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

RECEIVED 2280 OMB No. 1024-0018

JAN 25 1996

NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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 Parker High School Auditorium

other names/site number Parker Middle School Auditorium

2. Location

street & number 900 Woodside Avenue not for publication ___
city or town City View vicinity ___
state South Carolina code SC county Greenville code 045 zip code 29611

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.)

Mary W. Edmonds 1/18/96
Signature of certifying official Date

Mary W. Edmonds, Deputy SHPO, S.C. Department of Archives & History, Columbia, S.C.
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:

X entered in the National Register
___ See continuation sheet.
___ determined eligible for the National Register
___ See continuation sheet.
___ determined not eligible for the National Register
___ removed from the National Register
___ other (explain): _____

[signature] 2/26/96

for Signature of Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

___ private
X public-local
___ public-State
___ public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

X building(s)
___ district
___ site
___ structure
___ object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	___	buildings
___	___	sites
___	___	structures
___	___	objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

___

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat:	Sub:
EDUCATION	Education-related
RECREATION AND CULTURE	Auditorium

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat:	Sub:
EDUCATION	Education-related

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)
Late 19th & 20th Century
Revivals/Classical Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation	Concrete
roof	Asphalt
walls	Brick
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)

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 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)
ARCHITECTURE
INDUSTRY

Period of Significance
1938-1945

Significant Dates
1938

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder
Works Progress Administration

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
X Local government
___ University
___ Other
Name of repository: Greenville County Library, Greenville, S.C.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	17	370600	3858140	3			
2				4			

___ 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 Angela Gray Murphy

organization _____ date 4 April 1995

street & number 112 West Tallulah Drive telephone (803) 421-0549

city or town Greenville state SC zip code 29605

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 School District of Greenville County

street & number P.O. Box 2848 telephone (803) 241-3100

city or town Greenville state SC zip code 29602

RECEIVED 2280 OMB No. 1024-0018
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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

The Parker High School Auditorium is located on Bramlette Road, near the corner of Bramlette and Woodside Avenue, within the city limits of City View, in Greenville County, South Carolina. The area is a mix of residential, commercial, and industrial buildings. The auditorium is located on the campus of what used to be Parker High School, but is now Parker Middle School. Other buildings on the campus, which are not part of the nominated property, include a gymnasium on the south side of the auditorium and buildings housing the cafeteria, library, and classrooms on the east side of the auditorium. An athletic field is located on the west side of the auditorium, and the north, or front, elevation of the building faces Bramlette Road.

The auditorium is a 7500 square-foot rectangular brick building with a front-gabled roof. It was built in 1938 by the Works Progress Administration in the Classical Revival style. Construction was completed in 1939, and the building was dedicated on March 26, 1940. It is in good condition and has been only slightly altered since its construction.

The building has two sections: the original auditorium and a classroom building added to the rear in 1964. Although the auditorium appears to be two stories high from the street, the interior actually has only one floor and a small balcony.

The front elevation is the most ornamented part of the exterior and it projects forward approximately 12' from the main body of the auditorium. The front elevation is not as wide as the main body of the auditorium and has a flat roof. Five concrete steps lead up to a narrow concrete porch. Three sets of double doors, which are not original, open into the lobby on the front; their fanlights are boarded up. Each fanlight features a decorative brick arch with concrete keystones and caps. A rectangular window, also partially boarded up, is at the second-story level directly above each of the doors. A two-story square pilaster with simplified Doric column on either side of the entrance doors separates the center of the facade into three equal parts.

On the east and west sides of the three sets of doors are two arched, recessed areas whose brick arches duplicate those found above the fanlights. A stone rondel, approximately 1' in diameter is above each of the windows, and stone quoins decorate the east and west corners of the facade. A plain molding runs horizontally across the top of the quoins and the Doric pilasters. A stone lozenge, approximately 1' on each side, is above the molding in the center of the facade. The roof of the front elevation is flat.

Behind the projecting facade, only the outline of the rectangular auditorium and its front-gabled roof can be seen. In the center of the front gable there is a window with a louvered vent.

Side Elevations

The east and west sides of the building are similar. On the east side of the front projection, there is a set of double doors that lead into the lobby. These doors are not original to the building. There is a second-story window above the doors. Five concrete steps lead up to a small concrete porch in front of the doors. On the west side of the front projection there are first- and second-story windows.

On both the east and west sides of the auditorium there are four rectangular windows, with two windows on the first story and two windows directly above them on the second story. These windows feature twelve-over-four panes.

Each side also has three large windows, with thirty panes of glass and a fanlight. The fanlights have decorative brick arches identical to those found over the front doors. Toward the rear of the building, on both sides, are small projections with double doors; these projections house staircases.

Rear Elevation

The rear elevation of the building is plain, with the exception of three decorative brick pilasters, one in the center stretching to the peak of the gabled roof, and two smaller pilasters on either side.

The new addition is a small one-story brick U-shaped structure that wraps around the back of the auditorium. This building was added in 1964 to provide classroom space for music and art. Access to the new structure is primarily from the outside, but there is one door through a back staircase into the auditorium. This addition is not visible from the facade and does not compromise the integrity of the historic auditorium.

Interior

Four sets of double doors on the front and side elevations lead into the auditorium's small foyer. The floors are wooden, and the walls are plaster with wood paneled wainscoting. Wooden steps lead to the balcony on the east and west sides and wooden steps lead down to the side door on the east side. On the west side there is a boiler room with one window. Two sets of double wooden doors with glass panes lead into the auditorium. Both doors have fanlights.

The floor slopes to the stage, with approximately 1300 original wooden seats bolted to the floor of the auditorium. The seats have metal frames. Each seat folds, and has an interesting classical motif carved on the end on the aisle. There are four aisles. The walls of the auditorium are half-paneled with wooden strips five feet high. The tops of the walls are covered with wooden planks painted white. This is probably what is referred to in early descriptions of the auditorium as "special acoustical material." The proscenium stage has wooden steps on both sides leading from the floor of the auditorium, and features a small backstage area.

A set of double wooden doors on either side of the stage leads into a small foyer, with double doors to the outside and stairs leading to the backstage area. On the west side there is also a wooden staircase, providing access to the new classrooms and the storage area under the floor of the auditorium.

At the top of the stairs in the front lobby is another lobby for the balcony. This lobby also has half-panelled walls. Two wooden steps lead up to a small projection booth approximately 11' x 9' and original to the building. Two sets of wooden double doors open from the lobby into the balcony. The balcony has approximately 230 wooden folding chairs and four aisles.

The auditorium has undergone some minor alterations since its construction in addition to the 1964 classroom building addition, such as the replacement of the roof in 1990.

The Parker High School Auditorium is significant as an outstanding example of Works Progress Administration (WPA) -designed educational architecture of the late 1930s. It retains integrity of setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

According to the facilities planner for the School District of Greenville, the building--constructed in 1938 at a cost of $50,000 and designed to be fireproof--is structurally sound.[1] A contemporary account in the Greenville News reported, "The one-story center for student and community activities will be modern in every respect."[2]

The Parker High School Auditorium was part of a $285,000 WPA building project for the school that also included a gymnasium, an athletic field, a vocational building, a cafeteria and library, and an automobile shop.[3] The other buildings, however, have either been torn down or altered to the extent that they no longer retain their integrity. The auditorium is the best and most-intact building from the massive WPA building project on the Parker campus.

The Works Progress Administration--later the Works Projects Administration --was a federal project of the New Deal era that sponsored public works and cultural projects employing thousands of people during the Great Depression. The WPA built or improved roads, bridges, airports, libraries, post offices, and other public projects across the United States in the late 1930s and early 1940s. According to Greenville press accounts, the Parker High School building program was the largest WPA school project in South Carolina.[4]

Parker High School Auditorium is also significant for its association with the textile industry in Greenville. The auditorium stood as the center of the Parker School District, which served those who lived in the mill villages of the city and vicinity from 1922 to 1952. Greenville, in addition to being racially segregated, was segregated on the basis of employment as well, as those who worked and lived in one of the city's many mill villages remained separate from the rest of the community. Although

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[1]"Foundation for Parker's New Auditorium Being Laid," Greenville Piedmont, 7 October 1938.

[2]1938 clipping in L.P. Hollis Papers, Personal Scrapbooks of Parker Schools, 1924-1941, Volume 8 (1938), South Carolina Collection, Greenville County Public Library, Greenville, S.C.

[3]"Parker Dedicates Enlarged High School Plant Tuesday," Greenville Piedmont, 25 March 1940.

[4]L.P. Hollis Papers, Personal Scrapbooks of Parker Schools, 1924-1941, Volume 8 (1938), Greenville County Public Library.

most Greenvillians were proud of their city's status as "The Textile Capital of the South," the "town folk" did not often mix with the "mill folk."

In the early days of the textile industry's boom period in the South--in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries--employee turnover was high. To attract and keep workers, the mills subsidized houses, a store, a school, teachers, a church, and a minister for their workers in self-contained mill villages. One of Greenville's most influential mill executives in this period was Thomas F. Parker, who became well known across the South for the welfare programs he created for his workers. In 1904, Parker established the Monaghan YMCA, the first industrial YMCA in the South, and hired L.P. Hollis the next year as first its assistant secretary and then as its secretary. By 1911 Hollis had become director of Welfare Activities for the Parker Cotton Mill Company, and included the operation of the company's elementary schools among his many responsibilities.[5]

Through Hollis's welfare work, Parker exerted a great deal of control over his workers' lives, even outside the mill. Parker hoped that his workers, wany of whom who had recently been independent small farmers who moved down from the nearby mountains in search of "regular work," would reach a better standard of living than before. To that end, he and Hollis organized community athletics, set up a health clinic, and sponsored a nurse who visited the Monaghan workers at home.[6]

Hollis and Parker also wanted to improve the educational opportunities for both children and adults in all of the mill villages. Each mill sponsored an elementary school for its workers' children. There were no high schools in the mill villages, for after the seventh or eighth grade, children were expected to go into the mills to work. Parker and other local mill leaders created the Parker School District consisting of all fourteen mill village elementary schools and a new high school named for Parker.[7]

When the new Parker School District was created in 1923 it became one of the largest and richest school districts in South Carolina. Hollis was appointed superintendent of the district, and because he was not a professionally-trained educator he did not operate his schools according to the prevailing educational methods of the day. His motto "Head, Heart,

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[5]Mary G. Ariail and Nancy J. Smith, Weaver of Dreams (Columbia: R.L. Bryan Company, 1977), 11-12, 15.

[6]Ibid, 8-9.

[7]Parker District High School Faculty, et al, Parker Serves Its People: A Report (Greenvillle: Parker District, 1942), 1-2.

Hands, and Health" suggests a holistic approach to education. Hollis employed a full-time dentist, psychiatrist, and nurse, and he emphasized physical activity. He did not believe that children learned from teachers' lectures, but encouraged an informal classroom setting where children would be able to discover for themselves. The normal setting was for desks to be bolted to the floor; Hollis, in contrast, ordered separate desks and chairs that could be moved if necessary. Parker students learned about nature by being outside. They took field trips across the state. Hollis introduced science fairs, and created displays of students' work. His students even built their own museum. Hollis's ideas were so new that he had to train teachers how to teach according to his methods. He developed a summer school to teach his teachers, a school led by experts from Columbia University such as John Dewey.[8]

Hollis also realized that the majority of his students were not going on to college. He said, "We didn't think that everybody should go back into the mills but we had a wonderful textile department in the school because we knew that most of the people would go back to the mills."[9] He emphasized vocational education in the high school. Parker High School had a separate building for vocational education, which was completed in 1927. According to Hollis, it was the first white vocational school in South Carolina.[10] Training was offered, for example, in weaving, machine shop, domestic arts, typing, and cosmetology. Although mill-related vocations were naturally emphasized, students were not required to prepare for employment in the textile mills.[11] The effectiveness of the vocational training offered by Parker High School is revealed in a 1932 report that showed that even in the midst of the Depression only two of sixty-one graduates of the vocational education program were unemployed. Of those with jobs, twenty-one were in textiles, eight were in higher educational programs leading to a career in textiles, four were in higher education, and sixteen were employed in a non-textile-related field. Although Parker High emphasized

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[8]Don L. West, "Parker Mill District is Fully Alert to Need for Education of the Youth," Greenville News, 6 May 1926; George Kent, "Mill Town Miracle," School and Society, 9 August 1941, 81-85.

[9]L.P. Hollis, interview by unknown person, ca. 1977; transcript, p. 11, South Carolina Collection, Greenville County Public Library.

[10]The first vocational school in South Carolina was almost certainly Penn Normal, Agricultural, and Industrial School, established during the Civil War on St. Helena Island (in Beaufort County) for the education of black adults and children on the South Carolina sea islands during and after the war.

[11]Parker Serves, pp. 38-39.

vocational training, an academic education was also available to some students and many of them went on to college.[12]

The Parker School District did more than educate the children of the mill workers. It also held afternoon and evening classes for adults, especially emphasizing literacy, but also teaching courses in domestic skills, history, the arts, choir, horticulture, and vocational skills needed for work in the textile mills. The motto of the night school, called "Parker People's College," was "all sorts of classes for all sorts of people." The People's College curriculum was designed to help mill workers obtain skills to move ahead at work, and also to educate them to improve their lives and bring themselves up to prevailing middle-class standards.[13]

In 1930, an inspector from the Unitarian Church investigating conditions in the Southern textile industry found that the Parker School District was the best school system in the South and one of the most progressive anywhere.[14] Hollis's innovations were well-publicized, and so many delegations and visitors from all over the United States and abroad visited the district that Hollis had to employ someone full-time to handle visitors.[15] Hollis and the district were also praised in a 1941 article in School and Society, later reprinted in Reader's Digest, and in 1949 Look magazine named Hollis one of the nation's top one hundred educators.[16]

The Parker High School Auditorium stands today as the centerpiece of the original Parker School District, which was absorbed by the Greenville County School System in 1952. The Parker School District fostered a sense of unity in the community, and the auditorium in particular served as the meeting place for the entire community, as both school and community events were often held there.

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[12]L.P. Hollis Papers, Personal Scrapbooks of Parker Schools, 1931-1932, Volume 4, p. 29, Greenville County Public Library.

[13]Kent, "Miracle," 83.

[14]L.P. Hollis Papers, Personal Scrapbooks of Parker Schools, 1924-1941, Volume 3 (1930), Greenville County Public Library.

[15]Hollis interview, p. 11.

[16]Ariail, p. 33.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES

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SECONDARY SOURCES

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Hall, Jacquelyn Dowd, et al. Like a Family: The Making of a Southern Cotton Mill World. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987.

Hollis, L.P. "Parker Schools Net Early Industrial City Needs." Greenville News, 26 June 1962.

Kent, George. "Mill Town Miracle." School and Society, 9 August 1941, 81-85.

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Kohn, August. The Cotton Mills of South Carolina. Columbia: South Carolina Department of Agriculture, Commerce, and Immigration, 1907.

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Parker, Thomas F. "The South Carolina Cotton Mill: A Manufacturer's View." South Atlantic Quarterly, October 1909, 330.

Parker District High School Faculty. Parker District Serves Its People: A Report. Greenville: Parker District Schools, 1942.

Potwin, Marjorie A. Cotton Mill People of the Piedmont. New York: Columbia University Press, 1968; repr. ed., New York: AMS Press, 1968.

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the nominated property is shown as the line marked "Parker High School Auditorium" on the enclosed copy of Greater Greenville Tax Map 125, drawn at a scale of 1'=100'.

Verbal Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the Parker High School Auditorium and its immediate setting, the only portion of the historic Parker High School campus that retains its integrity from the period of significance.

The following information is the same for each of the photographs:

Name of Property:	Parker High School Auditorium
Location:	900 Woodside Avenue Greenville, S.C. 29611
County:	Greenville
Name of Photographer:	Angela G. Murphy, Greenville, S.C.
Location of Original Negatives:	Angela G. Murphy, Greenville, S.C.
Date of Photographs:	April 1995

1. Northern facade
2. Western elevation
3. Southern elevation
4. Eastern elevation
5. Interior (view from stage)
6. Interior (view from balcony)
7. Balcony

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 96000144 **Date Listed:** 2/26/96

Parker High School Auditorium
Property Name

Greenville
County

SOUTH CAROLINA
State

N/A
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.

for **Signature of the Keeper**

2/26/96
Date of Action

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Amended Items in Nomination:

Section No. 8

This nomination is amended to show that the property is significant in the area of education, as well as in architecture and industry.

This change was confirmed by phone with the South Carolina SHPO (2/21/96)

DISTRIBUTION:
National Register property file
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)