NPS Form 10-900
(Oct. 1990)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *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 (former) Atkins High School

other names/site number Negro High School, Atkins Middle School

2. Location

street & number 1215 North Cameron Avenue N/A not for publication

city or town Winston-Salem N/A vicinity

state North Carolina code NC county Forsyth code 067 zip code 27101

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this [X] nomination [ ] request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property [X] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant [ ] nationally [X] statewide [ ] locally. ([ ] See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Jeffrey F. Crow SHPO 11/18/99

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State of 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: Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

[ ] 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:)

Atkins High School
Name of Property

Forsyth Co., North Carolina
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☐ private
- ☒ public-local
- ☐ public-State
- ☐ public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
1		sites
		structures
		objects
2	1	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
EDUCATION: education-related
RECREATION AND CULTURE: sports facility

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION: School
EDUCATION: education-related
RECREATION AND CULTURE: sports facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

CLASSICAL REVIVAL

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK
walls BRICK
CAST STONE
roof
other WOOD

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.)

- [X] **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.
- [X] **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- [ ] **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

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

Property is:

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

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

Education
Ethnic Heritage/Black
Architecture

Period of Significance

1931-1949

Significant Dates

1931

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Macklin, Harold, architect
McCormick, Walter R., consulting architect
Blum, Frank, Construction Company
Christian, Charles W., Company (heat/plumb
Eveready Electric Company

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- [ ] preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 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:

- [XX] State Historic Preservation Office
- [ ] Other State agency
- [ ] Federal agency
- [ ] Local government
- [ ] University
- [ ] Other

Name of repository:

Atkins High School
Name of Property

Forsyth Co., North Carolina
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 15.05 acres

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	17	570020	3996625
2	17	570395	3996295
3	17	570015	3996040
4	17	569795	3996425

☐ 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 Langdon Edmunds Oppermann, Preservation Planning

organization _____ date April 1998

street & number 1500 Overbrook Avenue telephone 336/721-1949

city or town Winston-Salem state NC zip code 27104

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. Donald L. Martin, Superintendent, Winston-Salem Forsyth County Schools

street & number 1605 Miller Street telephone 336/727-2816 (Atkins 727-2781)

city or town Winston-Salem state NC zip code 27103

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

Narrative Description

Setting

The former Atkins High School is a substantial landmark in Winston-Salem, representative of the more impressive schools built in North Carolina cities in the 1920s and 1930s. The school is situated in the 1200 block of North Cameron Avenue between East Twelfth and East Fourteenth streets, and with its gym and playing fields contains about fifteen acres. The main school building faces west on a graded site close to the sidewalk in a residential neighborhood. A wide flight of concrete steps leads from Cameron Avenue down the terraced banks to another staircase leading to the front entrance. Attached to the north side of the school building is the brick gymnasium built in 1952. Behind and on the north side are playing fields, tennis courts, a running track, and parking lots. The eastern border of the school property is wooded, and a city recreation center is adjacent to the northeast portion of the property. The school was built in 1930-1931 with the assistance of the Julius Rosenwald Fund. The prolific Harold Macklin of Winston-Salem was architect, and the Rosenwald Fund's Walter R. McCormack of Cleveland, Ohio, was consulting architect.

Main School Building, 1930-1931, Contributing Building: Built in 1930-1931 of steel frame construction, Atkins High School is a handsome brick building with sophisticated use of cast stone detailing. The school's exterior remains largely unaltered and in good condition. It is a large three-story brick building set on a raised basement and designed in the Classical Revival style with a symmetrical facade and a generally C-shaped footprint. The style increased in popularity in institutional buildings during the 1920s as masonry veneering techniques allowed builders to execute brick and stone ornamentation more inexpensively. Typical of the style, the more refined ornament is placed at focal points and in the pattern of fenestration. The building is seventeen bays wide with three-bay wings at the sides. The front facade is broken into a three-part massing by the ornamentation and slight projection of the five central bays. Bays on the two lower levels of the central projection are emphasized by fluted Doric pilasters in cast stone with a cast stone cornice above. Recessed cast stone panels are between the windows of the first two levels. The entrance door has a segmental arch and cast stone surround. Above the door is a plaque with the name Atkins Middle School (renamed in 1984) and a camel, the school's mascot.

The majority of the building's front fenestration is made up of paired double-hung windows with nine-over-nine sash. These are separated by plain wooden mullions and topped with brick jack arches and cast stone keystones at first and second stories. Windows of the upper level are situated just beneath the cast stone cornice. Above is a brick parapet with cast stone accent. The roof behind is not visible from the ground. Both the north and south side elevations of the main

building are brick expanses with windows only to illuminate interior stairs. On the north and south elevations of the building is a two-story, three-bay wing with brick-arched double doors with fanlights on the first floor and paired windows on the second floor. The southern wing has blind windows in the outer bays of the upper level. The cornice of these wings is the same as that of the main building. The side elevations of the wings continue the detailing and pattern of the front fenestration, flooding the classrooms with light.

Attached to the north wing of the school by a brick hyphen is a brick, barrel-roofed gymnasium built in 1952. Located down a terraced bank from the school, the gym is two stories in height although with no second level inside. The front facade has three bays of windows; beneath is a flat-roofed, one-story entrance lobby extending almost the width of the facade. On the north side elevation is a row of six triple-grouped windows. The gym floor was replaced in 1997. In July, 1998, the gymnasium was renamed in memory of Samuel Everett Cary, a popular basketball coach and student mentor at the school from 1946 to 1953.[1] New access to the gym was added in 1997. A two-story brick addition encircles the rear, or east and south elevations, of the north wing, the hyphen, and the gymnasium, providing two levels of covered access.

Other additions were also constructed in 1997, all in brick. The southern side wing of the main building, originally nine bays deep, was extended to eighteen bays to increase the number of classrooms. The addition was designed to blend successfully with the original building, employing the same proportions, materials, and design details. Another addition built in 1997 is a brick elevator tower providing handicap accessibility.

Windows throughout the complex were replaced in 1997 with new wood sashes of the same light pattern as the original. Architect for the 1997 renovation was Ersoy & Associates of Winston-Salem, and Fowler Jones Beers Construction Company was the contractor.

Interior: The building has a central hall plan; the front (west) entrance hall meets a north-to-south corridor with doors to offices, classrooms, and stairwells. The library (media center) is in the front of the school on the second floor above the entrance; it remains in its original location but in 1997 was enlarged significantly while retaining its historic character. The auditorium, located in the northern three-bay wing, remains much as it was originally with new lighting and new carpeting. The original cast-iron-and-wood row seats were refinished and remain on the main level and in the large balcony seating area. When built, the building had linoleum floors and painted plaster finishes on ceilings and walls. Plaster remains in some places; in others it has been replaced with wallboard. Original woodwork typical of the 1920s and 1930s is found throughout the school in the halls and classrooms, including molded surrounds at classroom doors and blackboards, wide window surrounds with molded lintels and sills, and baseboards throughout the building. Originally the woodwork was stained; however, over the years some

[1] *W-S Journal*, 7/17/1998, p. B1.

had been painted. In 1997 all painted woodwork was stripped and stained, and many non-loadbearing partitions were removed to increase the size of old classrooms. The new classrooms in the extended south wing use wood molding matching the original and the rooms are lighted with windows of the same size and detailing. Old chairs are also used in many of the new classrooms. The school's original wooden microscope cabinets remain installed in the science laboratory, and in some areas behind banks of lockers remains evidence of the school's 1931 unit ventilation system, the first in Winston-Salem. The original interior stairwells remain with their curving walls at landings and curving wooden rails on solid balusters.

In 1931, the concrete floors were covered with "battleship linoleum to reduce noise."[2] In 1952 when the gym was built, vinyl tile flooring was laid in the school corridors, carpeting put in many classrooms, and cork composition flooring in others. In 1997, the corridors were laid with terrazzo, bathroom floors were covered with tiles, and most classrooms were carpeted.

Cafeteria, 1968, Non-contributing Building: Behind the central portion of the school and encircled on three sides by the C-shaped school building is the detached, one-story cafeteria, built in 1968 of concrete block construction with brick veneer.

Playing Fields, 1931 and later, Contributing Site: Behind and north of the school is a ball field, grassy lawns and banks, a running track with football practice area in the interior grassy area, tennis courts, and parking lots. The only vehicular access to the school property is from East Twelfth Street.

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[2] *Columbian.*

Summary

The former Atkins High School (1930-1931) is of statewide significance in the areas of education, black ethnic heritage, and architecture because of its important role in the development of black education in North Carolina during the first half of the twentieth century (Criterion A) and because architecturally it was a state-of-the-art school facility and "the first modern high school for Negroes" in Winston-Salem (Criterion C). Winston's and Winston-Salem's African-American schools were prominent among North Carolina schools from an early date. *The New England Journal of Education* praised the city's work in 1885, calling it the most notable among Southern towns. Two years later in 1887, the city built the Depot Street School, at the time the largest and most important public school for African-Americans in the state.[1] Atkins High School also symbolizes local and national philanthropic efforts to improve education for black Americans. Of significance also is Atkins' place as an experiment of the Rosenwald Fund, which supported construction of schools for rural black children in the South: the construction of Atkins High School in 1930 and 1931 marked the first use of Rosenwald Funds for an urban high school in the state and a departure from the fund's traditional philosophy of training black students for success in "Negro jobs." Atkins was noted for its comprehensiveness in a variety of vocational training opportunities and for its academic preparation. Architecturally, it was a "modern" design, the first building in Winston-Salem with unit ventilation. The building was designed in 1930 by local architect Harold Macklin, working with a consulting architect for the Rosenwald Fund, and is a fine example of the institutional Classical Revival style. Atkins has been used continuously as a school for sixty-eight years, from its opening in 1931 until today and currently serves as Atkins Middle School. The property gained its primary significance in 1931, when the school was dedicated, named for local black education champion Simon G. Atkins, and opened to students. The end of the period of significance is 1949 in order to comply with the fifty-year cutoff guideline.

Historical Background and Education and Black History Contexts

At 2:30 on a spring afternoon in 1931, the dedication ceremony for Winston-Salem's "new high school for Negro children" was held. As this event the school was named Atkins High School in honor of Dr. Simon G. Atkins, champion of the education movement in Winston-Salem's African-American community. The history of Atkins High School begins long before its construction, however, and ample record survives to chronicle its story. The school followed

1 Steele, "Key Events," p.23.

decades of improvements in Winston's (later Winston-Salem's) secondary school system. The aftermath of the Civil War had tremendous impact on the city's schools, both black and white. Although the 1869 Education Act required free and separate public schools for newly emancipated Negroes, education in Winston after the Civil War was similar to that in most of the state: teachers were overworked and underpaid and school facilities were wanting. Despite the new law, the reality was that little money was available for schools since most state investments were worthless as a result of the war, the poll tax levied for new school funds was inadequate, and the local economies were devastated.[2] Although education as a whole suffered, for blacks it was particularly deficient. In 1900, one in five white North Carolinians was unable to read, while among blacks it was one in two.[3] Racism was also a factor; most schools for African-American children were private, built with church funds or funded by Northern benevolent organizations.

Near the close of the nineteenth century, North Carolina began to take an interest in improving its public education and the wealthy boom city of Winston was often at the lead. The state legislature first considered a statewide system of public schools in the last years of the nineteenth century and it was at the same time that the first $100,000 was appropriated for public schools. North Carolina became the leader of southern education in the first decades of the 1900s.[4]

Early in the town of Winston, the 1869 state law requiring schools had been heeded somewhat, for by 1878 Winston had a Negro public school supported not by the city but by northern Quakers. The city's public education had also gotten a boost in 1874 when Calvin Wiley, the prominent State Superintendent of Education known as father of the state's common schools, moved to Winston. The following year he drafted a bill for a Winston public school system. The bill failed, but was subsequently approved by the General Assembly in 1879 and implemented in 1883. The intent was to create separate schools for white and "colored" children; however, public funds were inadequate even for construction of the West End School (for white children), and private citizens advanced the deficit funds. Nevertheless, the School Board pursued its commitment to build a Colored Graded School. The Commissioners therefore sought donations, noting it was harder to get private contributions for ". . . . expensive structures, in colored settlements, where real estate is not likely to advance in value. . . ." Not surprisingly, by 1884 the board had been unable to secure a lot for a colored school; instead, the board made arrangements with the First Baptist Church (Colored) and St. Paul's Methodist

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[2]Noble, History of Public Schools, pp. 297, 299.

[3]Hanchett, p. 391.

[4]Preslar, History of Catawba County, pp. 149-150, 154.

Church (Colored) to open school in the churches. Samuel A. Waugh was hired as principal along with three other teachers, all female.[5] Both churches were in the Depot Street neighborhood and are documented in the Multiple Property Documentation Form, "Historic and Architectural African-American Resources of Northeastern Winston-Salem, 1900 to 1947," (MPDF nomination, 1998).

Winston's efforts were noticed nationally. The *New England Journal of Education* commented in January, 1885,

> "The new city of Winston, N.C., has done the most notable work among Southern towns of its size in the establishment of a system of graded schools. . . . Only four months from its organization, the West End Graded School, with all the disadvantages of the mixed population of a new manufacturing community, is a model and is thronged with visitors from all over the Southern country. . . . An excellent beginning has been made with the colored schools and a handsome lot awaits the next effort for a commodious schoolhouse."[6]

The awaiting lot was put to use in 1887 when the Depot Street Graded School for Negroes was built, financed in part with funds from local citizens and those solicited from benevolent groups. The Depot Street School was the largest and most important public school for African-Americans in North Carolina. Board minutes described it as a "commodious two-story frame structure...at a cost, including grounds and furniture, of $8,500. It contains eight school rooms, large halls, the upper of which can readily be adapted for office and library." Even so, only primary education and limited industrial training was available to Winston's black students.[7] This was to change with the arrival of Simon Atkins who came to Winston in 1890 as the new principal of Depot Street. Atkins's tremendous impact on education for blacks began immediately and coincided with the state's education revival of the 1890s. Under Atkins's leadership, the Depot Street School was expanded in 1894 to contain eleven classrooms and an auditorium and became home to the first "Negro High School" in Winston in 1895.[8]

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[5]Wellman & Tise, *Education*; 8/25/1883 minutes, Winston Commissioners of Graded Schools. Wiley was elected the first chairman of the new school board; Board minutes 9/4/1884; *Columbian*, p. 2; Fries, *Forsyth, County on the March*, pp. 86-87.

[6]Fries, *Forsyth, County on the March*, p. 87

[7]Minutes, December 1887; and Wellman & Tise, *Education*, p. 36, quotes *Guidebook* by Blum.

[8]First graduate was R.W. Brown, who later became principal of Woodland Avenue School. Between 1895 and 1900, cooking and sewing were added and the name was changed to the Depot Street Graded and Industrial School. The school housed all high school grades (eighth and ninth) until 1917 and additional high school grades until 1923, continued as a primary school until 1926 when it was sold "for YMCA purposes," and soon afterwards burned.

Simon Green Atkins (1863-1934) was a well-educated African-American born in Chatham County and educated at St. Augustine College in Raleigh and other normal (teaching) schools. He was a founder of the North Carolina Negro Teachers' Association for which he served several terms as secretary and president. In 1890 he left his position at Livingstone College in Salisbury where he had been head of the grammar school department and treasurer of the college, and came to Winston's Depot Street School. Simon Atkins had an immediate impact on the Winston community, even beyond the realm of education. In January of 1891, only one year after arriving here, he suggested the development of a suburb for the increasing number of black professionals in the city. Atkins was convincing; land was soon assembled for the Columbian Heights suburb which became *the* place for African-Americans to live. Among its residents were lawyers, doctors, teachers, and skilled craftsmen. Simon Atkins appears to have been one of its first residents.[9]

That same year, Atkins persuaded leaders of both races to start Slater Industrial Academy on a lot in the neighborhood, beginning classes in a one-room, frame structure with twenty-five students and one teacher. The school grew rapidly in both enrollment and curriculum. In 1895 both he and his wife, a teacher, resigned from public schools to work full time with Slater, by then Slater Normal and Industrial School. It came under state supervision that year and received a legislative charter in 1897.[10]

Major changes were afoot in North Carolina. In 1900 a new governor was elected, Charles B. Aycock, who campaigned on educational improvements. Although Aycock championed white supremacy, he also is remembered as the Education Governor for laying the foundations of the state's public education program. Aycock advocated a uniform school system throughout the state with the use of state and local funds for its support. He asserted "the equal right of every child born on earth" to have an educational opportunity, and argued that public education was good use of tax monies, an investment returned by an educated work force which would bring better industry to the state so all would benefit.[11]

Aycock's efforts produced swift results. In 1901 the state provided money to equalize local

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[9]Corporation Deed Book 1, pp. 72-74; Powell, Dictionary of N.C. Biography, vol. I, p. 60; Tilley, The R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company, p. 524; Oppermann, *A-A Neighborhoods*; deeds.

[10]The school grew rapidly; in 1925 it became the Winston-Salem Teachers' College, said to be the first African-American institution in the United States to grant degrees for teaching in the elementary grades. Atkins served as president until his retirement shortly before his death in 1934. In 1969 the school became Winston-Salem State University (WSSU).

[11]Powell, William S North Carolina, A History, p. 183.

schools by raising those in the poorer counties to the same standards as those in the richer. Other laws required standards for school construction. These efforts, however, were directed at schools for white children and in some areas disparities between black and white schooling actually increased.[12] Meanwhile in Winston-Salem, in about 1905 the Columbian Heights Colored Grade School was begun in a three-room frame building. Soon three new public schools for black children were built: Woodland Avenue School in 1910, Trade Street Grade School in 1911, and Oak Street Grade School in 1913. Upon consolidation of Winston and Salem in 1913, the Winston-Salem School Board inherited and enlarged the Columbian Heights school. In 1917, the first high school grade entered and Simon Atkins was asked to become principal of "Columbian Heights Grade and High School" while continuing his duties as principal of Slater. This was the second home of the Negro High School in Winston-Salem. Despite the improvements in the schools, a 1917 survey showed daunting statistics: of the 3,300 white grade school students, nearly forty-eight percent were old for their grade, and in the Negro schools over sixty percent of the 2,200 students were overage.[13]

By 1920 the city's total school enrollment had reached about 7,800, or seventy-five percent of the school age children, and the citizens had voted significant funds for school improvement. As a result, most of the city's pre-1950 schools were built during the decade of the 1920s. The white high school burned in 1923 and was replaced the next year by R.J. Reynolds High School. In 1930 North Junior High School and South Junior High School opened. Improvements also took place to the Columbian Heights school; in 1922 all four years of high school were added and the city built a brick addition. The city remodeled the school again in 1929, adding more classrooms, an auditorium, library, cafeteria, and specialized rooms.[14] While this was quite an improvement over the 1905 three-room school, it was a far cry from the modern high school to be completed just two years later.

Thus by 1930, the city's statistics had improved considerably. High school enrollment had increased from 670 to 3,320, and in percentage of pupils in proper grades, Winston-Salem

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[12]Hanchett, p. 392.

[13]Williams and Johnston, *Study of the W-S Schools*, p. 47.

[14]Tise, *Education*, p. 42. Enrollment in the city's high schools numbered 531 white and 142 black students; Fries, *Forsyth, County on the March*, p. 206. North Junior High became Hanes High, then Hanes Middle School; South Junior High became Gray High School and later the N.C. School of the Arts; *Columbian* newspaper. Upon the opening of Atkins High School in 1931, Columbian Heights High School became the Columbian Heights Elementary School, its third name

schools ranked first among the state's eight largest school systems.[15] At this time the "Winston-Salem High School for Negroes" was under construction to be opened the next year.

Winston-Salem was growing rapidly, with a population gain of more than fifty-five percent in the ten years between 1920 and 1930. In the boom period begun in the 1880s, the city had become one of the industrial giants of the Southeast and was the state's largest city. The Depression ended the boom: the city's school budget was reduced by half in two years. In 1933, the state assumed full control of the public schools, cut the school year by a month, reduced teaching staff and salaries, and reduced operating and maintenance budgets. Fortunately, Winston-Salem was not hit as hard by the Depression as elsewhere, and after two years the citizens approved a special tax to maintain the high quality of schools they had come to expect.[16] The city's public schools made continued progress and in 1940 remained at the top of the largest and best systems in the state. It was in this framework that Atkins High School was built at the start of the Depression. It is not only representative of the statewide effort to update schools and school buildings in general, but also a milestone in the development of education for African-Americans.

Atkins High as an Experiment of the Rosenwald Fund.

Atkins was built with the assistance of the Rosenwald Fund, a philanthropic organization devoted to building schools for black children. Atkins High was a new venture for the Fund, an experiment of sorts, and the Fund dictated both the new high school's curriculum and the design of its building. The Rosenwald program originated in 1912 from efforts of the African-American educator Booker T. Washington and his staff at Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. Washington sought to improve education for black children in the rural South by creating partnerships between black communities and philanthropists. His program had three primary goals: to improve schools, to promote black-white cooperation, and to increase communities' support for black education.[17]

Washington's concept was realized through the Rosenwald Fund. The benefactor was Julius Rosenwald (1862-1932), who grew up poor, the son of a Jewish peddler-turned-business owner, and became president of Sears Roebuck and Company. He was a proponent of improving black education, a trustee of Tuskegee Institute, and an admirer of Booker T. Washington.

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[15]Koos, "Our Schools," pp. 9-12. Koos was assistant superintendent of city schools.

[16]1930 Chamber of Commerce brochure, Census; Tise, *Education*, p. 43; Fries, *Forsyth, County on the March*, p. 207.

[17]Hanchett, p. 387

Rosenwald's initial donations to Washington were targeted toward aiding black colleges and preparatory academies in an effort to train teachers, but he agreed to allow a portion of the funds to help rural Southern communities erect schools for black children if the communities could raise matching funds. In all of Julius Rosenwald's benefactions he emphasized the desirability of contributing only where the enthusiasm of others was sufficient to create a success. Rosenwald put up about one-fourth of the cost of each structure and had strict program requirements including use of Rosenwald plans for the school buildings.[18]

The program was extremely successful. North Carolina was the most active state participating in the Fund, building the first Rosenwald School in 1915. By the end of the construction program in 1932, North Carolina had 813 Rosenwald-funded schools, more than any other state. All of the buildings were one story, most were small, from one to four teachers, and most were of wood, though some provided for seven teachers and were brick. In accepting a 1927 award for Distinguished Achievement in Race Relations, Julius Rosenwald said, "If we promote better citizenship among Negroes not only are they improved, but our entire citizenship is benefited."[19]

The construction of Atkins High School represented a major change in the philosophy of education for blacks from what had been conventional practice. During the early twentieth century, black educators themselves promoted two opposing objectives for black education. The first was the philosophy of improving blacks' traditional role in society through education in agriculture and the trades, as promoted by Booker T. Washington. Washington believed that only through economic advancement could the Negro ultimately succeed in voting rights and social equality. The second was the more progressive philosophy of academic education for the talented, and aggressive integration of African-Americans in all areas.[20] The Rosenwald Fund was developed in association with Washington, and as a result his philosophy guided the Fund's educational efforts. The goal was to train African-American pupils for occupations prescribed as "Negro jobs" rather than prepare them for vocations that were closed to blacks because of racism. In Greenville, South Carolina, for example, a report prepared by the Rosenwald Fund recommended a course in "washing and greasing" to prepare Greenville's African-American high school students for jobs at service stations. It also recommended training in "public service occupations such as those of janitor, waiter, bellman, cook, bootblack, etc. . . . .A course in

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[18]Thomas, Wake Forest School nomination; Hanchett, p. 395; *The Columbian* (1931); Harlan, Separate and Unequal; and Hanchett, Central School nomination

[19]Hanchett, p. 408; *The Columbian*.

[20]Phillips, National Register nomination, Palmer Memorial Institute, 1988.

shoe shining would prove unpopular among certain classes of Negroes in any southern community,... because they do not realize its economic worth, and the splendid possibilities for developing a real vocation." The philanthropists did not address the reality that black workers were excluded from most decent jobs because of racism, but rather emphasized the "splendid possibilities" of shoe shining.[21] The occupations typical of African-American adults in the 1920s did not require a high school education. It should be noted that at the same time, most southern whites believed that education beyond the elementary grades was not necessary except for children of social position and wealth--that every white child did not need similar education. That this was even more true for blacks was generally accepted.

The Fund's policy reflected its philosophy: it would pay one-third of the cost of black high schools devoted exclusively to industrial education, but only one-fifth toward a black high school that combined academics and industrial education. The fund would pay no money for strictly academic black high schools. In effect, while the benefits of the Rosenwald Fund and other charities were great, this policy continued the practice of African-Americans' being trained for "racially prescribed" occupations.[22]

The Rosenwald Fund's involvement in Atkins High School diverged greatly from this philosophy and was an experiment. Atkins was the result of a recognition that, as the South became industrialized, African-Americans could advance only if they learned the proper skills. Consequently, the Fund subsidized the building of five industrial high schools in five states. These provided instruction for boys in such industries as printing, the building trades, and auto mechanics, and for girls in cooking, dressmaking, millinery and other aspects of home economics.[23] At Atkins, one of the five, academic subjects were an important part of the curriculum. An excerpt from Atkins's 1931 dedication program best describes the facilities provided at the new high school:

> "The Winston-Salem Negro High School has been planned as a school of the comprehensive type. It has been built for all the high school children of Winston-Salem's colored population. There is to be included in its program vocational, industrial art, general education, and college preparatory work. In the near future there will be organized trade classes in carpentry, masonry, auto-mechanics, printing, paper hanging, metal work, barbering, dress making, laundry and clothes cleaning, beauty parlor work, housekeeping, and commercial cooking; industrial

[21]Anderson, p. 226

[22]Anderson, p. 228.

[23]Embree, pp. 51-52.

arts classes in woodwork, metal work, mechanical drawing, cooking, and sewing; academic work in citizenship, English, foreign languages, mathematics, sciences, arts, physical education, and music.

"Besides the auditorium and the gymnasium the building is equal in size to a sixty room school. There are in the building such special features as principal's offices, medical rooms, teachers' room, cafeteria and kitchen, art room, library rooms, shower and locker rooms, science laboratories, and lecture rooms, masonry trades, auto-mechanics, carpentry, woodwork, mechanical drawing, finishing, barbering and beauty parlor work, laundry, sewing, housekeeping and cooking rooms. In addition to the rooms mentioned above there are twenty-seven class rooms, three study halls, and ten lavatories.[24]"

The Rosenwald Fund gave $50,000 towards the building of the new high school, and Atkins was the only high school in the South to receive funds ($500) under the Fund's College Library program.[25] The opening of the new school was a celebration. Keynote speaker at the school's dedication ceremony was the president of the University of North Carolina, surely not the usual speaker for a high school opening.

Atkins High was immediately popular with the black community (1,130 students attended the second year) and enjoyed the ardent involvement of parents in school activities. Among its many accomplished graduates are Togo West, former Secretary of the Navy, and Lawrence Joel who received the Congressional Medal of Honor and for whom the city's Coliseum is named. Alumni of Atkins High School speak with great pride about the outstanding quality of the education they received there and the valuable lessons instilled in them by the school's able leadership and dedicated teachers. Mr. John A. Carter, the school's principal, is remembered as a stern but fair disciplinarian who stressed proper decorum and manners in addition to academics. John Carter had been an instructor at Winston-Salem Teachers College (now WSSU) and principal at Columbian Heights High School. In preparation for his new position as principal of Atkins, he built a house in the Cameron Park neighborhood immediately south of the new high school. City directories show that the Carters were the first African-Americans to move to the white neighborhood (today known as Reynoldstown). John and Alice Carter's move was a forecast of the neighborhood's dramatic shift from an all-white to an all-black neighborhood in only a year or two. City directories show the area occupied by whites in 1931. Just a year later the

[24]Dedication program.

[25]Embree, p. 263-265.

directory shows all of Cameron Park populated by management-level, professional African-Americans. This was a direct result of the opening of "the new high school for Negro children."

Atkins High was also a leader in state athletics. School sports were segregated while Atkins served as a high school, and Atkins' teams were perennial contenders in the Triple A Division of the N.C. Negro High School Athletic Association. Atkins won the state basketball championship in 1952, 1953, and 1954, and won the state's first football championship in 1954. In 1953 the Atkins Camels defeated the county's other African-American high school, the Carver Yellowjackets, for the state basketball championship. Mary Barber was the only white sports editor to come to the black schools, and she covered Atkins's games in the *Winston-Salem Journal*. Samuel E. Cary was Atkins High's popular basketball coach and student mentor at the school from 1946 to 1953. He was named outstanding coach statewide, was voted the college basketball association's top referee, and three of Atkins's players were named to the all-star team. In 1998 the gymnasium at Atkins was renamed in memory of Cary.[26]

National developments in the civil rights movement improved Atkins. By 1947, North Carolina was one of three Southern states to adopt a law providing equal pay for teachers of equal preparation regardless of race. The 1950 supreme court case Sweatt v. Painter held the southern districts must provide facilities which were truly equal.[27] Partially in response to this case, in 1952 the school board built the gymnasium building for Atkins High School and made renovations inside the school. In 1956, a small shop building with a shop, drafting room, and a classroom was built across East Twelfth Street from Atkins and remained in use until the 1980s. It no longer is associated with Atkins. The famous 1954 Brown v. Board of Education case calling for an end to separate education for the races had tremendous impact on Atkins, though not immediately. A 1959 proposal to convert Atkins into a junior high school met strong opposition from the community and was dropped. Atkins later became a junior high when widescale integration began in 1971. In 1984 it became Atkins Middle School which it remains today.

Architecture Context

Atkins High School is a landmark in the history of Winston-Salem's public education, a prestigious institution from the start. Representative of the emerging statewide effort to update

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[26] *W-S Journal*, 7/17/1998. After his coaching career, Cary served as first principal of Diggs Elementary School and then as principal of Kennedy Middle School. Cary lived in Cameron Park (Reynoldstown) neighborhood just south of Atkins High.

[27] Embree, p. 59; Kluger, Simple Justice, pp. 249-280.

schools and school buildings, the building embodies many of the characteristics of the new healthful design of school facilities: brick, with an auditorium, central corridors, large classrooms and plentiful windows for light and ventilation. The school's design also demonstrates a comprehensive approach to education, with specialized spaces for auditorium, library, laboratory and music rooms. At the time of construction the building, equipment, and grounds were valued at $400,000.[28] The funds were approved by vote of the citizens of Winston-Salem, supplemented with a grant of $50,000 from the Rosenwald Fund. Located adjacent to the 14th Street Elementary School and forming a sort of educational park, the new school occupied a site of thirty acres, accommodating numerous and ample athletic fields including a football gridiron, baseball diamond, and volleyball, baseball, and tennis courts.

Atkins was the third high school for African-American students in Winston-Salem. However, the first two had begun as small frame buildings for elementary grades, were enlarged several times, and had high school grades added later. They also were limited in size and programming. Atkins was the first school in Winston-Salem built as a high school to serve the black population.

Architecturally, Atkins exhibits the distinctive characteristics of the Rosenwald Schools but in an uncommon way. Samuel L. Smith, who became administrator of the Rosenwald Fund in 1920, had studied with the progressive educational architect Fletcher B. Dresslar, and Smith immediately developed stock plans for Rosenwald Schools. The plans incorporated the new century's best ideas for functional, efficient school design, and were so widely distributed that the Rosenwald design became a standard for American educational architecture. Atkins High, however, was unconventional as a Rosenwald project not only in its programming, but also in its architecture. Rosenwald Schools were always to be one story tall and were usually of frame construction. Atkins was brick, and three stories tall with a lighted basement. Nevertheless, it retains the "Rosenwald windows," large banks of windows forming a rhythm across the front facade of schools built from the Rosenwask Fund's "Community School Plans," as well as high ceilings, interior corridors and well-lighted, airy classrooms that were trademarks of Rosenwald schools. The dedication program for Atkins boasted its corridors and rooms were covered with battleship linoleum to reduce noise.[29]

Atkins High School was designed by local architect Harold Macklin, working with the consulting architect for the Rosenwald Fund, Walter R. McCormack of Cleveland, Ohio.[30] The architect's

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[28] 1931 dedication program.

[29] Central School nomination and Dedication program.

[30] *Columbian*, p. 1

careful use of cast stone and brick ornamentation served to soften the bulk of this large building; he used these elements to create a well-balanced design. Macklin (1885-1948) was a native of Portland, England, educated in the cathedral schools in Salisbury and the Architectural School in London. In 1919 when he was thirty-four years old, he established an architectural practice in Winston-Salem, becoming one of the city's most prolific architects. In 1928 he formed a partnership with William Roy Wallace (1889-1983), who had come to Winston-Salem with Charles Barton Keen for construction of Reynolda House, and later Reynolds High School. Most of Macklin and Wallace's designs were for commercial and institutional buildings, and they were quite successful, with their offices' requiring the entire twelfth floor of the then new Reynolds Building. Macklin designed the new headquarters for the Journal and Sentinel newspapers in 1926, borrowing features from Philadelphia's Independence Hall and from Old Salem buildings; his simple colonial buildings would inspire a new series of colonial and Salem style buildings in later years.[31]

Some of Macklin's other extant buildings include the Realty Building/Patten Building downtown (1925), the downtown YMCA building (1927), and the YWCA building in West End, all in the Colonial Revival style. His Gilmer Building located downtown (1924-1926) combined classical and Egyptian elements. He also designed the building at 315-319 W. Fourth Street and the Pepper Building downtown (and was architect for its remodelling), but his most prominent work was as associate architect for St. Paul's Episcopal Church, one of the most outstanding Gothic Revival structures in the region, designed by the distinguished ecclesiastical architect, Ralph Adams Cram of Boston, and built of granite in 1928-1929. Macklin worked with eclectic designs, with classical traditions, and with the Colonial and Georgian Revivals.[32]

General contractor for the new high school was the Frank Blum Construction Company of Winston-Salem, the plumbing and heating contractor was the Charles W. Christian Company of Charlotte, and the electrical contractor was the Eveready Electric Company of Winston-Salem. The Blum Company erected the structural steel frame building, at the time the only steel building in the city. The building boasted the city's first "unit ventilation system," by which fresh air was

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[31]Taylor, Frontier to Factory, p. 58; also AIA guidebook. In 1924 Macklin returned to Philadelphia with Keen, coming back to Winston-Salem in 1928 to join with Wallace. He lived in the Washington Park neighborhood (NRHD 1992?), first on Gloria Avenue, then in a bungalow at 330 Vintage Avenue; Interview with Margaret Macklin Fowler, Macklin's daughter; Tise, *Building and Architecture*, p. 41; and Church Street School nomination, Davidson County. Among Wallace's designs were Pine Hall Brick & Pipe Co., the Old Town Telephone Co., Twin City Club, Fries Memorial Moravian Church, and Highland Presbyterian Church. Wallace also did almost all the architectural work for Davidson County schools from the mid-1930s into the 1950s. He died at the age of 93.

[32]Fowler and Macklin interviews. Phillips & Taylor, West End nomination; AIA Guidebook.

drawn over heated coils in each room by a unit ventilator machine, then drawn around the student lockers into the corridors and taken out of the building through breather ducts on the roof.[33]

The Rosenwald Fund built no other large high schools in North Carolina, and Atkins remains in use as a school and is in very good condition. Many remaining Rosenwald schools have been remodeled. Window openings are commonly blocked off decreasing natural light and compromising the architectural integrity of the school buildings. Atkins, on the other hand, looks very much as it did when it opened. It has gained a 1952 gym to its north and 1997 classroom and hallway additions to the rear, enabling it to continue functioning as a modern school. The major renovations completed in 1997 included retrofitting systems, installing computer technology, and in general "sprucing up" the interior with great sensitivity to retaining original fabric and character. Although windows were replaced, the replacements are in wood with sashes matching the originals. The building retains a high level of historic architectural integrity.

Atkins is significant for the reasons illustrated above. Unfortunately, it is also significant as one of the few extant pre-1950 African-American school buildings in Winston-Salem. All of the community's early schools have been demolished: The Willis School, Depot Street, Slater's (WSSU) early buildings, Columbian Heights, Woodland Avenue, Trade Street, Oak Street. Carver High School (built as a county school) remains in use as a school.

[33]Dedication program.

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10. Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries of the nominated area are shown by the heavy dotted black line on the accompanying map, at a scale of 1 inch to 200 feet, and include lots 102, 103A, and 104 of block 831 of Forsyth County tax maps.

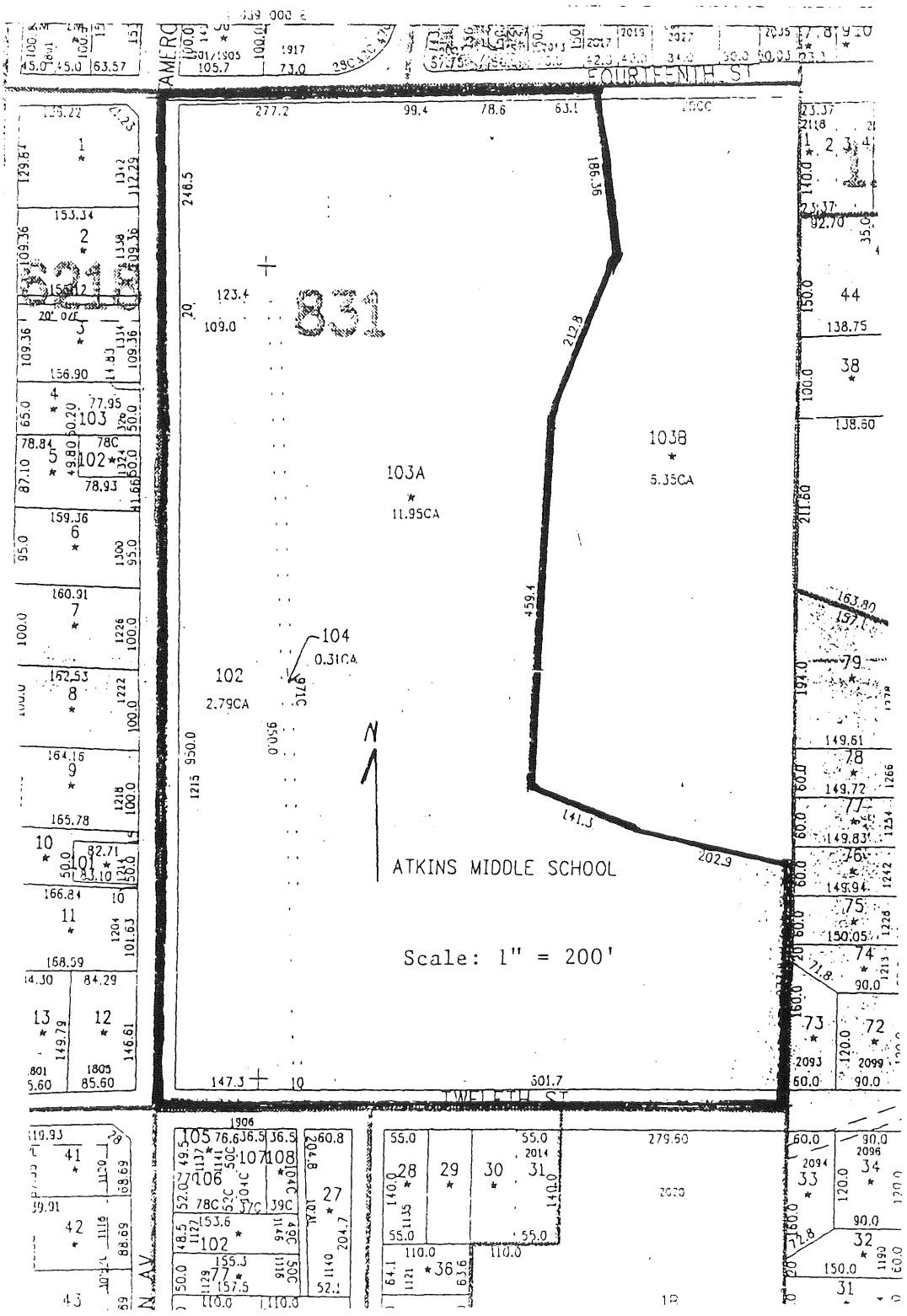
Boundary Justification

The boundaries of the nominated property include approximately fifteen acres (15.05 acres) of the original thirty-acre school tract which included the E. 14th Street School and the site of today's lot 103B, the city's E. 14th Street Recreation Center. The boundaries are drawn to encompass the 1931 building with attached gymnasium and later additions, the cafeteria, and current and historically associated playing fields.

PHOTOGRAPHS:

The following information for #1-5 applies to all nomination photographs:

1) (Former) Atkins High School
2) Forsyth County, North Carolina
3) Langdon E. Oppermann
4) 2/99
5) State Historic Preservation Office, Raleigh, North Carolina
6-7) A. Front facade; photographer facing NE.
B. North wing; photographer facing E.
C. Front and south side showing 1997 addition; photographer facing NE.
D. Gymnasium; photographer facing NE.
E. Entrance bays; photographer facing E.
F. Rear of complex, photographer facing SSW.
G. Interior corridor
H. Interior, original classroom showing microscope cases.
I. Interior, auditorium seating, main level; photographer facing W.
J. Interior, gymnasium; photographer facing WNW.


FOURTEENTH ST
TWELFTH ST
103A
11.95CA
103B
5.35CA
102
2.79CA
104
0.31CA
ATKINS MIDDLE SCHOOL
Scale: 1" = 200'
N

WILLIS MIDDLE SCHOOL
15