NPS Form 10-900

OMB No. 1024-0018

SG100007479 Listed 3/9/2022

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form.* 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 certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

,,,,,,,,,,,,,,
1. Name of Property
historic name Springfield Terrace School
other names/site number Pearl Lee Smith School, Oglethorpe Academy
2. Location
The state of the s
city or town Savannah N/A vicinity
state Georgia code GA County Chatham code 051 zip code 31415
3. State/Federal Agency Certification
A. H. J.
As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 at the following level(s) of significance:
national statewideX_local
7. Dec ()
Signature of certifying official/Title: Dr. David C. Crass/Historic Preservation Division Director/Deputy SHPO Date
Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Dept. of Community Affairs
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government
In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.
Signature of commenting official Date
Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government
4. National Park Service Certification
hereby certify that this property is:
entered in the National Register determined eligible for the National Register
determined not eligible for the National Register removed from the National Register
other (explain:)
Signature of the Keener

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Springfield Terrace School Name of Property		Chatham County, GA County and State		
5. Classification			-the-mass -	***************************************
Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply.)	Category of Property (Check only one box.)	Number of Res (Do not include pre		in Property ources in the count.)
private X public - Local public - State public - Federal	X building(s) district site structure object	Contributing 1 0 0 1	Noncontrib	buildings sites structures objects Total
Name of related multiple prop (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a r	nultiple property listing)	listed in the Na		ources previously ter
N/A		N/A		
6. Function or Use				
Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions.) EDUCATION/school		Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions.) VACANT/NOT IN USE		
7. Description				
Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions.)		Materials (Enter categories fro	om instructions.)	
LATE 19 TH AND 20 TH CENTURY REVIVALS:		foundation: CONCRETE		
Colonial Revival		walls: BRICK		
LATE 19th AND EARLY 20th CE	NTURY			
AMERICAN MOVEMENTS: Cra	ftsman	roof: ASPHALT		
		other: WOOD		

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Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a summary paragraph that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

The Springfield Terrace School is located at 707 Hastings Street on the westside of Savannah, Chatham County, in the southeastern portion of Georgia. The 1926 one-story, wood-frame building is clad in a painted brick veneer and is small in scale, consistent within the surrounding modest one-story, working-class houses in the neighborhoods it historically served. The small school building occupies the northwest corner of a large, irregularly shaped parcel bounded roughly by Hastings Street to the west, Gwinnett Street to the south, Stiles Avenue to the east, and by the rear property lines of numerous residential lots fronting Cornwall Avenue to the north. The parcel once contained other resources such as additions and a playground, none of which remain extant or retain integrity. The school's architectural details contain elements of both the Craftsman and Colonial Revival styles. Craftsman style elements include exposed rafter tails, wide over-hanging eaves, low-pitched cross-gabled and hipped roofs, and ribbon windows. Colonial Revival style elements include building symmetry, a central entrance framed by a traditional pediment and round Doric columns, multi-light (9/9) windows, and a brick exterior finish. The building is slightly T-shaped and has four large classrooms accessed via a central corridor with angled doorways, while two small utility rooms flank the corridor between classroom spaces. The building maintains a high level of integrity with its intact original floorplan and the survival of most original finishes and materials including plaster walls and ceilings, wood doors with transoms, windows, and wood details like wainscotting in the corridors. Minimal alterations include nonhistoric flooring, and a c.1999 conversion of the former storage and furnace rooms to restrooms and a storage room, respectively.

Narrative Description

NOTE: The following narrative is taken from the January 13, 2021 "Springfield Terrace School" draft <u>National Register Registration</u> Form that was prepared by Becki Harkness of Ward Architecture + Preservation, and minimally edited by Christy Atkins, Historic Preservation Division. It is on file at the Historic Preservation Division, Department of Community Affairs, Atlanta, Georgia.

SITE AND CONTEXT

Located at 707 Hastings Street, the one-story school building occupies the northwest corner of Lot 51 in Savannah's Morrison Ward, and is slightly set back from and facing the street. Situated at the northwest corner of a much larger and irregularly-shaped parcel bounded roughly by Hastings Street to the west, Gwinnett Street to the south, Stiles Avenue to the east, and by the rear property lines of numerous residential lots fronting Cornwall Avenue to the north. The school is surrounded by modest single-family residential lots to its north and west, and industrial and commercial properties to its south and east. The surrounding context is characterized by late 19th to early 20th century working-class African American residential neighborhoods, along with commercial and industrial activitiest. A concrete sidewalk leads to the building from the street curb and is covered by a modern metal and wood covered walkway (photograph 1), likely added after 1999 when the building became the Oglethorpe Academy, a charter middle school. A slightly elevated rear porch with metal pipe railing serves as the transition between the interior and exterior spaces (photograph 6). Within the parcel, and immediately adjacent to the east and south of the building, are large concrete pads where additions and auxiliary elements of the school were formerly located. Two large rectangular concrete foundations. located immediately east of the school building, mark the former locations of two additions to the school constructed in 1952 and 1959, demolished in 2015. A large, vacant grassy area to the south of the existing building signifies the former location of a playground, with only a small concrete pad and a concrete basketball court remaining. Concrete pads and foundations associated with the former Linde Air Products Company

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structures are located to the southeast of the school site (photographs 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17). The boundary for the nomination is the footprint of the school, as the rest of the parcel does not retain integrity to the period of significance. The school building is currently vacant.

SPRINGFIELD TERRACE SCHOOL BUILDING

The one-story building sits on a concrete slab foundation slightly above grade and is of wood-frame construction with a painted brick veneer. The building's simple architectural details reflect its modest size and the institutional nature of its use. Its architectural details include elements of both the Craftsman and the Colonial Revival styles. Craftsman elements include exposed rafter tails, wide over-hanging eaves (photograph 7), low-pitched cross-gabled and hipped roofs (photographs 1, 4, 5, and 8), and ribbon windows (photographs 1, 10). Although typically more common in residential buildings, the use of this style in this small school building is likely reflective of its small size. Building symmetry, a central entrance framed by a traditional pediment and Doric round columns (photographs 1 and 2), multi-light (9/9) windows, and brick exterior finish are all characteristic of the Colonial Revival style.

The building's form is a T-shape plan, with the front portion of the building representing the top of the letter form, and the rear portion forming its very wide base. This design reflects the arrangement of its four large, rectangular classroom spaces on the interior, with two rooms running lengthwise in the front of the building and two rooms running widthwise at the rear. The building's brick veneer is in a running bond pattern and is painted a light cream color. It is unclear if the brick was painted historically. A cross-hipped, low-pitched roof features wide eaves and exposed jigsaw-cut decorative rafters (photographs 5, 7, and 8). The current roofing material is modern 3-tab asphalt shingle and is in poor condition.

The building's primary entrance, facing Hastings Street, is centered within its front (west) elevation and features a Colonial Revival-style surround with small engaged Doric columns, a five-light fixed transom, and simple entablature (photographs 1 and 2). Double wood doors, each with three horizontal recessed panels at the bottom and a four-light glass panel at the top, lead to and through the building's centrally located corridor to matching exterior doors on the building's rear (east) elevation (photographs 5, 6, 18, and 19). The doors have been retrofitted with modern door hardware, including panic bars on the interior. The rear exterior doorway features the same five-light transom as the primary entrance and has a soldier course of brick above the opening (photograph 6). Large openings with groupings of five windows divided by wide, flat mullions are on the front elevation on either side of the primary entrance, and on the north and south elevations of the building (photographs 1, 8, and 10). Each opening maintains a soldier course of brick above and a row lock course beneath. Original multi-light (9/9) wood double-hung sash windows survive in all but the middle openings of each grouping, where HVAC units have been added within the openings (photographs 1, 10). A single window opening, of equal size and light configuration to those in the larger openings, is located along the north elevation at the location of the former storage room (modified into bathrooms c.1999). All openings with surviving sash windows have been covered with plywood. A square brick chimney with simple stepped banding near its top projects from the roof of the former furnace room, located at the corner formed along the south elevation where the front portion of the building meets the rear (photograph 8). A low brick appendage matching the exterior veneer brick also exists at this corner, along with a small opening (now covered with plywood) within the exterior wall above it. It may have had an association with the historic function of the building's original oil furnace which is no longer extant.

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The interior layout of the building is characterized by a long, central corridor running the length of the building from west to east and an octagonal foyer at the building's center (photographs 18, 19, 22, and 23). Four large classrooms are located at each corner of the building, accessed via angled door openings surrounding the foyer. Two narrow linear spaces, the former storage closet and furnace room, flank the foyer to its north and south, positioned between the front and rear classrooms. The northern space, originally the storage closet, was converted to a restroom c.1999 when Oglethorpe Charter School occupied the building (photographs 32 and 34). The former furnace room to the south is now a storage room (photograph 42).

Flooring throughout the building is modern vinyl composition tile and is in poor condition (photograph 41). Evidence of the historic flooring is not visible, and it is unknown if it is still extant. All original walls and ceilings are of plaster and lathe and are largely intact. The condition of the smooth plaster finish ranges from good to poor, with the walls generally being in better condition than the ceiling surfaces, largely due to water infiltration from the roof (photograph 27). In the corridor and foyer, walls feature a simple vertical grooved wood wainscot with flat, squared baseboards and top rails, which all appear intact (photographs 21 and 25). A second, shorter wood baseboard finished with quarter-round trim is on top of the wainscot baseboard and is possibly a later addition (photograph 21). Two levels of decorative wood trim, one above the wainscot and one below the ceiling (picture rail), feature on the western end of the corridor (photograph 19). At the eastern end of the corridor, picture rail lines the walls, and a large bulletin board occupies a space on the south wall (photograph 18). A c.1999 modern hanging fluorescent light fixture hangs from the ceiling at each end of the corridor. Each classroom doorway features double wood doors with five horizontal panels, and a seven-light fixed transom. The doors appear original with the bottom panels of each door removed at some point, presumably for venting, and have been replaced with plywood panels (photographs 22 and 23). The bathrooms (formerly the storage closet) and storage room (formerly the furnace room) have single doors matching the style and configuration of the classroom doors and have three-light transoms. The transom of the furnace room is covered with plywood (photographs 22 and 23).

The original architectural plans for the building label the classrooms as #1-4: Classroom #1 (Southwest) (photographs 39, 40, and 41); Classroom #2 (Northwest) (photographs 36, 37, and 38); Classroom #3 (Southeast) (photographs 43 and 44); Classroom #4 (Northeast) (photographs 27, 28, and 29). Each classroom features a set of windows along one wall, three closets or cloakrooms along another, and two long runs of horizontal chalkboards and/or bulletin boards flanking the classroom entrance doors. The middle window of each grouping has been removed and covered in plywood to accommodate HVAC equipment housed on its exterior, and vents have been cut in the plywood on the interior for ventilation (photograph 29). The walls feature wood chair rail and picture rail, and the same double baseboard configuration found in the corridor and foyer. Each classroom has four modern ceiling mounted light fixtures that match the fixtures in the corridor (photograph 28). With the exception of Classroom #4, where the middle closet/cloakroom has been altered into a cabinet, the closet/cloakroom spaces are intact (photographs 28, 30, and 31). Most of the closets/cloakrooms are missing their doors and those remaining appear to date from the period of one of the 1950s additions (photograph 43). The double entry doorway for classroom #4 was modified to create an entrance which leads to the south bathroom (photograph 22). The furnace room is open and houses modern electrical panels (photograph 42).

ALTERATIONS

In addition to what has been described above, alterations include conversion of the storage closet into two restrooms c.1999 when the school became the Oglethorpe Academy and construction of a stud wall with a

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new door opening created along the west wall of Classroom #4 to provide a separate entrance to the bathroom on the north. In 1952, an addition to the school was constructed to the east (rear) of the school building, attached by a covered walkway. Another, very similar addition was added in 1959 to the east of the 1952 addition. Both additions were one-story and featured a central hallway flanked by classrooms at either side. Both were demolished in 2015.

INTEGRITY

The building retains a high level of integrity of design, materials, and workmanship through its historic and character-defining features including historic finishes, fenestration, and floorplan. Springfield Terrace School remains in its original location and setting bordered the residential neighborhood present during the time of the school's operation. Integrity of feeling and association are derived from the building's direct link as a purpose-built school erected to provide education to the children of the African American families in the surrounding area.

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8. Sta	tement of Significance			
(Mark ")	cable National Register Criteria x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property onal Register listing.)	Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions.) EDUCATION		
XA	Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.	ETHNIC HERITAGE - BLACK ARCHITECTURE		
В	Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.	AROTTLOTORE		
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.	Period of Significance 1926-1972		
D	Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.	Significant Dates 1926 – Date of construction		
(Mark "x	ia Considerations " in all the boxes that apply.)	Significant Person		
Proper	rty is:	(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)		
A	Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.	N/A		
В	removed from its original location.	Cultural Affiliation N/A		
c	a birthplace or grave.	IN/A		
D	a cemetery.			
E	a reconstructed building, object, or structure.	Architect/Builder Levy & Clarke – architect		
F	a commemorative property.	Olaf Otto – builder		
G	less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.			

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance begins with the date of construction and opening of the school in 1926, and ends in 1972, the end of the historic period at the time of nomination. The school was in continuous use during the period of significance.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary) N/A

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The Springfield Terrace School is significant under Criterion A in the areas of education and ethnic heritage-Black, for its association with African American education in Chatham County, and as a good example of the continuing influence of the Rosenwald School Building Program with its standardized school plans in local communities and its efforts to improve schools for African Americans across the South during the early 20th century. Located in the western area of Savannah, the small school historically served the surrounding communities, including Springfield Terrace, Water Works, Brickyard, Carver Village, Flatland Village, and Collat's Quarters. Surrounded by light and heavy industrial development on the western edge of the city, the students were from nearby neighborhoods, composed of primarily African American, blue-collar workers. The school is also significant under Criterion C for earchitecture, as a good, representative example of an early 20th-century school building designed by the Savannah architectural firm of Levy & Clarke. The vernacular school was one of the firm's standardized plans. Its simplified architectural details were likely designed to facilitate speed and economy of construction. The only surviving example of one of these schools designed by the firm in Chatham County, the school served as an institutional and civic anchor for the area from the time of its construction in 1926 until its closure in 1991. Springfield Terrace School is significant at the local level.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

NOTE: Portions of the following narrative were taken from the January 13, 2021 "Springfield Terrace School" draft <u>National Register Registration Form</u> that was prepared by Becki Harkness of Ward Architecture & Preservation, and edited by Cynthia Catellier, Historic Preservation Division. The original is on file at the Historic Preservation Division, Department of Community Affairs, Atlanta, Georgia.

EDUCATION & ETHNIC HERITAGE – BLACK

Springfield Terrace School is significant under Criterion A in the areas of <u>education</u> and <u>ethnic heritage-Black</u> as it exemplifies efforts made to educate and improve the lives of African Americans in the segregated South. According to the statewide context study, *Public Elementary and Secondary Schools in GA, 1868-1971*, even though the state legislature enacted "An Act to Establish a System of Public Instruction" in 1870 to educate both Black and White students, Georgia prioritized schooling for Whites (Ray & Assoc. 2004, 4). In 1910 as little as ten percent of the state's allocation for public education was spent on Black schools and in the 1920s only twenty percent of the state's Black schools consisted of two or more rooms (Ray & Assoc. 2004, 9; Merritt 1984, 39).

Following this pattern, in the early-20th century, Chatham County failed to prioritize the education of Black youth even though African Americans made up nearly half of the population (Census 1920, 62). For example, in 1921 and 1922, Chatham County invested \$333,149 to build schools for Whites. During those same two years, the county invested nothing on "colored" school building (GA Dept of Ed. 1921, 399; GA Dept of Ed. 1922, 347, 275). However, due to the persistent efforts of Mrs. Pearl Lee Smith and the local community, in 1925 the Chatham County Board of Education authorized funding to build a school for the African American children in the Springfield Terrace community.

The Board of Education hired the Savannah architectural firm of Levy & Clarke which had already designed several school buildings in Chatham County. Beginning as early as 1917, Levy & Clarke produced a plan for the Woodville School which was built to serve African American students (Levy & Clarke 1917). The architects

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made very few changes to their standardized plans when they designed the four-room Springfield Terrace School. The Levy & Clarke standardized school plans bear numerous similarities to the Rosenwald school plans including layout, siting, materials, fenestration, and more. The Rosenwald School Building Program was envisioned and funded by philanthropist Julius Rosenwald, who sought to offer African American children access to quality public education in modern facilities. The Rosenwald program produced economical standardized architectural designs and made them available free of charge. While many southern states took advantage of the Rosenwald program which also partially funded school buildings, Georgia participated less than other southern states (Ellis 2013). Compared to North Carolina, which built 813 Rosenwald Schools, and South Carolina, which built 450 Rosenwald Schools, Georgia constructed 259 Rosenwald Schools (Cyriague, Hebert, and Moffson 2009, 12; Powell 2018; UNC Wilmington 2000). Chatham County built only one Rosenwald School, Pin Point, to serve primary grades (Cyriague, Hebert, and Moffson 2009, 60). The Springfield Terrace School reflects these state and local trends as it was funded by the Chatham County Board of Education and designed by local architects. Additionally, the plans drawn for the Springfield Terrace School reflect the apparent influence of the contemporaneous Rosenwald School Building Program on a non-Rosenwald school. The school's construction marked an improvement in the education of the African American youth nearby.

Springfield Terrace school, which opened in 1926, enrolled around 240 students in grades 1-6 (Smith 2004, 112). The school was modern by contemporary standards and was designed to emphasize good lighting, air flow, and included a furnace for heating. The school's benefit to the community did not end with education. A school often set the standard for the neighborhood with regard to architecture, sanitation, and maintenance (Cyriaque, Hebert, and Moffson 2009, 33). According to the statewide context study, *Public Elementary and Secondary Schools in GA, 1868-1971*, "The arrival of a school often meant a first step toward progress of the community, to be followed by new paved streets, streetlights, and sidewalks for the first time" (Ray & Assoc. 2004, 17). With the school in place, subdivisions where African Americans were permitted to live in segregated Savannah were platted nearby. Following World War II, the Federal Housing Administration approved and insured the adjacent Carver Village subdivision (NRIS SG100003340). According to the 2013 Historic Resources Survey of Carver Heights/Carver Village "The City of Savannah took extra steps to show support for the project when the Mayor and Aldermen approved the construction of roads, drainage, and water and sewer mains at the City's expense" (Cherry-Farmer & Farr 2019, 18).

The additional housing brought more students to the Springfield Terrace School. A wing was added on the rear elevation in 1952 and another extension was added in 1959 (both demolished 2015). In 1958, the Springfield Terrace Parent Teachers Association (PTA) voted to rename the building Pearl Lee Smith School after the woman who had worked so tirelessly to obtain funding for the building (Dedication 1959). The building also functioned as a community center for nearby residents. Springfield Terrace School continued to operate as a public elementary school and community gathering place until 1991.

The Springfield Terrace School serves as an example of a purpose-built school designed to educate Black pupils who were excluded from most of the buildings and resources of Chatham County's public education system in the early-20th century. The building exemplifies the struggles and successes to provide education to African American youth in the segregated South. At a time when African American schools throughout the

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state were inadequate at best, the well-designed well lighted Springfield Terrace School building was a beacon of hope and continues to occupy a prominent place in the memories and hearts of the community.

ARCHITECTURE

The Springfield Terrace School is also significant under Criterion C for <u>architecture</u> as an excellent intact example of a school funded by the Chatham County Board of Education to educate African American students in the Jim Crow South. The school's design by the Savannah architectural firm of Levy & Clarke was based upon their earlier design plans which were intended to provide modern public education facilities in rural and underserved communities, including this one which was built specifically for African American children.

Analysis of the architectural plans of the schools designed by Levy & Clarke between 1917-1926 reveal numerous standard features and similarity of design (Levy & Clarke 1917-1926). The Levy & Clarke school designs are all one-story, hipped roof buildings featuring three, four, or six large classrooms all with windows and cloakrooms. Common elements shared by the buildings include a centralized façade with almost identical entrances, symmetrical and mirrored plans, similar building materials, groupings of five multi-light (9/9) windows, exposed rafters and wide eaves, and a single chimney. The buildings maintain a simplicity of form reflective of function and modest financial investment with minimal decoration and have simple interior finishes designed to be easily cleaned and maintained.

The first of the schools using these plans was the Woodville School built in 1917. In 1920, Levy & Clarke slightly modified the Woodville School plan in its design for a new school, Port Wentworth. Springfield Terrace School's design was largely based upon the architectural plans of Port Wentworth School. The Port Wentworth School plan retained the central corridor, paired windows, and single chimney of the Woodville School but removed two of the classrooms at the rear of the building. The result was a T-shaped footprint and a lower pitched hip roof. The architects indicated changes made from Port Wentworth on the plan for the Springfield Terrace School as "This drawing shows changes in floorplan from the Port Wentworth School" (Levy & Clarke 1925). The major alterations made for Springfield Terrace school are the addition of brick veneer on the exterior, and slight alterations to the areas housing the storage closet and the furnace room.

The four-room Springfield Terrace School's architectural details contain elements of both the Craftsman and Colonial Revival styles (photograph 1). The building's exposed rafter tails, wide over-hanging eaves, low-pitched cross-gabled and hipped roofs, and ribbon windows are all characteristic of the Craftsman style (photographs 1, 3, 7, and 10). The building's symmetry, central entrance framed by a traditional pediment and Doric round columns, multi-light (9/9) windows, and brick exterior are all characteristic of the Colonial Revival style (photographs 1 and 2). Among the building's elements that are similar to Rosenwald School plans are its simplicity of design as well as the rows of five multi-light (9/9) windows and the school's siting on an east-west axis with the banks of windows aligned to capture light in the classrooms in the most advantageous manner (photographs 1, 8, and 10).

The firm of Levy & Clarke, and eventually Levy, Clarke & Bergen, was very active in Savannah and designed many buildings, including several other schools. The modest nature of Springfield Terrace School is noteworthy as it is atypical of the firm's later work, which included much more monumental buildings. Their involvement in the development of Springfield Terrace and the others which are of similar design (Port

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Wentworth, Woodville School, Rose Dhu, Montgomery School, Bloomingdale, and Fell Avenue) occurred towards the beginning of the architects' careers. This work served as part of the foundation for their later work on larger school buildings and established the firm's reputation for successful school designs. Notably, Mr. Levy began serving as Supervising Architect for the Board of Education for the City of Savannah and Chatham County in 1927, directly following the completion of the Springfield Terrace and Fell Avenue schools. He continued serving in the position until 1941 (American Institute of Architects 2018).

Springfield Terrace School survives as a good example of a Levy & Clarke design. The school was developed from a standardized plan by the firm to meet the needs of underserved students in Chatham County with a modern, safe, and healthy learning environment and tells, "the story of educational achievement in the face of great odds" (Merritt 1984, 37). The school survives as an excellent model of an architect designed school built to educate African American students in the Jim Crow South.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

NOTE: The following narrative is taken from the January 13, 2021 "Springfield Terrace School" draft <u>National Register Registration</u> Form that was prepared by Becki Harkness of Ward Architecture & Preservation, and minimally edited by Christy Atkins, Historic Preservation Division. It is on file at the Historic Preservation Division, Department of Community Affairs, Atlanta, Georgia.

The Springfield Terrace School is located at the current address of 707 Hastings Street in Savannah, in Chatham County. The full parcel, which once contained additions and other elements, extends from Hastings Street to the west, Stiles Avenue to the east, the rear property lines of residences to the north, touches West Gwinnett Street to the southwest, and the rear property lines of residences border the remainder to the south. When the additions were in place (no longer extant), access to the property was from both Hastings Street and Stiles Avenue, resulting in address listings utilizing both streets in the City Directories. Addresses listed for the school property over the years include 707 Hastings Street, 707 Stiles Avenue, and 711 Stiles Avenue.

MRS. PEARL LEE SMITH

The push for a new school to serve the Springfield Terrace community began with Mrs. Pearl Lee Smith (ND), an African American activist and leader. After consulting with parents in the Springfield Terrace community about the need for a school, Smith organized the first Parent Teacher Association (PTA) in Chatham County. The PTA presented the idea for the new school to the Chatham County Board of Education, but the Board was not in favor of pursuing it until Mrs. Smith enlisted the help of Mrs. A. R. Lawton of Atlanta and attended the State Interracial Meeting in Atlanta to again present the idea (Dedication 1959, 2). Mrs. Lawton appears to be Ella Stanley Beckwith Lawton (1860-1949), wife of Alexander Rudolph Lawton (1858-1936). The Commission on Interracial Cooperation was established in 1919 and was based in Atlanta. Active until 1944, the commission had committees scattered throughout the state (Pullen 2004). A journal article from *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* described the commission as being comprised of "white southerners who questioned, disagreed with, and spoke out against traditional southern mores" and sought to "humanize and soften the southern system of segregation by rallying the better element of white southern society to forward-looking social programs for blacks." The commission formed an "alliance of southern whites, northern philanthropists and foundations, and conservative blacks of the Tuskegee school" (Pilkington 1985).

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Following this meeting, the group approached the local Board of Education again, and the Board approved the new school with the contingency that the group secure a site for the new building (History of School Real Estate ND). The Blun family donated a portion of their property at the northwest corner of Lot 51, Morrison Ward, to the City of Savannah, who then transferred the title to the Board of Education on September 2, 1925. The transfer included a resolution that the Board "must maintain thereon a school house and upon the discontinuance and using of same for school purposes, and purposes connected with the maintaining of a school house, same to revert to the City of Savannah" (Mayor and Aldermen 1925). In a statement made around 1958, Mrs. Smith described the lengthy process: "All of the procedures required considerable time and work for several months. Finally, a school building was built at a cost of \$18,000. The superintendent, as well as the parents, was happy over the outcome. He requested me to attend the next Interracial meeting and make a detail report of our progress. This I did at the expense of the state through Mrs. Lawton." She also described her "untiring effort" to secure funding for the Ferguson Avenue and Rose Due (sic) schools (Dedication 1959, 2-3).

Mrs. Smith was not only active in her local PTA, but also served as a founder of both the State and National PTA Congresses, and as the third President of the Georgia State PTA. Mrs. Smith held a Bachelor of Science degree from Savannah State College in Elementary Education, and was the first woman to pass the Georgia Board of Pharmacy after earning her degree from Meharry Medical College in Nashville, an historically Black college. To recognize significant individuals and their contributions on a local, state, and national level, the Board of Education launched an initiative in 1958 to rename public schools with nominations from the community. The Springfield Terrace PTA submitted that their school be renamed for Pearl Lee Smith in honor of her contributions to establishing the school itself, and for her many other achievements. The Board voted to approve the renaming of the school to "Pearl Lee Smith School" at their meeting on May 13, 1958. (Dedication 1959).

SPRINGFIELD TERRACE SCHOOL/PEARL LEE SMITH SCHOOL

The larger area historically served by the school comprises several smaller neighborhoods: Springfield Terrace, Water Works, Brickyard, Carver Village, Flatland (also known as Flatman) Village, and Collat's Quarters (also known as Little Mexico) (City of Savannah ND, 1). The area maintains a mixture of commercial, industrial, and modest residential properties. The construction of housing in this area began in the late-19th century and continued through the mid-20th century with the construction of affordable post-World War II housing for working class African Americans (Greenhouse 2013, 33). The city limits of Savannah did not extend into this area until 1945, which was considered rural by educational standards at the time of the school's construction in 1926 (Greenhouse 2013, 12).

As early as 1908, property developers placed advertisements in the local African American newspaper, the *Savannah Tribune*, offering "the industrious colored people of Savannah" opportunities for home ownership in a new area then known as Springfield Terrace. Located north of West Gwinnett Street and west of Stiles Avenue, across from the 1892 Savannah Water Works, the lots were located on a "terrace about two feet above Gwinnett Street" (*Savannah Tribune* 1908). Significant expansion of residential housing in the area continued over the next few years, creating a need for resources to educate the growing number of children in the area and ultimately resulting in the construction of the Springfield Terrace School in 1926.

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In addition to the apparent influence of the Rosenwald School Building Program, Levy & Clarke's plans for the Springfield Terrace School and others could have been influenced by the designs of another similar precedent within the state: the Georgia Rural Public School. Characterized by simplicity of form and function, these vernacular school buildings' "finishes were kept simple and often esthetics was not an issue." Although most prevalent in rural agricultural areas of the state, "the Rural Public School was also found in the smaller, less affluent urban areas. Many times, but not exclusively, African Americans in cities were educated in this type of school building" (Ray & Assoc. 2004, 19).

The culmination of continued inequality of standards between White and African American schools resulted in the Civil Rights Act in 1964. The act eliminated funding to school districts that practiced discrimination and federal courts began forcing desegregation of schools. Schools that were previously only available to the White population opened to African American residents who wanted to integrate. Larger schools were constructed to consolidate the growing population, replacing older facilities. While overcrowding, secondary facilities, and inequity of resources spurred the movement, fear from both sides led to a slow movement of integration implementation.

LEVY & CLARKE

The principal partners of the architectural firm of Levy & Clarke, Morton Henry Levy (1890-1954) and William Bordley Clarke (1890-1943) were prolific architects throughout the city of Savannah and the state of Georgia. Both architects were born in Savannah and maintained an architectural partnership during the years 1916-1943. Mr. Levy served as Supervising Architect for the Board of Education for the City of Savannah and Chatham County between 1927-1941 and, following the death of Mr. Clarke, formed the architectural firm of Levy & Kiley with partner Walter F. Kiley in 1943. The firm designed private and public buildings across the South, including Savannah's Exchange Branch Bank (1919), St. Paul's Lutheran Parish House and Sunday School Building (c.1924), Cohen's Old Man's Retreat (c.1934), and the Pine Gardens Firehouse (c.1944) (Ciucecivh et al. 2019).

Morton Levy and William Clarke were members of the Associated Architects of Savannah, a group of influential local architects who worked to help design at least two federal housing projects in Savannah for the United States Housing Authority. Yamacraw Village and Fellwood, both constructed in 1940, were early public housing projects that sought to provide modern quality housing to the city's low-income residents. The group submitted several designs to the government, maintaining their strong feelings about how the new developments, particularly Yamacraw Village, should be designed. Notably, they argued that common approaches to the design of public housing projects elsewhere in the country, such as the use of flat roofs, were not suitable in Savannah. They argued that "Savannahians had preferred pitched roofs for 200 years and saw no reason to change. Public housing, they maintained, should reflect local traditions (US Congress 1948, 1216)." The resulting design of small, side-gabled housing units was very progressive for its time and still stands today.

SPRINGFIELD TERRACE SCHOOL AND THE COMMUNITY

The contract for the Springfield Terrace School's construction was awarded to Olaf Otto on August 19, 1925, and construction of the 4,057 square foot school was complete in 1926 (Springfield Terr. ND, 59). Olaf Otto was listed in records as a builder (Armstrong House), architect (Citizens and Southern Bank Building) and

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engineer (Savannah River Bridge) working in Savannah during the early 20th century. The school served grades 1-6 within four large classrooms surrounding a central foyer and had an initial enrollment of roughly 240 students (Smith 2004, 112). A plan view sketch of the building from the 1937 Savannah Cadastral Survey shows a small appendage at the rear of the building (no longer extant), which may have originally housed restrooms and water fountains (Wideman 1937). The initial boundaries of the area served by the school are unclear. An undated newspaper article dating prior to 1959 specifies the boundaries as: "North: Louisville road but not including Louisville road. East: Springfield canal to Stiles avenue and Stiles avenue to corporate limits of the city. South and West: Corporate limits of the city to Louisville road; the area between Henges and Travis avenues to be included in Springfield Terrace" (Savannah Morning News ND).

With the school in place and the surrounding lands largely undeveloped, subdivisions were soon platted west of the Springfield Terrace community. The Fair Housing Act was established in 1938 to provide equitable housing for minority communities. Through this effort, opportunities for financial support of housing was made available and new housing projects were developed in Savannah. Following World War II, the return of soldiers and the need for housing led to a building boom across the country. This was true for the many African American military members and new subdivisions using the Fair Housing Act were developed to meet the demand. In Savannah, local designers, developers, banks, and officials from the City of Savannah partnered to develop Carver Village, a "low cost negro housing development" conceived from the need for post-World War II housing and backed by the Federal Housing Authority (Greenhouse 2013, 15). Located south of Gwinnett Street slightly west of Springfield Terrace School, planning of the subdivision began in 1947. The plan included lots for 600 homes and two parks, and by 1955, construction on almost all lots was complete (Greenhouse 2013, 15, 24). The Carver Village Historic District (NRIS SG100003340) was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2019 and continues to retain a strong historic connection to the school.

Due to the increasing population surrounding the Springfield Terrace School, the school building was not large enough to accommodate the number of students within its purview, particularly after development of Carver Village. According to a survey report of public schools in Chatham County in 1949 issued by the George Peabody College for Teachers in Nashville, Tennessee, the average number of students in each of the four rooms was 71. The report notes that the school was operating in double sessions at the time of survey, and that "at least three additional classrooms are now needed . . . The existing site will not carry this load" (Georgia Peabody College 1949, 153, 167).

To meet the demand and provide for the growing number of students, a large addition and improvements to the grounds were developed. In 1951, the City of Savannah conveyed the northeast portion of Lot 51 to the Board of Education for the construction of a six-classroom addition to the Springfield Terrace School which opened for the 1952-53 school year. The 10,044 square foot, concrete block addition featured two separate structures separated by a narrow, covered walkway. It was designed by Commander T. S. Klinger and was constructed by Walter Strong. In 1956, the Board of Education reached an agreement with the neighboring Linde Air Product Company (a Division of Union Carbide Corp.), located southeast of the school, to lease a portion of the company's land for a playground and construct a fence to separate the playground from the industrial site (Wideman 1937).

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By January 1958, the number of students attending the school reached 642, and the school was operating in two separate sessions between 7am and 7pm: a clear indication that overcrowding remained an issue (Springfield Terr. ND). On November 19, 1958, the Board of Education awarded a contract for the construction of another addition to the school to Walter H. Strong. The 15,253 square foot addition was designed by Hansen Architects and would add another eleven classrooms to the facility on the same piece of property conveyed to the Board of Education in 1951. On March 19, 1959, the Board purchased the southern two-thirds of Lot 51 (including the playground site and the former Linde Air Products Company buildings) from Union Carbide, increasing the Board-owned property by 2.922 acres. On October 25, 1959, a dedication ceremony was held for the new addition and for the official name change to Pearl Lee Smith School (Dedication 1959, 1). In October 1961, Board of Education records report a count of 807 students and 23 teachers at the school, and even with the new addition complete, the records note a schedule of double sessions to accommodate all the students and classes.

Due to continued growth in the area in the 1960s, the Board of Education expanded the property and its presence in the neighborhood. Sanborn Fire Insurance maps indicate that by at least 1966, the old Linde Air Products Company structure was occupied by the Board of Education's Purchasing Department (Sanborn 321). In 1968, the Board purchased Lots 11-15 Morrison Ward, south of Lot 51 and fronting West Gwinnett Street. Buildings on the small residential lots were removed at a cost of \$3,000. Addresses of the property have also included 707 Johnson Street, 707 Stiles Street and 1202 West Gwinnett Street at times (Spracher 2012, 1).

A large fire destroyed the administration wing, including the cafeteria, on May 26, 1971, and the cafeteria was not replaced until 1978. Following the fire and continued efforts to integrate public schools, the school's student occupancy began a rapid decline in the 1970s. Desegregation of schools in Savannah began in 1963, and all schools in Georgia were desegregated by 1971 (*Savannah Morning News* 2013; Ray & Assoc. 2004, 18). By the beginning of the 1973-74 school year, the school had a capacity of 588 students, but active enrollment was down to 409 pupils. In 1981, the City of Savannah transferred the northwest portion of Lot 51 (the land upon which the 1926 school building stands) again to the Board of Education, but removed the reversionary resolution in the original 1925 deed, giving the Board of Education full title to the property (History of School Real Estate ND; Springfield Terr. ND; Mayor and Aldermen 1925).

The school continued to operate until the end of the 1990-1991 school year, when the Springfield Terrace School (then known as the Pearl Lee Smith School) officially ceased operation as an elementary school. From May 1992 through March 1994, the facility operated as a transition center for suspended or expelled students. The school buildings appear to have sat vacant until the fall of 1999, when the newly created Oglethorpe Academy Charter Middle School opened, breathing new life into the facility and operating at the site until 2012 (Spracher 2012, 15). In 2010, the Board of Education and the City of Savannah agreed to an exchange of property, wherein the City would provide land for the Oglethorpe Charter School to build a new school building, and the Board of Education would convey the Springfield Terrace School/Pearl Lee Smith School property back to the City of Savannah (Savannah Morning News 2010). In a transfer dated November 5, 2012, the City of Savannah again became the title holder of the property (Board of Public Education 2012). Since that time, the 1926 portion of the school has remained vacant and the 1952 and 1959 additions have been demolished, along with the old Linde Air Products Company buildings. According to a demolition permit, these elements

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were demolished in 2015. The City of Savannah (the current owner of the property) and local community leaders hope to restore the school for use as a community center and local history museum, as well as one of the landmark features within the emerging Canal District, anchored by the new Savannah Arena (planned opening 2022) and the Savannah Water Works Pump House, both adjacent to the eastern edge of the school site.

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Wideman, R. L. 1937. "Morrison Ward, Block 18, Linde Air Products Co." Savannah Cadastral Survey. Chatham County Superior Court Record Room. Chatham County Courthouse. June 1.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):	ster :	Primary location of addi X State Historic Preser Other State agency Federal agency Local government University Other Name of repository:		
Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A				
10. Geographical Data				
Acreage of Property Less than one acre Latitude/Longitude Coordinates Datum if other than WGS84: (enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)				
1. Latitude: 32.0731	Longitude: -8	1.1155		
UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)	et.)			
1 <u>17S</u> <u>489296</u> <u>3548595</u> Zone Easting Northing	3	Zone Easting	Northing	
2 Zone Easting Northing	4 <u>-</u>	Zone Easting	Northing	

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary is the exterior footprint of the building, indicated by the heavy red line on the attached tax map, which is to scale.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary of the nominated property comprises the building footprint, as no other extant site elements or features remain from the period of significance.

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Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

• 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. Key all photographs to this map.

- Continuation Sheets
- Additional items: (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property:

Springfield Terrace School

City or Vicinity:

Savannah

County:

Chatham

State: Georgia

Photographer:

Susannah Bull, Ward Architecture & Preservation

Date Photographed:

February 7, 2020

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Description of Photograph(s) and number:

Photo 1 of 44:	West elevation, entrance, photographer facing east.
Photo 2 of 44:	West elevation, entrance detail, photographer facing northeast.
Photo 3 of 44:	Northwest corner, photographer facing east.
Photo 4 of 44:	Northeast corner, photographer facing west.
Photo 5 of 44:	East elevation, building rear, photographer facing west.
Photo 6 of 44:	East elevation, rear doors, photographer facing northwest.
Photo 7 of 44:	East elevation, eave detail, photographer facing southwest.
Photo 8 of 44:	South elevation, photographer facing north.
Photo 9 of 44:	South elevation, chimney, photographer facing northwest.
Photo 10 of 44:	South elevation, window detail, photographer facing northeast.
Photo 11 of 44:	Site, photographer facing south.
Photo 12 of 44:	Basketball Court and view of Savannah Water Works Pump House, photographer facing
	east.
Photo 13 of 44:	South elevation, photographer facing north.
Photo 14 of 44:	Site from former Linde Air Products Building slab, photographer facing northwest.
Photo 15 of 44:	Former Linde Air Products Building slab, photographer facing southeast.
Photo 16 of 44:	1952/1959 demolished addition slabs, photographer facing west.
Photo 17 of 44:	1952/1959 demolished addition slabs, photographer facing east.
Photo 18 of 44:	Corridor viewing front entrance, photographer facing west.
Photo 19 of 44:	Corridor viewing rear entrance, photographer facing east.
Photo 20 of 44:	Corridor, rear door transom, picture rail detail, and school bell, photographer facing
	northeast.
Photo 21 of 44:	Floor, wainscot, and baseboard trim detail, photographer facing southeast.
Photo 22 of 44:	Foyer, facing classrooms #2 and #4 and former storage closet, photographer facing
	north.
Photo 23 of 44:	Foyer, facing classrooms #1 and #3 and former furnace room, photographer facing
	south.
Photo 24 of 44:	Foyer ceiling, photographer facing west.
Photo 25 of 44:	Corridor, wainscot and classroom door detail, photographer facing northwest.
Photo 26 of 44:	Classroom door hardware detail, photographer facing south.
Photo 27 of 44:	Classroom #4, photographer facing northeast.
Photo 28 of 44:	Classroom #4, photographer facing southwest.

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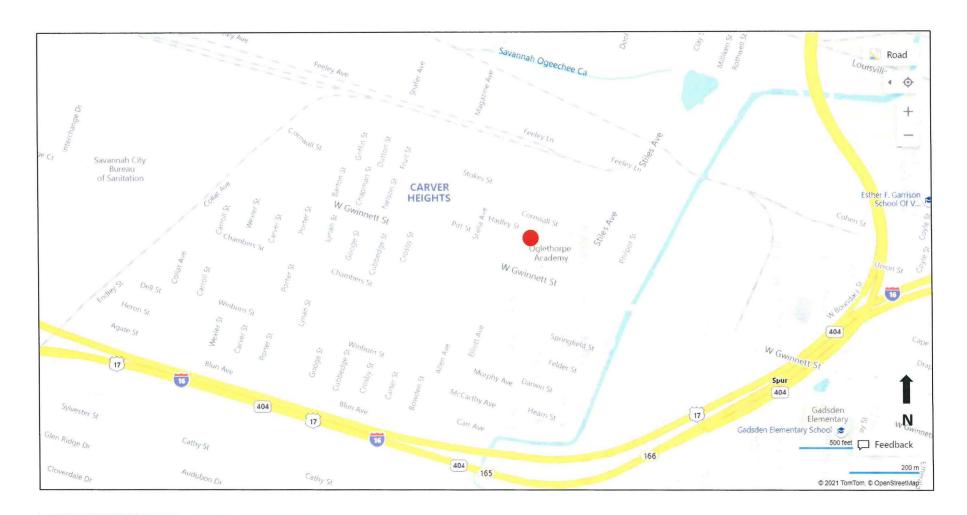
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Name of Property	County and State
Photo 29 of 44:	Classroom #4, window detail, photographer facing north.
Photo 30 of 44:	Bathroom hallway addition, photographer facing north.
Photo 31 of 44:	Bathroom hallway addition, photographer facing south.
Photo 32 of 44:	North Bathroom, photographer facing north.
Photo 33 of 44:	North Bathroom, window, ceiling, and partition detail, photographer facing northwest.
Photo 34 of 44:	South Bathroom, photographer facing northwest.
Photo 35 of 44:	South Bathroom, photographer facing south.
Photo 36 of 44:	Classroom #2, photographer facing northwest.
Photo 37 of 44:	Classroom #2, photographer facing southeast.
Photo 38 of 44:	Classroom #2, chalkboard detail, photographer facing south.
Photo 39 of 44:	Classroom #1, photographer facing southwest.
Photo 40 of 44:	Classroom #1, photographer facing northeast.
Photo 41 of 44:	Classroom #1, floor detail, photographer facing southwest.
Photo 42 of 44:	Furnace Room, photographer facing south.
Photo 43 of 44:	Classroom #3, photographer facing southeast.
Photo 44 of 44:	Classroom #3, photographer facing northwest.



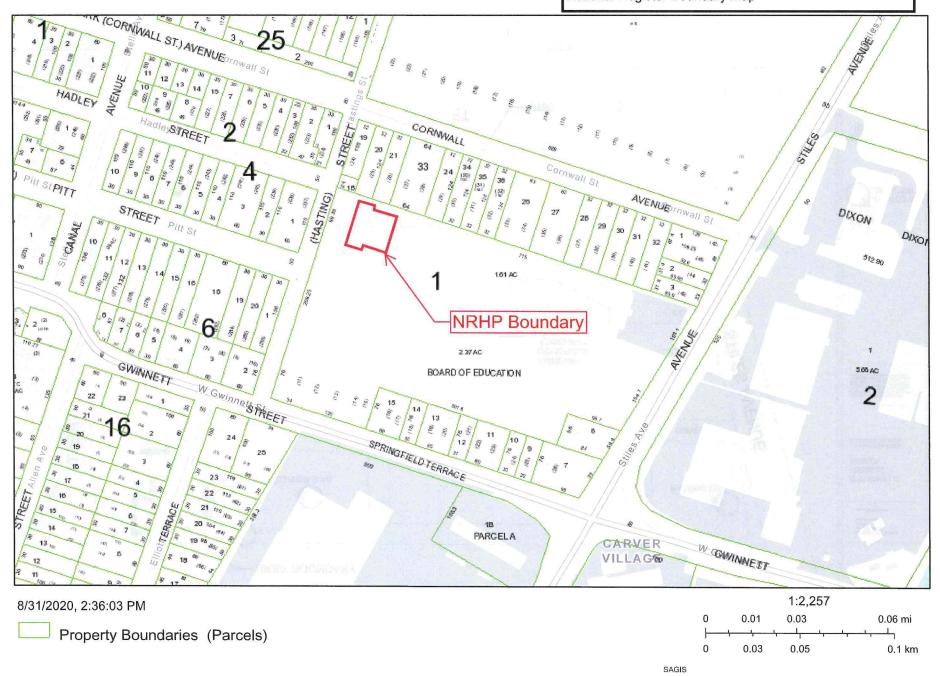
Springfield Terrace School 707 Hastings Street

707 Hastings Street Savannah, Chatham County, Georgia

Latitude: 32.0731 Longitude: -81.1155

Source: Bing Maps, 2021

Springfield Terrace School 707 Hastings Street Savannah, Chatham County, Georgia National Register Boundary Map



Springfield Terrace School 707 Hastings Street Savannah, Chatham County, Georgia

Photo number and direction of view map

