

NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 10-90)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

MAR 23 2001

421

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 Panther Branch School

other names/site number Juniper Level School

2. Location

street & number E. side SR 2727, 0.5 mi. S. of SR 1010 not for publication N/A
city or town Raleigh vicinity X
state North Carolina code NC county Wake code 183 zip code 27603-9242

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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 ___ statewide X locally. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Jeffrey J. Crow SHPO

3/6/01

Signature of certifying official

Date

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

=====
6. Function or Use
=====

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: EDUCATION Sub: School

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: RELIGION Sub: Meeting Hall

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7. Description
=====

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH & 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS: Colonial Revival

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE BLOCK
roof ASPHALT
walls WOOD: Weatherboard
other _____

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)

- 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
ETHNIC HERITAGE: Black
SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance 1926-1952

Significant Dates 1926

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)
N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder W.M. Ballentine Co., Builder

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

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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(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: North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, Division of Archives and History

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10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of Property 2.00 acres

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u> 17 </u>	<u> 713610 </u>	<u> 4945610 </u>	3	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____
	<u> See continuation sheet. </u>					

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 Nancy Van Dolsen

organization _____ date 3 December 2000

street & number 1601 Highland Drive telephone 252.243.7861

city or town Wilson state NC zip code 27893

=====
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)

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Property Owner
=====

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Juniper Level Baptist Church

street & number 9104 Sauls Road telephone _____

city or town Raleigh state NC zip code 27603
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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Section 7 Page 1

Panther Branch School
Wake County, North Carolina

The Panther Branch School sits facing west towards the road on an open, grassy lot. To the rear of the building is a wooded area, and southeast of the school is a cemetery. This small cemetery, owned by the Juniper Level Baptist Church, is located on the southeast corner of the school lot. The cemetery dates to ca. 1970 and is unfenced. Across the road from the school stands the Juniper Level Baptist Church. The area around the school is experiencing modern development; the former farm fields have been replaced with housing subdivisions in recent years.

The Panther Branch School is a one-story, frame, weatherboarded building standing on brick piers that have been infilled with concrete block. The gable roof has a slight overhang that has no adornment. The building features a central recessed entry that is sheathed in flush horizontal boards. The entry is highlighted by a pedimented portico that is supported by simplified Tuscan-style pillars that stand on a brick kneewall flanking six concrete steps leading to the entry. The simple pediment is defined by an entablature of flush narrow vertical boards. One door is located on the rear of the building, and is reached by a flight of seven steps.

The building originally featured four nine-over-nine sash windows flanking the entry, and two sets of four nine-over-nine sash windows on the east (rear) elevation. The windows were replaced ca. 1970 with four small square openings (now covered with plywood) on the façade and rear elevation. The window openings are also covered by plywood inside the building. Two small horizontal two-over-two sash windows were added to flank the entry.

Within, the building exhibits a high level of integrity, retaining the original floor plan, doors, partition between the rear classrooms, floors, and beaded tongue-and-groove walls and ceilings. The stage is also intact, but is now located in the northeastern classroom; it once stood in the southeastern classroom. Transoms above the interior doors and windows near the ceiling between classrooms add additional light to the interior. On the partition walls between the front and back rooms, horizontal fixed-single, four-pane sash are located approximately two feet below the ceiling to provide additional light to the classrooms. The chalkboards were once located below these windows; ca. 1970 horizontal openings were cut to provide additional access between the front and back rooms.

The floor plan consists of a central corridor flanked by a classroom to the right, and the "industrial room" and a cloak room (originally divided into three rooms) to the left. At the rear of the corridor are two classrooms that have a movable partition between the two.

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Panther Branch School
Wake County, North Carolina

On the exterior, despite the reduction in size and in the number of windows, the building, through its form, scale, portico, and exterior finishes still reads as a Rosenwald School. The building exhibits good interior integrity, retaining its original floorplan, partition wall between the rear classrooms, and all interior finishes.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Panther Branch School
Wake County, North Carolina

Section 8 Page 1

Summary

Panther Branch School is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in three areas of significance: education, social history, and ethnic heritage. Built in 1926 with funds from the Julius Rosenwald Foundation, contributions from the local African American community, and support from the Wake County School Board, Panther Branch School is one of only five remaining Rosenwald Schools in Wake County; twenty-one were constructed between 1919 and 1928. Panther Branch School retains integrity, and still features its original floor plan, interior wood walls, ceilings, floors, and movable partition between the two rear classrooms. During the late 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s, the school served as an educational and social center for the African American community, hosting plays, glee club performances, adult education classes, vaccination clinics, home demonstrations, and meetings between the county extension agent and farmers. The school closed its doors in 1952, but is presently used as a meeting hall by the Juniper Level Baptist Church. Panther Branch School stands as a physical reminder of the strong, vital, historic African American community founded in Juniper Level shortly after the Civil War and which continues to this day. The only other remaining historic building from the pre-1940 era is the Juniper Level Baptist Church which was substantially remodeled in 1960. Panther Branch School is discussed in the Multiple Property Documentation Form, "Historic and Architectural Resources of Wake County, North Carolina (ca. 1770-1941)," under "Property Type 4: Institutional Buildings, Post World War I Consolidated Schools" and in "Context 4: Boom, bust, and Recovery Between World Wars (1919-1941), Rural School Consolidation and High Schools Offer Greater Advantage." An addendum to the Wake County Multiple Property Documentation Form, "Wake County's Rosenwald Schools," discusses in-depth the social history, education, and ethnic heritage context for Panther Branch School and the county's other Rosenwald-funded schools. The School also meets Criterion Consideration A for religious properties because the school building was not owned by a religious institution during the period of significance, and the building derives its primary importance from its historical associations.

Historical Background

Juniper Level, also known as Juniper, is a post-Civil War rural Black community founded in 1870. The community grew up around the Juniper Branch Baptist Church, which splintered from the New Bethel Baptist Church.¹ During the 1870s, the community built a school for

¹ Kelly Lally, *Historic Architecture of Wake County* (Raleigh: County of Wake, 1995) 406.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Panther Branch School
Wake County, North Carolina

its children, a one-room log building without any windows, and heated by a fireplace constructed with a stick and mud chimney.²

During the 1910s and 1920s, Juniper prospered, and its residents built three new community structures: a church, a lodge, and a school. With the more-than-fifty-year-old log school building long overdue for replacement, the Wake County Board of Education voted in August 1925 to approve the purchase of "two acres of land for school site in district no. 1, Panther Branch Township, colored." Mr. R.F. Stancill sold the lot for \$500. At their next meeting, the School Board began receiving bids to construct the new school building. On August 31, 1925, the board hired W.M. Ballentine Company of Holly Springs to construct a "Rosenwald School" for District No. 1 at a cost of \$3,954.50.³

In Wake County, the Rosenwald Fund helped to build twenty-one schools, contributing \$23,000, while the school board gave \$143,805 (the second highest in the state), the white community donated \$605, and the African-American community raised \$35,756 (the largest in the state).⁴ Part of the \$35,756 that had been raised for Rosenwald Schools by the Wake County African-American community was solicited by residents of Juniper Level.

The school building that they selected to build was a one-story, frame, weatherboarded building with some Colonial Revival details. The plan for the school was provided by the Rosenwald foundation, and was designed as a three-teacher school. The plan featured a recessed entry, and a central corridor that was flanked by a classroom to the right and the "industrial room" and a cloak room to the left. Like all Rosenwald schools, the classrooms were lit by groupings of large multi-pane windows. At the rear of the corridor were two classrooms that had a movable partition between the two. A raised stage was constructed at one end of one of the rear classrooms and the two rear classrooms opened up to create a large meeting room.

² Elizabeth Reid Murray, *Wake: Capitol County of North Carolina* (Raleigh: Capital County Publisher, 1983) 603.

³ Wake County Board of Education, Minutes, August 3, 14, 31, 1925. North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh, North Carolina.

⁴ Jerry L. Cross, "Julius Rosenwald: His Fund and His Schools, A Brief Historical Sketch of the Rosenwald Fund and Black Education in the South 1917-1948," March 19, 1980; unpub. typescript in the "Rosenwald Schools" file, Eastern Office, Division of Archives and History, Greenville, NC; 7. The Johnston County school district contributed \$156,500 toward the cost of constructing African-American rural schools. The greatest number of school buildings were constructed in Mecklenburg County, a total of 26.

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Panther Branch School
Wake County, North Carolina

The school opened in 1926. Originally the building housed first through seventh grades: the first and second grades occupied the northeast room, the third and fourth grades the southeast room, and the fifth, sixth and seventh grades the southwest room. There were approximately thirty-five to forty students in each classroom. The northwest room was first used for "practical classes," home economics for the girls, and farming courses for the boys. In 1942, eighth grade was also taught at the school, which meant a re-ordering of the rooms. The "practical room" became the first and second grade classroom, the northeast room was designated for the third and fourth grades, the southeast room housed the fifth and sixth grades, and the seventh and eighth grades occupied the southwest room.⁵

Two teachers and the principal taught classes until 1942, when a third teacher was hired. The teachers lived in the community, rooming with families of the students. It was required that the teachers attend the Juniper Level Baptist Church.⁶

The school year was geared to the agricultural calendar, beginning in late September, after the cotton was picked, and ending by May 1 so students could help set the tobacco plants. Some of the students were the children of sharecroppers, and would attend the Panther Branch School for a few years until their parents moved to a different farm. Students walked to class, some as far as five miles.⁷

Every classroom had a freestanding stove. On cold mornings, the first student who arrived would bring in the coal from the coal shed behind the school and start the fire. The day started at nine in the morning with devotion and ended about three in the afternoon. The basics were taught: reading, writing, and arithmetic. Spelling bees were held regularly. All of the students in the school would gather together for health and social studies classes. The school had a piano, and three or four times a year the students would put on operettas or plays that were attended by their parents and the public. The glee club, the only club that the school sponsored except for 4-H, also used the piano. The only other extracurricular

⁵ Lizzie McClain Gill (1930-1945), Peggy Harrington (1940-1945), Lillie McClain Hinnant (1932-1938), Lucy Tomlinson Huntley (1934-1941), Rosa W. Langston (1938-1944), Elsie Denning McKeithan (1939-1946), Jarvis Morgan (1930-1931), Rula Lee Morgan (1930-1931), Marlon Nipply (1947-1952), John Penix (1928-1837), Ella W. Perry (1934-1943), James Smith (1929-1936), Lonnie Lywen Wilder (1938-1945), and Lovie M. Wyatt (1929-1936), Interview with attendees of Panther Branch School by Nancy Van Dolsen, July 2000, Juniper Level, North Carolina. Hereafter cited as "Interview with attendees of Panther Branch School."

⁶ Interview with attendees of Panther Branch School.

⁷ Interview with attendees of Panther Branch School.

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Panther Branch School
Wake County, North Carolina

activity was baseball, and later basketball, which were played against other African American schools.⁸

From 1926 when the school opened until 1952 when it closed, the school was actively used. Adult education was offered during the evenings; the county agricultural cooperative extension held home demonstration programs; the county agents met with local farmers; the bookmobile came in the summer; nurses came to give vaccinations; and almost everyone attended the plays put on by the students. The parents provided the wood and coal for heating the building and food for hot lunches.⁹

Panther Branch School remains a source of pride for the African American community of Juniper Level. The Juniper Level Baptist Church purchased the school, has maintained the building, and uses it for a meeting place and social hall. The school has also housed religious services when the church was undergoing renovation.

⁸ Interview with attendees of Panther Branch School.

⁹ Interview with attendees of Panther Branch School.

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Panther Branch School
Wake County, North Carolina

Bibliography

Cross, Jerry L. "Julius Rosenwald: His Fund and His Schools, A Brief Historical Sketch of the Rosenwald Fund and Black Education in the South 1917-1948," March 19, 1980. Unpublished typescript, in the "Rosenwald School" file, Eastern Office of the Department of Archives and History, Greenville, North Carolina.

Crow, Jeffrey J., Paul D. Escott, Flora H. Hatley, *A History of African Americans in North Carolina*. Raleigh: Division of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 1992.

Embree, Edwin R. *Julius Rosenwald Fund: A Review to June 30, 1928*. Chicago: Julius Rosenwald Fund, 1928.

Embree, Edwin R. and Julia Waxman. *Investment in People: The Story of the Julius Rosenwald Fund*. New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1949.

Gill, Lizzie McClain (1930-1945), Peggy Harrington (1940-1945), Lillie McClain Hinnant (1932-1938), Lucy Tomlinson Huntley (1934-1941), Rosa W. Langston (1938-1944), Elsie Denning McKeithan (1939-1946), Jarvis Morgan (1930-1931), Rula Lee Morgan (1930-1931), Marlon Nipply (1947-1952), John Penix (1928-1837), Ella W. Perry (1934-1943), James Smith (1929-1936), Lonnie Lywen Wilder (1938-1945), and Lovie M. Wyatt (1929-1936), Interview with attendees of Panther Branch School by Nancy Van Dolsen, July 2000, Juniper Level, North Carolina.

Hanchett, Thomas H. "The Rosenwald Schools and Black Education in North Carolina." *The North Carolina Historical Review* Vol. LXV, No. 4, October 1988: 388-444.

Lally, Kelly. *Historic Architecture of Wake County, North Carolina*. Raleigh: Planning Department of Wake County, 1995.

Lally, Kelly. National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form. Historic and Architectural Resources of Wake County, North Carolina (ca. 1770-1941). March 18, 1993.

Murray, Elizabeth Reid. *Wake: Capital County of North Carolina*. Raleigh: Capital County Publishing, 1983.

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Section 9 Page 2

Panther Branch School
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Thomas, Beth P. National Register of Historic Places Nomination for the W.E.B. Dubois School, Wake County, North Carolina. March 31, 1993.

Wake County Board of Education Minutes 1925-1959. North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh, North Carolina. Microfilm.

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Panther Branch School
Wake County, North Carolina

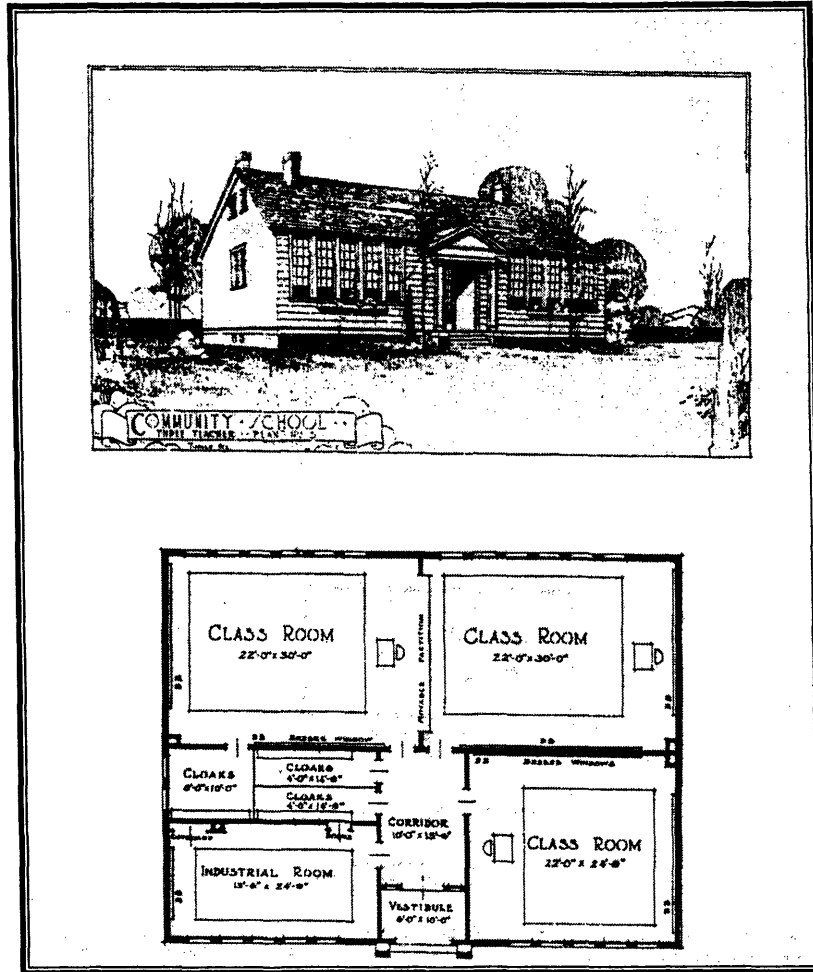
Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary corresponds to the present tax parcel number, Panther Branch Township, PIN 7830.

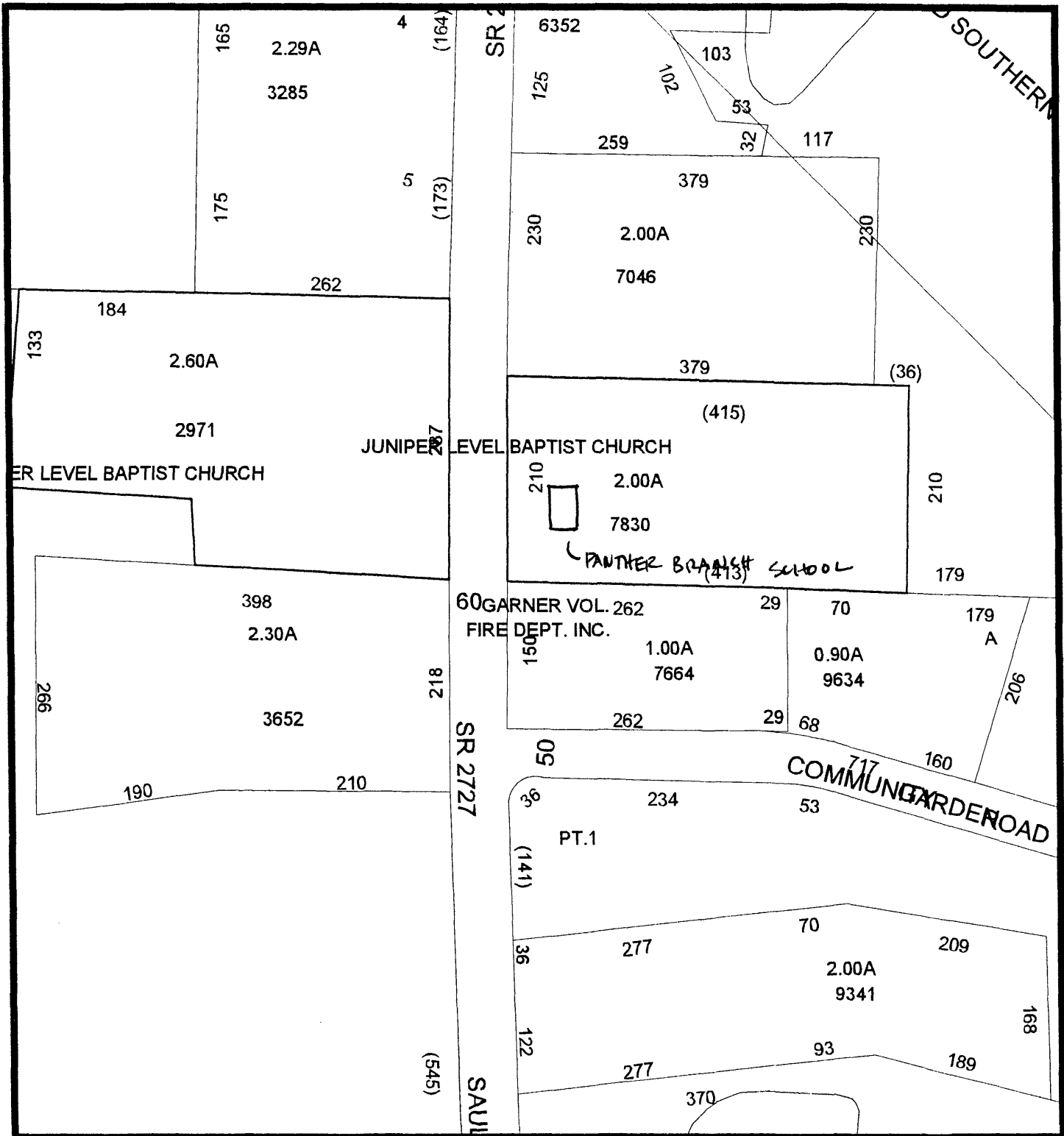
Boundary Justification

The proposed boundary includes the original two-acre tract of land associated with the school, and the school itself.

Panther Branch School
Wake County, North Carolina



Plan for a three-teacher school, Julius Rosenwald Foundation
(from Thomas W. Hanchett, "The Rosenwald Schools in North Carolina,"
The North Carolina Historical Review, Vol. LXV, No. 4, October 1988: 402)



PANTHER BRANCH SCHOOL
 WAKE COUNTY, NC
 TAX PARCEL MAP



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National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

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SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 01000421

Date Listed: 5/8/01

Panther Branch School
Property Name

Wake
County

NC
State

Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Bill Boland

Signature of the Keeper

6/20/01

Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

There is a cemetery located in the southeast corner of the lot, within the listed boundary. It is a noncontributing site.

This information was confirmed by Ann Swallow of the NC SHPO staff.

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)