

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.

1. Name of PropertyHistoric name: Triplett High and Graded SchoolOther names/site number: Triplett High and Vocational School; VDHR ID 265-0004-0122

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

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

2. LocationStreet & number: 6044 Main StreetCity or town: Mount JacksonState: VACounty: ShenandoahNot For Publication: N/AVicinity: N/A**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

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 statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A B X C D

Signature of certifying official/Title:

Date

Virginia Department of Historic Resources

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

Triplett High and Graded School
Name of Property

Shenandoah County, VA
County and State

4. National Park Service Certification

I 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 Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private: ☒
- Public – Local ☐
- Public – State ☐
- Public – Federal ☐

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s) ☒
- District ☐
- Site ☐
- Structure ☐
- Object ☐

Triplett High and Graded School
Name of Property

Shenandoah County, VA
County and State

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 1

The Triplett High and Graded School building is a contributing resource to the Mount Jackson Historic District (NRIS No. 93000541). The cafeteria was recorded as an addition to the main building in the district inventory, rather than a separate building.

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION: school

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

WORK IN PROGRESS

Triplett High and Graded School
Name of Property

Shenandoah County, VA
County and State

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS: Colonial Revival

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

BRICK, CONCRETE, WOOD, METAL, STONE, GLASS, ASPHALT, SYNTHETICS

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

Triplett High and Graded School, located at 6044 Main Street in Mount Jackson, Shenandoah County, Virginia, is a 1939 two-story Colonial Revival building of load-bearing brick construction. Its salient architectural feature is a monumental portico with modified Doric columns. Other exterior features of the west-facing building include a parapet shed roof, large steel-framed classroom windows, a pedimented front entry surround, and tall round-arched windows on the auditorium/gymnasium wing. A pre-engineered metal firehouse addition was made in 1994 in place of a 1925 school building to which the 1939 building was an addition. The 1939 building's interior features plaster wall and ceiling finishes, a variety of floor materials including concrete and maple strip, and a wide T-shaped hallway with stairs at each end. Other interior features include archways and arched niches, original classroom fixtures, and a stage with a proscenium frame in the auditorium/gymnasium. On the south side of the school and almost touching it is a ca. 1948 one-story cafeteria building of brick-faced concrete block construction and flat-roofed utilitarian design with a 1998 vinyl-sided frame side addition on one side. (The cafeteria has a separate address, 131 Triplett Road; it and the 1939 building were in the process of rehabilitation at the time of writing in August 2024.) The site, which slopes gently to the south, has lawn area with shade trees, a limestone retaining wall along the sidewalk at the

Triplett High and Graded School
Name of Property

Shenandoah County, VA
County and State

front, and parking areas to the rear. Beyond Triplett Road, which bounds the 1.532-acre nominated area on the east, are playing fields that were historically part of the campus but which are under separate ownership and are not included in the nominated area. The property has views of nearby farm fields and of Short Mountain and Massanutten Mountain, outliers of the Blue Ridge, in the distance. The 1.532-acre nominated area lies at about 890 feet above sea level in the drainage of Mill Creek, a short distance upstream from the creek's confluence with the North Fork of the Shenandoah River.

Narrative Description

Inventory

1. Classroom/Auditorium Building. 1939, 1994. Contributing building.
2. Cafeteria. Ca. 1948, 1998. Contributing building.

Classroom/Auditorium Building Exterior

The **Classroom/Auditorium Building** (inventory no. 1) is a 1939 two-story building of T-shaped form with a classroom block that forms the head of the T at the front (west) end facing Main Street and an auditorium/gymnasium wing at the back (east end). The brick is laid in 1:2 Flemish bond with the header/stretcher courses separated by two stretcher courses. The stretchers are lightly variegated in reddish and purplish hues. The headers are more consistently purplish in hue. Some sections of brickwork, especially in the parapet, have been repointed.

The building is nine bays across with the center three bays sheltered by the portico. The four smooth-shafted modified Doric columns stand on tall masonry pedestals with stepped square sections. Behind, where the portico meets the building, are rectangular-section Doric pilasters on lower bases. The portico stands on a concrete platform with steps flanked by low masonry cheeks at the front. The steps descend to a wide concrete walkway with flights of steps that descend to the street. The portico has a gable-fronted slate roof with a round window-like panel with a keyblock surround in the pediment. The cornice at the top of the portico entablature ties into a cornice that wraps around the building below a flat brick parapet which steps up behind the portico pediment.

The portico shelters the principal entry which is the center bay of the nine-bay elevation. The entry has a crossetted surround on which rests a wide cyma-like pulvinated molding and a pediment. A metal light fixture projects from the pulvinated molding. The surround encloses plain double doors (the door leaves are probably replacements) and a transom divided into fourteen panes. Flanking the entry inside the portico are narrow vertical windows, and above is a wide window which approximates the width of the entry and has flanking windows like those below. To the left and right of the portico are three large classroom windows on each story. These and the windows inside the portico are of steel-framed industrial type with fixed and operable sections, flat heads, and concrete sills. At the base of the elevation runs a soldier belt

Triplett High and Graded School

Name of Property

Shenandoah County, VA

County and State

course which wraps around the south end of the building. A square brick boiler flue rises near the center of the building.

The north and south ends of the building differ. The south end features at its back corner a two-story section of header stack-bond brickwork which forms a surround for a window above and an entry below. The entry has double doors like those on the front inside a recess spanned by a soldier-course lintel. Above the lintel is the stepped ghost impression of a former flat-roofed covering that connected to the cafeteria. A low flight of concrete steps with pipe railings descends from the entry. Below the soldier belt course is a cast-iron coal hatch and near it is a low rectangular concrete enclosure or catch basin that may formerly have contained an oil tank.

The north end has a window at the same second-story location as the window on the south end but without a stack-bond surround. The first story abuts a one-story hyphen that formerly connected to the 1925 building and now connects to the 1994 fire house wing. The hyphen was built in two periods. Original to 1939 is the back part, which has round-arched windows like those on the auditorium/gymnasium wing. The round-arched windows now open into the interior of an addition across the front of the hyphen. The addition has 1:5 common-bond brickwork (probably a veneer over concrete block) and four square-headed stack-pane windows. The style of the windows and other features suggest the addition was built in the late 1940s or 1950s. In front of the hyphen on a low concrete base sits a long granite inscription panel inscribed "Triplett High & Vocational School." The panel was originally built into the brickwork over the front entry of the 1925 building. Near it is another concrete base on which sits a small marble marker inscribed "In honor of teachers and students of Triplett High School who served in World War II."

The rear auditorium/gymnasium wing is distinguished by the row of six round-arched windows on the south elevation. These are high off the ground, to clear bleachers inside, and like the other windows they are steel-framed with radial and concentric muntins in the arches. The glass is textured and translucent rather than clear as in the building's other windows, perhaps to discourage individuals from viewing events inside without paying. The arches are formed by triple header courses and have cast-stone keystones and impost blocks. There are two entries on the south end elevation. These have replacement double doors with glazing under six- and eight-pane transoms. The entries are sheltered by nearly flat roofs with beaded tongue-and-groove ceilings and triangular "gallows" brackets with chamfering and decorative ends. On the auditorium's north elevation are two additional entries with the same roof treatment but narrower, with single doors and three-pane transoms.

In the south angle where the auditorium and classroom block join is a basement bulkhead with an entry with a plain door sheltered by a flat roof on diagonal struts. On the east side of the hyphen is a wide entry like those of the auditorium. The 1994 fire house wing has metal siding, a low-pitched metal-sheathed side-gable roof, and five bays with roll-up doors on the front and rear. The metal siding runs above a wainscot-like stretcher-bond brick veneer on the west side and north end which changes to painted concrete block on the east side. Near the center of the two

Triplett High and Graded School
Name of Property

Shenandoah County, VA
County and State

sides are wider divisions between the bays with pedestrian entries. Set into the brick at the front north corner of the wing is a marble plaque inscribed "In memory of J. E. Pool Sr. 1994."

Classroom/Auditorium Building Interior

The T-shaped hallway on the first floor connects the front entry to the south entry and hyphen. The hallway walls are embellished with baseboards, beveled wood rails at head level, and molded wood cornices. Milk-glass globe light fixtures, probably original, hang from the ceilings (some are missing their globes). At the turn of the hallway and at the connection to the hyphen are thick archway-like frames with cyma recta details at their top corners. The stem of the T forms a front entry hall on the wall of which is a bronze plaque identifying the Federal Works Agency Public Works Administration as a funding source for the building and naming President Franklin D. Roosevelt, Federal Works Administrator John M. Carmody, and 1939, the year of completion. The wall between the hallway and the auditorium/gymnasium has a double doorway with a seven-pane transom flanked by shallow round-arched niches. The two-run stairs at each end of the hallway are of steel construction with gray soapstone treads. They have closed strings, square newels with peaked tops, and simple railings.

The first floor has two classrooms with similar finishes and features (as is also true of the second-floor classrooms). The finishes and features include maple strip flooring, fluorescent tube lighting, blackboards, wall radiators, and banks of closets on the walls opposite the entry. Four of the five closets have single- or double-leaf doors with two panels to a leaf. They have shelving and, in a few cases, original metal coat hook rails. The fifth closet is actually a bookcase with double-leaf multi-pane glass-fronted doors, solid cabinet doors below, tongue-and-groove backing, and shelves. The classrooms are entered through wood and glass panel doors with three-pane transoms above. The second-floor hallway, which is not T-shaped, has similar baseboards, rails, and cornices. It serves three classrooms, the middle one smaller in proportion with the entry hall below. The wall opposite the classroom entries has shallow round-arched niches, one of which retains a wall-mounted white ceramic drinking fountain of Moderne design manufactured by the Standard company. Restrooms have lightly variegated tan to orange glazed block walls.

The auditorium/gymnasium focuses on a stage with a proscenium frame (so called because it is square-headed instead of arched). The opening is flanked by paneled Doric-like pilasters, spanned by a heavy cornice, and underpinned by an apron with recessed beaded tongue-and-groove panels. To either side are doorways with wood and glass panel doors and three-pane transoms leading to the backstage area and boys and girls lockers. The walls have glazed block up to about head height, painted concrete block above, maple strip flooring, and a ceiling from which ceiling tiles were recently removed. The bleachers along the south wall are wood. The 1994 wing has exposed steel structure on walls and ceiling and astroturf or other material carpeting.

Cafeteria

Triplett High and Graded School
Name of Property

Shenandoah County, VA
County and State

The **Cafeteria** (inventory no. 2) is a ca. 1948 one-story building of brick-faced concrete block construction and flat-roofed utilitarian design. The brick is laid in 1:3 Flemish bond with the header/stretcher courses separated by three stretcher courses. The red brick is variegated in orangish, reddish, and purplish hues. Windows extend down the north side and across the west end and partly around the south side. The window openings are original, with concrete sills, but the original sashes have been replaced with vinyl sashes with a six-over-six false muntin pattern and with vinyl siding infill above. At the back (east end) are several barred windows with three-pane stack-pane sashes. A lower flat-roofed vestibule extends from the northwest corner. It has an operable steel-frame window with a stack-pane arrangement of eight panes (four and four), a pair of original metal and glass doors, and a small entry porch with square supports. On the south side of the building is a 1998 addition of vinyl-sided frame construction with an asphalt-shingle hip and gable roof, a concrete block foundation, and a recessed entry porch. The addition incorporates or replaces a small wing in existence in 1994.

The cafeteria's main interior space is a plainly detailed dining room with stippled ceiling tiles, fluorescent tube lighting, and ceiling-mounted ductwork. In the southeast corner is a built-in plywood cabinet with a mount for a flag. At the east end two large openings with roll-up shutters communicate with the kitchen. The kitchen has plywood base cabinets and double wood and glass panel doors to a rear store room with unpainted walls with alternating concrete block and brick courses.

Integrity Analysis

The Triplett High and Graded School possesses sufficient integrity for listing. The school retains all its principal character-defining exterior features, namely brick construction, a modified Doric portico, steel-frame classroom windows, steel-frame round-arched auditorium windows, and entries with various decorative treatments. Likewise, the interior retains all its principal character-defining features, namely its original plan configuration, plaster wall and ceiling finishes, classroom doors and transoms, stairs, archways, niches, and auditorium stage and proscenium frame. The main negative is the replacement of the original 1925 school building with a 1994 metal fire house wing. However, the wing is to the side and does not obscure any of the original fabric of the 1939 building (it attaches via a historic-period hyphen). Given the excellent state of preservation of the 1939 building, the sum total of the building's integrity is not unduly compromised by the wing. The loss of the 1925 school is regrettable, however the 1939 addition has the appearance of a complete and standalone building, so the loss does not compromise its architectural impact or make it appear as a remnant of something missing. The ca. 1948 cafeteria has undergone more alteration, with mostly replacement windows and a non-historic addition, though the latter is set back on a side elevation and is not visible from most angles. Despite these alterations, the cafeteria possesses sufficient integrity to qualify as a contributing secondary resource. The property's contributing resources therefore possess overall integrity of design, workmanship, and materials. The setting is unchanged from the character it had achieved by the end of the period of significance, with surrounding historic resources (a mill and houses) which, like the 1939 school, are classified as contributing resources in the Mount Jackson Historic District. The retention of character-defining features and the high integrity of

Triplett High and Graded School
Name of Property

Shenandoah County, VA
County and State

setting contribute to the property's integrity of feeling. The school possesses integrity of association in that it is directly linked to the historical developments that formed it.

Triplett High and Graded School
Name of Property

Shenandoah County, VA
County and State

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 grave
- ☐ D. A cemetery
- ☐ E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- ☐ F. A commemorative property
- ☐ G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Triplett High and Graded School
Name of Property

Shenandoah County, VA
County and State

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1939-1959

Significant Dates

1939

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Long, Raymond V. (architect)

Wood Construction Company (contractor)

Triplett High and Graded School
Name of Property

Shenandoah County, VA
County and State

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Triplett High and Graded School, located in the town of Mount Jackson, Shenandoah County, Virginia, is an important historic educational resource in Mount Jackson. The school consists of a 1939 Colonial Revival classroom and auditorium/gymnasium building, built with New Deal funding, and a ca. 1948 cafeteria. The 1939 building, built as an addition to a no-longer-extant 1925 building of similar design, retains character-defining features including a Doric-inspired portico, steel-framed windows, steel and soapstone stairs, archways, classroom cabinetry, and an auditorium/gymnasium with a stage and decorative proscenium frame. Architect Raymond V. Long played a role in the design of the building as a representative of Virginia's state school authority. The building was used by white high school and grade school students until 1959 when the high school moved to another facility. In after years the building served as an elementary school and then middle school for both black and white students, closing in 1993. Triplett High and Graded School is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the Education area of significance as a key historic educational resource in Mount Jackson. The school is also eligible under Criterion C in the Architecture area of significance as a well-preserved local example of Colonial Revival school design. The period of significance extends from 1939 to 1959, encompassing the building's years as the sole educational facility for the white student population of Mount Jackson and its vicinity. The school is eligible at the local level of significance.

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

Historic Background and Criterion A Education Area of Significance

A village known as Mount Pleasant developed near the Great Wagon Road crossing of Mill Creek in the southern part of Shenandoah County by the end of the eighteenth century. In 1826 the community was officially established as the town of Mount Jackson, named in honor of General Andrew Jackson who would soon (in 1828) be elected the nation's seventh president. The improvement of the Great Wagon Road as the Valley Turnpike in the 1830s benefited the town, which served as a commercial, milling, and transportation center for the surrounding area. The arrival of the Manassas Gap Railroad in 1859 was another boon, especially since the town served as the line's southern terminus until 1868.¹

¹ Edwards, "Mount Jackson Historic District," 26-28. The 1939 building of Triplett High and Graded School is a contributing resource in the Mount Jackson Historic District, which was listed in the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places in 1993, although the ca. 1948 cafeteria is not, because it did not satisfy the age requirement at the time of listing. Also, the cafeteria is not enumerated as a separate resource in the nomination report inventory (p. 21). A number of individuals assisted with the preparation of the report, foremost among them the sponsor of the designation project, William Todd Holtzman with Triplett School LLC, and architect Ivan Huber. Others who assisted

Triplett High and Graded School
Name of Property

Shenandoah County, VA
County and State

Education was an important element of town life in the early days. A school serving the community of Mount Pleasant is said to have been in existence by 1804. In 1827 a “school house and meeting house” occupied the Union Church lot, the church building presumably serving both functions. According to one source the school was known at the Mount Jackson Union School. A “Mount Jackson High School” was in existence during the Civil War. A school for the community’s African American students was established by 1875 and a public school for white students was built on a lot acquired for the purpose in October 1877. The latter school, known as the Mount Jackson High and Graded School, was the direct precursor of Triplett High and Graded School. The building appears to be the one pictured opposite the title page of the 1905-07 biennial report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, which shows a “transportation wagon,” a horse-drawn version of a school bus, pulling up in front. The building survives today at 5790 Main Street outside the northern boundary of the Mount Jackson Historic District: a two-story brick building with ornate Italianate detail—suggesting it was built in the late 1870s or possibly the early 1880s—and a mix of twentieth- and twenty-first-century one-story additions on the front and sides. The 1930 Sanborn map shows it as the core of a car repair garage with a drive-through canopy on the front.²

The ca. 1880 building became obsolete as the twentieth century advanced. In May 1917 local businessman Dr. Joseph I. Triplett (1845-1930) donated land at the south end of town and \$25,000 for the construction of a new school which was to be named Triplett High and Vocational School in honor of the gift. In his 1993 National Register report for the Mount Jackson Historic District, architectural historian David Edwards described Triplett as “Mount Jackson’s most prominent citizen of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century” and devoted two paragraphs to Triplett’s commercial, industrial, and philanthropic enterprises in Mount Jackson and Shenandoah County. The school was to be built on what Sanborn maps show as a largely undeveloped site above a large mill on Mill Creek (which still stands). The land deed granted Triplett the right to erect a “handsome granite shaft or monument . . . to mark the Home Place of Dr. L. [Leonidas] Triplett and family.” The phrasing and map evidence suggest this residence stood at the site but was gone by the early twentieth century.³

included Kim Cassford, Director of Crew (Community Resources for Education and Wellness), Zach Hottel with the Shenandoah County Library, Courtney Thompson with the Library of Virginia, Cheryl Jett with the Shenandoah County Public Schools, Amy Green with Inboden Environmental Services, and Aubrey Von Lindern and Amanda Terrell with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources.

² Janney, “Brief History of Schools in Mt. Jackson,” *Reflections*, 53, 58; Burruss, “Mt. Jackson High & Graded School,” 2; *Shenandoah Herald*, December 6, 1918; “Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction,” Sanborn maps.

³ Burruss, “Mt. Jackson High & Graded School,” 2; Edwards, “Mount Jackson Historic District,” 29; Shenandoah County Deed Book 88, p. 287; Sanborn maps. A monument to the Triplett family does not appear to survive at the school site, if one was ever erected. In a 1925 reminiscence, historian John W. Wayland referred to the “old Triplett home” being on the “lot now occupied by the Triplett School,” with the implication the house was then gone. The Samuel Kingree harness and saddled shop may also have stood at the school site. Wayland noted that in the winter of 1892-93 he taught in “the old brick schoolhouse, now Hepner’s Garage” (*Shenandoah Herald*, October 9, 1925). In 1954 the ca. 1880 building was occupied by a John Deere dealership (*Northern Virginia Daily*, October 18, 1954).

Triplett High and Graded School
Name of Property

Shenandoah County, VA
County and State

The Woodstock-based *Shenandoah Herald* followed progress on the new school throughout 1917, reporting in its March 30 edition:

Dr. Triplett has voluntarily increased his subscription to the new High School to be erected this spring from \$300 to \$5,000. This will enable the building committee to erect a much finer building than they had anticipated. The building complete will cost about \$23,000. It has been named the Triplett High and Vocational School.

The May 24 *Edinburgh Sentinel and Valley Advertiser* reported in its Mount Jackson news column: "There is on exhibition in the show window of Everly's drug store a drawing of our new school building . . . The picture shows a beautiful building and if the house looks as well it will be a credit to the town and vicinity." In the "Bids Asked" section of the May 16, 1917, issue of the construction trade journal *Engineering & Contracting*, the following notice appears: "Mt. Jackson, Va.—Until 2 p.m., May 21, by W. H. Tysinger, for furnishing material and erecting Triplett high and vocational school." Bidding "proved to be unsatisfactory, the *Edinburgh Sentinel* noted on May 31, but despite this setback planning proceeded and on October 5 the *Shenandoah Herald* reported: "Work is in progress on the Triplett High and Vocational School and the building committee expect to have it ready for occupancy within the year."⁴

The *Shenandoah Herald* ran a lengthy report in its November 23, 1917, issue:

The brick for the new High School building have just been finished, and the Building Committee plans to speed up the work of building as rapidly as the weather conditions will permit. The excavation for the foundation will be done in a few days, and the construction will be started at once.

When completed this will be one of the best school buildings in this section of Virginia. With a frontage of ninety-nine feet, a depth of one hundred feet, and a maximum height of over fifty feet. It will present a massive and beautiful exterior appearance.

In the basement, which is almost entirely above the grade line, there will be two class rooms, boys' and girls' gymnasiums and toilet, furnace and boiler rooms, and several storage compartments. The first floor will contain four class rooms, an office, a library room, and a large auditorium, which will seat about 700 people. On the second floor will be six class rooms and two rest rooms.

The heating plant, which is already shipped, is one of the best on the market. The lighting plans are designed after the most modern specifications. The ventilating and sanitation systems are of the latest and most efficient type.

Throughout the plans of the building and its equipment every principle of school architecture has been incorporated to make this a thoroughly modern school plant.

⁴ *Shenandoah Herald*, March 30 and October 5, 1917; *Edinburgh Sentinel and Valley Advertiser*, May 24 and 31, 1917; *Engineering & Contracting*, May 16, 1917.

Triplett High and Graded School
Name of Property

Shenandoah County, VA
County and State

These newspaper accounts suggest construction began by the end of 1917, but after November 23 the papers are virtually silent on school-related news until the early 1920s. This coupled with the oft-repeated construction date of 1920 suggest work was halted. The nation's deepening involvement in World War I may explain the stoppage. The "vocational" part of the school's name reflected the influence of the 1917 Smith-Hughes Act which promoted vocational and agricultural instruction in the nation's schools. Mount Jackson's high school was the first in Shenandoah County to organize a vo-ag program, in 1919.⁵

The 1920 school served the community for five years until a fire thought to have started in an overheated corn germinator in the school's "agricultural laboratory" burned the building down on February 14, 1925. In response the community resolved to build a "better and a bigger" replacement. The Broadway Hardwood Company, based in adjacent Rockingham County, was the contractor for the replacement building, however the name of the architect has not been discovered. The new Triplett High and Vocational School, incorporating undamaged walls from the 1920 building, was ready for occupancy in the fall of 1925. "In no other way," wrote the *Shenandoah Herald* in its October 9, 1925, issue, "is the civic spirit of Mt. Jackson as well exemplified as in its splendid Triplett High and Vocational School, which will be opened on Monday. This modern building stands as a monument not only to the progressiveness of the community but it is a testimonial to the community's courage in rising superior to a disaster which would have blighted the growth of many towns."⁶

The construction of the 1920 and 1925 buildings occurred against a backdrop of school consolidation in Virginia. The late nineteenth century witnessed a proliferation of community-based public schools, the one-room schoolhouses of lore. Virginia educators of the early part of the succeeding century championed a different approach: fewer and larger "consolidated" schools. Rural schooling expert Joseph DuPuy Eggleston, president of Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College and Polytechnic Institute (today's Virginia Tech) in the 1910s, spoke for many when he argued that consolidation encouraged economies of scale, increased enrollment and attendance, and fostered an "atmosphere of social and intellectual stimulation and gregariousness." Another development of the era was greater standardization and professionalism in school design, the result of the state school authority offering standardized construction plans to localities. One reason for offering this service was to promote the adoption of "scientific" design features such as large classroom windows to provide ample natural illumination (artificial lighting was primitive before the widespread adoption of fluorescent lighting around 1940).⁷

In September 1938 the *Northern Virginia Daily* wrote that Triplett High and Vocational School opened with a record enrollment of 450 students. "Two buses daily carry students from nearby schools, which have been closed, to Mt. Jackson," the paper noted, pointing to consolidation as the cause of the enrollment surge, and added, "A mass meeting of citizens was held . . . at which

⁵ *Shenandoah Herald*, November 23, 1917, and February 17, 1925; *Echoes of Shenandoah*, 67.

⁶ *Greene County Record*, February 26, 1925; *Page News and Courier*, February 17, 1925; *Shenandoah Herald*, February 17, April 10, and October 9, 1925

⁷ Neville and Salmon, "Toms Brook School," 4; Link, *Hard Country and a Lonely Place*, 139.

Triplett High and Graded School
Name of Property

Shenandoah County, VA
County and State

time B. E. Nelson, school trustee, and J. W. Garber, supervisor, discussed the probability of the erection of an addition to the building in the near future.” The addition, built with federal Public Works Administration funds, as noted by the plaque inside the front entrance, featured classrooms for elementary school use and an auditorium/gymnasium for use by all grades. No architect’s name appears on the construction drawings, which are dated November 1938, but evidence points to Richmond architect Raymond V. Long as the creator or at least promulgator of the addition design. In 1938 Long represented the state in assisting with Shenandoah County school construction projects including the Triplett addition. Regarding the projects, on September 7, 1938, the *Northern Virginia Daily* reported, “the division superintendent of schools of Shenandoah County has procured and has in his possession certain plans prepared by the state architect for each of said buildings and additions,” a clear reference to Long’s role. The Wood Construction Company was the successful bidder for the addition. “The new building at Mt. Jackson,” read a December 7, 1938, news report, “which will be connected to the present plant by a corridor, will include an auditorium equipped with a stage, five class rooms, and locker rooms for boys and girls.” With the opening of the enlarged school in September 1939 a news report referred to it as the Triplett High and Graded School, but the name was first used in 1932, suggesting grade school students were housed in the 1925 building along with high school students for some time before the addition was made. The first newspaper references to a Triplett Graded School appeared in 1939.⁸

As the sole school serving the white population of Mount Jackson and much of the surrounding area, Triplett High and Graded School occupied an important place in the town and area’s educational history until 1959, when Stonewall Jackson High School opened in the Quicksburg vicinity. Triplett School also occupied a central place in the community’s social life. One indication of this was the annual Triplett School May Parade held in the 1940s. The 1947 event was esteemed the “longest and most colorful parade ever held by the Triplett School” up to that time. Hundreds turned out to watch the parade, which featured floats, the mayor and other notables riding in the town’s “Official Car, a 1917 Dodge,” bands, children on bicycles, goat and dog carts bearing more children, and marchers from various businesses and civic organizations. The parade concluded with May Day festivities on the school grounds with dances, presentations, and “Nursery Rhymes . . . portrayed by 1st. and 2nd. Grades.” Earlier, in 1943, the festivities included an “Allied Nations” pageant put on by the children. In the fall was the Annual Triplett School Fair and Horse Show. The 1948 fair included the presentation “Tom Thum Wedding” staged by the younger grades in the school auditorium. Professional entertainments held in the auditorium during the period included a play put on by the Abingdon,

⁸ *Northern Virginia Daily*, September 22, 1932, September 10 and December 7, 1938, and September 5, 1939. The plans for the Triplett addition, which included amended plans dated February 1939, do not name the architect but are identified by project number 9-R-12. According to architectural historians John Wells and Robert Dalton, Raymond Long was associated with the State Board of Education from 1923 to 1937, but newspaper accounts make it clear he continued in that capacity through at least 1938 (Wells and Dalton, *Virginia Architects*, 267). Some sources identify him as Supervisor of School Construction.

Triplett High and Graded School
Name of Property

Shenandoah County, VA
County and State

Virginia, Barter Theatre traveling troupe. Less enjoyable, at least for the community's youngest members, was an April 1948 preschool vaccination clinic held in the auditorium.⁹

The May parades and other activities continued into the 1950s. The Parent Teachers Association also utilized the school during the period, for example meeting in the auditorium in November 1951 and listening to an address by children's author Bernice Bryant. The most significant development of the 1940s-50s period in terms of the school's physical fabric was the construction of the cafeteria. Newspaper references to a "Triplett School Cafeteria" or "Triplett High School Cafeteria" first appear in January 1948. This accords with a general understanding that the building was built in or about 1948. Given the timing of the first newspaper references it may have been built in 1947 and placed in service in January 1948 after the Christmas holiday. As with the school's auditorium, the cafeteria was used for school-related and non-school-related functions in addition to its core function, for example a Junior Farmers meeting in 1948, a spring flower show in 1952, and a Mt. Jackson Community Band covered dish supper in 1953. The building was described as the "new Cafeteria of the Triplett School" in an April 1950 report on the annual banquet of the Future Homemakers and Future Farmers of America.¹⁰

By the mid-1950s overcrowding was once again mooted as an issue. In October 1954 a total of 813 students occupied the building's eighteen classrooms. Consequently, in the fall of 1959 the high school students were transferred to Stonewall Jackson High School in the Quicksburg vicinity of the county between Mount Jackson and New Market. The Triplett building was repurposed as Triplett Elementary School and was repurposed again, as Triplett Middle School, in the mid-1980s. School use ceased in 1993 and in 1994 the county board of supervisors granted the "Triplett Middle School property" to the Mount Jackson Fire Department, with the provision that the county parks and recreation department be allowed to use the gymnasium. The 1925 section was torn down and a fire house garage built in its place. The property is currently undergoing rehabilitation as the Mount Jackson Community Center, continuing an aspect of its use that has been part of its identity since the 1920s. Current plans are to upgrade the garage wing as a sports hall of Modernist appearance to clearly distinguish it from the historic construction.¹¹

⁹ *Northern Virginia Daily*, May 4, 1943, May 10, 1947, April 12 and September 18, 1948, May 6, 1949. It is unknown where Mount Jackson-area African American students attended high school during the 1939-59 period. One possibility is a high school located in one of the area's larger towns. Harrisonburg's Lucy F. Simms School accepted African American students from outside its Harrisonburg service area during the period (Kalbian and Peters, "Lucy F. Simms School," 9).

¹⁰ *Northern Virginia Daily*, January 30, 1948, April 3 and May 12, 1950, November 9, 1951, April 13 and May 15, 1952, November 30, 1953, and April 30, 1955. Prior to the construction of the cafeteria a lunchroom operated in the school basement (Janney, "Brief History," 2).

¹¹ *Northern Virginia Daily*, October 18, 1954, and May 22 and October 21, 1959; *Reflections*, 55; Shenandoah County Deed Book 708, p. 170. One possible indication of overcrowding in the 1950s is a newspaper reference to the Triplett School third grade occupying a Mount Jackson commercial building known as the Tisinger Building (*Northern Virginia Daily*, June 5, 1951). In 1938 state school architect Raymond V. Long acknowledged community center use of Virginia schools designed under his program (*Suffolk News-Herald*, May 6, 1938).

Triplett High and Graded School
Name of Property

Shenandoah County, VA
County and State

Criterion C Architecture Area of Significance

Triplett High and Graded School is architecturally significant as a well-preserved local representative of Colonial Revival school design from the first half of the twentieth century. Its predecessor, the ca. 1880 Mount Jackson High and Graded School, featured a bracketed cornice and segmental-arched entries and windows expressing the Italianate style, one of a number of style options available to local school authorities at the time. The Romanesque Revival, Queen Anne, and generalized Victorian styles were other options in the late nineteenth century and, to a lesser extent, the early twentieth century. This began to change at the very end of the nineteenth century. The 1893 World Columbian Exposition in Chicago resurrected classical architecture, which had declined in popularity after the Civil War, and trendsetting American architects of the era emulated the nation's colonial (and early national) architecture, which was largely classical in inspiration.

The classical tradition was especially strong in Virginia as a result of association with the house of luminaries like George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, the great Georgian-style James River plantation houses, and the restorations at Colonial Williamsburg beginning in the 1920s. Classicism was also intimately connected with education in the state, the prime example being Jefferson's buildings at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville and most subsequent construction on the campus. The university was specifically cited as a comparison for a high school building planned for Front Royal at the same time as the Triplett addition. According to an October 1938 news report, the portico-fronted Front Royal building "which in accordance with architect's designs will be of the Georgian type of architecture and similar to buildings on the University of Virginia campus." Other Virginia universities and colleges followed UVA's lead in the design of their campuses.¹²

In the early twentieth century, classicism was adopted by architects and educators as the preferred mode for Virginia's public schools, especially its high schools. An early example in the Valley of Virginia is the 1910 Ann Smith School in Lexington, fronted by a heavy Doric portico with smooth columns, triglyphs, and metopes. Indicative of its early date, the Lexington building has a front entry, transom, and sidelights in a large round-arched opening, a Romanesque Revival holdover. Another early classical high school is the 1909 Ashwood School in Bath County, which features a pedimented front pavilion but no portico. Ashwood School was designed by Richmond architect Charles M. Robinson (1867-1932), and though the school is believed to have been built with state funds matched by the county, it is unknown whether there was state input in the design. More likely, given the many classically-inspired Virginia school buildings Robinson designed over the course of his career, he helped instill the preference for classical and Colonial Revival school design, rather than the other way around.¹³

Closer geographically and temporally to Triplett High and Graded School is the 1935-36 Toms Brook School in Toms Brook, Shenandoah County, built to a design by Luray architect James

¹² *Northern Virginia Daily*, October 21, 1938; Wilson et al, *Buildings of Virginia*, 151-162.

¹³ Lyle and Simpson, *Architecture of Historic Lexington*, 88; Byrd, Johnson, and Von Lindern, "Ashwood School," 12-13; Sadler, McRae, and Witt, "Orange High School," 4-5.

Triplett High and Graded School

Name of Property

Shenandoah County, VA

County and State

Raymond Mims but reflecting the approach of the State Board of Education's School Building Service, created in 1920 to foster sound school planning in Virginia communities. Toms Brook School shares with the Triplett school a two-story height, brick construction, a Doric portico, a pedimented front entry surround, and large classroom windows, though its windows are wood sash rather than steel-frame. Also, the Toms Brook School's interiors are described as utilitarian, lacking the architectural embellishments present in the Triplett School.¹⁴

The 1939 Triplett High and Graded School design is so similar to the 1925 Triplett High and Vocational School design that it seems likely to reuse the earlier design with minor modifications. Reuse would have resulted in cost and time savings, a benefit during the cash-strapped years of the Great Depression. The 1939 building exists squarely in the tradition of Virginia classical/Colonial Revival school design of the pre-World War II era, but it ventures into a more Modernist aesthetic in two small ways. The header stack-bond brickwork on the south end references the Moderne style, an early Modernist style popular from the late 1930s to the late 1940s (dates that reflect its mainstream popularity, not necessarily its high-style application). Moderne brick buildings often feature stack-bond brickwork, executed in either all stretchers or all headers. Stack-bond brickwork was also popular in the more International Style-influenced Modernism that superseded the Moderne style in the 1950s. The other example is the Moderne styling of the drinking fountain that survives in the upstairs hallway. Its step-molded detail evokes the fluted, layered, and concentric forms common in Moderne architecture of the era. The stack-pane windows of the ca. 1948 cafeteria and the roughly contemporaneous hyphen addition are also Modernist. The 1939 Triplett High and Graded School was built at the end of the period of classical/Colonial Revival dominance in Virginia public school design. After World War II Virginia school boards fully embraced Modernist design, a preference that has persisted to the present.

¹⁴ Neville and Salmon, "Toms Brook School," 1, 5.

Triplett High and Graded School
Name of Property

Shenandoah County, VA
County and State

9. Major Bibliographical References

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Triplett High and Graded School
Name of Property

Shenandoah County, VA
County and State

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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 # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Triplett High and Graded School
Name of Property

Shenandoah County, VA
County and State

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
☐ Other State agency
☐ Federal agency
☐ Local government
☐ University
☐ Other

Name of repository: Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, Va.

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): VDHR File No. 265-0004-0122

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.532 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 38.743089 Longitude: -78.641932

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

The nominated area corresponds to the Shenandoah County, Virginia, tax parcels 091A1 A 259 and 091A1 A 259C.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary of the nominated area encompasses the two historic resources associated with the Triplett High and Graded School, the 1939 classroom/auditorium building and the ca. 1948 cafeteria.

Triplett High and Graded School
Name of Property

Shenandoah County, VA
County and State

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: J. Daniel Pezzoni
organization: Landmark Preservation Associates
street & number: 6 Houston Street
city or town: Lexington state: Virginia zip code: 24450
e-mail: gilespezzoni@rockbridge.net
telephone: (540) 464-5315
date: September 7, 2024

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Triplett High and Graded School

City or Vicinity: Mount Jackson

County: Shenandoah

State: Virginia

Photographer: J. Daniel Pezzoni

Date Photographed: August 2024

Triplett High and Graded School
Name of Property

Shenandoah County, VA
County and State

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 17.

Classroom/auditorium building front (west) elevation, view facing east.

2 of 17.

Classroom/auditorium building front (west) elevation with hyphen in foreground, view facing southeast.

3 of 17.

Classroom/auditorium building front (west) elevation with fire house addition in foreground, view facing southeast.

4 of 17.

Auditorium wing (left) and fire house addition (right), view facing west.

5 of 17.

Auditorium wing, view facing west.

6 of 17.

Cafeteria, view facing west.

7 of 17.

Cafeteria showing addition, view facing northwest.

8 of 17.

Classroom/auditorium building front (west) elevation front entry, view facing southeast.

9 of 17.

Front steps and retaining wall at sidewalk in front of building, view facing north.

10 of 17.

Classroom/auditorium building first-floor T-shaped hallway.

11 of 17.

Classroom/auditorium building first-floor classroom.

12 of 17.

Classroom/auditorium building first-floor classroom bookcase.

13 of 17.

Classroom/auditorium building auditorium/gymnasium.

Triplett High and Graded School

Name of Property

Shenandoah County, VA

County and State

14 of 17.

Classroom/auditorium building second-floor hallway.

15 of 17.

Classroom/auditorium building second-floor niche with drinking fountain.

16 of 17.

Cafeteria dining room.

17 of 17.

Setting of school (in right distance) showing contributing buildings in the Mount Jackson Historic District, view facing south.

Historic Images Log (see Continuation Sheet)

Figure 1. 1925 building (left) and 1939 building (right) as pictured on the endsheets of the 1959 *Omega* Triplett School yearbook, view facing south.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations 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.460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
Tier 2 – 120 hours
Tier 3 – 230 hours
Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Triplett High and Graded School

Name of Property

Shenandoah County, VA

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Documentation

Page 1



Figure 1: 1925 building (left) and 1939 building (right) as pictured on the endsheets of the 1959 *Omega* Triplett School yearbook, view facing south.

Triplett High and Graded School

6044 Main Street, Mount Jackson, Shenandoah County, Virginia

DHR ID# 265-0004-0122

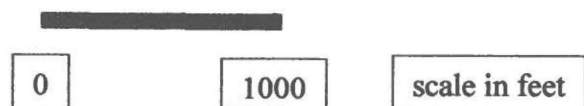
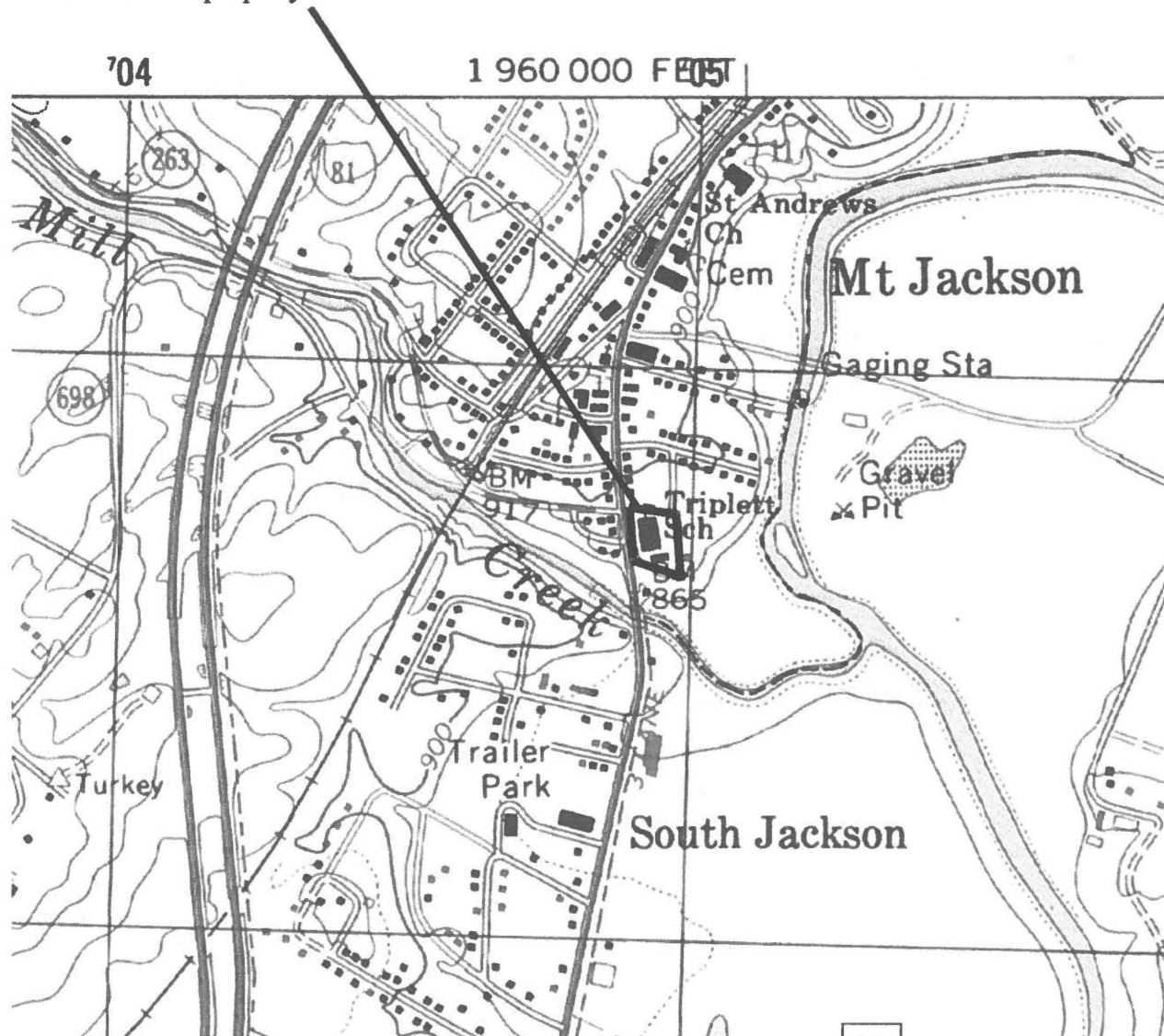
National Register of Historic Places Location Map

Latitude/longitude coordinates:

1. Latitude: 38.743089

Longitude: -78.641932

Location of NR property



Triplett High and Graded School

6044 Main Street, Mount Jackson, Shenandoah County, Virginia

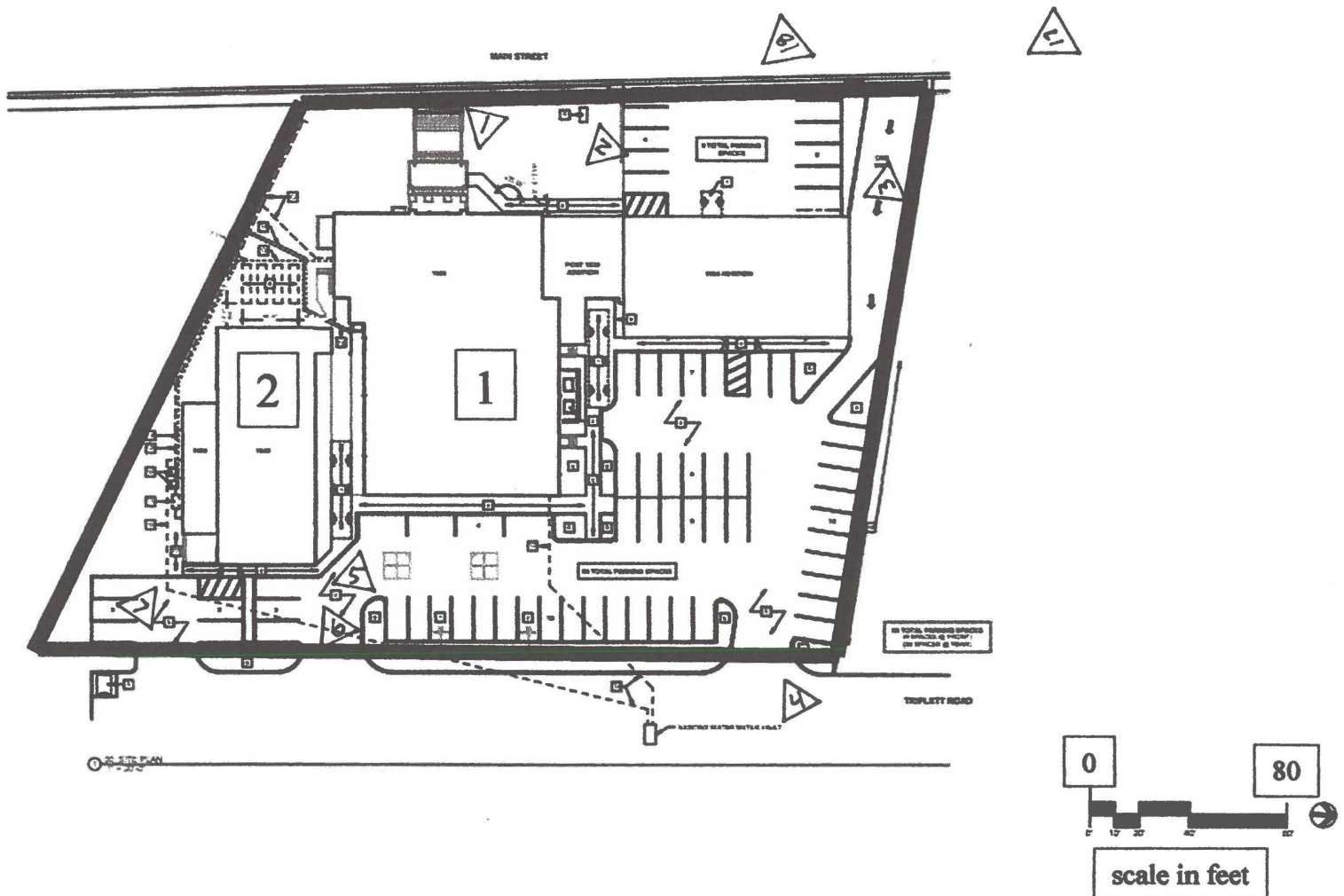
DHR ID# 265-0004-0122

National Register of Historic Places Boundary Map, Site Plan & Photo Key

Triangular markers indicate number and direction of view of nomination photos and are keyed to the photo log in the report. Building footprints are essentially current; parking spaces are proposed.

Inventory

1. Classroom/Auditorium Building. Contributing building.
2. Cafeteria. Contributing building.



Triplett High and Graded School

6044 Main Street, Mount Jackson, Shenandoah County, Virginia

DHR ID# 265-0004-0122

National Register of Historic Places Tax Parcel Map

Tax parcel map data obtained September 7, 2024, from Shenandoah Co., Va., GIS website:
Shenandoah Web LoGISTics (shenandoahgis.org)

