



PRELIMINARY INFORMATION FORM (PIF) for INDIVIDUAL PROPERTIES

Note: PIFs are prepared by applicants and evaluated by DHR staff and the State Review Board based on information known at the time of preparation. Recommendations concerning PIFs are subject to change if new information becomes available.

DHR No. (to be completed by DHR staff) 103-5194

1. General Property Information

Property name: Parry McCluer High School

Property address: 2329 Chestnut Avenue

City or Town: Buena Vista

Zip code: 24416

Name of the Independent City or County where the property is located: Buena Vista

Category of Property (choose only one of the following):

Building X Site _____ Structure _____ Object _____

2. Physical Aspects

Acreage: approximately 5.5 acres

Setting (choose only one of the following):

Urban X Suburban _____ Town _____ Village _____ Hamlet _____ Rural _____

Briefly describe the property's overall location and setting, including any notable landscape features:

The school occupies the east side of school grounds formed by the merger of two Buena Vista city blocks. The school is surrounded by historic-period residential development with the Southern Virginia University campus a short distance to the north. Magnolia Avenue, Buena Vista's main historic commercial thoroughfare, bounds the property on the west side. Mature trees shade much of the narrow lawn area in front of the school.

3. Architectural Description

Architectural Style(s): Classical Revival; Modernist

If the property was designed by an architect, landscape architect, engineer, or other professional, please list here: Raymond V. Long; Clarence Henry Hinnant (Hinnant & Wickline)

If the builder is known, please list here: Charles W. Barger and Son; W. L. English Construction Company

Date of construction (can be approximate): 1923-24; 1947-48; 1955

Narrative Description (Please do not exceed one page in describing the property):

Briefly describe the property's general characteristics, such as its current use (and historic use if different), as well as the primary building or structure on the property (such as a house, store, mill, factory, depot, bridge, etc.). Include the materials and method(s) of construction, physical appearance and condition (exterior and interior), and any additions or other major alterations.

The former Parry McCluer High School is a 1923-24 Classical Revival brick building with 1947-48 Classical Revival and 1955 Modernist additions. The east-facing, one- and two-story building has a parapet flat roof except over the auditorium where the roof is hipped. The 1923-24 section has classrooms across the front and four perpendicular classroom wings extending to the rear (west side), the two center wings bracketing an auditorium beside which rises a tall boiler flue. The building is constructed in 1:4 common bond and has reinforcing piers with stone or cast-stone capitals, an outward-stepped soldier course at the upper-floor floor level, and stepped parapets with diamond-shaped accents. On the front elevation is a Doric colonnade with a recessed entry façade behind. Two other front entries have shallow Doric porches. Banks of large classroom windows retain steel-framed sashes. The 1947-48 addition has 1:5 common-bond brickwork and a library with large round-arched windows and an angled corner entry with a round-arched fanlight framed by a pedimented Doric frontispiece. The 1955 Modernist addition, also 1:5 common bond, has a gymnasium with pier-wall side walls and square-headed doors and windows, the latter with stack-pane sashes.

The 1923-24 section hallways have beaded tongue-and-groove wainscots, high drop ceilings, and original stack-panel doors to classrooms and other spaces surmounted by multipane transoms. The auditorium, which has had its west-facing windows mostly infilled, retains a stage with a fluted proscenium arch surround. The 1947-48 addition has tall hallway wainscots of glazed tile block, wood and glass panel classroom doors with multipane transoms, and recessed drinking fountain niches, the one near the library round-arched with a keystone. The library ceiling preserves the original acoustic tiles and it and classrooms have Moderne fluorescent light attachments. The original and addition classrooms have coat and storage closets, paneled or glazed. The 1955 addition gym has steel roof trusses, its woodshop also has a steel-truss roof structure (plus skylights), and some classrooms have birch plywood doors.

In a bullet list, include any outbuildings or secondary resources or major landscape features (such as barns, sheds, dam and mill pond, storage tanks, scales, railroad spurs, etc.), including their condition and their estimated construction dates.

- Louis V. Schreiner Field: The large athletic grounds west of and downslope from the school. The field is enclosed by a tall 1939 concrete-block wall with a poured-concrete foundation and angled copings. Structures inside the field include:
 - A historic-period brick and steel pole backstop (missing its mesh).
 - A non-historic tall open-fronted cinder-block shelter (possibly one end of a batter's cage).
 - A non-historic metal shed.
- Between two of the rear school wings is a non-historic picnic shelter.
- Along the 23rd Street sidewalk is a decorative stone border.

4. Property's History and Significance (Please do not exceed one page)

Briefly explain the property's historic importance, such as significant events, persons, and/or families associated with the property. If the property is important for its architecture, engineering, landscape architecture, or other aspects of design, please include a brief explanation of this aspect.

Draft Statement of Significance Summary

Parry McCluer High School (former) in Buena Vista, Virginia, provided high school education to the city's white students from its opening in 1924 and for all the city's high school-aged students after integration in the 1960s. The Classical Revival brick building features a Doric portico, decorative brickwork, and original steel-framed windows. The library with its round-arched windows and corner entry was added in 1947-48 and a gymnasium and industrial arts wing was added in 1955. The school library also served as the Buena Vista Public Library until about 1970. The athletic field behind the building is enclosed by a high concrete block wall constructed by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in 1939. The high school building has been used as the Parry McCluer Middle School and for school board offices after the current Parry McCluer High School opened in 2001. Parry McCluer High School (former) is potentially eligible under Criterion A in the Education area of significance as a key public school facility for the City of Buena Vista and secondarily as the home of the Buena Vista Public Library. The property is potentially eligible under Criterion C in the Architecture area of significance as a well-preserved example of Classical Revival design in the city, the work of architects Raymond V. Long (1923-24 building) and Clarence Henry Hinnant (1947-48 addition). The proposed period of significance extends from the year the school opened in 1924 until the end of the historic period in 1975. Parry McCluer High School (former) is potentially eligible at the local level of significance.

Historic Context

Public schooling in Buena Vista developed around the time of the city's boom in the late 1880s. A brick school was built for the city's white children on the present school grounds in 1891. Buena Vista's black children attended the Buena Vista Colored School, initially in a frame building built in 1891 and later in a brick building (which survives) built ca. 1915 and enlarged in 1926. By the 1920s a new facility for white students was deemed essential. Bond referendums in 1921 and 1922 secured funding and architect Raymond V. Long submitted plans in March 1923. A "picture of the building" was displayed in a downtown shopwindow. The cornerstone was placed on July 4, 1923, and in late 1923 the school was named Parry McCluer High School after long time Buena Vista educator and city school superintendent John Parry McCluer (1849-1924), though originally the building housed all grades. Students moved into the building in early 1924. Historian Francis Lynn, a Parry McCluer alumnus, writes about the students' delight in their new modern quarters:

There was going to be *indoor* plumbing! That meant water fountains and no more everyone drinking from a common bucket from a common dipper! And most of all, it meant no more bundling up to run outside to "be excused!"¹

Students assisted with tree planting and landscaping in March 1924. A negative aspect of the school's opening year was the realization that the building cost more than planned. Students were charged a \$20 yearly tuition to pay off the building, a measure that remained in place until 1930.

A baseball field existed on the public school grounds in 1922 when an athletic association was formed to improve sporting facilities. In 1939 "The City Council agreed to borrow \$3,500 . . . for the erection of a

¹ Buena Vista's original African American public school did not have indoor plumbing at the date of its closing in 1957 and electric lights were not added until 1937 (Lynn, *Fesser's McCluer*, 73).

concrete block fence around the Parry McCluer Athletic grounds.” According to a period report: “The wall will be of concrete blocks, to be manufactured by WPA [Works Progress Administration] labor here in the city, and will be eight feet high and extend entirely around the athletic field, joining the rear of the school building on each side.” In May 1940 the *Lexington Gazette* reported city council approval for the “installation of lights at the new grandstand on the athletic grounds.” The shed-roofed grandstand, which no longer survives, stood against the west wall of the athletic grounds.

In March 1947 construction began on a new library and classroom wing which was completed in 1948. The library’s ceiling was described as “acoustically treated” (it retains its original acoustic tiles) and “well lighted with the latest fluorescent fixtures.” The library also served as the Buena Vista Public Library from its opening until the library moved to its current quarters in the Buena Vista Company Building ca. 1970. The library and classroom addition was designed by architect C. H. Hinnant and built by Charles W. Barger and Son general contractors (a bronze plaque identifies the architect as Hinnant & Wickline). On September 1, 1955, the *Buena Vista News* ran an aerial photo of a completed gymnasium and shop addition, which was built by the W. L. English Construction Company of Rocky Mount for \$500,000.

Historian Charles Bodie writes that the integration of Buena Vista’s public schools began in 1962 and was completed by 1965. The 1964 *Parrimac* yearbook shows an African American eighth grade student but no African American high school students. The 1966 yearbook shows African American students in the classes of 1969 and 1970. In 1963 Enderly Heights Elementary School opened and presumably some elementary students transferred from the high school to the new building, though the Parry McCluer building still housed an elementary department that year (F. W. Kling Jr. Elementary School opened in 1976, after the period of significance). The high school program moved to the current Parry McCluer High School in 2001. Since then, the Parry McCluer Middle School and school board offices have occupied the building.

Please list all sources of information used to research the history of the property, such as deeds, census and tax records, and/or published articles and books. (It is not necessary to attach lengthy articles or family genealogies to this form.)

Bodie, Charles A. *Remarkable Rockbridge: The Story of Rockbridge County, Virginia*.
Lexington, Va.: Rockbridge Historical Society, 2011.

Buena Vista deed records. Buena Vista City Hall, Buena Vista, Va.

Buena Vista News (Buena Vista, Va.).

Lynn, Francis W. “Fesser” McCluer: *The Life and Times of J. Parry McCluer*. Buena Vista,
Va.: Paxton House Historical Society, 2001.

_____. “The Great Depression Visits Buena Vista: Part Two: FDR’s Second New Deal
(1934-36) . . . and Beyond.” 2010.

Lynn, Francis W., ed. *Buena Vista: The Bud Not Yet Blossomed*. Lexington, Va.:
News-Gazette, 1992.

“Map of Buena Vista, Rockbridge County, Virginia,” June 1892.

Morton, Oren F. *A History of Rockbridge County, Virginia*. Staunton, Va.: McClure
Company, 1920.

News-Gazette (Lexington, Va.; September 20, 2023, issue)

Parry McCluer High School yearbooks (various names until 1946 when *The Parrimac*
was adopted).

“Perspective Map of Buena Vista, Va. 1891.” Library of Congress website
(<https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3884b.pm009530/>).

Pezzoni, J. Daniel. “Buena Vista Downtown Historic District.” National Register of Historic
Places Registration Form, 2009.

_____. *The Architecture of Historic Rockbridge*. Lexington, Va.: Historic Lexington
Foundation, 2015.

Rockbridge County News (Lexington, Va.).

Sanborn maps of Buena Vista, 1921.

Spectrum Design. “Program Report: Parry McCluer Middle School.” 2008.

Wells, John E., and Robert E. Dalton. *The Virginia Architects, 1835-1955*. Richmond, Va.:
New South Architectural Press, 1997.

5. Property Ownership (Check as many categories as apply):

Private: _____ Public\Local ☒ Public\State _____ Public\Federal _____

Current Legal Owner(s) of the Property (If the property has more than one owner, please list each below or on an additional sheet.)

name/title: JASON TYREE, CITY MANAGER

organization: CITY OF BUENA VISTA

street & number: 2039 SYCAMORE AVE

city or town: BUENA VISTA state: VA zip code: 24416

e-mail: TROBERTS@BVCITY.ORG telephone: (540) 261-8607

Legal Owner's Signature: _____

Date: 3/6/2025

• • *Signature required for processing all applications.* • •

In the event of corporate ownership you must provide the name and title of the appropriate contact person.

Contact person: Tom Roberts, Director of Community Development

Daytime Telephone: (540) 261-8607

Applicant Information (Individual completing form if other than legal owner of property)

name/title: J. Daniel Pezzoni

organization: Landmark Preservation Associates

street & number: 6 Houston St.

city or town: Lexington state: Virginia zip code: 24450


e-mail: gilespezzoni@rockbridge.net telephone: (540) 464-5315


Date: March 4, 2025

PLEASE DO NOT ATTACH CONTINUATION SHEETS TO THIS FORM. THANK YOU!

PIF BOUNDARY MAP

Parry McCluer High School
City of Buena Vista, VA
DHR ID# 103-5194


 Proposed Boundary

0 100 200 300
 Feet



PIF AERIAL-VICINITY MAP

Parry McCluer High School
City of Buena Vista, VA
DHR ID# 103-5194

 Proposed Boundary

0 300 600 900 Feet



Buena Vista Downtown Historic District
VLR, NRHP 2009
DHR ID# 103-5055

Virginia Geographic Information Network (VGIN), VITA, Esri, HERE, Garmin, INCREMENT P, Intermap,
NGA, USGS





















Louis V. Schreiner
Field

NO DOGS
ALLOWED

NO PERSONS
AND VEHICLES
ALLOWED
EXCEPT BY
PERMISSION











Rooms 152, 153, 154
Art Room
Civics (on the inside front)
Music
To Downstairs →







MUSIC









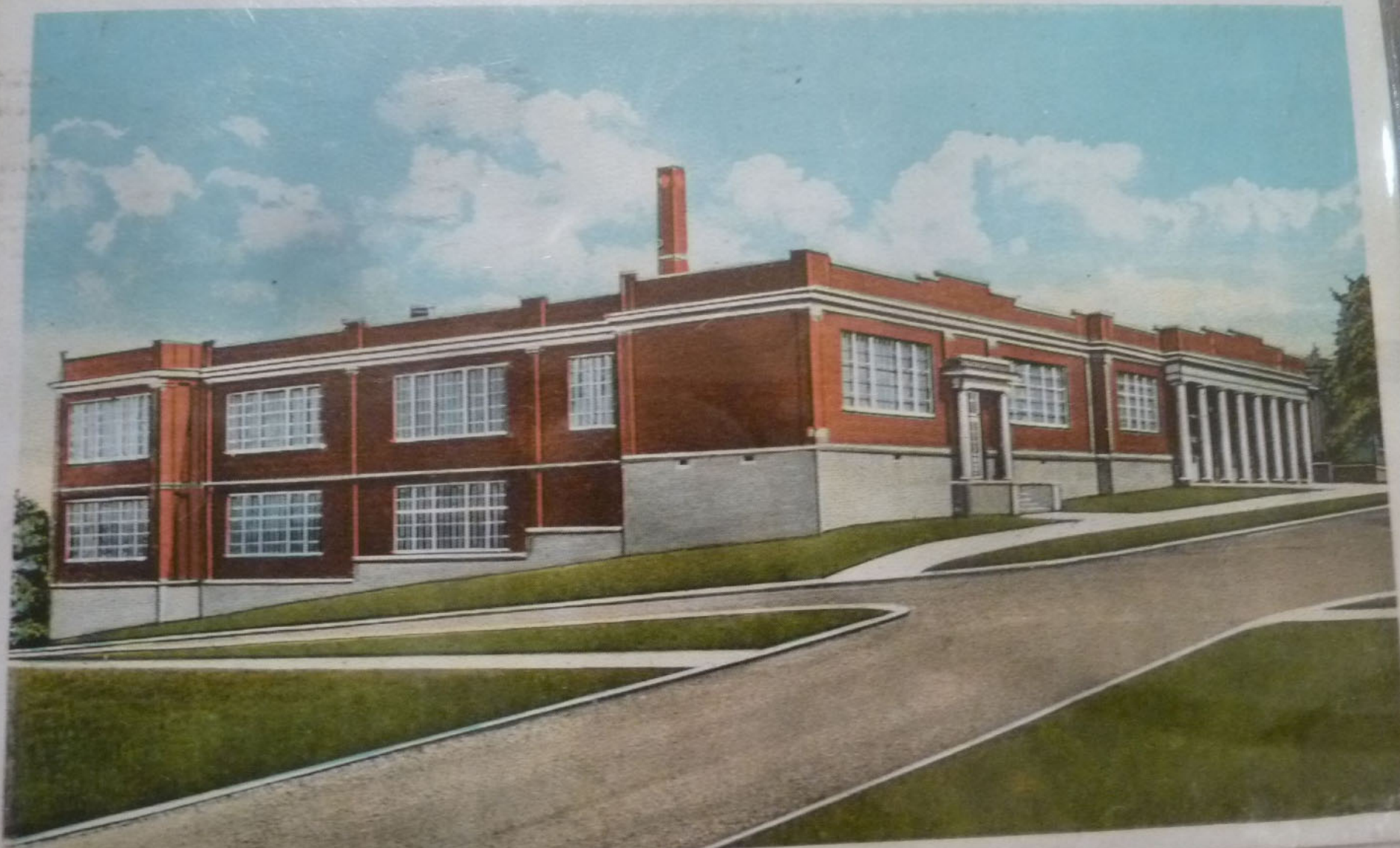












PARRY McCLUER HIGH SCHOOL, BUENA VISTA, VA.

Parry McCluer 19

