

ates Department of the Interior
al Park Service

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 Woodlawn School

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number North side SR 1921 0.15 miles west of jct. not for publication N/A

city, town Mebane w/ SR 1920. vicinity

state North Carolina code NC county Alamance code 001 zip code 27302

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	_____ buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ objects
		<u>3</u>	<u>1</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register -0-

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 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. See continuation sheet

William S. P... [Signature] 10-22-91
Signature of certifying official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

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 and bureau _____

5. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this 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:) _____

Signature of the Keeper _____ Date of Action _____

Function or Use

Functions (enter categories from instructions)
FUNCTION: school
FUNCTION: meeting hall
RECREATION AND CULTURE: sports
facility (ballfield)

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)
SOCIAL: meeting hall
RECREATION AND CULTURE: sports
facility (ballfield)

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)
OTHER: Simplified Queen Anne

Materials (enter categories from instructions)
foundation BRICK
walls Weatherboard
roof ASPHALT
other WOOD

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Woodlawn School, Alamance Co., N. C.

7. DESCRIPTION

Summary

Woodlawn School is located in Alamance County, North Carolina, two miles northwest of the city of Mebane. The southward-facing school occupies the north end of a 4.36-acre lot that includes two other contributing resources (a ballfield and a wood shed) and a noncontributing well. Built in two stages in 1911-12 and 1913, Woodlawn School has weatherboard siding, a brick foundation, and an asphalt-shingle gable roof with a belfry. The interior of the school is simply detailed with plaster and tongue-and-groove finishes and originally had two classrooms and several smaller auxiliary rooms. In 1939 a stage was built in one of the classrooms and the school was converted to exclusive use as a community center. In its form and detailing Woodlawn School is based on a Queen Anne-style design by Raleigh architects Barrett & Thomson contained in a 1911 North Carolina Board of Education publication.

School: Exterior

The exterior of Woodlawn School has remained virtually unchanged since 1913. The first section of Woodlawn School to be built was the 1911-12 eastern half consisting of a single classroom with shed-roofed front auxiliary rooms; in 1913 a second classroom with shed-roofed front auxiliary rooms was built against the west side of the first classroom (see floor plan, Exhibit 3). The two sections were built to identical specifications and share stretcher-bond brick foundations with brick-lattice vents and architectural details such as cornice returns, frieze boards, quarter-round corner boards with diminutive caps, simple door and window trim, and tripartite louvered vents in the gables. Early photographs and surviving paint layers indicate that the weatherboard sheathing was originally painted white and the trim work was painted green. The two classrooms are lighted by tall six-over-six sash windows with three-pane transom sashes. Rising between the classrooms is a large brick stove flue.

The auxiliary rooms form a continuous shed-roofed element across much of the south elevation. These rooms are lighted by six-over-six sash windows and several small, high-placed, one-pane windows that were added after about 1930. The original entry to the 1911 half of the school was converted to a window (the easternmost on the front) at an early date. The present main

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 2

Woodlawn School, Alamance Co., N. C.

entry opens into the vestibule of the 1913 addition and is hung with double paneled doors surmounted by a three-pane transom. Sheltering this entry is a gable-roofed porch supported by two pairs of closely set square wood posts. The posts have molded neckings and are joined at the top by small arch-like elements. Against the school wall are two pilasters with detailing similar to that of the free-standing posts; formerly a balustrade with square-section balusters or slats connected the pilasters and posts on the sides of the porch. The ceiling and gable of the porch are sheathed in tongue-and-groove boards.

On the east side of the 1911-12 classroom is an entry with a glazed door and a three-pane transom (this entry may replace an earlier window). Over this entry, supported by brackets, is a gabled roof with a ceiling and gable sheathed in tongue-and-groove boards. Rising from the roof ridge of the 1911 section near the south gable is a belfry with three arched louvered vents, a pyramidal roof with a simple wooden finial, and architectural detailing similar to that of the structure below. The bell in the belfry was manufactured at the Hillsboro [N. C.] Bell Company.

School: Interior

Woodlawn School's two classrooms are characterized by wooden floors, beaded tongue-and-groove ceilings, and plaster-and-lath walls above beaded tongue-and-groove wainscots with molded chair rails. Five doorways surmounted by three-pane transoms and hung with six panel doors (the panels arranged vertically) open from the classrooms into the auxiliary rooms. Suspended from the ceiling are light fixtures that probably date to the 1930s or 1940s. A bell cord hangs down into the east classroom at its south end. On the south wall of the east classroom hangs a framed 1917 charter for the Woodlawn Union of the Farmers Educational and Cooperative Union of America. In the west classroom are an early-twentieth-century teacher's desk and a Hobart M. Cable Piano that are associated with the historic uses of the building.

The two classrooms were formerly divided by a wooden partition that slid upwards into a pocket in the ceiling. A brass catch on the floor between the classrooms is associated with this former partition. In 1939 this partition was removed and a stage was built against the west wall of the west classroom, both changes reflecting the school's new exclusive use as a community center. The stage is accessed by steps at each end and has a beaded tongue-and-groove apron, red curtains hung from a wire, and a wooden backdrop partition.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 3

Woodlawn School, Alamance Co., N. C.

The auxiliary rooms have beaded tongue-and-groove ceilings and horizontal beaded tongue-and-groove walls above vertical beaded tongue-and-groove wainscots. The 1913 vestibule has pegboards for coats nailed to its walls; the smaller 1913 room contains two early-twentieth-century cabinets and may have served for the storage of school supplies. The partition separating the 1911 vestibule and coat room was removed and the rooms converted into a kitchen during the latter part of the 1910s. The kitchen is furnished with a mid-twentieth-century sink and counters. One of the doors leading from the kitchen to the east classroom was made into a Dutch door.

School Grounds

Woodlawn School occupies the north end of a 4.36-acre parcel (see Exhibit 2). The parcel is bounded on the south side by the hardtop Mebane-Rogers Road (State Road 1921) and on the east side by a gravel lane known as Wilkerson Trail. To the north of the parcel the land falls away to the Mill Creek stream valley, now made into a small lake. The area around the school is elevated above the southern two-thirds of the lot and is grown up in oaks, maples, tulip poplars and other deciduous trees. Several shrubs have been planted around the foundation; a 1923 financial statement for the school indicates that shrubs were planted on the grounds during the early years of the school.

To the east side of the school is an original well with a concrete-block curb and a canopy dating to the late 1940s. The well canopy consists of an asphalt-shingled pyramidal roof supported by four log sapling posts painted white. To the north side of the school is a vertical-board-sided, shed-roofed frame wood shed that dates to the first half of the twentieth century; this wood shed may replace an earlier shed of similar form, materials, and placement. The wood shed was also used to store a stage that was constructed of several detachable sections. This stage was set up in the school on special occasions until the present permanent stage superceded it.

To the south side of the school is a 1930s ballfield, the northern end of which has been dug out of the elevated ground on which the school is located. The ballfield has two diamonds. The diamond in the northwest corner of the field has a low backstop constructed of creosoted telephone pole sections, boards, and wire; this diamond is grown up in grass and serves principally as right field for the other diamond. The diamond in the northeast corner has a modern metal backstop and a well maintained playing surface.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 4

Woodlawn School, Alamance Co., N. C.

Two two-seat privies formerly stood near the school. In the 1930s a tennis court with a grass playing surface was constructed to the north side of the school. This court has disappeared, now completely overgrown.

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) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

EDUCATION

SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance

1911-1941

Significant Dates

1911-12

1913

1939

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Barrett & Thomson, Architects

& Engineers

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 3 Page 1

Woodlawn School, Alamance Co., N. C.

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Summary

Woodlawn School, built in 1911-12 and 1913, is one of the best preserved rural schools in Alamance County, North Carolina. The two-room school represents a superb local example of the types of facilities constructed throughout the state during a period of educational reform and expansion at the beginning of the twentieth century. The school also testifies to the determination of the Woodlawn community to provide quality education for its children. Woodlawn School is therefore locally significant under National Register Criterion A in the area of Education. Woodlawn School is also eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion A in the area of Social History owing to its secondary use as a community center during the years 1912 to 1935 and its primary use as a community center after 1935. The school was altered in 1939 with Works Progress Administration funds when a stage was built in one of the classrooms and a ballfield laid out on the grounds. The school functioned as an interdenominational church and a meeting hall for organizations such as the local union of the Farmer's Educational and Cooperative Union of America. In its form and detailing Woodlawn School is based on a simplified Queen Anne-style design by Raleigh architects Barrett & Thomson contained in a 1911 North Carolina Board of Education publication. The school combines original exterior elements such as a belfry, decorative porch, and an innovative fenestration system with later interior features such as the stage associated with the building's use as a community center. Woodlawn School is therefore locally significant under Criterion C for its architecture.¹

¹A number of individuals assisted in the preparation of this nomination report. Claudia Brown of the North Carolina Historic Preservation Office reviewed the various drafts of the report and saw the nomination through to completion. Gale Varinoski, chairman of the board of Woodlawn Community, Inc., initiated the project and provided valuable assistance throughout. Gary Winkler of Preservation Technologies helped with measurements of the school. In addition to the informants listed in the bibliography the following people provided information: Caroline Roney, Glenn McMullen and Kay Davis.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

Woodlawn School, Alamance Co., N. C.

Historical Background

Woodlawn School dates its origins to the year 1900 when residents of the area sought to enroll their children at a school in the nearby town of Mebane.² According to local tradition, the parents were told "country jack rabbits" were not wanted at the town school.³ Dr. William Newton Tate (1846-1931), a leading resident of the area, and others sought support for the establishment of a school from the Alamance County Board of Education. The county board turned down the request but Tate met with more success from the state Board of Education, which offered to pay a teacher's salary if the locality could secure a school building.⁴

The first Woodlawn School was built in 1901 on a lot provided by Mrs. Will Aulbert. The first school was a one-story, one-room log building that stood approximately a half mile to the north of the present school. Residents of the area (mostly the parents of the first students at the school) provided materials and furnishings for the school and formed the construction crew. According to local tradition, W. N. Tate's wife, Fannie, named the school after the woods and lawn that surrounded it. The first teacher at Woodlawn

²Although most accounts agree on a circa 1900 date of establishment for the Woodlawn School, a detailed 1893 map of Alamance County shows a district schoolhouse approximately 2/3 of a mile northwest of Mebane, ie. in the same general location as the present Woodlawn School. The map is contained in Elinor Samons Euliss, ed., Alamance County, The Legacy of Its People and Places (Greensboro, N. C.: Legacy Publications, 1984).

³Annie Lee Young, "History of Woodlawn Cited." (Mebane, N. C.) Enterprise-Journal, August 8, 1968. Unless otherwise indicated, information in the Historical Background section of this report is derived from Young's article.

⁴Alamance County Board of Education records for the years 1886 through 1918 are missing, a period that encompasses both the establishment of the Woodlawn School and the construction of the present school building. North Carolina Board of Education records are incomplete for the period around 1900 and state documents pertaining to the establishment of Woodlawn School apparently do not exist.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 3

Woodlawn School, Alamance Co., N. C.

was Belle Murray. During the early years the school year averaged only 2-1/2 to 3-1/2 months long.⁵ The first school doubled as a Sunday School; later an arbor was built next to the school for Sunday School classes.⁶

In 1909 Annie B. Lasley became the sixth or seventh instructor to teach at Woodlawn. Lasley was the twenty-two-year-old daughter of G. W. Lasley, a wheelwright who resided in neighboring Orange County. Miss Lasley and an older sister, Cora E., who was also a public school teacher, lived with their parents in 1909.⁷ According to a 1913 article in the Mebane Leader, prior to Lasley's involvement Woodlawn School "did very little" and "the people had no heart in it." "Miss Lasley began the work and infused new life and hope in the school," the article continued. One of Lasley's reforms cited was the lengthening of the school year to eight months.

Other accounts as well credit Lasley with improving the calibre of education at Woodlawn School and in generating support for a new facility. In July 1911 voters of Melville and Haw River townships in eastern Alamance County voted unanimously in favor of a special tax to pay for a new school at Woodlawn.⁸ A 4.36-acre school site was sold to the Alamance County Board of Education for \$75 by E. P. and T. W. Cook in September 1911.⁹ Construction proceeded swiftly and the original section of the present school was apparently completed by 1912. A second classroom was built in 1913, and there is evidence that a third classroom was contemplated in 1921 in an attempt to stave off a proposed consolidation.¹⁰

⁵"Woodlawn." (Mebane, N. C.) Mebane Leader, May 22, 1913. Microfilm at the North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh.

⁶Article on the Tate family by Barbara Wells, in Euliss, Alamance County.

⁷U. S. Census, 1910 Alamance County, N. C. Population Schedules.

⁸Mebane Leader, July 20, 1911.

⁹Alamance County Deed Book 60, page 195.

¹⁰Erastus P. Cook to the Secretary of State of North Carolina, June 21, 1921. Records of the Department of Public Instruction, Office of the Superintendent, General Correspondence, at the North

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 4

Woodlawn School, Alamance Co., N. C.

An early commencement exercise held at the school was reported on in the May 22, 1913 issue of the Mebane Leader. Woodlawn School was described as "one of the best and most up to date country school houses in the county. The house is well finished and the seats and furniture are of the best." The article also noted the enthusiasm for the school among the residents of the community. With the completion of the second classroom in 1913, Irma Coble joined Annie Lasley at the school. During the 1910s Coble was appointed the first Alamance County Home Demonstration agent. Described by a University of North Carolina sociologist as a "capable woman ... engaged in a splendid work," by 1925 Coble organized thirty home demonstration clubs in the county that gave instruction in cooking, sewing, millinery, canning, basketry and home improvement.¹¹

Contemporary with Coble's efforts a home demonstration club was organized at Woodlawn School with Maggie (Margaret) Cates (1877-1952) as the first president. Woodlawn students participated in the club's activities. According to school historian Annie Lee Young, "A domestic science room was added and equipped with an oil stove and cooking utensils" during the 1910s. This domestic science room (kitchen) was inserted into the space previously occupied by the vestibule and coat room of the 1911 classroom.

An important figure in the life of the Woodlawn school and community during the 1910s and into the mid-century was Charles F. Cates, husband of Maggie Cates. Cates (1872-1947) spearheaded the drive to have the Woodlawn community incorporated and he served at various times as chairman, secretary and treasurer of the Woodlawn Community, Inc. board of directors. In later years Cates served as president of the North Carolina Milk Producers Federation, president of the state chapter of the Farmer's Alliance, and served on the state Board of Agriculture, the executive committee of the state Grange, and the Board of Trustees of the University of North Carolina. Cates is perhaps best known as the founder of Charles F. Cates & Sons pickles. Cates and M. C. Terrell, superintendent of Alamance County schools, were instrumental in the consolidation of Alamance County's high schools

Carolina State Archives, Raleigh.

¹¹Paul W. Wager, County Government and County Affairs in Alamance County, North Carolina (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Institute for Research in Social Science, 1925) 44-45.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 5

Woodlawn School, Alamance Co., N. C.

beginning in the 1920s.¹² The Cates family and another family who lived near the school, the Woosleys, provided lodging for many of Woodlawn School's teachers.¹³

Woodlawn Community, Inc. meetings were held at Woodlawn School. Usually the meetings were serious in nature but occasionally they were intended as entertainment. At an early meeting in 1914 or 1915 a man from the nearby city of Burlington presented a moving picture or magic lantern show on Africa.¹⁴ Short skits that poked fun at local residents, sometimes presented in the form of mock trials, and an "Ugliest Man Contest" were some of the other activities at the community meetings.¹⁵

Another organization that met at Woodlawn School was the Woodlawn Union (No. 2697) of the Farmers Educational and Cooperative Union of America. Also known as the National Farmers Union, the Farmers Educational and Cooperative Union was established in Texas in 1902 to promote the political and economic interests of farmers.¹⁶ During the early 1910s North Carolina had the largest state membership in the Union and in 1912 1,783 locals operated in the state.¹⁷ Women as well as men were members of the North Carolina division of the Union which among its reforms promoted the establishment of domestic

¹²Cates interview; John W. Harden, Alamance County: Economic and Social University Extension Division series v. 7, n. 10 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1928) 33.

¹³Cates interview.

¹⁴Eloise Cates, telephone interview; Mebane, N. C., June 23, 1991.

¹⁵Young and Cates interviews.

¹⁶U. S. Census, 1910 Alamance County, N. C., Population Schedules; Edward L. Schapsmeier and Frederick H. Schapsmeier, Encyclopedia of American Agricultural History. (Westport, Cn.: Greenwood Press, 1975) 239-40.

¹⁷Charles P. Loomis, "The Rise and Decline of the North Carolina Farmers' Union," The North Carolina Historical Review v. 7 n. 3 (July, 1930): 309,315.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 6

Woodlawn School, Alamance Co., N. C.

science courses at rural schools.¹⁸ The Woodlawn local was formed in 1917 towards the end of the Union's popularity in North Carolina. J. A. Holt served as the Woodlawn Union's first president; Charles F. Cates served as the first Secretary-Treasurer.¹⁹

In the early 1920s revenue from the special railroad fund enabled Woodlawn to employ its first year-round teacher, Florence Gray. According to Young, Gray "taught piano lessons, held a story hour with children each week, worked 4-H Club girls, coached students who had failed school work, helped prepare exhibits for the Mebane Fair, worked in the Sunday School, [and helped] with community meetings." A surviving 1923 statement of Woodlawn School Funds suggests that the school also entered an exhibit at the state fair.²⁰ Along with other Alamance County schools, Woodlawn School participated in an annual school parade at the county seat in Graham. One year Woodlawn paraded a float that was a miniature replica of the school house, with children riding inside and smoke coming out of a chimney.²¹

Former students of Woodlawn School recall an educational experience that was far from monotonous.²² Parents took on the responsibility of transporting their children to school; one father picked up the neighborhood children in a two-horse wagon. During bad weather the students sometimes had to stay overnight at the school. Occasionally the students brought vegetables that were left to simmer in a pot on one of the stoves: "At lunchtime, hungry students gathered around to enjoy hot soup." The school day extended from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 or 3:30 p.m. and the bell was used to signal the beginning of school, recess, lunch and the end of the day. In addition to the Three

¹⁸The State Farmer's Union Educational Report. (North Carolina, 1913), 2.

¹⁹Charter, Woodlawn Union No. 2697, 1917. Mounted on wall at Woodlawn School.

²⁰A copy of this statement is on file at the Survey Branch of the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, Raleigh.

²¹Young interview.

²²The information in this paragraph is derived from a report by instructor Caroline Roney and students at Woodlawn Middle School, Mebane, N. C. (ca. 1990). ;

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 7

Woodlawn School, Alamance Co., N. C.

Rs, courses included North Carolina history, geography, spelling, language, drawing, hygiene and home economics. The parents provided text books and the school also had a small library.

In 1933 Woodlawn School was consolidated with Mebane and only the first through fourth graders stayed on at the school. In 1934 the last teacher, Betty Nelson, married and moved away and the school closed. On November 5, 1934, the Alamance County Board of Education authorized the sale of Woodlawn School and three other surplus schools.²³ In May 1935, after an auction, offers, and counteroffers, the school board approved the sale of the Woodlawn School to Woodlawn Community, Inc. for \$400, a transfer recorded in 1939 after the last of several installments was paid to the county.²⁴

After 1935 Woodlawn School served primarily as a community center, accommodating community meetings and picnics, home demonstration club meetings, 4-H Club meetings, and square dances.²⁵ In 1939 the school was remodeled as a community center with Works Progress Administration funds. A Mr. Hawkins from Mebane directed the local carpenters and other workmen involved in the project.²⁶ Also during this period the play area to the south side of the school was improved as a ballfield and a tennis court was constructed to the north side of the school and wood shed. The tennis court was considered a novelty in rural Alamance County. The court was graded by Howard Cates; the project itself may have been conceived by teacher Betty Nelson.²⁷ The ballfield was home to a team known as "Golley's Babies" assembled by area resident Golley Gattis.²⁸

²³Minute Book, 1932 to 1948, Board of Education, Alamance County. At the Alamance County Schools Administrative Offices, Graham.

²⁴Ibid; Alamance County Deed Book 124, page 240.

²⁵Gale Varinoski, "Historical Events in the Life of Woodlawn School" (1990). Typescript on file with the Survey Branch.

²⁶Wilkerson interview.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Cates interview.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 8

Woodlawn School, Alamance Co., N. C.

Woodlawn School continues to serve as a community center, although it is not used to the extent that it was during the early and mid-twentieth century. 4-H Club activities were held at the school into the 1960s under the direction of Ralph and Rebecca Poe.²⁹ Today the ballfield on the grounds receives frequent use and the school building itself is used seasonally for baseball equipment storage. Woodlawn Community, Inc. still holds an annual picnic at the school and there is a growing desire to rehabilitate the building and return it to more active use.

Architecture, Education and Social History Contexts

Woodlawn School is one of the most elaborate and best preserved of Alamance County's historic rural school houses, of which a dozen or so were identified by a county-wide survey conducted in the late 1970s and more are pictured in county histories.³⁰ Most of these school houses are vernacular one-story frame buildings that are either domestic in scale, form, and detailing, or resemble the small rural churches of the region. The earliest identified schools date to the mid-nineteenth century; the majority date to the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the first quarter of the twentieth century.

Woodlawn School is based on a design by the Raleigh architectural firm of Barrett & Thomson that appeared in the 1911 publication Plans for Public Schoolhouses issued by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. Charles W. Barrett and Frank K. Thomson practiced in partnership during the first two decades of the twentieth century; in 1903 they provided schoolhouse designs to Superintendent James Y. Joyner for use in the first edition of Plans. Barrett & Thomson were probably familiar with the emerging literature on rural school design, specifically pamphlets similar to Plans issued by a number of states during the period. The majority of Barrett & Thomson's 1903

²⁹Gale Varinoski, "Historical Events in the Life of Woodlawn School." Typescript, 1990.

³⁰Carl Lounsbury, Alamance County Architectural Heritage. (Burlington, N. C.: Alamance County Historic Properties Commission, 1980) (also, Alamance County Site Files, North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, Raleigh); Elinore Samons Euliss, Alamance County, The Legacy of Its People and Places (Greensboro, N. C.: Legacy Publications, 1984).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 9

Woodlawn School, Alamance Co., N. C.

designs were for plainly detailed one-story hip-roofed buildings, but the architects also included a two-room Queen Anne-style building with decorative porches, false half-timbering in the gables, and an octagonal belfry with belled roof (see Exhibit 4).

Barrett & Thomson's Queen Anne design appears to have been the most popular among North Carolina's educators. In 1906 several buildings based on the design were featured in Improvement in Rural School Houses and Grounds, 1900-1906, issued by Superintendent Joyner's office, and the Women's Association for the Betterment of Public Schoolhouses in North Carolina featured a Wake County building based on the design in a 1908 pamphlet.

In 1911 Superintendent Joyner issued a revised Plans for Public Schoolhouses that featured four designs derived from the 1903 Queen Anne design. Whereas in the 1903 publication the architects had only described how their two-room Queen Anne school could be built in two phases, in the 1911 publication the architects advocated the phased approach more explicitly. The architects also presented designs that exhibited varying degrees of ornamentation as an accommodation to the differing tastes and financial resources of rural school districts.

The Woodlawn school district chose Design No. 2C from the 1911 edition of Plans with the addition of a simplified version of the belfry shown in the more elaborate designs (see Exhibit 5). Barrett & Thomson's working drawings (provided to school districts for a small fee) were followed nearly exactly, down to the detailing of the entry porch and gable vents. The Woodlawn district also followed the suggestion that the school be built in two phases with the gable-fronted right-hand room being built first and the left-hand room second (the one-room starter school is illustrated in Exhibit 6). An innovative feature of Barrett & Thomson's designs that Woodlawn adopted was the use of tall classroom windows with hopper-sash transoms. The hopper-sash transoms were intended to deflect outside air towards the ceiling where it would be more evenly distributed. Another unusual feature Woodlawn adopted was the movable partition that could be "run up overhead and the [classrooms] thrown together for school exercises and entertainments."

The Woodlawn district may also have followed professional advice on school furnishings. Both the 1903 and 1911 Plans for Public School Houses recommended double-walled stoves to prevent injury to students; Woodlawn School had such stoves (see Exhibit 7). The Women's Association for the Betterment of Public Schoolhouses in North Carolina included in its publications lists of appropriate pictures for school walls; at Woodlawn

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 10

Woodlawn School, Alamance Co., N. C.

several early-twentieth-century prints depicting religious and pastoral scenes survive in storage. The Woodlawn district's strict adherence to the proscriptions of outside architects and educators suggests an eagerness to adopt the symbolism as well as the techniques of modern education.

During the first three decades of the twentieth century a number of rural schools were built in Alamance County from Barrett & Thomson designs. Oakdale School, a three-room high school probably built between 1905 and 1910, and Friendship School, another three-room building dating to 1907-08, were apparently based on design No. 2 in the 1903 edition of Plans, although these schools were built with gable roofs rather than the hipped roofs illustrated.³¹ The McCray School (built before 1915) and the Ossipee School (1918) may also have been based on Barrett & Thompson designs.³²

In a broader context Woodlawn School represents a good example of the professionally designed rural public schoolhouses that were built throughout the state and nation during the early twentieth century. These schools shared similar plan elements such as coatrooms and vestibules and features such as folding (or occasionally rolling) partitions and banks of tall classroom windows.³³ Although these schools hearkened back to traditional designs in form, scale, and material, they nevertheless reflected the latest theories concerning lighting, heating, and ventilation and were otherwise meticulously planned to optimize the educational experience of the student.

Woodlawn School was built during a period of reform and expansion that transformed primary education in North Carolina. Initiated in 1901 by Gov. Charles B. Aycock, a former school teacher, and his energetic Superintendent of Public Instruction, James Y. Joyner, these reforms included the creation of teacher training schools and the construction of rural high schools, a restructuring of the education bureaucracy, an increase in the length of school terms and teacher pay, and the establishment of a Loan Fund for

³¹Euliss, p. 509 and 517. Oakdale School was demolished in 1928; the status of Friendship School is unknown. Oakdale School employed the innovative fenestration system also seen at Woodlawn.

³²Ibid, pp. 512-27.

³³S. E. Challman, The Rural School Plant (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Co., 1917).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 11

Woodlawn School, Alamance Co., N. C.

building schools.³⁴ Numerous localities benefitted from the Loan Fund; during the 1912-14 biennium seventy-nine counties received loans totalling \$800,000.³⁵ In 1916 it was estimated that 3/5 of all schoolhouses in North Carolina had been built after 1902, in part a reflection of the success of the Loan Fund.³⁶ Although documentation for Woodlawn School appears not to have survived, Woodlawn may have been built with Loan Fund assistance since it fulfilled one of the principal qualifications for loans--the adoption of an approved schoolhouse plan.

The Alamance County survey did not identify any buildings other than Woodlawn School that were used exclusively as community centers. However, it seems likely that many of the identified school houses functioned as community centers, Sunday schools, chapels, etc., concurrently with their use as schools. This was not unusual in nineteenth and early-twentieth-century North Carolina. As one student of the subject has stated, "In early days when the one-teacher school existed in almost every neighborhood, the school was the most useful social center in the settlement; even more than the church."³⁷ This tradition was reinforced by North Carolina's early-twentieth-century educational reformers. The Women's Association for the Betterment of Public Schoolhouses in North Carolina sought "to make the schoolhouse the center of the social life in the community," as stated in the organization's constitution.³⁸ Woodlawn School played an important role in the social life of its immediate vicinity in east central Alamance County.

³⁴R. D. W. Connor, North Carolina, Rebuilding and Ancient Commonwealth, 1584-1925. (Chicago and New York: The American Historical Society, Inc., 1929) 415, 646-47.

³⁵Ibid, 646-47.

³⁶Edgar W. Knight, Ph.D., Public School Education in North Carolina (Cambridge, Ma.: The Riverside Press, 1916) 350.

³⁷Oakel Burnis Bass, "Community Use of Rural Schools in North Carolina" (Thesis, University of North Carolina, 1950) 12.

³⁸C. H. Mebane, The Women's Association for the Betterment of Public Schoolhouses in North Carolina (Raleigh: Office of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1908).

9. Major Bibliographical References

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 # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of property 4.36 acres

UTM References

A

1	7	6	5	3	4	3	0	3	9	7	3	8	0
Zone				Easting				Northing					

C

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

B

Zone				Easting				Northing					

D

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries of the nominated property are depicted on the accompanying partial tax map entitled "Alamance County, Melville Township, Sheet No. 10-2, Parcel 18" (Exhibit 1) and on the accompanying sketch map (Exhibit 2).

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundaries of the nominated property correspond to the original and present property lines and include all associated contributing resources.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Daniel Pezzoni
organization Preservation Technologies date August 1, 1991
street & number PO Box 742 telephone (703) 366-0133
city or town Roanoke state Virginia zip code 24019

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 1

Woodlawn School, Alamance Co., N. C.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Alamance County, deed and tax records.

Bass, Oakel Burnis. "Community Use of Rural Schools in North Carolina." Thesis, University of North Carolina, 1950.

Challman, S. E. The Rural School Plant. Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Co., 1917.

Connor, R. D. W. North Carolina, Rebuilding an Ancient Commonwealth, 1584-1925. Chicago and New York: The American Historical Society, Inc., 1929.

Euliss, Elinor Samons, ed. Alamance County, The Legacy of Its People and Places. Greensboro, N. C.: Legacy Publications, 1984.

Harden, John W. Alamance County: Economic and Social. University Extension Division series v. 7, n. 10. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1928.

Interviews with Eloise and Howard Cates, Jenny Mae King, Marie Eudy, Lucille Wall, Paul Wilkerson, and Annie Lee Young, June 22 and 23, 1991.

Lefler, Hugh Talmage, and Albert Ray Newsome. The History of a Southern State, North Carolina. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1954.

Loomis, Charles P. "The Rise and Decline of the North Carolina Farmers' Union," The North Carolina Historical Review. v. 7 n. 3 (July, 1930).

Lounsbury, Carl. Alamance County Architectural Heritage. Burlington, N. C.: Alamance County Historic Properties Commission, 1980.

Matheson, Donald Stuart. "Farm Movements in North Carolina and their Significance." Thesis, University of North Carolina, 1933.

Mebane, C. H. The Women's Association for the Betterment of Public Schoolhouses in North Carolina. Raleigh: Office of State Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1908.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 2

Woodlawn School, Alamance Co., N. C.

Mebane Leader (Mebane, N. C.), July 20, 1911; May 22, 1913.

Minute Book, 1932 to 1948, Board of Education, Alamance County.

North Carolina Board of Education, State Loan Fund for Building Schools,
General Correspondence.

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, Office of the
Superintendent, General Correspondence.

North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office. Alamance County
Historic Sites File.

North Carolina State Superintendent of Public Instruction. Plans for Public
School Houses, with Explanations, Specifications, Bills of Material and
Estimates of Cost. Raleigh: Edwards & Broughton, State Printers, 1903.

_____. Raleigh: E. M. Uzzell and Co., 1911.

_____. Raleigh: E. M. Uzzell and Co., 1914.

Roney, Caroline. Report on Woodlawn School, based on interviews with former
Woodlawn School students. Mebane, N. C.: ca. 1990?

U. S. Census, 1910 Alamance and Orange County, North Carolina, Population
Schedules.

Varinoski, Gale. "Historical Events in the Life of the Woodlawn School"
(1990).

Wager, Paul W. County Government and County Affairs in Alamance County,
North Carolina. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Institute
for Research in Social Science, 1925.

Woodlawn Union No. 2697 charter (Farmer's Educational and Cooperative Union
of America), 1917.

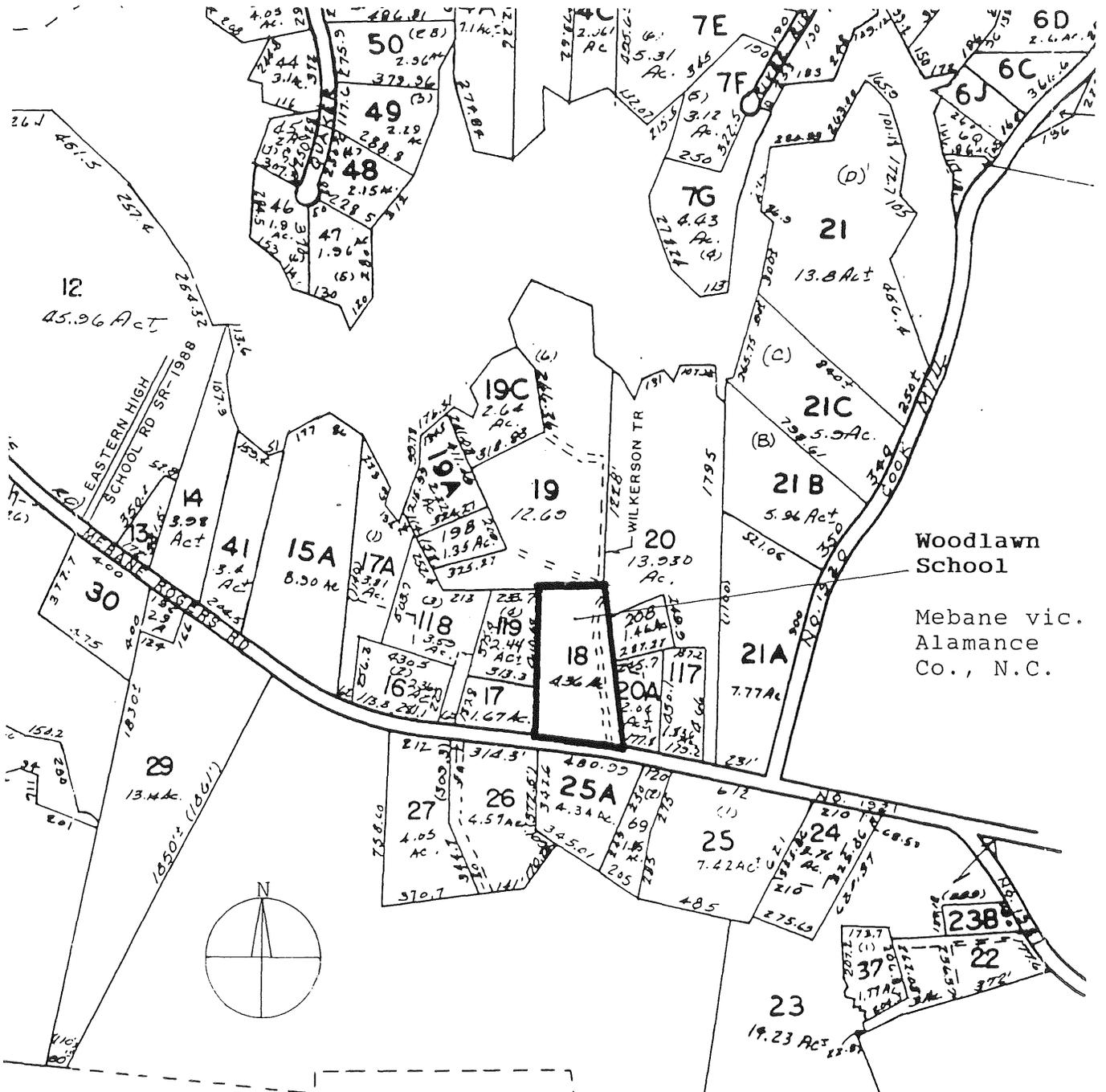
Young, Annie Lee. "History of Woodlawn Cited." Mebane Register (Mebane N.
C.), August 8, 1968.
interest)

3. Placement of travelways

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number Exhibit Page 1



Section of tax parcel map entitled "Alamance County, Melville Township, Sheet No. 10-2".

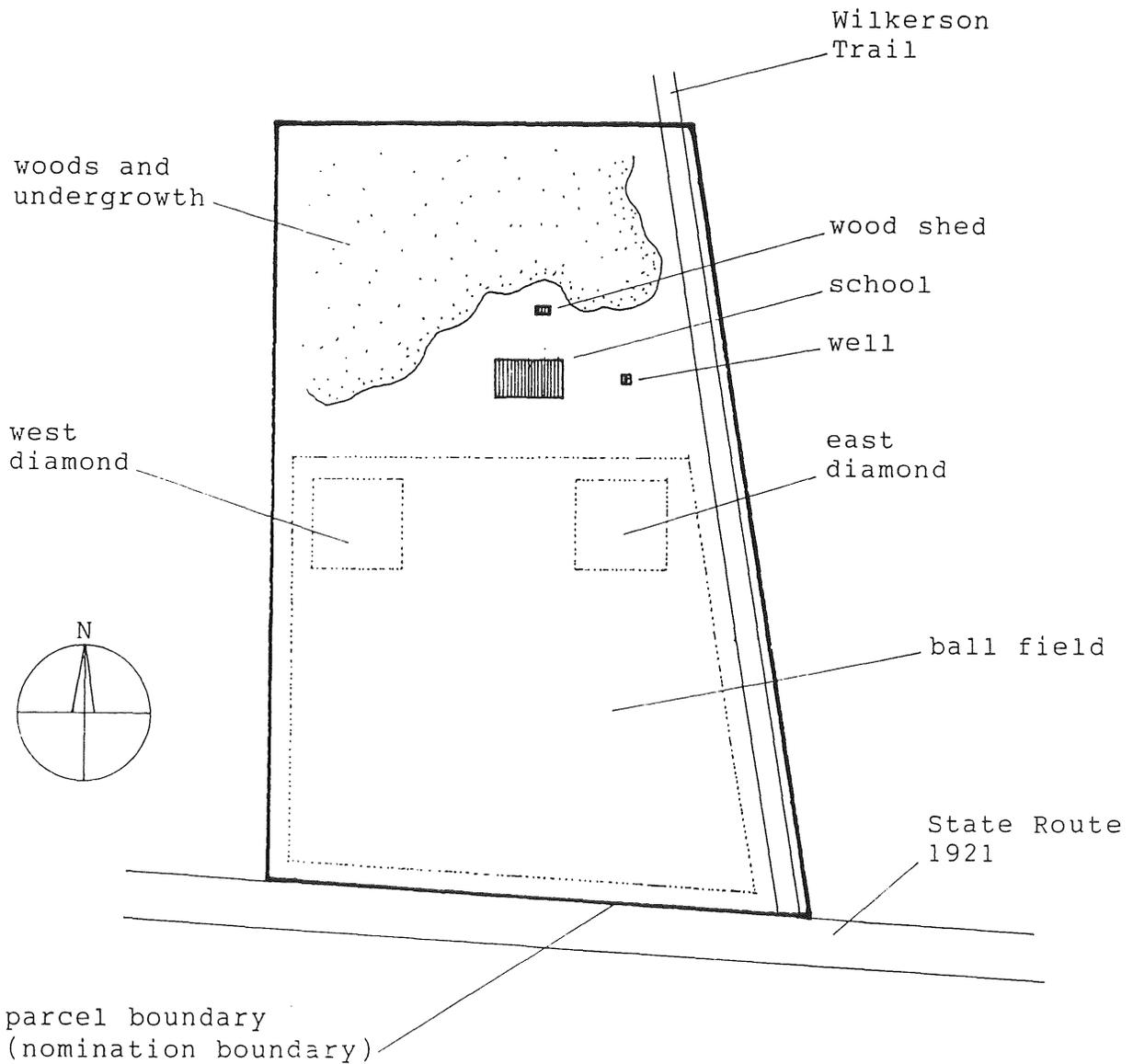
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number Exhibit Page 2

Woodlawn School

Mebane vic.,
Alamance Co., NC



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

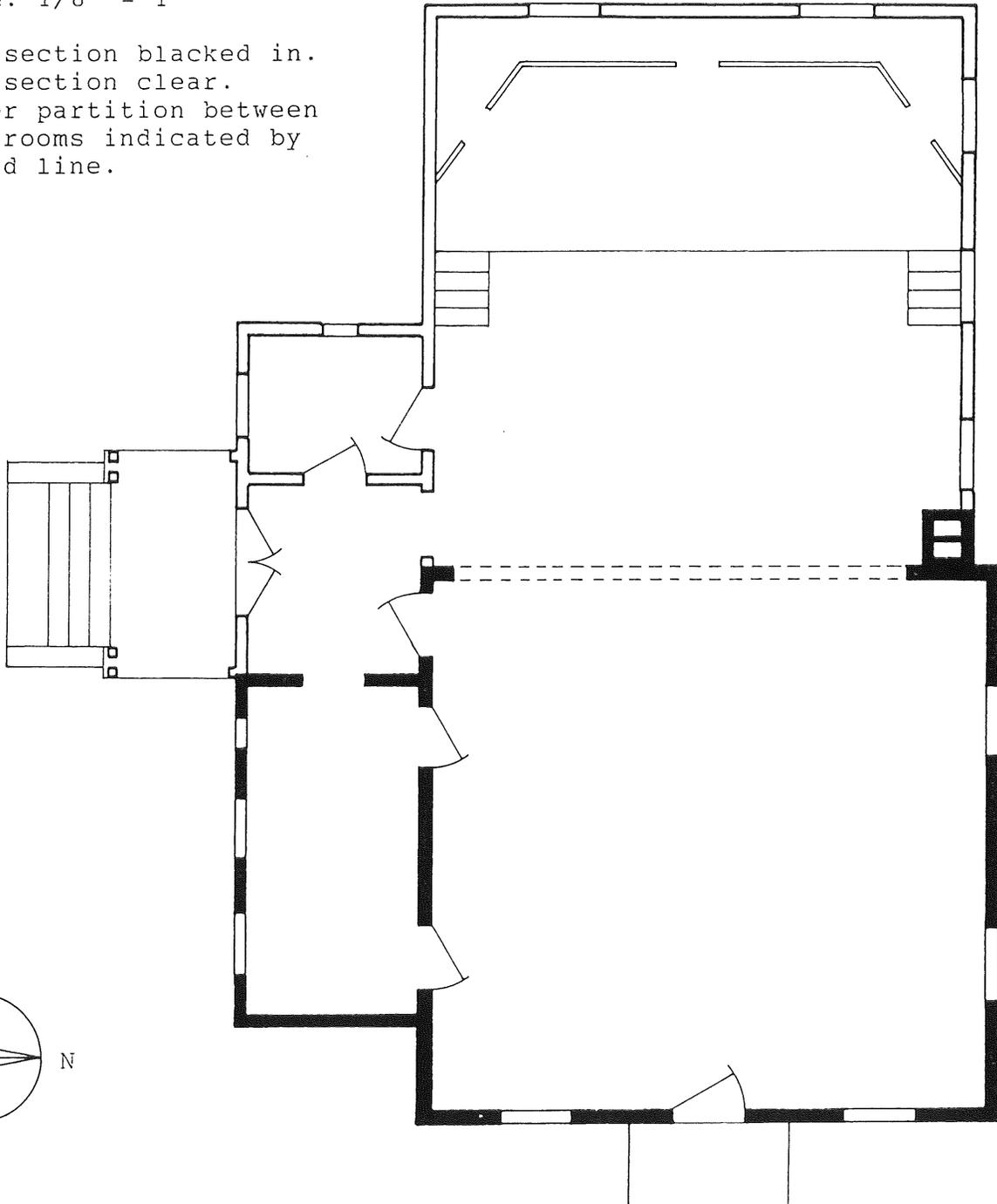
Section number Exhibit Page 3

Woodlawn School

Mebane vicinity,
Alamance Co., N. C.

Scale: 1/8" = 1'

1911 section blacked in.
1913 section clear.
Former partition between
classrooms indicated by
dotted line.

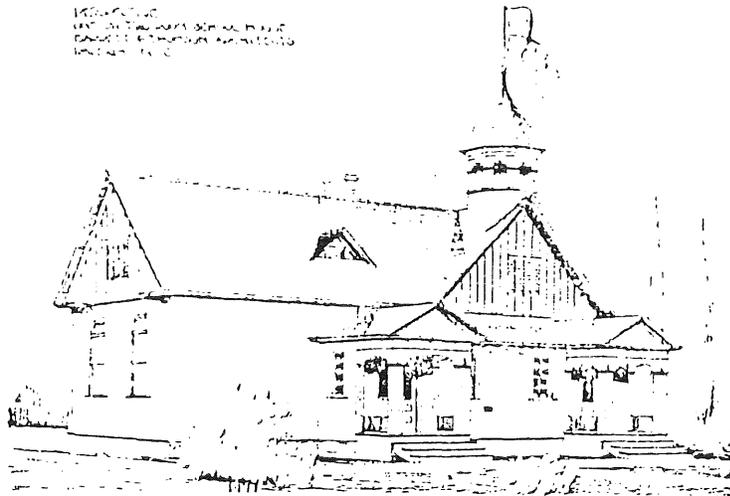


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

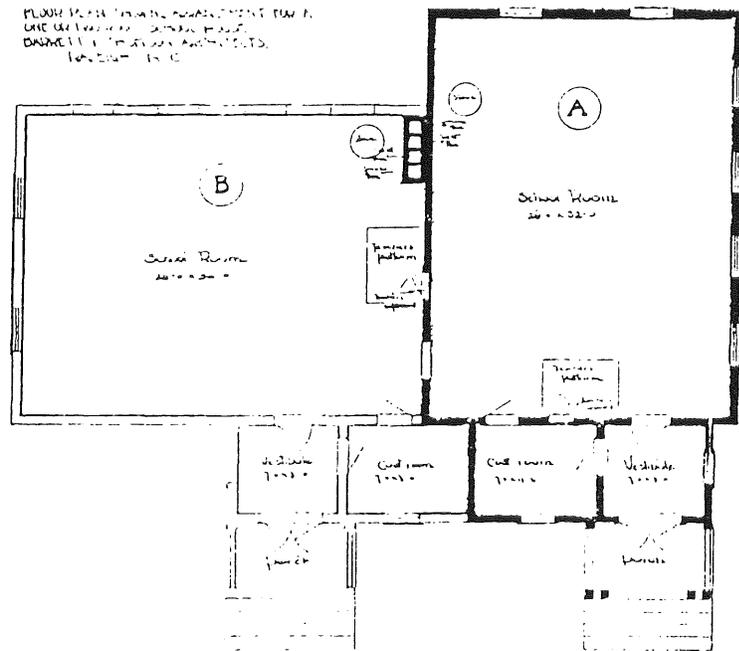
National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number Exhibit Page 4

Woodlawn School, Alamance County, NC



PERSPECTIVE PLAN NO. 1.



PLAN NO. 1.

Design No. 1 by Barrett & Thomson,
Architects, in "Plans for Public
School Houses" (1903), page 6.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number Exhibit Page 5

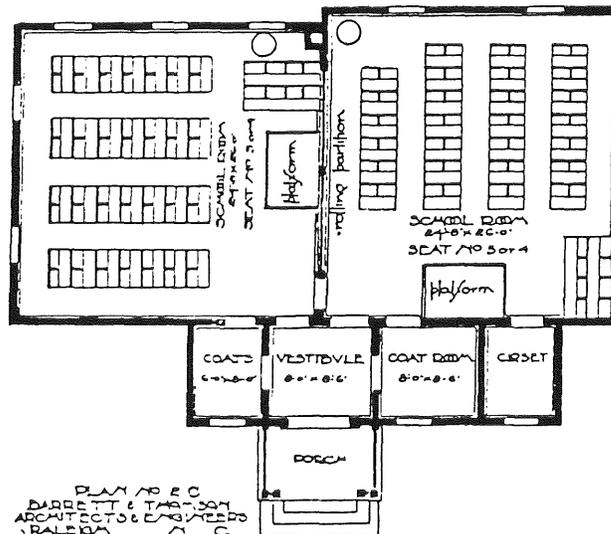
Woodlawn School, Alamance County, NC

8

PLANS FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLHOUSES.



DESIGN No. 2 C.



PLAN No. 2 C.

Design No. 2C by Barrett & Thomson,
Architects & Engineers, in "Plans
for Public Schoolhouses" (1911),
page 8.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number Exhibit Page 6

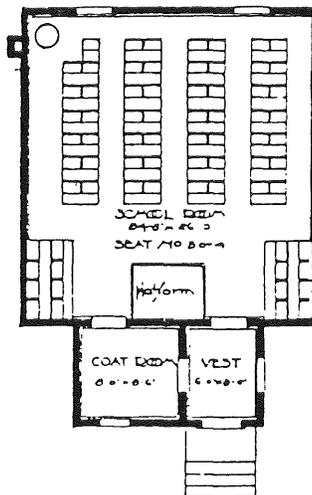
Woodlawn School, Alamance County, NC

6

PLANS FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLHOUSES.



DESIGN No. 1.



PLAN NO. 1
BARRETT & THOMSON
ARCHITECTS & ENGINEERS
RALEIGH N. C.

PLAN No. 1.

Design No. 1 by Barrett & Thomson,
Architects & Engineers, in "Plans
for Public Schoolhouses" (1911),
page 6.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

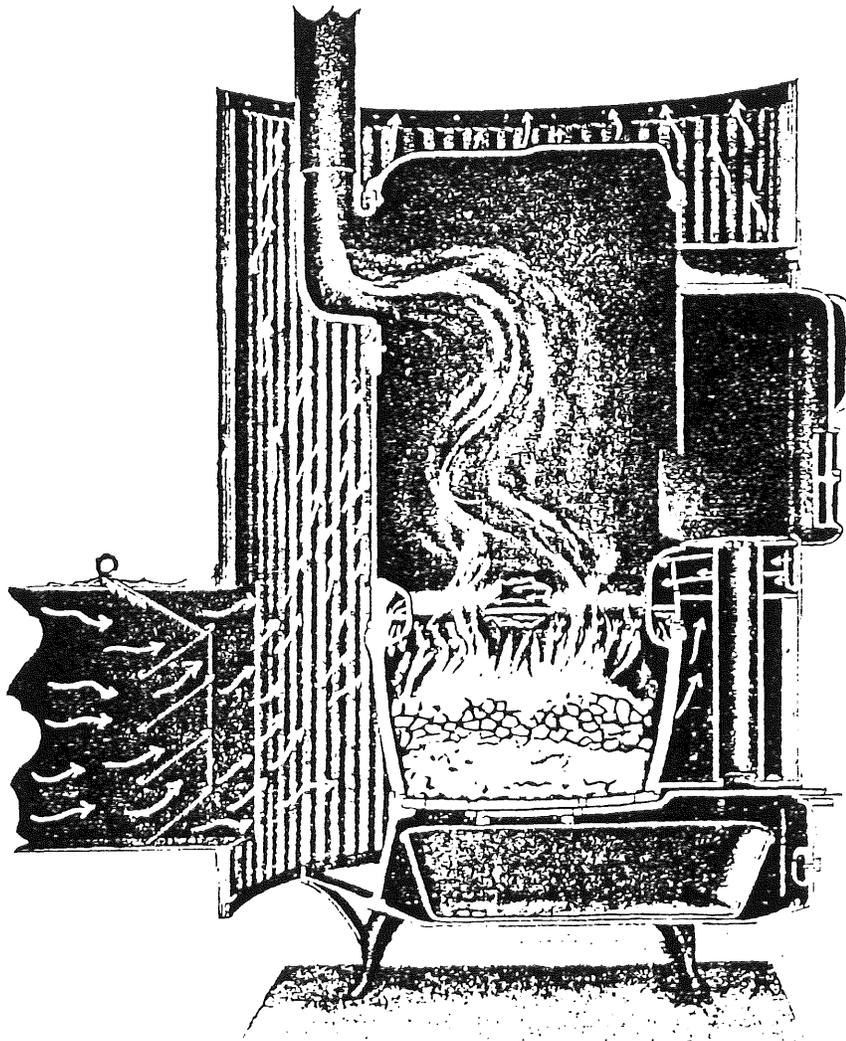
National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number Exhibit Page 7

Woodlawn School, Alamance County, NC

36

PLANS FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLHOUSES.



No. 2—INSIDE VIEW.

Double-walled classroom stove, in
"Plans for Public Schoolhouses"
(1911), page 36.

AROLINA
AND DEVELOPMENT
OLINA

WOODLAWN SCHOOL

MEBANE VIC. UTM: E 653430
ALAMANCE CO., NC N 3997380

MEBANE QUADRANGLE
NORTH CAROLINA
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRA

MEBANE QUAD ZONE 17

