

RECEIVED

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ALABAMA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

JAN 23 2009

468 S. Perry Street
Montgomery, Alabama 36130-0900
(334) 242-3184 www.preserveala.org

Ala. Historical Commission

ALABAMA REGISTER OF LANDMARKS AND HERITAGE NOMINATION FORM

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY - DATE ADDED:

1. NAME

Historic: Thorsby Public School
and/or Common: old Elementary School

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: 95 Illinois Avenue
City, Town: Thorsby ---Vicinity of:
State: AL County: Chilton Zip: - 35171

3. CLASSIFICATION

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> District	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> Private	<input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Park
<input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> Site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious
<input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> In process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> Being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

Name: Town of Thorsby Telephone: (205) 676-3575
Street & Number: Highway 31, Town Hall, P.O. Box 608
City or Town: Thorsby State: AL Zip: - 35171
Email Address: _____

5. FLOOR PLAN & SITE PLAN

(Attach sketched floor plan and/or site plan.)

See Attached floor plan (Fig 1A & 1B)
And site plan (Fig 2)

6. DESCRIPTION

(See attached instructions for specific guidelines on completing the description.)

CONDITION

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Good | <input type="checkbox"/> Ruins |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair | <input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed |

CHECK ONE

- | |
|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered |

CHECK ONE

- | |
|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Moved Date Moved |

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE.

See Attached description.

Thorsby Elementary School Historic Registration Physical Description

DESCRIPTION OF PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The building is one story with a reinforced concrete foundation with a crawl space of about 3 feet over most of the building area. The foundation was originally equipped with cast iron grates for ventilation, however most have been destroyed. At the front entrance the floor is about 4 feet above the ground level. The building structure consists of tile and brick exterior load bearing walls in a decorative pattern. The interior walls, roof, and floor are wood frame construction.

The entrance to the building is an arch with decorative wooden brackets on each side. The building does not have any porches, only a covered entrance area about 6 feet deep by 8 feet wide beneath the entrance arch.

Architecturally the building consists of five bays across the front. These consist of four classrooms and a central entrance. Each classroom has five double hung 9 over 9 light windows centered in each bay, while the central bay consists of the previously mentioned arch with flanking double hung arched windows. The two end bays and the central bay are projecting and have gabled parapet walls. The north and south elevations of the structure are single bays. The south end containing 9 double hung 9 over 9 light windows and the north bay has 2 windows of the same design.

The roof is a combination of gable and hip wood frame construction. The roof is presently predominantly asphalt shingles, however significant portions of the original diamond shaped asbestos shingles remain. The roof overhang consists of exposed wood

Thorsby Elementary School Historic Registration Physical Description

rafter tails with beadboard decking. The roof edge has a plain flat fascia board. The front facing gables are hidden behind parapet walls. There are two main chimneys on the front slope of the roof made from clay tiles as used in the exterior walls.

The front doors are double out swinging 12 light over two horizontal wood panel. The entrance to the building consists of a protruding wooden arch which rests on wooden brackets. The remaining exterior doors are single and are plain in design.

The auditorium is a wing which projects to the east (rear) of the main building. The original windows in the auditorium were either removed or covered when the space was redone for a gymnasium. Therefore, the style and size will have to be determined from historical sources.

The only staircase in the building is a plain utility stairway to the basement.

There are no mantles in the building. The chimneys were originally utilized for coal stoves.

All original interior doors are frame and five horizontal panel wood doors with plain wood trim. The windows are trimmed in a similar plain style. One classroom contains high mounted transom windows on the hall side for ventilation.

Thorsby Elementary School Historic Registration Physical Description

The interior walls originally had pine beadboard running vertically as wainscoting beneath the chair rail and the same beadboard running horizontally above. The ceilings are the same beadboard where exposed. A significant portion of the interior has been covered with drywall. The interior surface of the exterior load bearing brick/tile walls is covered with plaster. All interior floors are 4 inch tongue and groove heart pine.

There is no notable hardware left except for some of the original chain hung schoolhouse light fixtures. None of the original heaters remain except for a later natural gas unit.

Building Additions

1. The original auditorium was converted to a gymnasium/basketball court by a local church after the building ceased to be a school. This included removing the original stage and converting that space into a large room. Later the building occupants built a kitchen in a corner of the gym floor. The remaining area of the gym is being used as a dining space.
2. Two classrooms had dropped ceilings installed and vinyl flooring was placed over the original wood floors.
3. Bathrooms were built on each side of the auditorium at some time in the 50s or 60s. The bathrooms are of concrete block construction.

Thorsby Elementary School Historic Registration Physical Description

General Setting

The main façade of the building faces west toward Illinois Avenue. The neighborhood is primarily residential with the First Baptist Church of Thorsby being diagonally to the southwest across the intersection of Illinois Avenue and Summit Street. On the west side is a vacant lot and to the north is a ball field and tennis/basketball courts. There are a few large oak trees on the property but no original landscaping remains. The Thorsby Senior Citizens Center is located directly south of the school building.

Outbuildings

The only other remaining building from the school was built circa 1940 and was utilized as a classroom and later as a lunchroom. (Originally the lunchroom was located in the basement of the main building.) The building is one story, wood frame construction, on brick piers about two feet tall. The building measures about 42 feet east-west and 36 feet north-south and has two main rooms consisting of a kitchen area on the eastern side and a classroom or dining area on the west. The building has two entrances, two doors on the west side under a small porch, and a single back door on the east side adjacent to Indiana Avenue. The building has five double hung nine over nine windows on the north and south sides, and four of the same size on the west side flanking the doors. The roof is hipped with open rafter tails. The exterior is covered with wood shiplap siding

7. SIGNIFICANCE

(See attached instructions for specific guidelines on completing the significance.)

PERIOD

- Prehistoric
- 1400-1499
- 1500-1599
- 1600-1699
- 1700-1799
- 1800-1899
- 1900-

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE-CHECK AND EXPLAIN BELOW

- archeology-prehistoric
- archeology-historic
- agriculture
- architecture
- art
- commerce
- communications

- community planning
- conservation
- education
- engineering
- exploration/settlement
- funerary art
- humanitarian

- industry
- landscape architecture
- law
- literature
- military
- music
- politics/government

- religion
- scientific
- sculpture
- social history
- theater
- other

SPECIFIC DATES: Built 1925
STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

BUILDER/ARCHITECT: _____

See Attached.

Builder/Architect

The only record available indicates that a Ernie H. Hansen was the Superintendent of construction. The same newspaper indicates that during construction the site was visited by a "state architect" by the name of Mr. Benze. No other records have been located naming the architect or builder. However this local newspaper, the Chilton County Union Banner, also indicated that the plans were supplied by the Alabama State Department of Education. Enclosed is a copy of a page, possibly from a State Department of Education publication, which illustrates a building of practically the same design. However, we have not been able to locate this publication or determine who the Architect of record was. It is interesting to note that just nine years earlier Frank Lockwood had designed several school buildings for the Department of Education and these are illustrated in the departments 1916 Bulletin 52, Rural Schoolhouses and Grounds. Therefore it may well be that Lockwood designed the school building at Thorsby. Unfortunately, we are unable to find solid evidence that this is true.

Statement of Significance

The town of Thorsby was founded in 1895 as the first planned community in Chilton County. The original planners were a group of people of Scandinavian origin who were seeking a more favorable climate to grow fruit and grapes for wine production. The original four founders of Thorsby were comprised of three men of Swedish decent, Theodore Thorsen, John Petersen, and John Hedberg, and one Norwegian man - K. G. Faegre. This group formed the Concordia Land and Improvement Association and began mapping out the new community as settlers of predominantly Scandinavian lineage began

to arrive. Parks were included in the new plan and residential plots were sold as "vineyards" with the intention of creating a thriving settlement with life based around farming and wine production. From the beginning the town emphasized education as the first grammar school was built in 1896. In the year 1906 a group founded the Thorsby Institute, a private school which continued to offer a high standard of preparatory education until it closed in 1957. In the 1920s, as the town continued to grow, the citizens of the town began to work to build a public school for the general population. This school building was the result of those efforts. The construction of the school was financed by a community fund raising effort of \$3,000 and by the State and County Boards of Education who provided \$8,500.

The school was opened in 1925 and served as an elementary or grammar school until 1974. During this time it was a center of community activity as the auditorium was for years the largest venue in town and also served as a gymnasium in later years. The most significant institutions in small towns are churches and public schools. In 2006, the Chilton County Board of Education razed the last original building from the Thorsby Institute campus. This building is an irreplaceable reminder of the importance that this community has placed on education for the last 100 years. In the larger context of the State of Alabama, this building is significant for its representation of the commitment of the state to the improvement of education.

8. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Chilton County Union-Banner Newspaper - 1925
"Rural Schoolhouses and Grounds", State Department of Education,
Bulletin 52, 1916.

Interviews with older local residents - 2008.

9. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of nominated property: 3.4± ACRES

Quadrangle name: JAMISON EAST

Enclose map showing location of property. (city or county map, state highway department map, or USGS map) *See Figure 4*

If the property includes more than one building, submit a small sketch map showing the locations and relationships of the buildings. *See Figure 2*

10. FORM PREPARED BY

Name/title: Thomas B. Huett, Secretary

Organization: Thorsby Historic Preservation Comte.

Date: 1-11-09

Street & Number: 9186 Jones Street

Telephone: (205) 646-4101

City or Town: Thorsby

State: AL Zip: - 35121

Email Address: thruett007@centurytel.net

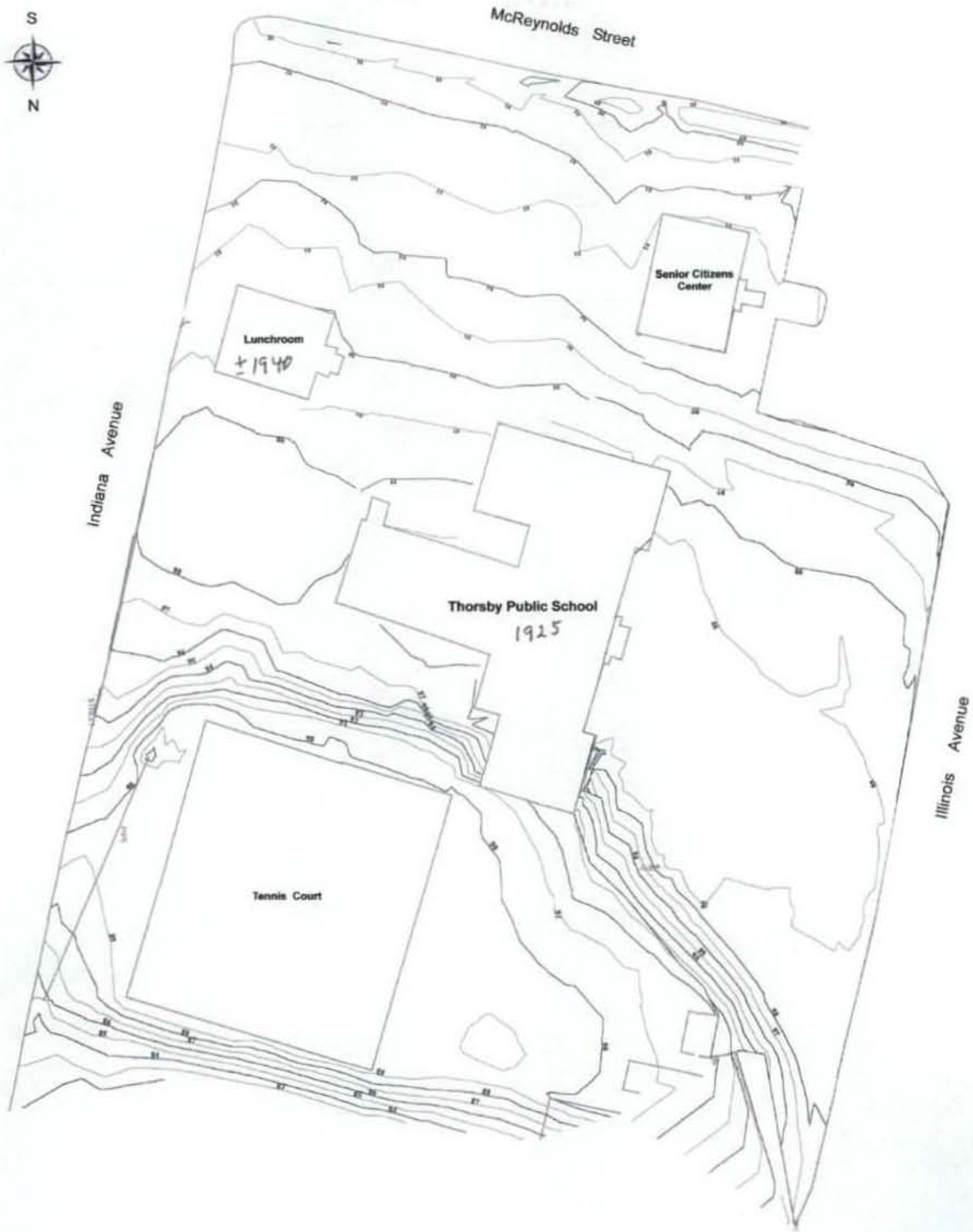
11. PLEASE SUBMIT COLOR IMAGES OF THE PROPERTY WITH THIS FORM:

Images are essential to the review process. They can be 4x6 color prints or digital images on a CD. Please see the "Instructions for Completing an AR Form" for more details on images or contact the AHC at 334.230.2687.

See Attached CD

12. PLEASE RETURN NOMINATION FORM AND DOCUMENTATION TO:

ALABAMA REGISTER COORDINATOR
ALABAMA HISTORICAL COMMISSION
468 SOUTH PERRY STREET
MONTGOMERY, AL 36130-0900



SCALE



File Name
TSSETUP3(VER1
UPDATE).xml
Drawing Name
06/13/2008 03:28

Map provided by:



Natural Resources Conservation Service

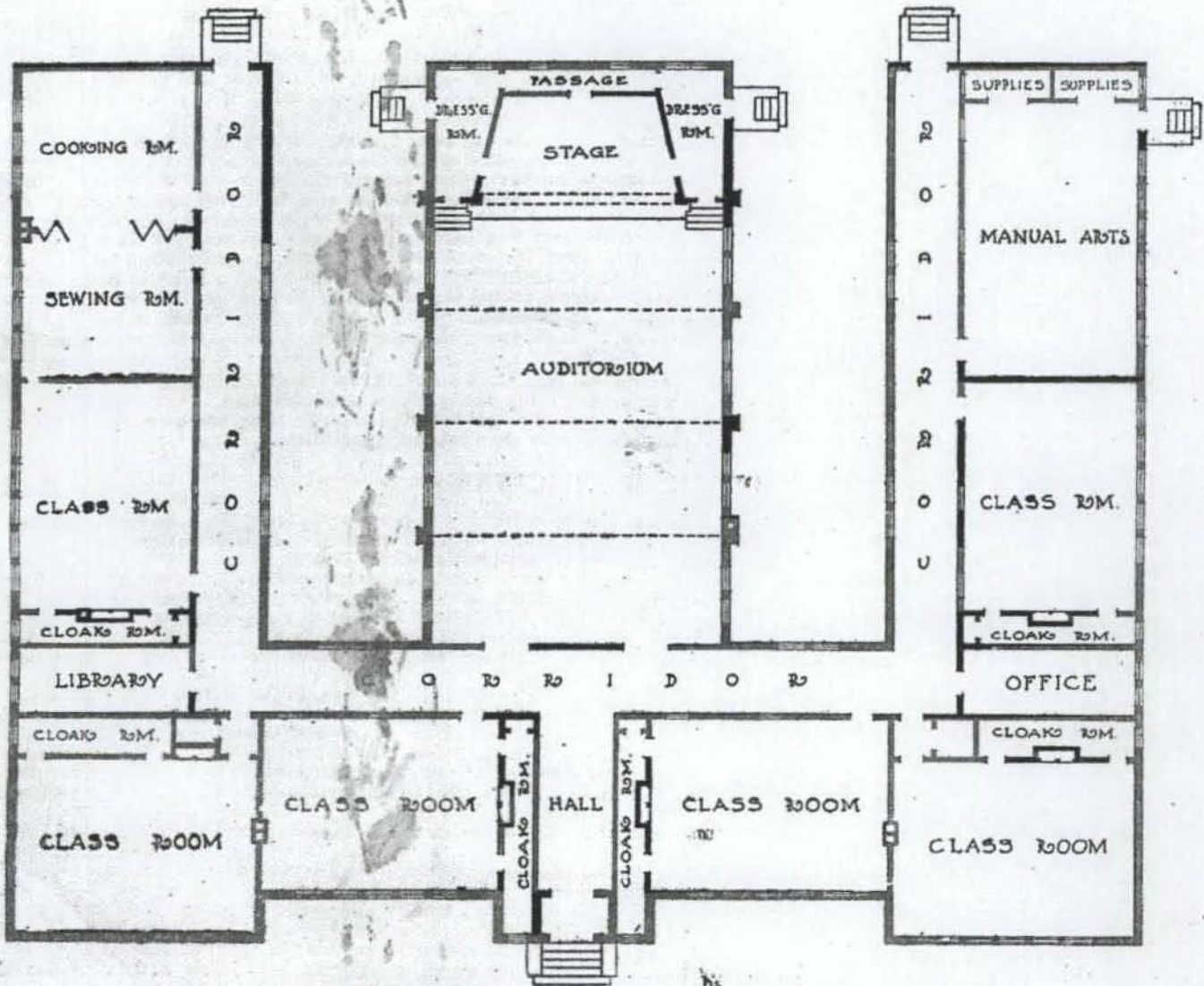
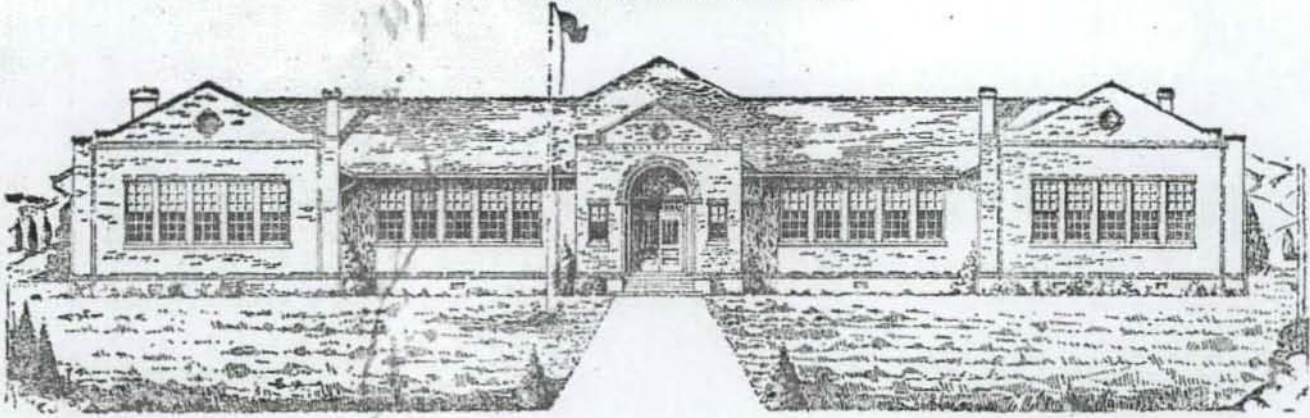
**Thorsby Public School
(Old Elementary School)
Site Plan**

Figure 2

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

STATE OF ALABAMA

DIVISION OF RURAL SCHOOLS



6-1-B—BRICK SCHOOL BUILDING, FRONTING EAST OR WEST.

Original State Plan.

Figure-3

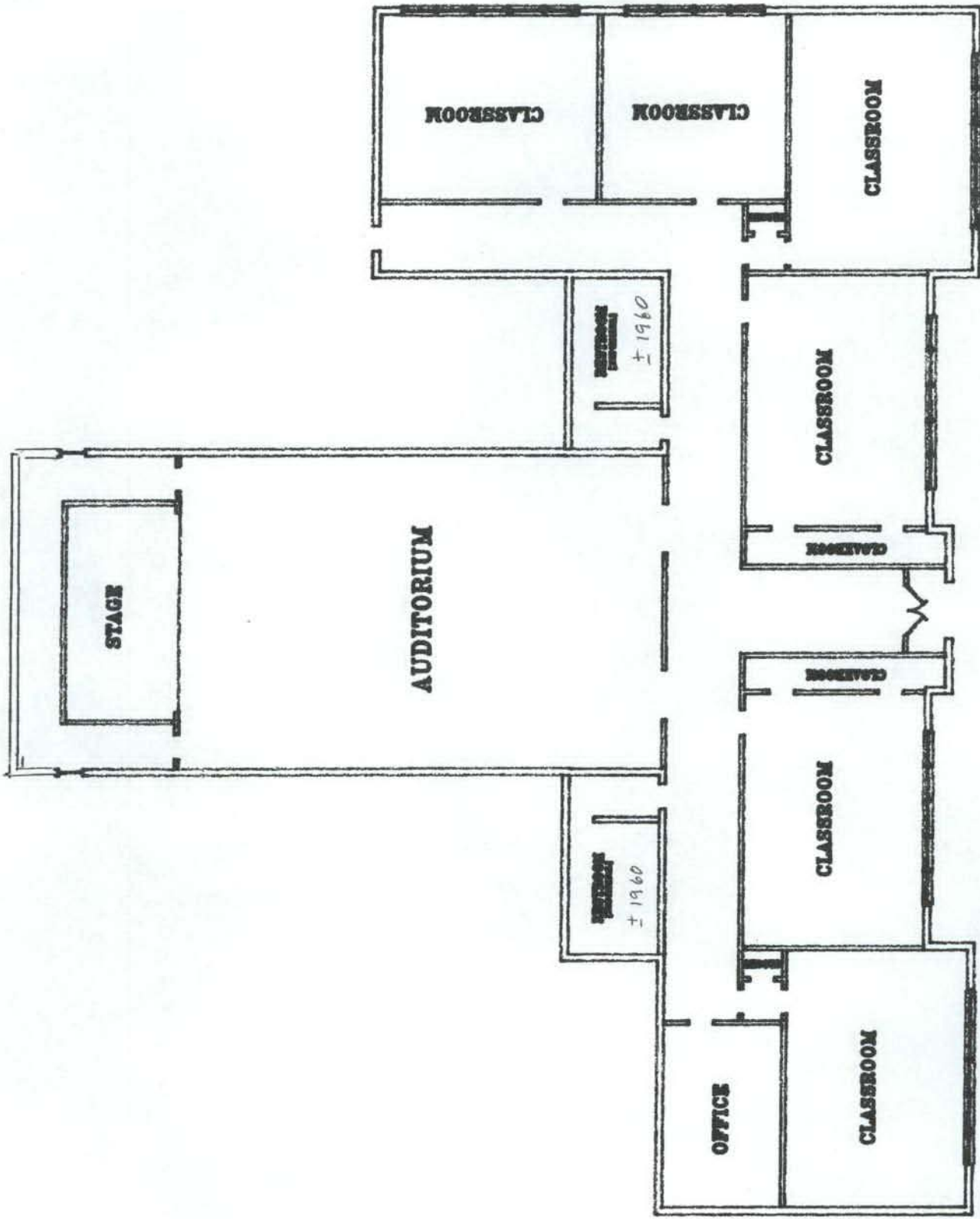


Figure 1-A

Building Plan - 1925
 (See Also Figure 1-B)



Thorsby Public School - 1925

Property Location

Figure 4

Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage



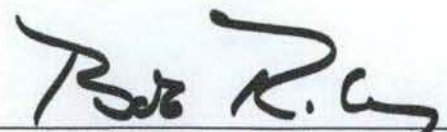
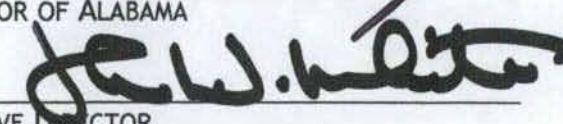
THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT

THORSBY PUBLIC SCHOOL

LOCATED IN CHILTON COUNTY WAS LISTED ON

MAY 28, 2009

preserve **ALA**
ALABAMA HISTORICAL COMMISSION


GOVERNOR OF ALABAMA

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
ALABAMA HISTORICAL COMMISSION