from its warehouse in the main space of the auditorium. A steel stair leads from the auditorium space to the upper balcony. This second-floor space has been converted to an office kitchen (photo 24). The film projection openings in the rear wall are still visible (photos 25-26). Exterior Concepts built a row of offices below the kitchen inside the main entrance (photos 14-15).

Exterior Concepts added landscape elements to the grounds around the auditorium. The company built a small stone fountain, steps, and a walled garden across the front of the building. Stone walls are located along Little Mill Road and Jackson Street. Exterior Concepts built iron-and-brick walls around the remainder of the property.

The auditorium is the only surviving building associated with the Church Street school complex. The classroom buildings and water tank have been demolished and a private residence and a commercial building are located on former school property.

8. Statement of Significance

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

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): N/A

A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions):

Architecture
Education
Entertainment/Recreation

Period of Significance:

1926-1956

Significant Dates:

1926 – The Buford Board of Education completed construction of the brick auditorium.

Significant Person(s):

N/A

Cultural Affiliation:

N/A

Architect(s)/Builder(s):

N/A

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 8--Statement of Significance

Statement of significance (areas of significance)

The Buford Public School Auditorium is a two-story brick auditorium that was built in 1926 as part of the Church Street school complex in Buford. The auditorium was central in the lives of students and town residents because it was the largest interior space in Buford for performances and public meetings. The auditorium served Buford for 30 years until a new school complex was built on Hill Street. The auditorium is the only surviving building associated with education in Buford before World War II.

The Buford Public School Auditorium is significant in the area of education and entertainment/recreation because the auditorium was integral to the education of Buford's white students for nearly 30 years because it provided space for student plays and larger student theater productions as well as school assemblies. The auditorium was used for community functions through the middle of the 20th century. As the largest interior space in town, the auditorium served Buford residents as a venue for community meetings, political rallies, dramatic performances, and musical productions. The auditorium was central in the life of Buford residents for three decades from its construction in 1926 until the new gymnasium on Hill Street was completed in 1956.

The Buford Public School Auditorium is significant in the area of architecture because it is a good representative example of an auditorium that includes the auditorium space, elevated stage, restrooms, ticket window, loggia, and a Renaissance Revival-style arched entrance. School auditoriums were built across Georgia in the first decades of the 20th century. Large consolidated schools often integrated auditoriums into sprawling T- or E-shaped schools. Many auditoriums were constructed as free-standing buildings, sometimes years after the school was built as funds became available. Auditoriums vary in form, but most include a stage, seating (sometimes inclined) restrooms, balcony, and a projection room.

National Register Criteria

A – The Buford Public School Auditorium is significant in the area of education and entertainment/recreation because the auditorium was integral to the education of Buford students for nearly 30 years and because the auditorium was used for community functions through the middle of the 20th century.

C – The Buford Public School Auditorium is significant in the area of architecture because it is a good representative example of an early 20th-century public school auditorium in Georgia.

Criteria Considerations (if applicable)

N/A

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 8--Statement of Significance

Period of significance (justification)

The period of significance begins in 1926 with the construction of the Buford Public School Auditorium and ends in 1956, when the building was last used as a public school auditorium.

Contributing/Noncontributing Resources (explanation, if necessary)

The Buford Public School Auditorium is the only historic resource associated with this nomination. There are no other resources located within the bounds of the property.

Developmental history/historic context (if appropriate)

Buford is a small industrial town laid out in a gridiron plan along the Southern Railway line that runs through the center of town. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Allen family owned substantial real estate holdings and a number of manufacturing plants in Buford. The Allens operated a tannery, a saddle and harness factory, and a shoe and horse collar factory. By the 1920s, Buford was known as Leather City and the local economy prospered. The city's leather industry diversified its line of products and increased its share of the national market for leather goods. The company's success enabled Buford to weather the Great Depression with a higher level of employment than many mill towns in the Piedmont region of Georgia.

In 1905, Buford residents approved a bond issue for a new school for \$4,000, a water works for \$6,000, and \$10,000 for an electrical system. The city purchased the old Methodist church property that was owned by Bona Allen as a location for the new school. The triangular-shaped parcel is bounded by Jackson and Bell streets and Little River Road.

The two-story Buford Public School, completed in 1908, was built of red brick with a crenellated parapet that gave the appearance of a fortress or citadel. It served as the white grammar school and high school until 1922, when a two-story brick high school building was built adjacent to the grammar school. The Buford Public School was built for \$5,845 and included four classrooms on each of its two floors. A two-story rear addition that was completed in 1919 added eight more classrooms. A 65,000-gallon elevated water tank was also located on the school grounds, but has since been demolished.

In 1926, the Buford Board of Education directed the construction of a large, two-story brick auditorium adjacent to the grammar school. The auditorium measured 70-feet wide and 90-feet deep and seated an audience of over 800. The stage, which was raised over three feet above the floor, included heavy curtains and footlights. Dressing rooms for girls and boys were located on each side of the stage. The floor was inclined to provide better views from the back rows. In 1946, a portion of the auditorium was converted for use as an undersized basketball court.

Before the brick auditorium was built in 1926, the old Methodist church was used as the school's auditorium and sometimes as classrooms. The church building was sometimes used as city hall and

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 8--Statement of Significance

a courthouse. When the auditorium was completed, the board of education sold the church building to African-American residents of Buford, who rolled it on logs to North Church Street where they used it as a church.

The new auditorium hosted school events, such as plays, talent contests, and assemblies, and community events that included public meetings, political rallies, dramatic performances, and musicals. Stunt night was a regular event in which skits were presented by factory workers, school faculty, and civic clubs. A production "Buford Follies" featured a cast of 50 and a production of "Once in a Blue Moon" included a cast of 150 on the expansive stage.

The auditorium suffered from inadequate heat that was supplied by coal-and-wood burning heaters located at the front of the auditorium. The auditorium is also remembered for its poor acoustics and efforts were made to improve the sound with aisle runners and the installation of felt panels.

In 1946, a portion of the auditorium was converted to a basketball court. The front of the auditorium floor was leveled and about half of the seats were removed. The court, which was too small for high school games, remained in use until 1951.

In 1948, Buford voters passed a bond issue for the construction of a new high school on Hill Street. The high school was completed in 1950. A new gymnasium adjacent to the school opened the following year. It featured a regulation-sized basketball court and seated 2,400 students. The Church Street school was used as an elementary school until a new elementary school was built adjacent to the high school on Hill Street in 1956.

In 1956, the three Church Street school buildings were sold to three different buyers. The elementary school was destroyed by fire and demolished in 1987. The water tank was dismantled in 1974. The Drake Furniture Company purchased the auditorium, which it used as a warehouse until 1978. That year, Drake was purchased by Pruitt's Furniture Company, which used the auditorium as a warehouse until 1988. The auditorium was left vacant when the current owner, Exterior Concepts, purchased the building in 2006. Exterior Concepts rehabilitated the auditorium as office and storage space.

9. Major Bibliographic References

Buhite, Lisa. "Church Street School Auditorium." Historic Property Information Form. July 13, 2007. On file at the Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia.

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

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been issued
date issued:
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary location of additional data:

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

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

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property 0.51 acres.

UTM References

A) Zone 16 Easting 775760 Northing 3779450

Verbal Boundary Description

The historic district boundary is indicated by a heavy black line on the attached map, which is drawn to scale.

Boundary Justification

The National Register boundary follows the current legal boundary of the Buford Public School Auditorium. It is a small portion of the property once owned by the Buford Board of Education.

11. Form Prepared By

State Historic Preservation Office

name/title Steven Moffson, Architectural Historian
organization Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources
mailing address 334 Peachtree Street, NW, Suite 1600
city or town Atlanta **state** Georgia **zip code** 30303
telephone (404) 656-2840 **date** June 15, 2009
e-mail steven.moffson@dnr.state.ga.us

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

name/title Lisa Buhite
organization Exterior Concepts, Inc.
mailing address 4975 Little Mill Road
city or town Buford **state** GA **zip code** 30518
telephone N/A
e-mail N/A

- () **property owner**
() **consultant**
() **regional development center preservation planner**
(X) **other:** Employee of Exterior Concepts

Property Owner or Contact Information

name (property owner or contact person) Joe Powell
organization (if applicable) Exterior Concepts, Inc.
mailing address 4975 Little Mill Road
city or town Buford **state** GA **zip code** 30518
e-mail (optional) N/A

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Photographs

Name of Property: Buford Public School Auditorium
City or Vicinity: Buford
County: Gwinnett
State: Georgia
Photographer: James R. Lockhart
Negative Filed: Georgia Department of Natural Resources
Date Photographed: September 2009

Description of Photograph(s):

Number of photographs: 29

1. Main façade, photographer facing northwest.
2. Main facade, photographer facing northwest.
3. Main entrance, detail, photographer facing northwest.
4. Main entrance, interior of entrance portico, photographer facing southwest.
5. North side, photographer facing south.
6. North side, detail of windows, photographer facing southwest.
7. North side, photographer facing west.
8. Rear wall and south side, view from cemetery, photographer facing east.
9. South side, photographer facing north.
10. South side, photographer facing northeast.
11. Rear façade, photographer facing southwest.
12. Main façade, photographer facing west.
13. North side, photographer facing south.
14. Interior, main entrance and offices, photographer facing north.
15. Interior, main entrance and offices, photographer facing south.
16. Interior, auditorium, photographer facing northwest.

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Photographs

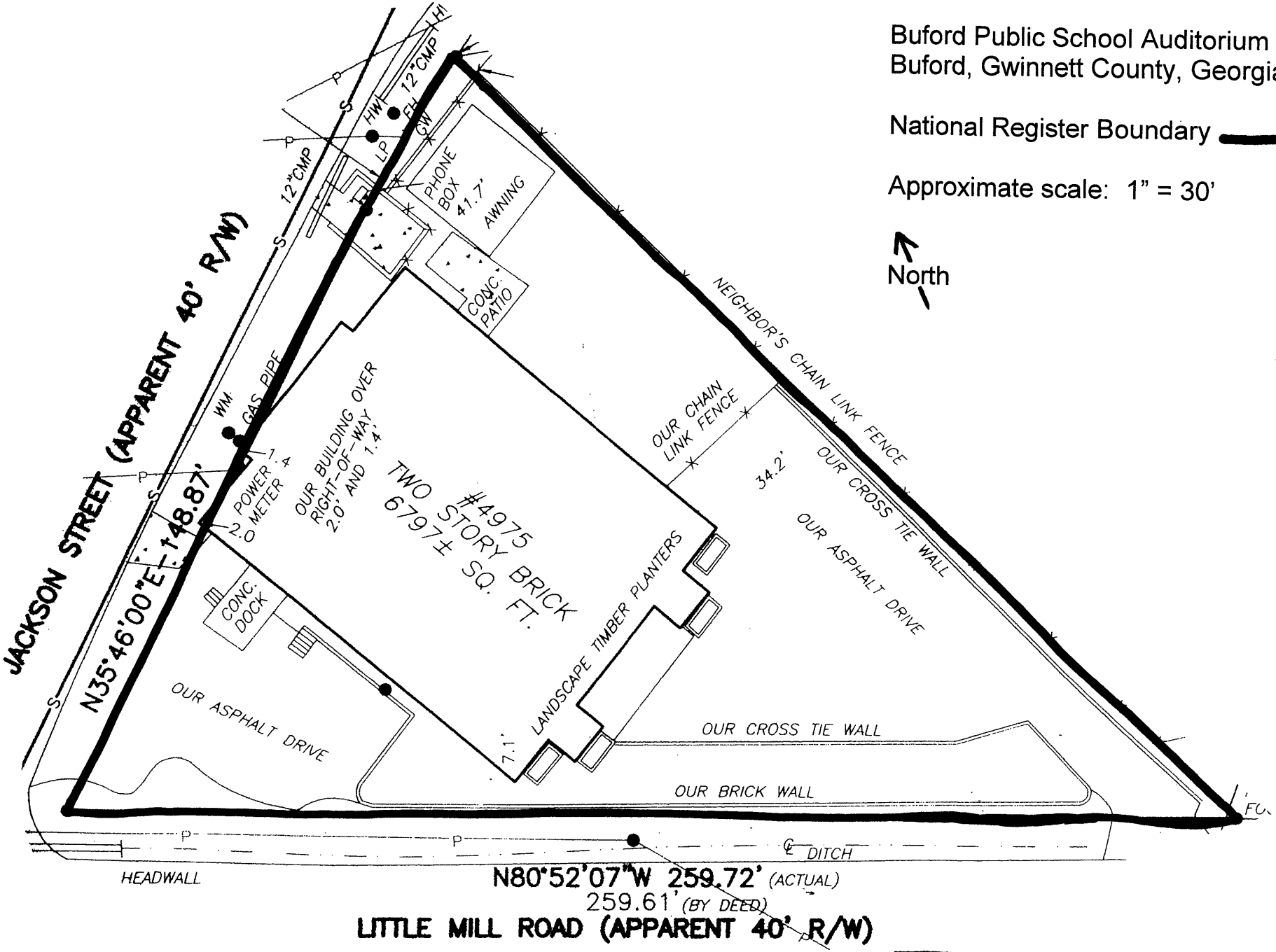
17. Interior, auditorium, photographer facing north.
18. Interior, auditorium, photographer facing southwest.
19. Interior, auditorium, stage, photographer facing northwest.
20. Interior, girls dressing room/storage area, photographer facing northeast.
21. Interior, girls dressing room/storage area, photographer facing southwest.
22. Interior, auditorium, photographer facing east.
23. Interior, auditorium, photographer facing northwest.
24. Interior, office kitchen, photographer facing southwest.
25. Interior, office kitchen, theater projection openings, photographer facing southeast.
26. Main entrance, second floor with theater projecting openings, photographer facing northeast.
27. Main entrance, second floor, photographer facing southwest.
28. Main entrance, second floor, window, photographer facing southeast.
29. Interior, second floor, photographer facing southeast.

(HPD WORD form version 11-03-01)

Buford Public School Auditorium
Buford, Gwinnett County, Georgia

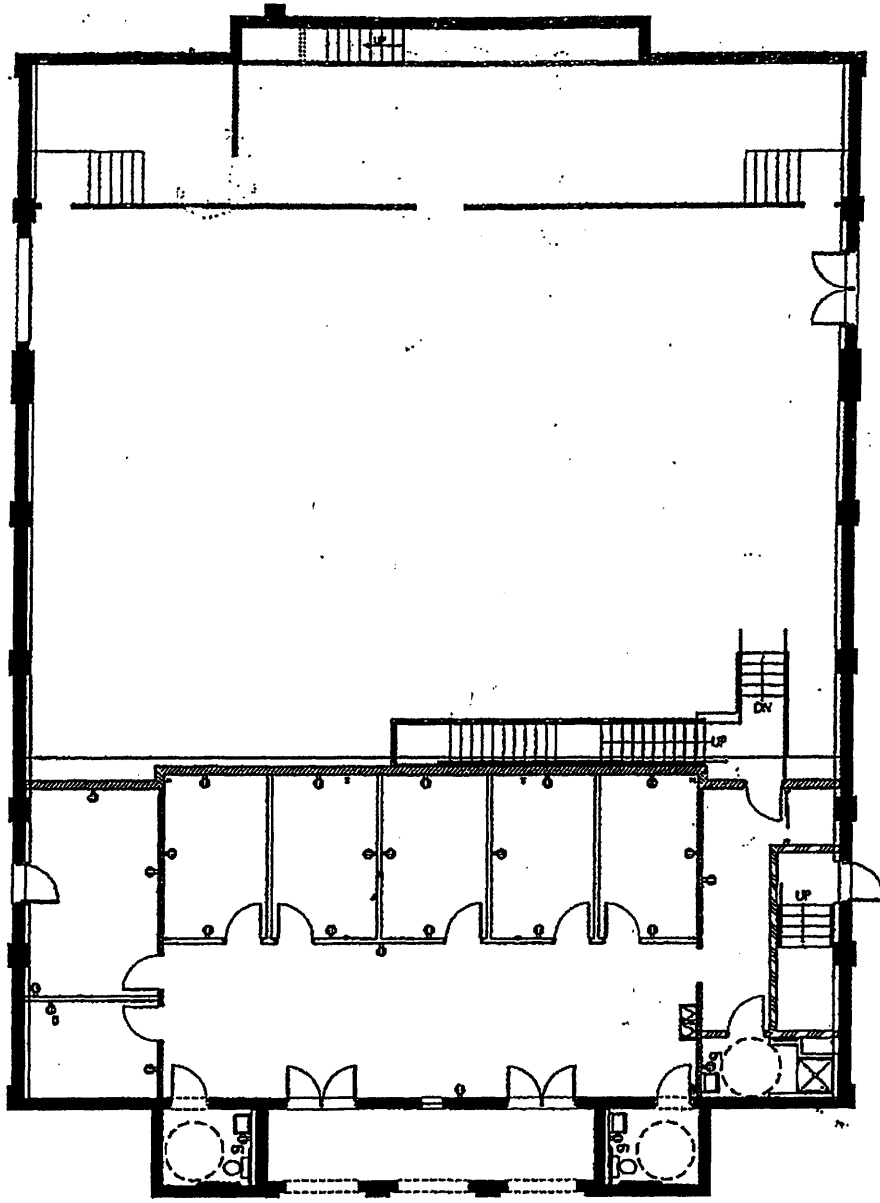
National Register Boundary 

Approximate scale: 1" = 30'



JACKSON STREET (APPARENT 40' R/W)
N35°46'00"E 148.87'

HEADWALL
N80°52'07"W 259.72' (ACTUAL)
259.61' (BY DEED)
LITTLE MILL ROAD (APPARENT 40' R/W)

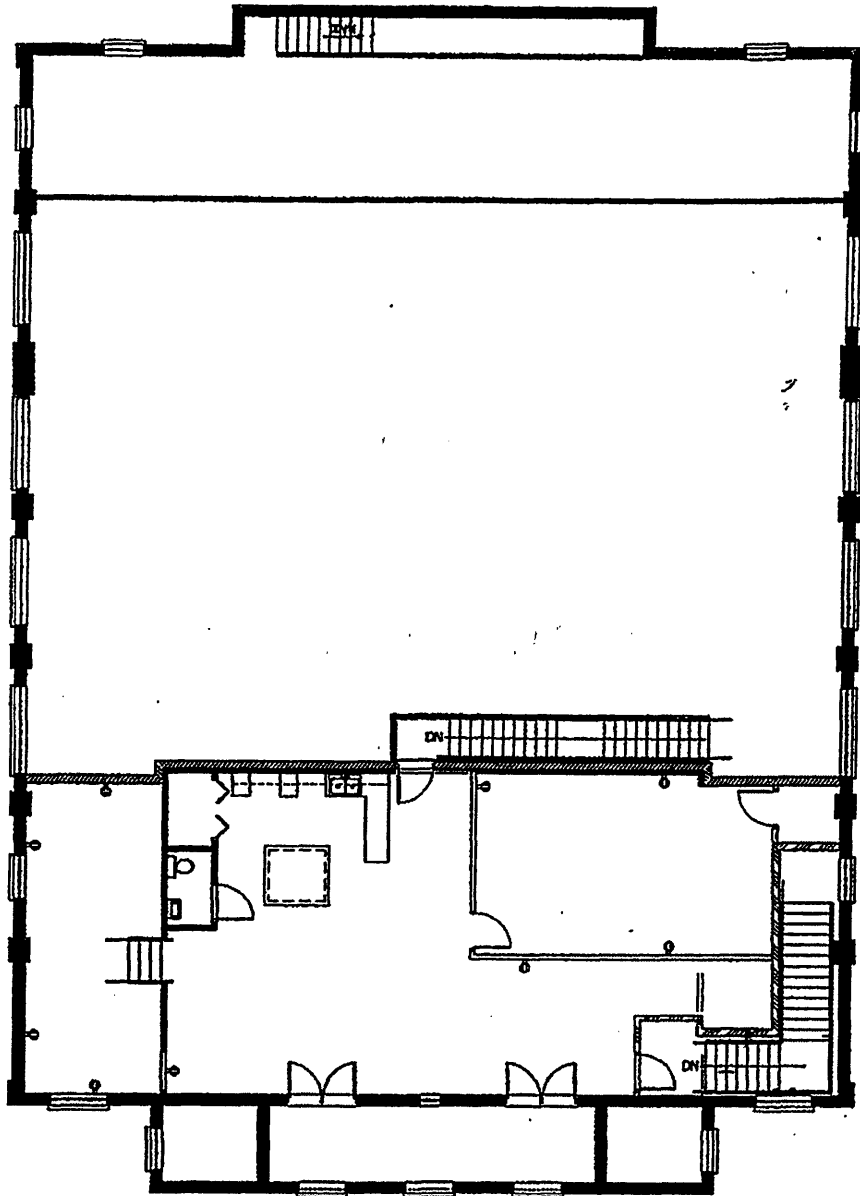


Buford Public School Auditorium
Buford, Gwinnett County, Georgia

First-Floor Plan

No Scale





Buford Public School Auditorium
Buford, Gwinnett County, Georgia

Second-Floor Plan

No Scale

