

INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY FORM FOR

Selma MULTIPLE RESOURCE OR THEMATIC NOMINATION

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Selma Graded School

AND/OR COMMON

Selma Elementary School

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

West Richardson Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Selma

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Third

STATE

North Carolina

CODE

037

COUNTY

Johnston

CODE

101

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Johnston County Board of Education

(919) 934-6031

STREET & NUMBER

Highway 70 East

CITY, TOWN

Smithfield,

VICINITY OF

North Carolina

STATE

27577

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Johnston County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

Market Street

CITY, TOWN

Smithfield,

North Carolina

STATE

27577

6 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Thomas A. Greco - Principal Investigator

August, 1980

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Town of Selma

STREET & NUMBER

Box 357

TELEPHONE

(919) 965-3388

CITY OR TOWN

Selma,

STATE

North Carolina 27576

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Selma Public School was built in 1922 to replace an earlier building, on the same site, that had been destroyed by fire in 1920. The building was designed by the Wilson architectural firm, Benton and Benton and the construction contract went to J. W. Stout and Company, from Sanford. The three story Gothic Revival building has a projecting three bay central block with attached side wings. A broad flight of stone stairs leads to the central entrance at the second floor level, with the first floor forming a high base. The central entrance bay, flanked by brick pilasters, has a large pointed arch opening with a carved limestone panel above containing the letters "SPS" (Selma Public Schools). The central bay is capped by a stepped parapet with a carved cartouche and carved limestone pinnacles atop the brick pilasters. The end bays of the central block contain tripartite windows with limestone surrounds. A fake limestone balustrade corresponds with the window openings in the parapet. The two flanking side wings, which contain classroom spaces, have decorated brick faces in a diamond pattern with limestone accents.

The H-plan of the structure houses two detached classroom wings connected at the first and second floors by the auditorium and former lunchroom. Two triple arch arcades with end flights of steps mark the entrances to the classroom wings and the auditorium at the second floor level.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

____ NATIONAL

____ STATE

 X

LOCAL

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1922

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Architect - Benton & Benton
Builder - J. W. Stout & Comp.**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The Selma Public School is an excellent example of public school buildings constructed across the state during the 1920's. The siting of the school, at the end of North Massey Street, is a visually dramatic terminus to the small scale residential street. Designed by the architectural firm, Benton & Benton, the public school is a prime example of this prolific Wilson, N. C. architectural firm. The partnership of Charles Collins and Frank Warthall Benton was formed in 1915 and lasted until 1935, with several schools, apartment buildings, a fire station and private residences completed during the twenty year partnership. The well proportioned exterior is augmented by finely carved Gothic Revival stone details. The building is a symbolic reminder of the importance that education has played in the history of Selma.

CRITERIA ASSESSMENT

A. The Selma Public School is representative of school buildings built during the 1920's across the state at a time of economic prosperity.

C. The building is a prime example of the work of Benton & Benton, a prolific Wilson architectural firm active from 1915 to 1935. The architectural design, executed in a mature eclectic style, presents a well proportioned front elevation coupled with finely articulated Gothic Revival exterior details. The siting of the building, at the terminus of a residential street, is both visually dramatic and highly symbolic of the importance that has been placed on education throughout the history of Selma.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Education and the educational system has played an important part in Selma's history. The first school was begun in 1869 and consisted of a one room building, no more than a shack. In 1875 John A. Waddell, co-owner of the Wilson Lumber Company, started a pay school on the second floor of his new home in Selma. This pay school was later followed by others. The Selma Masonic Lodge #320, which had been chartered in 1872, granted Benjamin Hatcher the use of rooms on the first floor of the lodge building in 1876, for another pay school.

The finest pay school that Selma had was built in 1880 by John Waddell, and was probably an outgrowth of the earlier school effort he started in his house. The Selma Academy became quite a reputable institution, drawing students from the neighboring counties of Wake, Wayne, Wilson and Franklin. At the Academy's height in the early 1890's it had an enrollment of nearly one hundred students, at a time when the population of Selma was not over seven hundred. The first principal of the Academy was Dr. Henry Louis Smith, a Greensboro native, he stayed at this post until about 1890. Dr. Smith left the Academy and became president of Davidson College () in Davidson, North Carolina and later president of Washington and Lee University (1912-1929) in Lexington, Virginia. Dr. Smith's brother, C. Alphonso Smith also taught at the Academy at one time.

In 1886 Robert Eason became superintendent of a new pay school which was located on North Green Street. This pay school became the Selma Graded School, the first free school in Selma, in 1901 when the building was turned to face Waddell Street and a new classroom wing was constructed. Frederick Archer became principal of the school in 1901. The 1911 Sanborn Map Company's Map of Selma lists the Graded School as a wood, two story frame building.

About 1915 the Graded School building was moved across the Southern Railroad to the site of the present Richard B. Harrison School. The building was used as a black school and replaced an earlier school that was started C. 1880. About 1933 the wood frame building burned and was replaced by the present three story brick building in 1935, designed by C. C. Hook, a Charlotte architect.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

1. Selma Centennial Commission. Selma, North Carolina 1867-1967 "Selma's Colorful Century". 1967.
2. The Smithfield Herald. February 25, 1916.
3. The Sanborn Map Company. 1911 Map of Selma

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than 1 acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,7	74,6	4,0,0	3,9	3,5	2,0,0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING			NORTHING	
C							D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

For Boundary description please see attached map.

8. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND . . . Continued

On February 25, 1916, the Smithfield Herald announced plans for a new Graded School, to be erected on West Richardson Street.⁹ The contractors were listed as Joe W. Stout and Company, a firm from Sanford; they were also the contractors for the Selma Town Hall and Opera House (1916).¹⁰ This new school, on the same site as the present building, opened in 1917. Three years later the building was destroyed by fire. The fire was the result of arson, started by Oscar Melvin, a former janitor of the school.¹¹ Plans for a new school were put into action in 1921 when the Selma School Board, consisting of: Dr. R. J. Noble, chairman; George F. Brietz, secretary; L. D. Debnan, treasurer; Dr. George D. Vick, P. C. Worley, J. F. Smith and N. E. Ward, trustees; and W. B. Crumpton, superintendent;¹² successfully marketed \$175,000 worth of school bonds.¹³ The new school was designed by the Wilson architectural firm, Benton and Benton. Charles Collins Benton and his brother, Frank Warthall Benton, began their architectural practice in 1915 and continued practicing together until 1935.¹⁴ The contractors for the project were again J. W. Stout and Company. The school was formally dedicated in May 1922 during the annual commencement excersises.¹⁵

The Selma Graded School was accredited in 1932 by the Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools of the Southern States, which attested to the high standards the school was able to maintain.¹⁶ The building was enlarged in 1938 as part of a Works Progress Administration (WPA) project, adding a six classroom wing.¹⁷

With the consolidation of the white and black schools in Selma in 1969, the Selma Graded School became an elementary school, with Harrison serving as the high school. In 1973 a new high school was opened, consolidating both Smithfield and Selma high schools. Harrison then became a junior high school.

Several recent additions, spanning the late 1950's through the 1970's, have been made the original Graded School 's site. However,

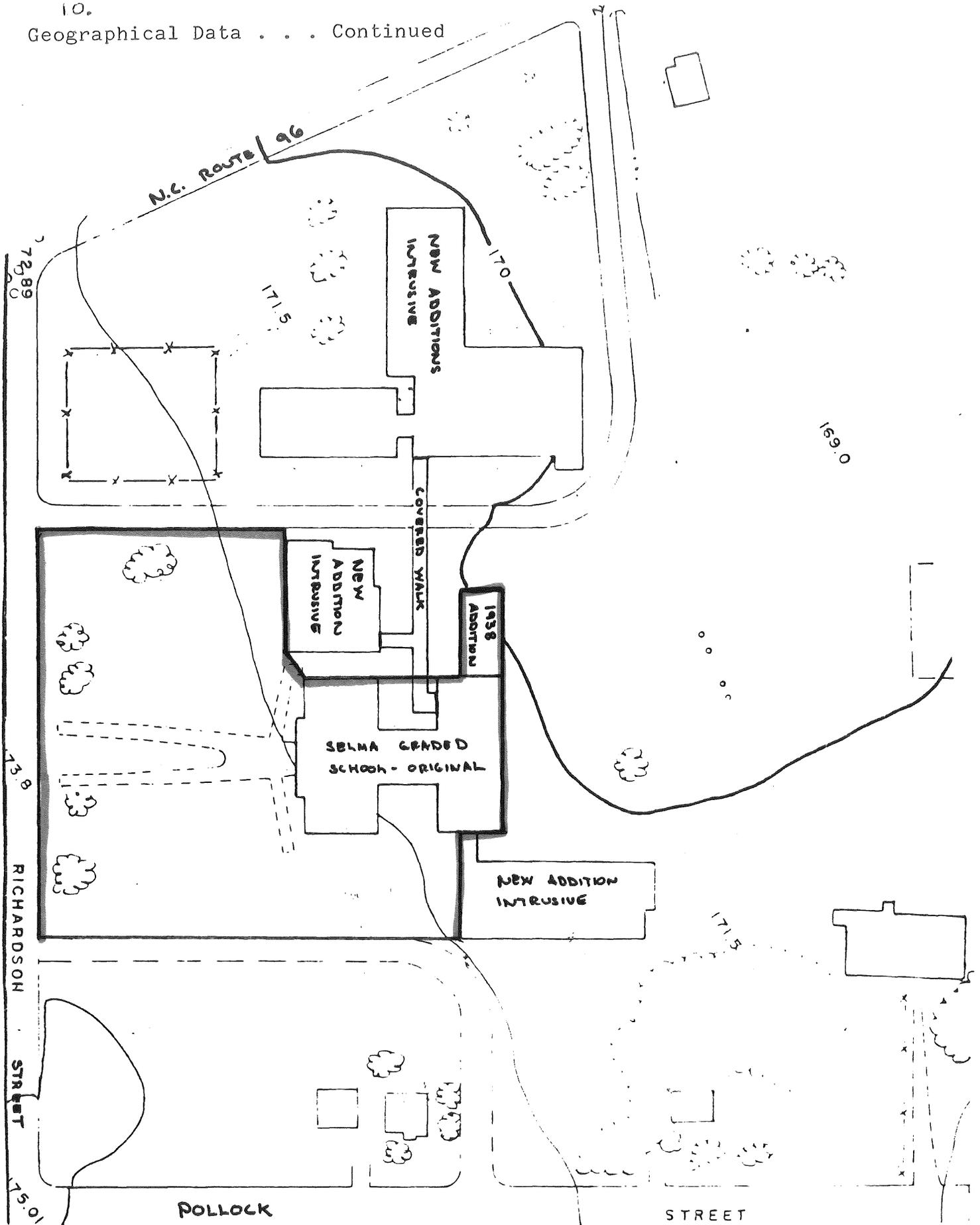
the integrity of the building has been maintained. The building is one of the more monumental structures in Selma and embodies the importance that Selma and the booming economy of the 1920's placed on education.

FOOTNOTES

1. Selma Centennial Commission. Selma, North Carolina 1867-1967
"Selma's Colorful Century". 1967. page 3.
2. Ibid. p. 3.
3. Ibid. p. 3.
4. Ibid. p. 4.
5. Ibid. p. 4.
6. Ibid. p. 5.
7. Sanborn Map Company. 1911 Map of Selma. New York, New York 1911.
8. Op. Cit., Selma Centennial Commission (S.C.C.) pp. 4, 7, 15, 16.
9. The Smithfield Herald. "Selma News" February 25, 1916.
10. Op. Cit., S.C.C. p. 10.
11. Ibid. p. 11.
12. Taken from plaque hanging in the foyer of the building, dated 1922.
13. Op. Cit., S.C.C. p. 12.
14. Research supplied by Kate M. Ohno, 9/14/79. Ms. Ohno completed the Wilson Historic Survey and the Rocky Mount Historic Survey.
15. Op. Cit., S.C.C. p. 13 and from plaque in building.
16. Ibid. p. 15.
17. Ibid. p. 16.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES - Continued . . .

4. Research supplied by Kate M. Ohno on the Benton family architects.
9/14/79.



Everitt P. Stevens House
E side SR 1003 at SR 1934
Selma MRN #1
Selma Quadrangle
Zone 17 Scale 1:24000
17 745000/3938230

Selma Graded School
W Richardson Street
Selma MRN # 4
Zone 17 Scale 1:24000
17 746400/39352000

Nowell-Mayerburg-Oliver House
312 W. Anderson Street
Selma MRN # 5
Selma Quadrangle
Zone 17 Scale 1:24000
17 746020/3935830

Selma Historic District
Selma MRN #2
Selma Quadrangle
Zone 17 Scale 1:24000
17 745280/3935660

William E. Smith House
309 W. Railroad Street
Selma MRN #6
Selma Quadrangle
Zone 17 Scale 1:24000
17 745990/3935620

Union Station
E. Railroad Street
Selma MRN # 3
Selma Quadrangle
Zone 17 Scale 1:24 000
17 746580/39353000

Noah Edward Edgerton House
301 W. Railroad Street
Selma MRN # 7
Selma Quadrangle
Zone 17 Scale 1:24000
17 745070/3935660

Waddell-Oliver House
N side Pine Level Road
Selma MRN # 8
Selma Quadrangle
Zone 17 Scale 1:24000
17 747800/39346000

