

## SUMMARY OF PROPOSED NATIONAL REGISTER/GEORGIA REGISTER NOMINATION

1. Name: Buford Public School Auditorium.

2. Location: 4975 Little Mill Road, Buford, Gwinnett County, Georgia 30518.  
*USGS Quadrangle: Suwanee, Ga.*

3a. Description: The Buford Public School Auditorium was built at the head of Church Street (now called Little Mill Road) in Buford, a small industrial town laid out along the Southern Railway line in northern Gwinnett County, 35 miles northeast of Atlanta. Built in 1926, the auditorium is a two-story brick building with a Renaissance Revival-style arcaded entrance. The sides are lined with tall, arched windows. The interior, which retains elements of the most significant spaces, was altered when the building was converted to office, manufacturing, and storage beginning in 1956. The seats were removed from the auditorium, which was shortened to create a row of offices. A wall was built across the stage within the proscenium arch. A kitchen was built in the area that served as the projection booth. The auditorium is the only surviving building associated with Church Street school complex.

3b. Period of Significance: 1926-1956.

3c. Acreage: 0.51 acres.

3d. Boundary Explanation: The boundary includes the small parcel associated with the auditorium.

4a. National Register Criteria: A and C

4b. National Register Areas of Significance: Architecture, Education, and Entertainment/Recreation.

4c. Statement of Significance: Buford is a small industrial town that was laid out in a gridiron plan along the Southern Railway line that runs through the center of town. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Allen family owned substantial real estate holdings and a number of manufacturing plants in Buford. As the tannery, saddle and harness factory, and shoe and horse collar factory prospered so did the town and its residents. In 1905, Buford residents approved a bond issue for a new school for \$4,000, a water works for \$6,000, and \$10,000 for an electrical system. The two-story, brick Buford Public School, completed in 1908, served as the grammar school and high school until 1922, when a two-story brick high school building was built adjacent to the grammar school. A 65,000-gallon elevated water tank was also located on the school grounds.

In 1926, the Buford Board of Education directed the construction of a large, two-story brick auditorium adjacent to the grammar school. The auditorium hosted school events, such as plays and assemblies, and community events that included public meetings, political rallies, and dramatic performances and musicals. A production of "Once in a Blue Moon" included a cast of 150 on the expansive stage. In 1946, a portion of the auditorium was converted for use as an undersized basketball court. Between 1950 and 1955, a new elementary school, high school, and gymnasium were built on Hill Street in Buford and the Church Street school buildings and auditorium were sold to the public. Since 1956, the auditorium, the only surviving building in the complex, served as office, manufacturing, and storage space.

The Buford Public School Auditorium is significant in the area of education and entertainment/recreation because the auditorium was integral to the education of Buford students for nearly 30 years and because the auditorium was used for community functions through the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As the largest interior space in town, the auditorium served Buford residents as a venue for community meetings, political rallies, dramatic performances, and musical productions. The Buford Public School Auditorium is significant in the area of architecture because it is a good representative example of an auditorium that includes the auditorium space, elevated stage, restrooms, ticket window, loggia, and a Renaissance Revival-style arcaded entrance.

4d. Suggested Level of Significance: The Buford School Auditorium is significant at the local level because it is significant as the surviving historic school building and a place for municipal events.

5. Sponsor: The nomination is sponsored by the property owners, who also prepared the nomination materials.