

**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 Grays Consolidated High School
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number U.S. Highway 278 not for publication N/A
city or town Grays vicinity N/A
state South Carolina code SC county Jasper code 053 zip code 29916

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.)

Signature of certifying official _____ Date _____

Rodger E. Stroup, State Historic Preservation Officer, S.C. Dept. of Archives and 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:	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
<u> </u> entered in the National Register <u> </u> See continuation sheet.		
<u> </u> determined eligible for the National Register <u> </u> See continuation sheet.		
<u> </u> determined not eligible for the National Register		
<u> </u> removed from the National Register		
<u> </u> other (explain):		

Grays Consolidated High School
Name of Property

Jasper County, South Carolina
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources)

- private
- public local
- public-State
- public-Federal

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
2	0	total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed
in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Category: Education

Subcategory: School

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Category: Vacant/Not In Use

Subcategory:

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th & 20th Century
American Movements

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick
walls Wood
Plaster
roof Asphalt
other Concrete

Narrative Description

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

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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)

Architecture
Education

Period of Significance

1931-1957

Significant Dates

1931

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Sams, James Hagood
Knopf, J.J.

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

(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:
Frederick Pratt Memorial Library,
Ridgeland, S.C.

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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	<u>17 497970</u>	<u>3614953</u>	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 Linda H. Stanley, with the assistance of the SHPO staff
 organization Grays School Preservation Committee date 27 March 2007
 street & number P. O. Box 1276 telephone (843) 538-8835
 city or town Walterboro state S.C. zip code 29488

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 Jasper County Council
 street & number P.O. Box 1149 telephone (843) 726-8127
 city or town Ridgeland state S.C. zip code 29936

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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Grays Consolidated High School
Name of Property
Jasper County, South Carolina
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Description

The Grays Consolidated High School is located in the town of Grays, in a rural area of northern Jasper County, South Carolina. It was built in 1927 and rebuilt in 1931 on approximately five acres of land, donated by Robert Lee Robinson.

The Grays School is an excellent example of South Carolina school architecture typical of the first half of the twentieth century. Entrance to the building is via a semi-circular paved drive that is lined with palmetto and crepe myrtle trees. The grounds are currently enclosed by a cyclone fence with two entry gates.

Set upon a brick foundation pierced with steel ventilator grates and a soldier course water table that is punctuated with cast stone blocks at the corners of the projecting bays, the building featured baroque massing and was "T" shaped when originally constructed in 1927. It consisted of a one-story brick veneer building with either a composition or asbestos shingle-clad roof that flares slightly at the eave and features exposed rafter tails. The central rear wing that created the "T" plan was built as an auditorium and featured paired nine-over-nine-light sash windows and a truncated hip roof. The auditorium wing features higher profile wall elevations and contains entrances/exits and single nine-over-nine-light windows to either side in the stage area near the wing's western terminus. In 1931, when the building was essentially rebuilt and expanded after a fire gutted the structure, leaving only its walls intact, a large wing with rear ell was added to the southern end of the building, all with identical brickwork, window and roof eave treatment.

The original building's facade consists of three projecting pavilions, the central one being a gable featuring decorative rafter tails and seven knee braces that accentuate and frame a two-part limestone inlaid plaque, bearing the name "Grays Consolidated High School." The main entrance to the school is accessed by a broad set of cast stone steps with wide cheek walls that lead to an inset porch framed by a large ceremonial semielliptical arch with plinth blocks and dripstone mould. A three-part doorway is surmounted by a sixteen-light fixed transom. The right-hand side [northwest wall] of the entry porch contains an inlaid cast stone dedication tablet with names of school trustees, county and school superintendents, construction dates, architect and contractor. Flanking the central entrance portal are two paired nine-over-nine, double-hung sash windows with brick sills and soldier course lintels.

To either side of the projecting gabled entrance bay are banks of six windows of the same size and configuration as those flanking the entry portal. Directly above each of these window banks and on the roof is a small gabled ventilator. At either end of the original section of the building are projecting pavilions with hipped roofs and banks of five windows of the same configuration as others on the building's facade. On the north end of the original section of the building and to the rear of the north projecting pavilion is a small hip roofed wing that contains a corner porch supported by a single classically-inspired wooden post and featuring cheek-walled steps, and a double-leaf entry with a twelve-light fixed transom. A similar configuration likely existed on the southern end of the building before the school's expansion in 1931.

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In 1931 the building was expanded on its south side with a large classroom wing extension and rear ell extension to the west. An inset entrance with cheek-walled steps and double-leaf door and twenty-four-light fixed transom pierces the south end of the expanded building near its southeast corner. This entrance is flanked by a triple window to the right, set high upon the wall, and a single nine-over-nine-light window to the left. All other fenestration along the south elevation consists of three groups of five nine-over-nine-light windows. A single gabled roof vent punctuates the roofline along this elevation. The rear ell extension terminates with a gable-on-hip roof and solid brick walls with no windows, only a central inset entry with cheek-walled steps, a double-leaf doorway with twenty-four-light fixed transom, and another similar entrance on the left-side wall of the inset.

The rear elevation of the building's original block and extension contains banks of six nine-over-nine-light windows. All other treatment is identical except that there are no roof ventilators.

On each side of the main entry foyer are two rooms, approximately ten feet wide and twenty-three feet long. The room on the left served as the principal's office/storage room and the room on the right served as an audio visual/storage room.

The original building consisted of eight classrooms. There were four rooms on the front of the building. Two of these rooms were approximately twenty-eight by twenty-five feet; two other rooms were approximately thirty-two and one-half by twenty feet. The four rooms on the back of the building were approximately twenty-eight by twenty feet. Each classroom had either five or six windows, grouped, that were raised and lowered by weighted rope pulleys. Each room had one door with a transom window above the door that could be opened to provide airflow for the classrooms. Each room was heated with two steam radiators.

The interior walls consist of medium-height V-groove paneled board wainscoting and plaster walls up to the twelve-foot ceilings. Each classroom also had ten-foot high picture molding. Flooring throughout the building is tongue-and-groove and finished.

The original building also housed an auditorium with a fourteen-foot ceiling, stage, and a sloping floor.

A twelve-foot high, double-loaded corridor extends the entire length and depth of the building to each exterior entrance door. There are indoor bathrooms at each end of the hall and a faculty bathroom as well.

A gymnasium/auditorium was built at a later date, but was later destroyed by fire. The original auditorium was divided in half and converted into classrooms and later into a lunchroom and home economics room.

Another addition to the building added four more classrooms, two restrooms, and a woodwork shop/with instructional space and a small bathroom.

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The site also included several outbuildings: (1) a wood-frame house for faculty members, called a "teacherage," that later housed the principal and his family; 2) a concrete block cannery; and (3) a brick boiler room/storage room. The teacherage was destroyed by fire a number of years ago, and the cannery has lost integrity and is excluded from the nominated acreage.

The boiler room/storage room is however a contributing resource. Likely built contemporaneously with the main school building, the brick boiler room/storage room was constructed in common bond, and is linear in form and contains minimal fenestration. A single-leaf doorway is centered on the building's gable front, while a secondary, single-leaf door is near the rear of the building. A large square brick chimney rises along the rear gable end elevation. The diamond-pattern asbestos shingle clad roof features exposed rafter tails.

The school is in a state of disrepair due to neglect, inclement weather, and vandalism. The Grays School Preservation Committee, a group of local concerned citizens has organized in an attempt to restore it.

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Grays Consolidated High School
Name of Property
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Statement of Significance

The Grays Consolidated High School, built in 1927 and rebuilt in 1931 in the town of Grays, Jasper County, South Carolina, is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places as an example of school architecture typical of small American towns in the first half of the twentieth century and as a relatively intact, distinctive and tangible representation of the movement toward consolidation of schools in rural areas of South Carolina and the South, first begun in Jasper County in the 1920s. The school was designed by James Hagood Sams (1872-1935), a prominent Columbia architect of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and soon rebuilt and enlarged in 1931, after Sams's original plans were revised by the South Carolina Department of Education.

A farming community, the town of Grays had its origins in a country store and post office at Tuten's Cross Roads established in the 1870s by W.F. Gray (d. 1907) and his brother Willie, and later named for them. W.F. Gray, a planter and merchant, also operated a cotton gin and saw mill nearby in what was first in Beaufort District, then in Hampton County when that county was created in 1878, and finally in Jasper County when that county was created in 1912.¹

By the 1920s, due to the devastation to Southern cotton production caused by the boll weevil and the effects of the agricultural depression on the economy, children were no longer needed to work on their family farms, and more of them were attending school than ever before. Many small one- or two-room schools, often with only one or two teachers, were consolidated into larger elementary or high schools. The Grahamville and Bees Creek Schools, for example, were consolidated into the school at Ridgeland, the county seat, in 1920.²

Consolidation advanced after Mary Gordon Ellis (1890-1934), who had taught at Grays School during the 1915-16 school year, became Jasper County Superintendent of Education in 1924. Ellis served in that capacity until 1928, when she became the first woman elected to the South Carolina Senate, serving two terms. Margie Williams Wise was principal of Grays School at this time. Ellis, who relocated the nearby Pine Level School to Grays as a teacherage, was instrumental in the continuing consolidation of Jasper County's rural schools and oversaw the construction of several new schools.³

The Grays School was one of these schools, and was designed by James Hagood Sams, a native of Beaufort. Sams, after serving as a draftsman in the Columbia office of Charles Coker Wilson (1864-1933), South Carolina's leading architect of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, practiced architecture in Columbia for almost forty years, first with partners such as Paul Youmans and Avery Carter, and then in independent practice from 1905 until his death in 1935.

¹ Grace Fox Perry, *Moving Finger of Jasper: Golden Jubilee Edition* (Ridgeland: Sponsored by the Jasper County Confederate Centennial Commission, 1962), pp. 52-55.

² Perry, pp. 175-76.

³ *Ibid.*

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Sams designed many schools while in independent practice, including those in Clio, Marlboro County (1905); Allendale, Allendale County (1907); Mayesville, Sumter County (1909); Olanta, Florence County (1909); Blossom Street, Columbia (1916); Swansea, Lexington County (1916); Neeses, Orangeburg County (1921); Industrial Building, Booker T. Washington, Columbia (1925); Lynchburg, Lee County (1925); Fairfax, Allendale County (1926); Garnett, Hampton County (1927); Hardeeville, Jasper County (1928); Ridgeland, Jasper County (1928); Yemassee, Beaufort County (1928), in addition to the Grays Consolidated High School.⁴

Among Sams' other designs of note are Arsenal Hill Presbyterian Church, Columbia (1904); Manning Presbyterian Church, Manning, Clarendon County (1905); Zion Protestant Episcopal Church, Eastover, Richland County (1911); Farmers' Bank & Trust Company Bank Building, Lancaster, Lancaster County (1916); Beaufort Public Library, Beaufort (1917); Presbyterian Church, Winnsboro, Fairfield County (1922); DeSoto Hotel, Columbia (ca. 1922); and Lake City Presbyterian Church, Lake City, Florence County (1925).⁵

Constructed in 1927, the Grays School was essentially rebuilt in 1931, after an arsonist's fire ca. 1929 gutted the building, leaving the walls essentially intact.⁶ The reconstruction took place during Y.C. Weathersbee's tenure as county superintendent, at a cost of \$14,000.⁷ It was renamed the Grays Consolidated High School and intended to accommodate students from this widespread rural area of Jasper County. This was part of the movement toward school consolidation that was taking place across South Carolina and the rest of the South. The new consolidated high school included grades 1-11 in 1931; grade 12 was added in school year 1948-49.

During a seventy five-year history, Grays Consolidated High School has provided structure and continuity for its community as times and needs changed. It hosted returning WWII veterans' training, a community cannery, women's sewing classes, adult typing classes, preschool training; served as a voting precinct and center for political rallies, and other scholastic and community events.

Grays Consolidated High School closed in the early 1970s and has been vacant since.

⁴ John E. Wells and Robert E. Dalton, *The South Carolina Architects 1885-1935: A Biographical Dictionary* (Richmond: New South Architectural Associates, 1992), pp. 148-151.

⁵ Wells and Dalton, pp. 148-151.

⁶ Interview with Lottie Smith, Grays, South Carolina, March 28, 2007.

⁷ *Manufacturer's Record* (Atlanta, Ga.), April 16, 1931.

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Select Bibliography

Bailey, N. Louise, et al, eds. *Biographical Directory of the South Carolina Senate 1776-1985, Volume I: Abbott-Hill*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1986.

Jasper County Historical Society. *Reflections of People, Places, and Events: Jasper County, South Carolina*. Ridgeland: Jasper County Historical Society, 2000.

Manufacturer's Record (Atlanta, Ga.), 16 April 1931.

Perry, Grace Fox. *Moving Finger of Jasper: Jubilee Edition*. Ridgeland: Published for the Jasper County Confederate Centennial Commission, 1962.

Smith, Lottie, interview, Grays, South Carolina, March 28, 2007.

Wells, John E., and Robert E. Dalton. *The South Carolina Architects 1885-1935: A Biographical Dictionary*. Richmond: New South Architectural Press, 1992.

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Grays Consolidated High School
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Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the nominated property is shown as the black line marked "Grays Consolidated High School" on the accompanying Jasper County Tax Map, Parcel # 052-00-05-035.

Boundary Justification

The nominated property is restricted to the 1931 school, the contemporaneous boiler room/storage room and their immediate setting.

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Section number Photographs Page 12

Grays Consolidated High School
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The following information is the same for each of the photographs:

Name of Property: Grays Consolidated High School
Location of Property: U.S. Highway 278
Grays, Jasper County, South Carolina

Name of Photographer: Linda H. Stanley
Date of Photographs: July 9, 2006
Location of Original
Digital Images South Carolina Department of Archives & History, Columbia, S.C.

1. Facade, left oblique view from front driveway
2. Main entrance pavilion
3. Inlaid name plaque in gable over entry portal
4. Inset entrance
5. Inlaid dedication plaque at entrance
6. Northwest entrance
7. Southeast entrance
8. Southeast elevation [1931 expansion]
9. Southwest entrance at terminus of rear ell
10. West elevation
11. Northwest entrance porch
12. Home Economics classroom [converted from original auditorium]
13. Interior, typical classroom
14. Interior, northwest entrance
15. Interior, southeast entrance
16. Interior V-groove wainscoting and radiator
17. Brick boiler room/storage room building (Contributing)