

NORTH CAROLINA STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
Office of Archives and History
Department of Cultural Resources

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Enfield Graded School

Enfield, Halifax County, HX1554, Listed 1/8/2009

Nomination by Beth Keane

Photographs by Beth Keane, May 2008



Overall front view



Overall rear view

**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 any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of property

historic name Enfield Graded School

other names/site number Enfield Middle School

2. Location

street & number 700 Branch Street not for publication N/A

city or town Enfield vicinity N/A

state North Carolina code NC county Halifax code 083 zip code 27823

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official Date

North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
<input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> other (explain): _____	_____	_____

Enfield Graded School
Name of Property

Halifax County, NC
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	
<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>	buildings
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>4</u>	<u>1</u>	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
N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: EDUCATION Sub: school
RECREATION AND CULTURE sports facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: VACANT Sub: _____

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Colonial Revival

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick
roof Asphalt
walls Brick
other _____

Narrative Description

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

Enfield Graded School
Name of Property

Halifax County, NC
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

B removed from its original location.

C a birthplace or a 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
Architecture

Period of Significance

1950-1958

Significant Dates

1950

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Simpson, Frank B., architect
Savage, Eugene, designer

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.

previously listed in the National Register

previously determined eligible by the National Register

designated a National Historic Landmark

recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other

Name of repository: _____

Enfield Graded School
Name of Property

Halifax County, NC
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property approximately 15 acres

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	18	259460	4007640	3	18	258940 4007440
2	18	259460	4007500	4	18	258940 4007580

 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 Beth Keane

organization Retrospective date July, 2008

street & number 6073 Gold Creek Estates Drive telephone 828-328-8147

city or town Hickory state NC zip code 28601

12. 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 the SHPO or FPO.)

name Halifax County Schools

street & number 9525 Highway 301 South telephone 336-882-9229

city or town Halifax state NC zip code 27839

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 the 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 Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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**Enfield Graded School
Halifax County, NC**

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

The Enfield Graded School in Halifax County sits on an approximate fifteen acre parcel of flat land at the end of Branch Street in a residential neighborhood known as Sherrod Heights located several blocks northwest of Enfield's small commercial district. The 1950 masonry Colonial Revival-style building faces southeast and is sits diagonally on the lot near the east end of the parcel. A 1951 brick gymnasium is located west of the school, while a 1952 concrete block agricultural building sits directly behind the school. A non-contributing 1970 metal music/band/storage building is located north of the gymnasium. All of the buildings, with the exception of the band building, are connected by sidewalks covered by metal breezeways. Athletic fields, comprised of a baseball diamond, two tennis courts, and a football field, are found west of the school. The nomination includes the Enfield Graded School, all the associated educational buildings, and the adjacent athletic fields. In order to simplify the description of building orientation, the southeast direction will be designated south, the northeast will be designated as east, the northwest will be designated as north, and southwest will be designated as west.

A driveway circles in front of the school building. A circular drive also accesses the rear of the school, but is not connected to the front drive. A grassy lawn and magnificent mature oak, dogwood, and magnolia trees create a park-like setting in front of the school. A gravel parking lot is located west of the school. A concrete walkway leads from the parking area to the front central door and the front west-side door. Two concrete benches are arranged on either side of a small circle approximately half-way along the concrete walkway leading to the central door. Residential neighborhoods surround the school property.

1. Enfield Graded School 1950 Contributing Building

The 1950 Colonial Revival-style Enfield Graded School is an H-shaped building with a large two-story central block, projecting two-story flanking wings, a rear one-story auditorium and a one-story kitchen addition behind the west wing. The school is a concrete-block building faced with brick veneer laid in five-to-one American bond. The lower floors are slab-on grade, while the upper floors consist of two- by ten-inch wood joists with diagonal one-inch sub flooring. The architecture incorporates classical features such as brick quoins on the end bays, concrete pilasters with Doric capitals in the central bay, and a cupola centered on the roof. The central block has a hipped roof, while the flanking wings feature front-gable roofs. The wooden cupola sits on a square wood base and features round-arched vents on each of its four elevations and a bell cast metal roof topped by a spire.

The twenty-bay façade has a central recessed entrance with double-leaf doors surmounted by a twelve-light transom. Concrete keystones accent the central door opening and two flanking

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first-story windows. The entrance is also marked by four, scored-concrete, two-story, pilasters with Doric capitals topped by a wide cornice. A cross-gable with a pediment of painted-white weatherboards and a circular vent surmounts the central front bay. Similarly, the flanking wings also feature prominent pediments with cornice returns, weatherboards, and circular vents.

The original steel, hopper-style banks of windows include singles, doubles, and triples on each of the building's four elevations. Window air-conditioning units pierce many of the windows. Two additional recessed entrances are located on either end of the school's central block. The double-leaf doors, surmounted by twelve-light transoms, provide access to the building's open-air stairwells. The second-level bays centered above the recessed openings are not enclosed, but are somewhat protected by metal awnings. The projecting end bays have no windows on the façade or rear (north) elevation.

The west elevation, adjacent to the drive and parking area, has a bank of single and triple windows and a central double-leaf entry door under a flat metal canopy that provides access to the school's cafeteria. The rear, west-end, one-story section, containing the kitchen, has a single and a triple window on its west elevation. A single-leaf entrance on its north elevation, flanked by a small square window, provides access to a small storage room. A double-leaf door, comprised of vertical boards, and protected by a gabled hood provides access to the kitchen on the east elevation.

The rear (north) elevation of the school also has banks of single and triple metal hopper windows arranged symmetrically at both levels. There are also double-leaf doors with twelve-light transoms located at either end that provide rear entry into the stairwells. Both doors are protected by a flat metal awning. The section west of the centrally located auditorium has steps that descend to a below-ground single door. An exterior brick chimney is positioned between the second and third bays near the west end of the elevation.

The one-story auditorium features an arched roof. There are three large windows, each with twenty-one panes of glass, and a double-leaf door with a twelve-light transom and flat metal canopy on both the east- and west-side elevations. Fenestration on the rear (north) elevation of the auditorium includes a central double-leaf door and two small metal hopper windows. A double rectangular wood vent is located near the top of the wall over the central door.

Single and triple metal hopper windows are symmetrically arranged at the first and second levels on the school's east elevation. Two narrow windows, providing illumination to a restroom, are centrally positioned along the wall.

The interior of the school remains largely intact, retaining a high level of architectural integrity. The floor plan of the central block is a typical arrangement of classrooms served by a

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transverse corridor. Offices are arranged on either side of the central entrance hall. On the first floor, the auditorium, flanked by two classrooms on each side is located on the north side of the main corridor. Built on a sloping floor, the intact auditorium features the original fixed wooden seats. The elevated stage is served by two small dressing rooms. The cafeteria is located in the west-side wing with the kitchen directly behind it. The east-side wing contains two classrooms. The layout of the second floor also features classrooms on either side of a transverse hall and several classrooms in the end wings. A library and a home economics room are positioned on the south side of the hall. Restrooms are located at either end of the corridor on the north side at both levels, as are the stairwells. Several square clerestory windows are positioned high on the first- and second-floor corridors' north walls.

The interior walls and ceiling are plastered with the exception of the cafeteria which has a fiber board tile ceiling. Most of the floors are covered in vinyl floor tiling, although some hardwood floors remain in the classrooms. The school also retains all the original interior glass and panel doors under six-light transoms. The original suspended incandescent light fixtures remain throughout the building. The kitchen and cafeteria are largely unaltered. A gas-fired boiler in a small basement room provided steam heat.

2. Gymnasium

1951

Contributing Building

A one-story concrete block gymnasium with brick veneer exterior walls is located west of the west wing of the high school and faces southeast toward Branch Street. The gable-front building rests on a concrete slab and measures seventy-six feet across the front, one-hundred-and-twenty-seven feet in length, and eighty-two feet across the rear. A 1953 one-story rear addition measures approximately ninety-seven feet in width by thirty-one feet, five inches deep. Three sets of double-leaf doors under four-light transoms are centrally located on the gymnasium's façade and are flanked on either side by three small window openings. The flat metal breezeway from the main school building connects to a slightly higher flat metal canopy suspended over the doors. The words "Enfield Cougars" and the head of a cougar are painted over the front entrances. The east- and west-side elevations have seven symmetrical hopper windows, each with eighteen lights, separated by brick pilasters. The west elevation also has three single entrance doors located on the first, the fourth, and the seventh bays directly underneath the windows. Each door is protected by a flat metal canopy. An exterior brick chimney is positioned on the rear (north) elevation of the gymnasium.

The rear one-story addition is divided into three sections with the middle section slightly higher than the flanking east and west sections. Each section is covered with a flat roof. A recessed entrance and two small hopper windows are found on the east elevation. The rear elevation of the east section features two small hopper windows and a double-leaf door surmounted by a flat metal canopy. The rear of the middle section has a single door with a flat

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metal canopy and two large, double hopper windows, each with thirty panes of glass. The west section has a small double hopper window on the rear elevation and a single door on the south elevation. Several circular heating vents pierce the roof.

The interior of the gymnasium has a wood tongue-and-groove floor which has been damaged in the center from roof leaks. Folding metal bleachers line two sides of the gymnasium. An exposed wood roof deck is supported by a steel beam truss system. Metal halide lighting fixtures hang from the ceiling. A gas-fired boiler provided steam heat. Locker rooms, restrooms, a boiler room, a coal room, and a storage room are located in the rear one-story section.

3. Agricultural Building 1952 Contributing Building

The rectangular one-story, slab-on-grade concrete-block building stands north of the main school building. The building has a side-gable shingle roof and measures forty-six by one-hundred feet. Two single-door entrances, one connected to the metal breezeway system, are located on the south elevation (façade). Five large metal hopper windows and one smaller window are also positioned on the façade. The rear (north) elevation has three single doors, two of which are protected by a single metal canopy, and seven metal hopper windows. Large wooden double-leaf doors, suitable for a vehicle entrance, are centrally positioned on the west-gable end. The doors are flanked by metal hopper windows: two north of the door and one south of the door. The east elevation has two large, triple, metal hopper windows and one small square window. An air conditioning unit is attached by vent pipes to one of the windows. The north slope of the roof is pierced by a brick chimney and a tall, slender vent pipe. An oil-fired boiler provided circulating hot water for heat.

The interior of the agricultural building is divided into two sections. It currently has wood paneling, carpet, and a dropped acoustic tile ceiling. The former shop area was converted to a media center and some later partitions have been installed.

4. Band Building 1970 Non-Contributing Building

The rectangular, metal band building is one-story with a low-pitched gabled roof. Constructed on a concrete slab, the building measures forty by ninety-nine feet and is situated north of the gymnasium. A single door and a large loading door provide access through the front (south) and rear elevations. There are no windows on the side elevations. The interior has been insulated and has a concrete block partition between the music/band room and the storage area. The building is heated and cooled with electrically operated equipment and has fluorescent lighting features.

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5. Athletic Field

Contributing Site

A large open field, formerly comprising a football field, tennis courts, and a baseball diamond for the school, is located west of the gymnasium building. The field is bound by private property to the north and south, Bryan Street to the west, and Ringwood Street on the southwest corner.

Rehabilitation Plans

Adaptive reuse plans call for the conversion of the school and agricultural building into residential one- and two-bedroom units and meeting rooms for senior citizens. The gymnasium will be restored by the town of Enfield and utilized for recreational purposes. The athletic fields behind the school will also be preserved by the town of Enfield for recreational purposes.

All rehabilitation work is being coordinated with the Restoration Branch of the State Historic Preservation Office and will meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The 1950 Enfield Graded School meets Criterion C as an excellent local example of an urban post-World War II school constructed on a larger scale and offering a broader curriculum than earlier local schools. Designed by prominent Raleigh architect Frank B. Simpson, with the assistance of designer Eugene Savage, the impressive two-story masonry Colonial Revival-style building was built to replace the town's outdated and deteriorated 1917 "graded" school. The school's design, however, harkened back to the consolidation era's consensus that public education was vital to community development and the school building should be a reflection of that ideal. Although the building's architectural details are more restrained than consolidated schools built during the 1920s and 1930s, the school's designers retained the impressive two-story form featuring a wide façade, banks of windows, and a focus on the central entrance. The interior also maintained the typical layout of earlier schools with double-loaded classrooms served by transverse corridors and fireproof stairwells at either end. In addition, the school incorporated a cafeteria and a substantial auditorium, while the campus comprises a separate gymnasium, an agricultural building, a music/band building, and adjoining athletic fields.

Enfield Graded School also meets National Register Criterion A for its association with the history of education in Enfield, North Carolina. Although the planning stages for the school started in the mid-1940s and construction began in 1948, the school for Enfield's white students did not open until 1950, a time period when school segregation policies were being challenged in the nations' court systems. A separate school for Enfield's African American students was constructed the following year. Thus, Enfield Graded School assists in underscoring the prevailing attitude of the state's county school boards in the middle of the twentieth century that public schools should be separate but equal. Enfield Graded School was finally integrated in 1964 at which time it became a high school, while in later years it transitioned to a middle school.

The period of significance extends from 1950 to 1958, during which time Enfield Graded School was the town's principal graded school for white children. The post-1958 period is not of exceptional significance and does not satisfy Criteria Consideration G.

Historical Background and Education Context

Originally known as Huckleberry Swamp, Enfield, Halifax County's oldest town, was settled by the 1730s. The town was later named for Methodist leader John Wesley's hometown of Enfield, Middlesex, England. It served as the seat of Edgecombe County until the county was divided into Halifax and Edgecombe counties in 1758. The original town lay west of the present town center (Allen, pp. 11-13). The arrival of the Wilmington and Weldon Railroad in 1845 transformed Enfield into a market town and the town center moved east to straddle the railroad

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tracks (Bishir, p. 302). In 1896 the opening of the Enfield Tobacco Market brought growth to the area, but it was soon surpassed in tobacco production by Rocky Mount and other towns. The establishment of buying and cleaning stations for peanuts soon made Enfield the world's largest raw peanut market. By 1920, however, cotton was considered the most important crop in Halifax County (Allen, Sidney, p15). Enfield and its outlying areas remain primarily rural today.

Shortly after the turn of the twentieth century, Enfield began a steady growth which continued throughout the first half of the twentieth century. By World War II, Enfield was a thriving town of approximately 3,000 residents. After the end of the war, many of its young people settled in the area resulting in a flurry of new residential housing, businesses, and industries constructed within the town. Further improvements included two new parks, a municipal swimming pool, and a new municipal building complete with jail, courtroom, and offices, a new fire department building, and a considerable expansion of the electric, water, and sewerage facilities. Also, it was during this time of growth and expansion that the town decided it needed new educational facilities (*Presenting Enfield*, 1961 brochure prepared by Enfield Industrial Committee).

Education in Enfield, like in most agricultural areas of the state, began in private homes or small buildings and fees were charged to attend. The town's first school, known as the Enfield Academy, opened in 1825 as a private school for white children supported by fees paid by the students' families. The following year, the North Carolina Legislature set aside funds to establish "Common" or "Free" schools. One of these Common schools was established in Enfield ca. 1839 and operated for two months each year. The public education movement was relatively stagnant, however, until Calvin H. Wiley was appointed the state's first Superintendent of Public Instruction in 1852. After a few years of his motivating influence, the movement was hindered by the social upheavals brought about by the Civil War and Reconstruction (*Enfield Commonwealth*, Lily Pike Sullivan Municipal Library, Enfield, NC).

According to Henry Taves in *The Rural Architectural Heritage of Halifax County*: "Documentary and physical evidence suggest that there was little centralized organization of public education in Halifax County until 1881 when the first deed was recorded in a list of properties purchased by the public school committees of Halifax County. During the following decade, forty-three transactions were completed, indicating a dedicated effort to establish a county-wide public school system" (Taves, p. 61).

Taves also reports: "The limitations of local transportation resulted in the formation of the Halifax County school systems as a collection of small schools that served local population centers. The public school, available to all, was regarded as a great benefit to society in spite of the limitations inherent in the one-room, single-teacher environment. Single-room district schools for both blacks and whites were built in every settled area, administered by a school

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committee in each township staffed by interested local citizens. By 1888, there were seventeen public schools for the white children and nineteen for the black students” (Taves, p. 61).

In 1896, the United States Supreme Court ruled in *Plessy v. Ferguson* that the Fourteenth Amendment did not require facilities to be racially integrated as long as they were equal, ushering in an era of “separate but equal” facilities and treatment for blacks and whites. In the area of education, it was felt that the children of former slaves would be better served if they attended their own schools in their own communities.

Education reform in North Carolina was a primary goal of Charles B. Aycock, elected governor in 1900. He effectively mustered popular support for school construction, lengthening the school term, and the fight against illiteracy. In 1901, the Enfield Graded School for white students, a one-story frame building with five teachers, was opened on the eastern edge of town with state and local funds (*Enfield Progress*, August 13, 1948, p. 1).

In 1909, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) was founded to secure civil justice and to foster racial integration and fair treatment toward “citizens of color.” The NAACP led an array of public education efforts. By the early 1930s, they began their effort to achieve desegregated schools, but did so initially within the “separate but equal” framework of *Plessy v. Ferguson*. The NAACP tried to make separate schools more equal in facilities, teachers’ salaries, school terms, and transportation as a way of putting financial pressure on the South to dismantle a dual system of education (Lowe, *The Strange History of School Desegregation*, www.rethinkingschools.org/archive/08_03/stra183.shtml).

The appointment of A. E. Akers, former superintendent of Roanoke Rapid schools, in 1915, as the first full-time superintendent of the county’s schools, brought about more impressive results in Halifax County during the succeeding years. As early as 1919, he reported that the school building program was well under way, although thirty of the forty-one county schools remained one-teacher school houses. He envisioned the eventual construction of eight- to twelve-room rural schools for the county (Allen, Sidney, pp. 34-35).

Between 1915 and 1940, the number of one-teacher schools in Halifax County was cut from thirty-six to eleven. As enrollment increased at the 1901 Enfield Graded School, a new larger brick school was built ca. 1917 on the same location. This occurred along with other consolidation efforts across the county. The philosophy of the consolidation movement held that a two-room school provided a much better educational environment than could two one-room schools. Students were bussed to school and larger brick school buildings were built. During the Depression in 1933, the town of Enfield consolidated schools with the Halifax County system. (Taves, p. 79).

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After the consolidation of the county educational program in 1933, it became obvious that the 1917 Enfield Graded School for white children was inadequate and in poor condition. It was not until November 1945, however, that the Board of County Commissioners first began to consider building a new school. Although it initially met with stiff resistance, money was finally appropriated to begin construction. On March 29, 1946, the Halifax County School Board purchased eight acres for the school site in the Sherrod Heights neighborhood from Margaret Elizabeth Sherrod (Deed Book 552, p. 16). Eugene Savage was chosen to design the building and F. B. Simpson of Raleigh was chosen as architect. O. W. Godwin, general contractor, was awarded the contract for the exterior brickwork, window frames, doors, and roof (*Enfield Progress*, June 11, 1948).

By the summer of 1948, the construction of the new Enfield Graded School was well underway. The June 11, 1948 issue of the *Enfield Progress* reported: "The new building will have the latest equipment, and also classrooms, cafeteria, and gym facilities fully adequate to care for the 546 enrollment, which the Enfield Graded School had the first of last year." It went on to elaborate: "The first floor of the new building will have ten classrooms, a modern cafeteria, and a gym with a full-size basketball court and built-in seats. Locker and shower rooms will also be included. The second floor will have thirteen classrooms and a library. The auditorium which will run through both floors, will measure ninety-two by sixty-one feet. The building will be of brick construction and colonial design with the entrance in the center fronted by four stone columns and topped by a cupola." An August 13th article in the *Enfield Progress* mentioned that the main building would be flanked by a \$50,000 gymnasium and a new agricultural building, correcting the June 11th report that stated the gymnasium would be in the first floor of the main school building.

At their September 12, 1949 meeting, the Halifax County Board of Education authorized the purchase of an additional 7.1 acres of land adjoining the eight-acre school site at a total cost of \$7,100.00 for use as the school athletic field (*Enfield Progress*, September 23, 1949). The deed, legalizing the transfer of land between members of the Sherrod family and the Halifax County School Board for the purchase of the 7.1 acres, is dated August 13, 1949 (Deed Book 579, p. 68).

While the new Enfield Graded School for white children was being built, the black citizens began campaigning for their own new school. At this time, racial segregation in public schools was the norm across the United States. Although all the schools in a given district were supposed to be equal, most black schools were far inferior to their white counterparts. As late as 1954, black schools received only sixty percent of all the funding white ones received (Lowe, www.rethinkingschools.org/archive/08_03/stra183.shtml).

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In 1950, the Halifax County School Board decided to use the 1917 Enfield Graded School for the “Negro” high school on a temporary basis after it had been vacated by the white pupils. A delegation composed of white and black citizens of Enfield appeared before the County Board with a petition containing the names of 613 people requesting that the Board of Education provide a new building and facilities for the “colored” high school pupils to be located near their homes and properties. Although an opinion was expressed by an employee of the Division of Surveys, State Department of Public Instruction, that the present school building was not in a condition for continued use, the Board of Education explained that minor repairs would be made to the building for its temporary use and further explained: “that a new building for “Negro” high school pupils had been included in its projected program to be constructed after the completion of projects for which application for State building funds is being made” (*Enfield Progress*, January 13, 1950).

At the March 6, 1950 meeting of the Halifax County Board of Education, the chairman and superintendent reported that the State Review Panel had approved the revised plan for school building projects that included: completion of the Enfield Graded School (white) at an estimated cost of \$100,000; construction of the William R. Davie School (white) at an estimated cost of \$50,000; completion of an auditorium, gymnasium and six classrooms for the Eastman School (colored) for an estimated cost of \$88,000; completion of an auditorium and gymnasium for the McIver School (colored) for an estimated cost of \$26,000; and the construction of a high school in the Enfield area (colored) for an estimated cost of \$139,475. A committee was appointed to select a suitable site for the “Negro” high school in Enfield (*Enfield Progress*, March 10, 1950).

The April 14, 1950 edition of the *Enfield Progress* reported that bids were accepted at the April 3rd meeting of the Halifax County Board of Education for the completion of construction of the Enfield Graded School. O. W. Godwin of Dunn was awarded the general contract for \$92,400.00; Marshburn Plumbing and Heating from Tarboro was awarded the plumbing contract for \$6,857.00; Jack Sullivan, Inc. from Rocky Mount was awarded the heating contract for \$15,484.00; and Fitts-Crumpler Electric Company from Roanoke Rapids was awarded the electrical contract for \$6,236.31.

The new Enfield Graded School opened its doors to students on September 13, 1950, although the building was not expected to be completed until several weeks later, as the auditorium, the cafeteria, and the home economics room needed additional work. Patrons of the school were asked to offer their help in constructing concrete walkways to the building. The school housed grades one through twelve with an initial enrollment of 483 students taught by twenty teachers. In addition to teaching the regular academic subjects, the high school curriculum included typing, vocational agriculture, home economics, physical education, music, and band. The principal for the new school was T. O. Hickman (*Enfield Progress*, September 15, 1950).

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Growth of the school complex continued rapidly after its construction. When the school opened in 1950, athletic competitions, including baseball, basketball, and football games, were held in a separate location on Highway 301. In July of the following year, the finishing touches were being put on the gymnasium and it was anticipated that it would be completed in time for the opening of the basketball season. Citizens of the community raised approximately \$25,000 to build the gym. Because there was only enough money to build the gym itself, the locker rooms and bleachers would be added later. Heat was provided by tobacco curers in the corners of the gym. Before there were lights in the building, all games had to be played during daylight hours after school. The new gymnasium featured three basketball courts and each court would be equipped with two goals, for a total of six basketball goals. The football field was also first used in 1951. The land for the field, bought the previous summer, had peanuts growing on it at the time. A local man plowed the field so it could be used for football. The Enfield Lion Club provided the bleachers and the Junior Chamber of Commerce paid for the lighting (*Enfield Progress*, July 27, 1951).

The agricultural building was completed in 1952 with county funding. Because money was limited, the vocational teacher and his students constructed the roof of the building themselves. A band room, a storeroom for the lunchroom, and a janitor's supply room were added to the rear of the gymnasium building in 1953 (*An Economic Study*, Halifax County, 1969).

Community involvement and support of the school was always strong. The Rotary Club supported the band beginning in 1950. Students still were required to purchase their own instruments, though the money from the Rotarians allowed the band to participate in numerous parades, competitions and events. The Levon Theater, located in Enfield, offered the band the use of their facility to give concerts in order to raise additional money (*Enfield Progress*, April 14, 1950).

It was during the early 1950s, when Enfield was building separate schools for the town's white and black students that school segregation issues in the United States were coming to the forefront. When a third-grade African American student named Linda Brown attempted to enroll in a white elementary school in Topeka, Kansas and was turned away, her father, Oliver Brown, went to the local branch of the NAACP asking for help. Eager to assist the Browns, the NAACP requested an injunction that would forbid the segregation of Topeka's public schools. The case eventually went to the Supreme Court where it was combined with other cases that challenged school segregation in South Carolina, Virginia, and Delaware. On May 17, 1954, the Supreme Court struck down the "separate but equal" doctrine for public education, ruled in favor of the plaintiffs, and required the desegregation of schools across America (www.watson.org/~lisa/blackhistory/early-civilrights/brown.html).

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It was not until 1964, however, that Enfield Graded School was integrated and African American students could enroll under the "Freedom of Choice" plan. In 1968, as integration efforts continued, the Inborden School, formerly serving Enfield's black student population in grades one through twelve, was changed to an elementary school and the 1950 Enfield Graded School became Enfield High School. The Inborden School, built in 1951, was named for Thomas Sewell Inborden, a noted black educator and founder of the Brick School that opened in 1895 to serve the large number of African Americans in the eastern North Carolina counties. The Brick School was located three miles from the town of Enfield (Inborden Elementary School survey file, SHPO).

Another change in the school system occurred in 1982 when the county consolidated all high school students into either Northwest Halifax or Southeast Halifax High Schools. Enfield High School then became Enfield Middle School with grades six through eight. The Enfield Middle School, as well as the 1951 Inborden Elementary School, closed in December of 2007. In January 2008, a new 124,000 square foot building opened on Highway 481, just outside the town limits. The new school consolidated the Enfield and Inborden schools and has an enrollment of approximately 750 elementary and middle school students (Terry interview, July 21, 2008).

The Choanoke Area Development Association (CADA) plans to acquire the Enfield Graded School and renovate the school building and the adjacent agricultural building, converting them into a housing facility for senior citizens, thereby ensuring the facility will continue to maintain its presence as an important institution in the community. The gymnasium and the athletic fields will be transferred to the town of Enfield.

Architecture Context

The beginning of the twentieth century brought a new awareness of the role architecture played in establishing the proper attitude and respect for education in the minds of the citizens. Books were written on the proper construction of modern schools and detailed descriptions given on everything from the size of the rooms and hallways to the importance of playground equipment. Specifications detailed the placement of lighting, plumbing, and electrical fixtures, all rather recent innovations for schools at the time, to be included in the new buildings (*The Development of North Carolina's Public School System Through 1940*, p. 12).

It was common practice for the county boards of education to contract with architects for the construction of new schools. The State Department of Public Instruction, through the planning division, reserved the right to review all plans. Local officials and architects could

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choose their own plans, but only if they met with state approval (*The Development of North Carolina's Public School System Through 1940*, p. 13).

The National Educational Association recommended that a minimum of fifty percent of a school's total floor area should be used for instruction; these areas included classrooms, libraries, labs, workshops, assembly halls, stages, and gymnasiums. Non-instructional areas included stairs and corridors, restrooms, walls and partitions, administrative space, and closets. State officials recommended that new schools be situated near the center of population in order to equalize school populations and to reduce transportation costs. They favored the use of architects who provided clear blueprints and specifications. Concrete, brick, and stone were the materials recommended for even the smallest buildings. Double use of areas such as auditorium/gymnasium was recommended. It was also advised that each of these modern schools include a low pressure steam heating plant, standard indoor plumbing, standard lighting, a pressure water tank, drinking fountains, and the all-important auditorium (Blair, pp. 26-68).

The end result of these numerous guidelines and recommendations by state officials was the proliferation during the early decades of the twentieth century of rural and small-town schools which were remarkably similar in plan and quality. While the facades may include differing degrees of detail, the interiors and floor plans exhibit few deviations from each other. The typical school was two stories, constructed of brick or stone, built on a "U", "L", "H", or "T" plan, with a low hip roof, numerous windows, and transverse corridors. Many exhibited Classical Revival, Gothic Revival, or Colonial Revival exterior details.

One of the principal aspects of the ca. 1920 through ca. 1950 consolidated schools was the inclusion of a campus plan. Separate buildings were typically built to house gymnasiums, agricultural classrooms, and sometimes band buildings. Enough acreage was typically acquired to provide ample room for playgrounds and outdoor athletic competitions. Thus, schools also became important community facilities, providing space for adult education, community organizing, plays, concerts, and athletic events (*The Development of North Carolina's Public School System through 1940*, p. 15).

The 1950 Enfield Graded School was likely one of the last schools built in North Carolina following the campus plan model. Although it was built to replace a 1917 brick school that was in a deteriorated condition and no longer adequate to house the town's white student population, the architects for the school followed the precedents set for schools designed during the first several decades of the twentieth century. Two stories in height and of concrete block and brick construction, the school's impressive Colonial Revival façade is reflected in the emphasis on the central pavilion with the cast concrete pilasters, wide cornice, prominent pediment, and central cupola. Mid-twentieth-century elements incorporated into the school include the use of concrete blocks, the installation of steel hopper-style windows, and a toned-

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down or streamlined appearance. The school had twenty-three classrooms, a home economics room, a science laboratory, a library, and an auditorium. It also featured a typical layout of transverse corridors with rooms on either side. Situated on a large town lot, there was plenty of space for a playground and for the later additions of the detached 1951 gymnasium and 1952 agricultural building.

The school board selected Frank B. Simpson as the principal architect for Enfield Graded School and Eugene Savage as the designer. A prominent architect based in Raleigh, Simpson is well known for his design of the 1913 Administration Building, the 1925 Haywood Store Building, the 1929 Capital Club Building, and the 1938 expansion of the United States (Century) Post Office, all located in Raleigh (Bishir, *A Guide to the Historic Architecture of Piedmont North Carolina*, pp. 110-113). He was also the architect for the 1953 Kingswood Elementary School in Cary where he again collaborated with Eugene Savage as the designer (Sellars, www.lib.ncsu.edu/findingaids/MC00063).

Additional consolidated schools in the northeastern region of the state include the 1922 Murfreesboro High School, located in Hertford County, the 1926 Central High School in Elizabeth City, Pasquotank County, the 1929 Ahoskie School in Hertford County (NR, 2005), and the 1929 Woodland-Olney School in Northampton County (NR, 1997). The two-story masonry schools are all very similar in that they feature large classrooms, a cafeteria, an attached auditorium, administrative offices, and fire-proof stairwells. Banks of large windows illuminate the classrooms. The exteriors feature restrained brick designs with Classical Revival or Colonial Revival details.

Although built just one year after the Enfield Graded School for white children, the 1951 Inborden School, constructed for Enfield's African American students, was a somewhat transitional school design in that it incorporated some of the design concepts of the pre-1950 schools along with a more typical layout of the schools built in the second half of the twentieth century. The school is a one-story H-shaped brick building with a ca. 1970 attached wing. It became typical for a school in the 1950s and 1960s to house the different grades in separate wings: one wing for elementary students, one wing for middle school or junior high students, and one wing for high school students. Inborden's cafeteria and gymnasium, built sometime after the school building, were housed in detached buildings, following the campus model that housed extracurricular activities, other than academics, in separate buildings (Inborden Elementary School file, SHPO archives).

Enfield Graded School is significant in that it was built at the tail end of the consolidation era and yet the school was modeled after schools built in the first decades of the twentieth century. The 1950s and 1960s brought further consolidation of school districts, resulting in the construction of larger, more sprawling, schools throughout the state. Enfield Graded School,

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however, continued to serve the town and surrounding area until its closure in December, 2007.
The school remains an important local landmark.

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Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries of the approximate fifteen-acre nominated tract are delineated by the red line on the attached Halifax County Tax Map, parcel 0403245.

Boundary Justification

The property boundary for the Enfield School entails an approximate fifteen-acre tract owned by the Halifax County Schools. The tract includes the 1950 Enfield Graded School, the 1951 gymnasium, the 1952 agricultural building, the 1970 band building, and the athletic fields. The nominated acreage is historically associated with the 1950 Enfield Graded School and provides an appropriate setting for the school.

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The following information applies to all photographs:

Name of Property: Enfield Graded School
County and State where property is located: Halifax County, North Carolina
Address: 700 Branch Street, Enfield

Photographs:

- Photograph 1: Enfield School: Façade (south elevation); camera pointing north
Photographer: Beth Keane; date: March, 2008
- Photograph 2: Enfield School: East and north elevations; camera pointing southwest
Photographer: Beth Keane; date: March, 2008
- Photograph 3: Enfield School: North elevation; camera pointing south
Photographer: Beth Keane; date: March, 2008
- Photograph 4: Enfield School: West elevation; camera pointing east
Photographer: Beth Keane; date: March, 2008
- Photograph 5: Enfield School: interior: classroom
Photographer: Beth Keane; date: March, 2008
- Photograph 6: Enfield School: interior: auditorium
Photographer: Susannah Franklin; date: December, 2006
- Photograph 7: Gymnasium: façade (south elevation); camera pointing north
Photographer: Beth Keane; date: March, 2008
- Photograph 8: Gymnasium: interior
Photographer: Beth Keane; date: March, 2008
- Photograph 9: Agriculture Building: west and south elevations; camera pointing northeast
Photographer: Beth Keane; date: March, 2008
- Photograph 10: Band Building; south and west elevations; camera pointing northeast
Photographer: Beth Keane; date: March, 2008
- Photograph 11: Athletic Fields
Photographer: Susannah Franklin; date: December, 2006