

**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 Property**Historic name: Lincoln High SchoolOther names/site number: Council Street Campus of Sumter High School, Lincoln Building; Trinity Lincoln CenterName of related multiple property listing: N/A

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

**2. Location**Street & number: 20-26 Council StreetCity or town: Sumter State: SC County: SumterNot For Publication: ☐Vicinity: ☐**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      C      D

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Signature of certifying official/Title:

Date

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State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

Lincoln High School  
Name of Property

Sumter, SC  
County and State

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting official:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title :

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency/bureau  
or Tribal Government

#### 4. National Park Service Certification

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 ☐

Lincoln High School  
Name of Property

Sumter, SC  
County and State

Structure

☐

Object

☐

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing

1

Noncontributing

1

buildings

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

sites

\_\_\_\_\_

1

structures

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

objects

1

2

Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Education/School

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Social /Meeting Hall

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Lincoln High School  
Name of Property

Sumter, SC  
County and State

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT

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**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Concrete, Brick, Glass

### 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.)

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#### Summary Paragraph

Lincoln High School, located at 20 Council Street, in the city of Sumter, South Carolina, was established in the 1930s as the high school for African American students in the city of Sumter, South Carolina. The building occupies the former site of a schoolhouse for African American students dating from 1874, which was also referred to as "Lincoln School."<sup>1</sup> The core of the high school building that remains today was constructed in 1937 in a modern-style. It was later expanded in 1952 with the addition of two large wings. The south wing housed primarily classroom space along with a cafeteria and library, while the north wing included a gymnasium. These additions were also constructed in the modern style. The building and grounds retain their historic character. Though a significant alteration was made to the building circa 1967, when a two-story white stucco façade that offers the appearance of columns was added to the main entrance of the building, this change was made during the period when Lincoln High School remained a segregated school for African American students. The form of the building therefore retains integrity from, and continues to convey the history of, segregated education in Sumter County.

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<sup>1</sup> Ruth J. Edens, "A History of Secondary Education in the City of Sumter, South Carolina" (unpublished manuscript, April 2, 1981), 97-98.

Lincoln High School  
Name of Property

Sumter, SC  
County and State

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## Narrative Description

### Contributing

#### **1) Lincoln High School Building (Constructed in 1937; expanded 1952; façade altered 1967)**

Lincoln High School is a 1937 modern-style building which was expanded in 1952 with the addition of a classroom wing, cafeteria, and gymnasium, also constructed in the modern style. The property stands in downtown Sumter surrounded by a central business district and a historic African American neighborhood locally known as the Oakland Avenue Neighborhood. The neighborhood has always been self-sustaining and was home to African American lawyers, doctors, educators, and small business owners. The school is a two-story building that occupies a roughly twelve-acre tract of land on the west side of Council Street between West Liberty and West Bartlette Streets. The tract consists of the high school building that faces east onto Council Street and includes a gymnasium sited to the north of the original building; and a cafeteria, library, and science wing sited to the south of the building. There are also former recess yards/grounds and bus parking areas that occupy the western portion of the property. The property is flanked on the north and south by two historic churches whose congregations date to 1827 and 1869. The school building fronts east onto Council Street and faces a parking lot that is a part of the school property. The surrounding streets are characterized by banks, the local hospital, businesses, and one- and two-story dwellings constructed in the nineteenth century and extensively renovated in the twentieth century.

The school's principal façade is set back approximately seventy-five feet from the street and has a sizable front lawn with a wide semi-circular walkway that directs pedestrians to the central porch steps and entrance. The school flagpole sits in the center of the lawn between two concrete benches. The general characteristic of the core of the building, which was constructed in 1937, is that of a rectangular main block, brick veneer, bond patterned, T-shaped building with a hip and gable roof which was originally flat. The historic appearance of the building reflects the 1937 construction as well as a major addition that occurred in 1952. The 1952 expansion included the south wing, the gym, and the shop building. An additional alteration was made to the building in circa 1967 when a two-story white stucco façade that offers the appearance of columns was added to the main entrance of the building. At the same time, fixed glass panels and doors were added and the original nine-over-nine windows on the main building were replaced by the current asymmetrical windows. The roofing material has been replaced since the period of significance and remains in excellent condition.

The façade (east elevation) has an entry porch that was altered circa 1967 with four columns of concrete posts and a concrete deck. The long horizontal steps run the length of the porch. There is a wheelchair accessible ramp with rail built on to the north side of the steps. Glass doors are flanked by a large glass-enclosed entry foyer. Simple brick laid in a 5:1 common bond with three plain horizontal string course bands run across the east façade. Unless otherwise noted, all the

Lincoln High School

Name of Property

Sumter, SC

County and State

original double hung, nine-over-nine light window panes in the 1937 building have been replaced with larger, single-pane windows. Sixty asymmetrical windows spread across the east elevation of the core building. The side (north and south) elevations of the 1937 school are now partially obscured by two-story hyphens that link the original building with the two 1952 wings. The narrow hyphens join the original building in the middle of the north and south elevations, and portions of these side elevations remain exposed. On the north elevation, west of the hyphen, are two double doors that lead into a wide foyer for entrance into the gym, choir room, and the band room. A walkway leads up to the double gym doors. The south elevation has a common bond brick panel that matches the common bond found on the east elevation. As with the façade, the rear (west) elevation has single and grouped windows that transmit natural light to the classrooms. The rear elevation also includes an auditorium wing that extends perpendicular to the main building. This auditorium is original to the building and was included in the 1937 construction. North of the auditorium wing, an asphalt-roofed stairway with a metal railing descends to the boiler room. The rear auditorium wing has exterior concrete steps that led directly into the auditorium, but the exterior entryway into the auditorium is now sealed off. The side elevations have matching fenestration with double glass doors and narrow four-over-four-light windows located in the southernmost bays and nine-over-nine-light windows in the other bays. The grade slopes away from the rear of the school. The rear elevation consists of brick pilasters but is otherwise blank.

Some window pane replacement is needed on the south wing of the building. Changes to the interior of the building have included drop ceilings, acoustical tile, and an alteration to the auditorium. Florescent lighting was installed in some parts of the school at an unknown date. The original low-pitched roof of the 1937 building was changed to a hip and gable, although the pitch of the roof is low enough as to be invisible from the street. These changes do not interfere with the historic integrity of the property. Though originally constructed in the 1930s, the building received substantial renovations and additions during South Carolina's school equalization building program (1951-1956) and fits within the context set forth in the National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, "Equalization Schools in South Carolina, 1951-1960." Significant features of the building that place it within this context include: its gently pitched roof; its two-story design, which was typical of urban school designs of the period; the surrounding school yards, which conformed with the post-war emphasis on the connection between recreation and learning; the aluminum windows, still present on the 1952 additions, that took advantage of new materials and industrial capabilities unleashed by America's involvement in World War II; and the enclosed air units, concrete frame, and brick veneer that were all characteristic of schools constructed during the state's equalization building program. Of particular note is the retention of the original fenestration on the 1952 additions. Many schools constructed during the equalization program have lost this feature when windows were later infilled with brick or concrete in hopes of increasing energy efficiency.<sup>2</sup>

Although suffering from some water damage and in need of minor repair, the interior of the 1937 building remains substantially intact and in stable condition. The interior was a T-shaped

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<sup>2</sup> Rebekah Dobrasko, "Equalization Schools in South Carolina, 1951-1960," National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, 2009: section F, 7-12.

Lincoln High School

Sumter, SC

Name of Property

County and State

corridor system. The main entrance opens into a short hall that once terminated at the entrance to the auditorium wing, which was situated in the center of a long, transverse corridor and had three entrances. A nurse's office, bathroom, and school administration offices were situated off the entry hall. The corridor is double-loaded both north and south of the auditorium, and a cafeteria is located on the south side of the 1<sup>st</sup> floor corridor within the 1952 expansion area. On the north side of the corridor there is entry into the wide foyer that leads to the gym, choir room, and band room. The auditorium has been altered by reducing it to half its original size and relocating the main entryway into the auditorium to the entryway on the south end of the corridor. These changes were made as part of the 1967 renovations to the building.<sup>3</sup> The altered portion of the auditorium is now used as office space. The remaining portion of the auditorium is set on a steep slant and has the original raised stage with two small dressing rooms, steps, and pine floor. The seats have been removed.

The original walls and ceilings of the building are plaster, and some original chair rail remains. Classrooms retain original wood baseboards and crown molding, slate blackboards with wood surrounds, and bulletin boards. Glass transoms remain above all the classroom doors. The horizontal paneled wood doors with original hardware survive. Original clocks, bells, fire alarms and intercom speakers are still in place. Six rooms on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor are serviced by a heating and air system. Though the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of the 1937 building does retain substantial historic integrity, it has undergone some restoration activity. The 1<sup>st</sup> floor bathrooms were retiled with ceramic tile and had new fixtures installed. The 1<sup>st</sup> floor hall is carpeted, and the walls, molding, doors, and windows have been painted. The lockers on the first floor corridor have been removed

At each end of the 1<sup>st</sup> floor corridor are two flights of steps with landings that lead to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. The stairwell walls are exposed brick with wide concrete steps framed in steel with steel hand rails. The 2<sup>nd</sup> floor has sustained the most water damage and is the floor most in need of repair. Some water-damaged plaster ceilings have been removed, exposing the wood ceiling and rafters. On the north end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor is a large girls' shower and dressing room. The facility is very much intact with showers, bath, sinks, vanities, and mirrors. The quarry tile floor in the shower room is in excellent condition. Each shower stall has built-in tile benches. Some paint is peeling away from the walls. The entry to the girls' shower room is the original heavy oak door with brass hardware.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> floor corridor is double loaded and has restrooms at each end of the hall. Original lockers line the corridor walls. There is carpet on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor corridor but the original wood floor is beneath another layer of vinyl tile. Radiators on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor are located in the classrooms. The classrooms on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor retain their historic features such as slate chalkboard, wooden built-in cabinets, radiators, and wood floors beneath linoleum tile. Original bells, alarms, intercom boxes, clocks, and door hardware remain intact. The original classroom walls are unchanged. The original solid wood paneled classroom doors survive with operable transoms above each door. Each classroom has a wall of windows that overlook the front lawn or the western elevation of the property. The south end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor corridor leads to the southern

<sup>3</sup> James and Durant Architects. Architectural Plans. "Alterations and Additions to Lincoln High School, September, 1967."

Lincoln High School

Name of Property

Sumter, SC

County and State

wing where the library and additional 2<sup>nd</sup> floor class rooms are located. The two wings are attached to the side (north and south) elevations of the 1937 building by two-story, two-bay hyphens that contain stairwells. Sharing the geometric and boxy design of the two wings, the hyphens have east- and west-facing windows, brick bays adjoining the 1937 building and the 1952 classroom wings. The two-story entry bay on the south end contains an off-center entrance with short steps, handicap ramp, with double leaf steel doors, and windows.

**The South Wing (1952).** Influenced by factory designs of the early twentieth century, the southern classroom wing is similar to flat-roofed boxes with exposed, reinforced concrete construction defining the floors and bays. Unless otherwise noted, the bays along both floors of the facades of the north and south wings are filled with matching, alternating bands of glass block (top), steel sash, awning windows (middle), and metal panels (bottom). Classrooms, bathrooms and closets are arranged along the halls. The classrooms are double loaded with lockers on each side. The 1<sup>st</sup> floor of the south wing contains chemistry labs and three home economics suites with instructional culinary kitchens. Some lockers have been removed on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor hall. Glazed and painted concrete block walls face the hallways, though the paint is peeling. There is a double steel door at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> floor hallway that faces the western side of the property. The classrooms have natural solid wood doors with three glass panels. Original, modernist, metal light fixtures are suspended from the classroom ceilings. The concrete stairways in the wings and hyphens have simple metal rails and newels. The hyphen has concrete block walls and steel, double-leaf doors that lead to the 1937 building. There are windows on both sides of the hyphen and an exterior door at the ground level of the hyphen. The first floor has matching, steel sash windows that also fill the entire wall on the second floor. The cafeteria (1952), sited south of the core building, can be entered from the eastern exterior or from the south end of the 1<sup>st</sup> floor. The cafeteria and its attached kitchen has the original red quarry tile floors, kitchen equipment, sinks, food prep tables, serving lines, and refrigeration units. The kitchen has windows on its eastern and southern elevation. There is an exterior door that faces north and opens to an entryway that can be used to access the cafeteria directly from the outside, and leads to a set of steps that can also be used to access the upstairs library from the exterior of the building.

**Gymnasium (1952).** Facing east onto Council Street, the gymnasium is sited to the north of the 1937 core building. The large, brick veneered, steel framed gymnasium has a gable-front roof with rows of steel sash, awning windows under the eaves along the south elevation allowing natural light into the basketball court. Exposed, flared, steel I-beams serve as posts and rafters to support the projecting eaves, and lighting. The main eastern elevation features three projecting, one-story, gable-front bays that mark the entrance. The interior vestibule has been restored with new tile. The main entrance of the gymnasium has two double steel doors underneath a concrete awning. There is also access through a ground-level door in the north hyphen, and access on the north and west side of the gymnasium. The rear elevation has a large former shower room for boys. The lockers have been removed from the shower room, and it now serves as a large bathroom. There is also an equipment room and a classroom. The interior of the gymnasium consists of a front lobby with access to a tiered band room, a large basketball/athletic court, a stage that was added in 1967 along the north side, and access to a tiered choir room. Flared steel I-beams are visible throughout the gym and reveal the steel-frame construction of the building.



Lincoln High School

Name of Property

Sumter, SC

County and State

The lobby has a vinyl tile floor. Original doors survive throughout the interior, which opens into the former locker rooms and existing bathrooms, the classroom, and storage rooms. Large, metal, double leaf doors open into the basketball court, which has the original wood flooring and folding wood stands. The gymnasium has painted concrete block walls filling the bays between the structural I-beams. The bathroom along the west side of the gym has glazed, concrete block walls, ceramic tile floors, and acoustic tile ceilings. The interior of the rear classroom wing has concrete block walls and ceramic tile floors.

### **Non-Contributing**

#### **a) Shop Building (c. 1971)**

On the back exterior of the gym building to the west is a non-contributing shop building constructed circa 1971. The shop building is a concrete structure with windows and a concrete floor.

#### **b) Shed (c. 1971)**

Located adjacent to, and just west of, the shop building is a non-contributing shed structure.

Lincoln High School  
Name of Property

Sumter, SC  
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

Lincoln High School  
Name of Property

Sumter, SC  
County and State

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Education  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1937-1969  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1937  
\_\_\_\_\_  
1952  
\_\_\_\_\_  
1967  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

\_\_\_\_\_  
James and Durant Architects  
\_\_\_\_\_

Lincoln High School  
Name of Property

Sumter, SC  
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.)

Lincoln High School is eligible for the National Register under Criterion A at the local level for its significance in the area of Education. It was the center of African American educational, civic, and community life in Sumter from 1937 to 1969. During that period, the school represented segregated education in Sumter. It is a local representation of segregated education in South Carolina and is a tangible reminder of the state of South Carolina's school equalization program of the 1950s, an attempt to equalize educational facilities for African American students in hopes of forestalling racial integration.

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

## **8. Statement of Significance**

### **EDUCATION**

Though Lincoln School was established by 1874, the core of Lincoln High School's current building was constructed in 1937, and expanded in 1952 and 1967. Lincoln High School is eligible for the National Register under Criterion A at the local level for its significance in the area of Education. Consisting of the main high school building (1937; expanded 1952) containing a cafeteria, library, science wing, and gymnasium (1952), the school complex testifies to the persistent struggle of African Americans to improve educational facilities in Sumter County and in South Carolina during the early to mid-twentieth century. Lincoln High School stands as one of the few remaining, substantially intact, public schools erected for black students in Sumter County and it is the only surviving African American facility in the county to offer secondary education from its opening in 1937 to its closing more than three decades later. The period of significance of the school extends from 1937, when the core building opened, to 1969, when Lincoln High School graduated its final class.

Lincoln High School is a two-story mass plan with two-story additions on either side. The historic core of the present building dates to circa 1937. The core has fixed pane windows with an awning window above and below the pane, brick veneer, and a large chimney on the rear. A one-story addition stretches perpendicular to the core building and has a gable roof, brick exterior, and exposed rafter ends. The new building, which was the third school building on the site dedicated to African American education, was constructed with the assistance of the Works Progress Administration, a New Deal era jobs program that provided paid labor for unemployed

Lincoln High School

Sumter, SC

Name of Property

County and State

Americans.<sup>4</sup> Without the W.P.A. funds, which were used to offset labor costs, it is unlikely that the building would have been as substantial as it was, and likely would not have been built at all.

The two, two-story additions on the side elevations of the core building date to circa 1952. These additions are both of brick construction with flat roofs, six-light hinged windows, and metal canopies over double doors. A two-story stucco façade, circa 1967, spans the front of the historic core. The 1937 building consists of a two-story, brick veneered, rectangular main block with an auditorium wing projecting from the center of the rear elevation. The auditorium wing houses a boiler room and access below ground to all parts of the core building. The south wing houses the science and lab classrooms, the library, and the cafeteria. The north wing houses the gym, the choir room, and the band room.

The 1952 expansion of the Lincoln High School facilities took place within the context of South Carolina's public school equalization program. With segregated public school education under assault in the federal courts—including within South Carolina itself, where, in 1952, a three-judge panel heard oral arguments in the case of *Briggs v. Elliott*, which challenged the constitutionality of racially segregated schools in nearby Clarendon County—South Carolina legislators sought solutions that would stave off racial integration.<sup>5</sup>

The state legislature set up a committee chaired by Ernest Hollings to conduct an examination of school needs. The Hollings Committee spent nearly two years on the task. After testimony and much travel to other states, the committee issued a report in early 1951 calling for a three-cent sales tax dedicated to public education, with the explicit understanding that a portion of the revenue would go towards upgrading African American educational facilities. The goal was to ensure that black schools would conform with the “separate but equal” doctrine articulated by the U.S. Supreme Court in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) and upheld by the Court since that time.<sup>6</sup>

James F. Byrnes, South Carolina's most prominent politician, agreed in 1950 to run for governor and push for the sales tax as a means to upgrade the black schools. In his inaugural address, he declared that he did not need “the assistance of Ku Klux Klan” and did not want “the interference of the NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People].” Byrnes made no secret that the tax funded building projects were aimed at avoiding racial integration of the public schools by conforming to the “separate but equal” doctrine.<sup>7</sup> The tax law

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<sup>4</sup> The first Lincoln School was operating on the site by 1874. In 1905, an 18 x 20 foot auxiliary classroom was built to accommodate the growing number of students at Lincoln, but it proved insufficient to the task. Then, in 1907, a six-classroom frame school house was built on the property, which would continue as Lincoln School until the construction of the 1937 building. Edens, “A History of Secondary Education in the City of Sumter, South Carolina,” 97-105.

<sup>5</sup> J.A. DeLaine, Jr. *Briggs v. Elliott: Clarendon County's Quest for Equality* (Pine Brook, NJ: O. Gona Press, 2003); Rebekah Dobrasko, *Equalization Schools in South Carolina, 1951-1959* (Columbia, SC: South Carolina Department of Archives and History, 2008).

<sup>6</sup> Through 1955, when the state legislature determined that African American educational facilities had achieved “substantial equality” with white schools, the state appropriated \$214 million for school construction projects. Of that amount, roughly 54% was devoted to white schools and 46% to black schools. Rebekah Dobrasko, *Equalization Schools in South Carolina, 1951-1959* (Columbia, SC: South Carolina Department of Archives and History, 2008).

<sup>7</sup> James F. Byrnes, *All in One Life Time*, 8.

Lincoln High School

Name of Property

Sumter, SC

County and State

and accompanying legislation radically altered the fabric of the public school system and sparked a remarkable eight-year building program.<sup>8</sup>

African American families in Sumter sought to be included in this equalization program and pressured local officials to upgrade their facilities. In 1951 fifty students from Lincoln High School filed a petition with the city council demanding “adequate facilities” that would relieve overcrowded conditions and place the physical plant at Lincoln on par with Sumter’s all-white Edmunds High School.<sup>9</sup> County School Superintendent Beaufort Mabry did not reply directly, but shortly thereafter the county submitted plans to the state Educational Finance Commission to expand the facilities at Lincoln. In early 1952 E.C. Dunn, chairman of the Sumter education board, announced plans to add “twenty classrooms, home economics and science laboratories, a modern cafeteria, a library, physical education facilities and other improvements” at a total cost of \$484,800 and in February 1953 the first students began occupying the new wings.<sup>10</sup> The equalization program was a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it sought to prevent racial integration, but on the other it did result in necessary upgrades to the often woefully inadequate facilities designated for use by African Americans. The history of Lincoln High School embodies this tension, and the building remains as a tangible reminder both of the success that African Americans achieved by demanding adequate educational facilities for their children and of the lengths that white legislators went to avoid the prospect of having white and black children attend the same schools.

Lincoln High School also represented the hope that education would provide a path to prosperity and advancement, even within a racially segregated society. Young men and women from farms and communities throughout the surrounding area attended the school to get an education which held the promise of better economic prospects beyond the sharecropping and domestic service that so often defined the lives of blacks during the Jim Crow era. Many of the students who traveled to Sumter from the surrounding rural communities boarded with families in town in order to attend Lincoln.<sup>11</sup> Although many high schools, both before and after World War II, focused their curricula on the fundamentals and practical vocational courses, Lincoln High School also offered an array of academic subjects that prepared students for college and higher-skilled jobs. In addition to courses in typing, shop, and home economics, Lincoln High School taught English, French, biology, chemistry, history, algebra, and mathematics, as well as supporting a full-time librarian, art instructor, and band director.

In its curriculum, Lincoln high school reflected the ambitions of the African American community in Sumter, which saw a high school, and possibly a college education, as a means of escaping the toils and limitations of farming. For Blacks in Sumter, several factors drove these aspirations and optimism. With its furniture mills and broad commercial base, a rapidly

<sup>8</sup> James F. Byrnes, *All in One Life Time*, 20.

<sup>9</sup> “Sumter Negro High Parents Seek Equal School Facilities,” *The State*, 21 Nov. 1951.

<sup>10</sup> “Allotment Granted Sumter School for Remodeling,” *Charleston News and Courier*, 17 December 1950; “Sumter Negroes Seek School Equalization,” *Charleston News and Courier*, 21 Nov. 1951; “Work on Equalizing Schools at Sumter Will Start Soon,” *The State*, 21 March 1952; “Building Permits Totaling \$660,670 Issued at Sumter,” *Charleston News and Courier*, 11 May 1952; “New Wing at Sumter Negro High School to be Occupied,” *Charleston News and Courier*, 1 February 1953.

<sup>11</sup> “Group to Build Monument at 114-year-old School,” *Sumter Item*, 15 Feb. 1988.

Lincoln High School

Name of Property

Sumter, SC

County and State

urbanizing Charlotte just north of South Carolina, and Atlanta further to the west, provided more job opportunities for African Americans, but ones which often required skills and schooling beyond the elementary grades. In addition, the proximity of several Black colleges within the state—Morris in Sumter; Allen and Benedict in Columbia; South Carolina State and Claflin in Orangeburg; Voorhees in Denmark; and additional schools in North Carolina and Georgia—made postsecondary education seem more feasible to local families. Finally, World War II broadened the experience and aspirations of many African Americans, and the integration of the military in 1948 provided new opportunities for African Americans, many of which demanded technical skills and expertise beyond the vocational model of earlier high schools.<sup>12</sup> In fact, nearby Fort Jackson, which integrated in September 1950, was one of the first U.S. Army installations to comply with President Harry Truman's Executive Order 9981, which directed the Armed Forces to desegregate.<sup>13</sup>

As the principal African American high school in this portion of the county, the facility was also a focal point for athletics and other social and cultural events. The gym was the site of basketball games and weekly dances ("sock hops"). Homecoming games in the early 1960s were major events. The school symbolized African American betterment amidst Jim Crow segregation and racial prejudice while preparing young people for jobs and even college.

The school's long era as an African American scholastic institution in the midlands area of South Carolina ended in 1969. Schools in Sumter County, and across the state, were gradually integrated. Between 1969 and 1970, Lincoln High School merged with the formerly all-white Edmunds High School to become Sumter High School, a racially integrated school. The old Lincoln High building did, however, remain in service until 1983 as the Council Street campus of Sumter High School.

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### Developmental History/Additional Historic Context Information (if appropriate)

The construction of African American Schools in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries occurred slowly in South Carolina.<sup>14</sup> After the Civil War in 1865, the federal government organized the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands (Freedmen's Bureau) which established public schools for former slaves. Subsequently, in 1868, the South Carolina State Constitution created a uniform, public, graded school system and authorized limited tax dollars for the construction of schoolhouses and the education of "all the children of the State between the ages of six and twenty-one years."

By January 1870 a school for African Americans was operating in Sumter with the support of the Freedman's Union Commission, Presbyterian Home Mission Committee and the next year another school, this one supported by the Freedman's Aid Society, Methodist Church, was

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<sup>12</sup> *African Americans and the Palmetto State*, South Carolina Department of Education, 1994.

<sup>13</sup> Andrew H. Myers, *Black, White, and Olive Drab: Racial Integration at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, and the Civil Rights Movement* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2006), 1, 74-91.

<sup>14</sup> James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988).

Lincoln High School

Sumter, SC

Name of Property

County and State

mentioned in the Annual Report of the State Superintendant of Education. It was not until 1874, however, that an effort was made to form the first public school for black students in Sumter. At that time the county school board purchased a half-acre lot on Council Street from the Sumter Station Methodist Church (now Trinity United Methodist) on which to build an African American school. The building erected was referred to as "Lincoln School." The school was a crudely constructed frame cottage, which contained four rooms radiating off of a central passageway.<sup>15</sup>

Control of the South Carolina state government began shifting in 1876, and by 1878 the new Democrat-controlled government had cut school spending, eliminated a provision that gave more state aid to poorer districts, and instituted policies that would slowly widen the gap between the white and black schools. The state maintained virtually no control over the quality of individual school districts. By 1895 the per-pupil spending for whites was \$3.11, while spending on black pupils was \$1.05. Local school officials were not required to share tax money equally between black and white systems. The belief that African American schools were no more than a meager portion of the school dollar quickly became state policy and was accepted even by the most enlightened white educators. In 1895 a new constitution was adopted to replace the one drafted during Reconstruction. It stated: "Separate schools shall be provided for children of the white and colored races, and no child of either race shall be permitted to attend a school for children of the other race." The school system in South Carolina developed at an extremely uneven rate.<sup>16</sup> In 1907, the legislature passed a High School Act, aimed at nurturing a system of secondary schools. The Act provided no relief to the African American community. Before World War I, most African Americans in the state had no access to any high school. During this period the African American community resorted to self-help by founding a number of private schools to educate their children. African American colleges also sometimes operated elementary and secondary schools that educated black youth. Examples included Laing High School in Mt. Pleasant, Brained Institute in Chester, Friendship Normal and Industrial Institute in Rock Hill, Mather School in Beaufort, Lancaster Normal and Industrial School in Lancaster, Avery Institute in Charleston, Coulter Academy in Cheraw, and Mather Academy in Camden.<sup>17</sup>

In 1913-14 the state expenditure for white students averaged \$14.94 per student. For black-schools, the figure was \$1.86. The gap in white and black schools continued well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the "Lincoln School" had to be supported by private as well as public financing.<sup>18</sup>

The apportionment of public money was inequitable, with black schools receiving far less funding than the white school system. Indeed, although African Americans paid taxes for the building of schools, few such institutions for black students were constructed entirely with public funds. Tax dollars went largely into white facilities while black schoolhouses were often constructed with donations of land, labor, and money from the African American community.

<sup>15</sup> Edens, "A History of Secondary Education in the City of Sumter, South Carolina," 97-99.

<sup>16</sup> Virginia B. Bartels, ed. "The History of South Carolina Schools," (Columbia: Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement, n.d.).

<sup>17</sup> Bartels, "History of South Carolina Schools,"

<sup>18</sup> Anderson, *Education of Blacks in the South*, 4-32.



Lincoln High School

Name of Property

Sumter, SC

County and State

Consequently, there were too few black schools, and many of these were of substandard construction.

With chronic underfunding, one in five white adults in South Carolina were illiterate at the beginning of the twentieth century, but one-half of all African American adults could not read.<sup>19</sup> Northern philanthropic groups and churches offered some private financial support for black education, but they concentrated on teacher training. Philanthropies such as the George Peabody Fund and the John F. Slater Fund and religious groups such as the American Missionary Association mainly supported preparatory schools and colleges. The Presbyterians, the Episcopalians, the Methodist Church, the African Methodist Episcopal Church, and the Baptists all operated schools and colleges to educate African American children. All these schools enrolled students from a wide range of educational backgrounds and thus included classes for illiterate and semi-literate pupils as well as for those who were academically qualified for a college curriculum.

Public schooling for both African Americans and whites throughout the state began to improve during the early years of the twentieth century, when small steps in the right direction were taken for financing education.<sup>20</sup> By the early 1920s, the General Assembly, faced with the miserable performance of the South Carolina recruits on World War I literacy tests, was ready to listen. In 1920, there were only forty-six four-year high schools in South Carolina and even by 1925, fewer than half of whites aged fourteen to eighteen were in high school; black students lagged even further behind. In 1920 the General Assembly approved a major school finance package aimed at finally resolving the tax imbalances between rich and poor counties. In the 1920s, adult education classes were begun. Statistics reveal that nearly one-half of the population had low productive ability, and thus a low purchasing capacity, which in turn was reflected in all businesses. Some "mill schools" in the textile communities were joint undertakings financed by public taxes and textile companies.

In 1924, the legislature made its first comprehensive attempt to address the problems caused by weak state control and unequal finance. The "6-0-1" law guaranteed six months of state aid to every school district and promised poor rural districts a larger share of the state money. The law encouraged schools to consolidate and improve standards in order to qualify for more state aid. Tragically, the law was not applied to the black schools and the ever-widening financial gap between the segregated systems spread even further apart. Funding for facilities, teachers, and books lagged well behind the tax dollars provided for white schools.<sup>21</sup>

Secondary education for African Americans was almost nonexistent across South Carolina during this period. High schools were available only in a few of the larger cities in the state, in private academies, or through the preparatory departments of black colleges. In South Carolina, the first public secondary schools for African Americans were not built until the early 1940's,

<sup>19</sup> Anderson, *Education of Blacks in the South*, 4-32.

<sup>20</sup> John Walker, Michael Richardson, and Thomas Parks, eds., *The Organization of Public Education in South Carolina* (Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 1992).

<sup>21</sup> *African Americans and the Palmetto State*, South Carolina Department of Education, 1994.

Lincoln High School

Name of Property

Sumter, SC

County and State

and most of these early high schools offered only one to two years of curriculum.<sup>22</sup> Within this context an education at Lincoln High School was considered superior to that of many nearby rural high schools. Therefore African American Families who lived in rural areas and counties in the Midlands would board their children with Sumter families, relatives and friends so that they could attend Lincoln and get a high school education. Lincoln also educated the children of parents who had migrated north during the great African American Migration. These children would be sent back to live with grandparents or relatives during the school year and sent back north during the summer for summer employment.

Some of the newly opened public high schools and private academies offered academic subjects that prepared black high school students for college, after which many would enter the teaching profession. However, with often only one or two years of instruction, many of the high schools of this period, including Lincoln High School, emphasized vocational education and the practical arts, drawing inspiration from Booker T. Washington's Tuskegee Institute. In addition to the fundamentals of reading, writing, and arithmetic, these high schools taught boys a variety of trades such as bricklaying and carpentry while girls were instructed in home economics.<sup>23</sup>

In 1948, the National Peabody Commission prepared a report on South Carolina's educational needs.<sup>24</sup> Like so many experts before them, the Peabody Commission recommended a school finance equalization program to correct tax imbalances between districts. They also called for a major new building program and a thorough consolidation of South Carolina's 1,700 school districts, which the Peabody group found wasteful and inefficient. As the state neared the halfway mark in the 20th century, the gap in quality was nearly as wide as ever, as shown by some 1949 statistics: per-pupil expenditures for White students was \$111; for blacks, \$50; the average teacher salary for whites was \$2,057, but only \$1,414 for blacks. Of the one-teacher schools still in operation, 180 were designated for whites, while 799 were reserved for black students. The value of white school property was \$68.4 million compared to \$12.9 million for black schools. The state was spending \$2.4 million on transportation for whites and \$184,000 on blacks.

Despite these disproportionate spending levels, African American schools often served as important centers of community life. At Lincoln the school personnel served as role models and leadership figures for students. Teachers had high expectations of students, found opportunities to foster leadership skills within their classrooms, and helped students discover their talents and interests. Much of this was achieved through extracurricular activities. The school a French club, a science club, a math club, and opportunities to participate in sports, choir and band. The masonry and carpentry program produced master bricklayers and carpenters who engaged in lifetime careers in those two crafts. The school also had a highly regarded student newspaper called *The Echo*, which began publishing in 1951. During the 1960s the faculty sponsor, Dr. Agnes H. Wilson, entered the paper in national contests sponsored by the Columbia Scholastic

<sup>22</sup> Walker et. al., eds., *Organization of Public Education in South Carolina*.

<sup>23</sup> *African Americans and the Palmetto State*, South Carolina Department of Education, 1994.

<sup>24</sup> Division of Surveys and Field Services, George Peabody College for Teachers, *Public Schools in South Carolina: A Report of the South Carolina Education Survey Committee* (Nashville, TN: George Peabody College for Teachers, 1948).

Lincoln High School

Name of Property

Sumter, SC

County and State

Press Association and they students fared quite well, winning several awards and even appearing on the N.B.C. Today Show during one trip to New York City.<sup>25</sup>

Lincoln High School was the center of the African American community in Sumter. The strong public school experience at the school was interwoven with a supportive family experience (often extended family, positive church participation, and cohesive community interest). The family and community supported the school's efforts, and the school, in turn, served the black community. The school building was made available for uses outside the regular school day and was considered a major institution of the community. Lincoln High School offered after-hours vocational classes to adults, and made the school's gymnasium available to the community. Community involvement extended to student participation in church events and civic gatherings where students' skills and talents could be displayed and school personnel could interact with local citizens. Additionally, the community made housing available to school personnel new to the community or in need of lodging during the week. The school served as a community center with civic groups using facilities for meetings and events and the school providing space to teach adults and others not enrolled there.

Lincoln High School was the community's ultimate cultural symbol, and reflected the basic patterns and beliefs of the neighborhoods. The school was a community extension of the familial atmosphere of shared responsibility and commitment. Most importantly, Lincoln High School maintained strong community support. One memorable highlight involving parents was the annual May Day Festival held on the front school lawn. Parental participation ensured that the event was successful. Family and community members were directly involved in the curricular and other activities of the school as well. The annual Lincoln High School Christmas concert was enjoyed by the entire community. A select group of Lincoln High School teachers sponsored an annual debutants ball to introduce African American females to the community.

Despite the external forces of racism and segregation, Lincoln teachers were determined to provide students with opportunities and expose them to knowledge and activities relevant to their current interests. During the '50s and '60s, Lincoln High School had some of the best art students in the state, taught and mentored by South Carolina Artist Dr. Leo Twiggs. The band was led by Robert Dorsey and the choir, by Mrs. Pleasant. The French Club and student newspaper were led by Dr. Agnes H. Wilson. Wilson was a Fulbright scholar and studied at the Sorbonne in Paris while pursuing her graduate education at Temple University. In 1969 she was honored both as South Carolina's Teacher of the Year and as a National Honor Roll Teacher of the Year.<sup>26</sup> Wilson's accomplishments exemplify the quality of Lincoln's faculty.

The athletic program was headed by beloved coach Robert Jenkins. Lincoln High school had some of the best sports teams in the state. Under the coaching of Mrs. Gwen White, the Lincoln High School Girls' team won the state championship. Many Lincoln athletes also attended college on athletic scholarships. An example was alumnus Lindburg Moody, who broke

<sup>25</sup> Edens, "A History of Secondary Education in the City of Sumter, South Carolina," 120.

<sup>26</sup> "Fulbright Study Grant is Awarded Sumter Teacher," *Baltimore Afro-American*, 5 July 1955; "State Assembly, Sumter to Honor Teacher of the Year," *The State*, 14 May 1969; "Dr. Agnes Juliet Hildebrand Wilson Burgess," obituary, *Times and Democrat*, 11 October 2012.

Lincoln High School

Name of Property

Sumter, SC

County and State

basketball scoring records at South Carolina State University and played professionally for the Detroit Pistons.

The class of 1969 was the last to graduate from Lincoln High School. When Sumter County schools integrated in 1970 Lincoln High School combined with Edmunds High School, the formerly all-white school in Sumter, with the two merging to become Sumter High School. Both buildings remained in service, however, and the Lincoln High School building was known as Sumter High School, Council Street campus, Lincoln Building.<sup>27</sup> When a new Sumter High School was built in 1983, the Lincoln High School building was sold to St. Jude's Catholic Church in 1984 and became the St. Jude Catholic School.<sup>28</sup> The building was then sold to the Trinity United Methodist Church, which is located next door to the school. The Church changed the name of the facility to the Trinity Lincoln Center.<sup>29</sup> In 2009, the Lincoln High School Alumni Association and Preservation Society purchased the building from Trinity United Methodist Church.

The building is currently used by various community organizations. The gymnasium has been used to support the recreational activities of the Boys and Girls Club. The Lincoln High School Alumni Association and Preservation Society is developing plans for its restoration and adaptive reuse as an African American cultural center. Lincoln High School remains an institutional landmark in Sumter, South Carolina, illustrating the progress in African American education in Sumter County during the early to mid-twentieth century. Built in 1937, the school stands as one of the surviving and intact public schools erected for black students in Sumter County, and in South Carolina, during the era of public school segregation.

<sup>27</sup> "Board Changes High School Names," *Sumter Daily Item*, 11 Nov. 1970.

<sup>28</sup> The memory of Lincoln High School lived on even at the new Sumter High School. When the new building opened in 1983 one side of the campus was named the Lincoln wing and the other the Edmunds wing. "Old School Names Chosen for Wings," *Sumter Daily Item*, 7 July 1983; "Group to Build Monument at 114-year-old School," *Sumter Item*, 15 Feb. 1988.

<sup>29</sup> "Trinity Lincoln Center Will House Community Organizations," *Sumter Item*, 21 August 2004.

Lincoln High School  
Name of Property

Sumter, SC  
County and State

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Lincoln High School

Name of Property

Sumter, SC

County and State

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--- Supplementary Details: James and Durant Architects. Architectural Plans. "Alterations and Additions to Lincoln High School, September, 1967."

--- Supplementary Details: *Lincoln High School A Living Legacy, 1874..... 1989.*

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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 # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

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

Lincoln High School  
Name of Property

Sumter, SC  
County and State

☒ University

☐ Other

Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** \_\_\_\_\_

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## 10. Geographical Data

**Acres of Property** 5.8 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

### Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: (enter coordinates to 6 decimal places) (The coordinates provided were obtained using a GPS locator)

1. Latitude: 33.918640 Longitude: -80.347564

2. Latitude: Longitude:

3. Latitude: Longitude:

4. Latitude: Longitude:

**Or**

### UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927 or ☐ NAD 1983

1. Zone: Easting: Northing:

2. Zone: Easting: Northing:

3. Zone: Easting: Northing:

4. Zone: Easting : Northing:

Lincoln High School  
Name of Property

Sumter, SC  
County and State

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

The boundary of Lincoln High School (and associated grounds) is comprised of the parcel labeled 2281301035 on the attached Sumter County Tax Map. It is bounded north by an unpaved drive and fence line; to the South by the fence and tree line; to the east by Council Street; and to the west by the tree line.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The nominated property is restricted to the historic school and its immediate setting.

---

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Robert Petrulis with assistance from SHPO Staff  
organization: EPRE Consulting LLC  
street & number: 4A Pinecrest Ct  
city or town: Columbia state: SC zip code: 29204  
E-mail: robert.petrulis@epreconsulting.com  
telephone: 803-718-4200  
date: Sept 16, 2013

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**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.)



Lincoln High School

Name of Property

Sumter, SC

County and State

### 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: Lincoln High School

City or Vicinity: Sumter

County: Sumter

State: SC

Photographer: Charlie Matthews

Date Photographed: March 2013

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

The following information pertains to each of the photographs:

Name of Property: Lincoln High School

Location: Sumter, South Carolina

County: Sumter County

Name of Photographer: Charlie Matthews Photographer, 122 South Main St. Sumter, SC

Location of original digital images: Lincoln High School Alumni Association

**Date of Photographs:** March, 2013.

<u>Photo #</u>	<u>Description</u>
1 of 22	East facade of 1937 building (left) and 1952 gymnasium (right), camera facing west.
2 of 22	East facade of 1937 building showing detail of 1967 two-story stucco facade addition, camera facing west.
3 of 22	East facade of 1937 building (left) and 1952 gymnasium (right), camera facing northwest.
4 of 22	East facade of 1937 building showing detail of windows replaced c. 1967, camera facing west.

Lincoln High School  
Name of Property

Sumter, SC  
County and State

- |          |   |
|----------|---|
| 5 of 22  | East facade showing detail of two-story hyphen connecting 1937 building to 1952 south wing addition, camera facing west.                                |
| 6 of 22  | North elevation of 1952 south wing addition, camera facing south.   |
| 7 of 22  | East facade showing hyphen connecting 1937 building to 1952 gymnasium addition (left) and east elevation of 1952 gymnasium (right), camera facing west. |
| 8 of 22  | West elevation of 1937 building showing auditorium wing (left) extending from main building, camera facing northeast.                                   |
| 9 of 22  | South elevation of 1937 auditorium wing, camera facing north.   |
| 10 of 22 | Non-contributing shop building (left) and south elevation of auditorium wing (right), camera facing northwest.  |
| 11 of 22 | Interior detail of kitchen in 1952 south wing.  |
| 12 of 22 | Interior detail of cafeteria in 1952 south wing.  |
| 13 of 22 | Original lockers along first-floor corridor in 1952 south wing.   |
| 14 of 22 | Original lockers and first floor corridor in 1952 south wing.   |
| 15 of 22 | Stage and dressing rooms in 1937 auditorium wing.   |
| 16 of 22 | Interior detail of 1952 gymnasium.  |
| 17 of 22 | Telescopic bleachers in 1952 gymnasium.   |
| 18 of 22 | Science laboratory in 1952 south wing.  |
| 19 of 22 | Original solid wood classroom door with operable transoms above in 1937 building.   |
| 20 of 22 | Home economics classroom in 1952 south wing.  |
| 21 of 22 | Chemistry laboratory in 1952 south wing showing detail of original segmented metal windows.   |
| 22 of 22 | Plaque denoting architects and builders of 1952 additions.  |

Lincoln High School

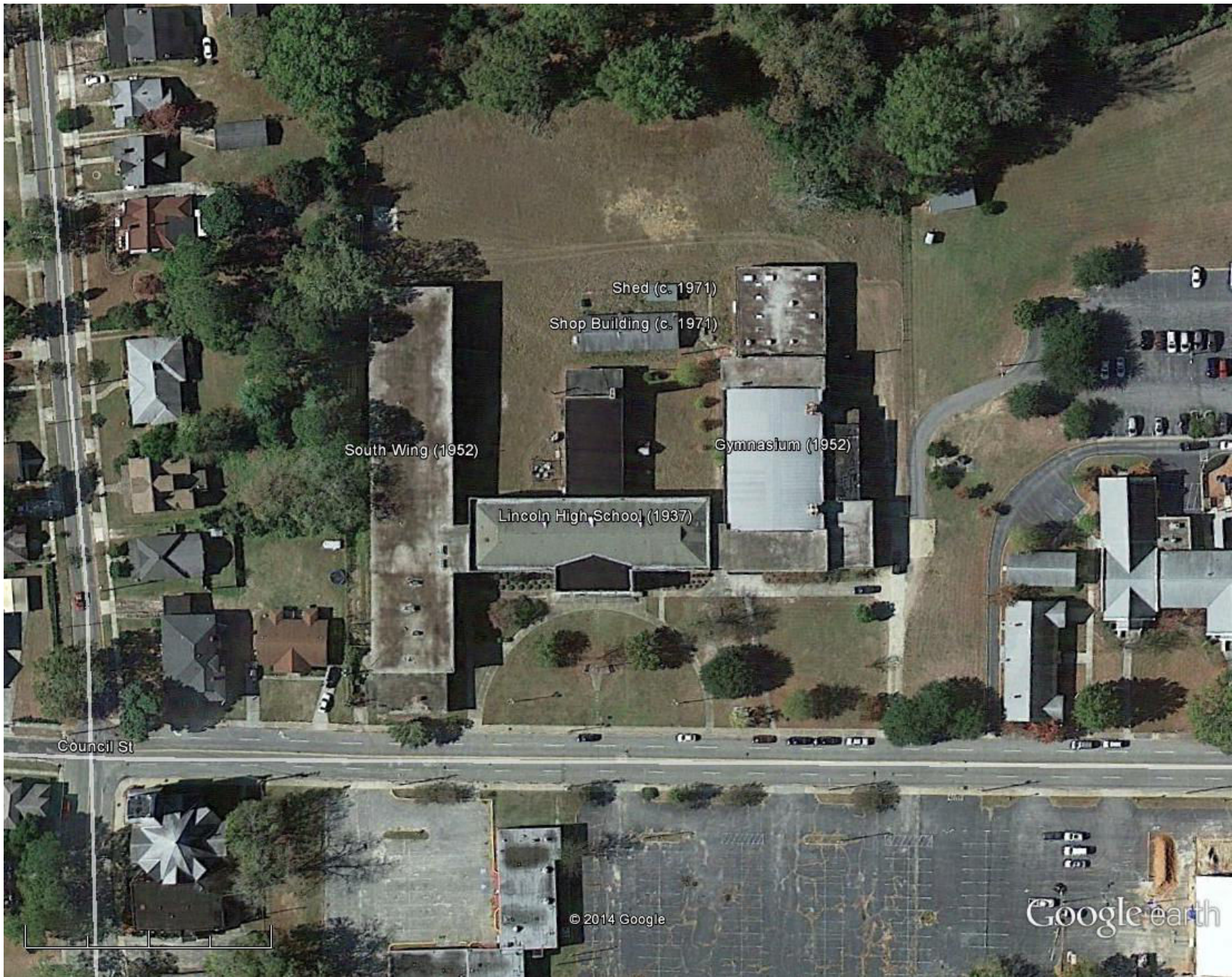
Name of Property

Sumter, SC

County and State

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications 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.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

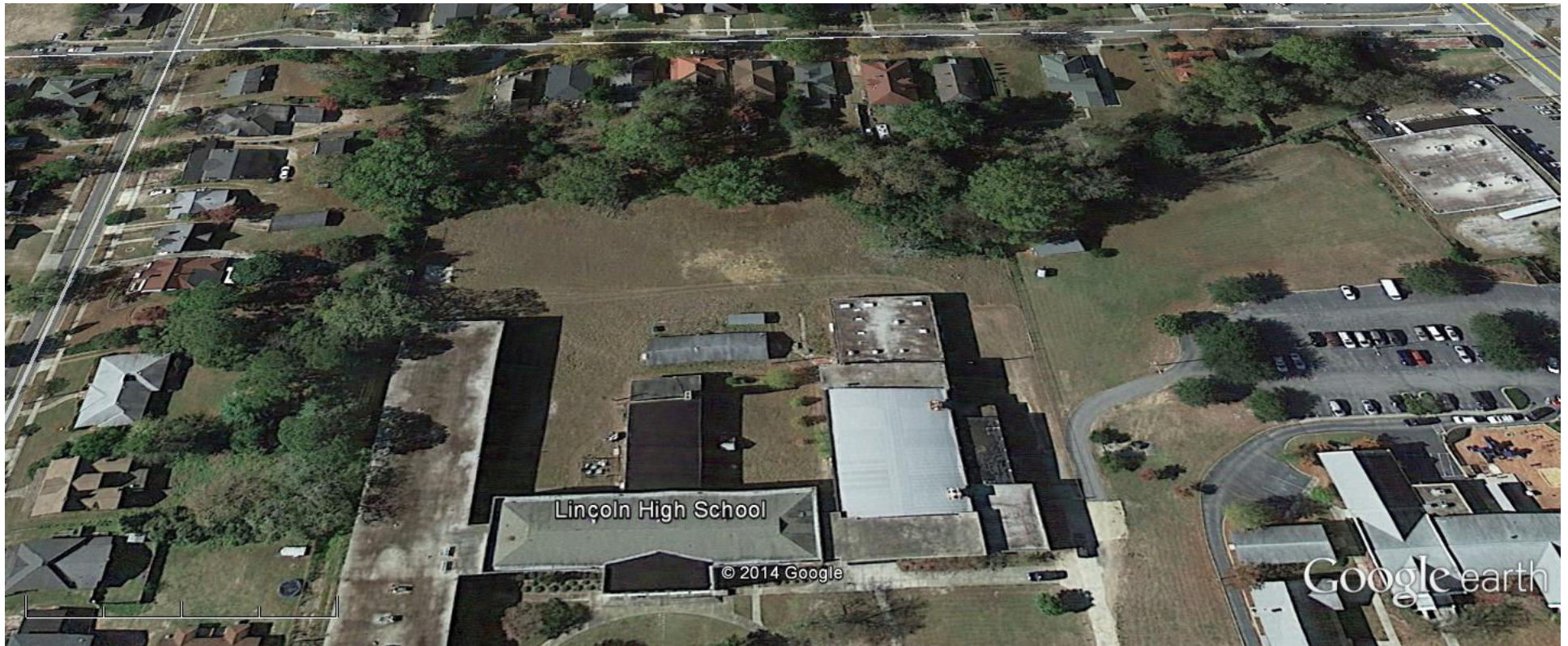


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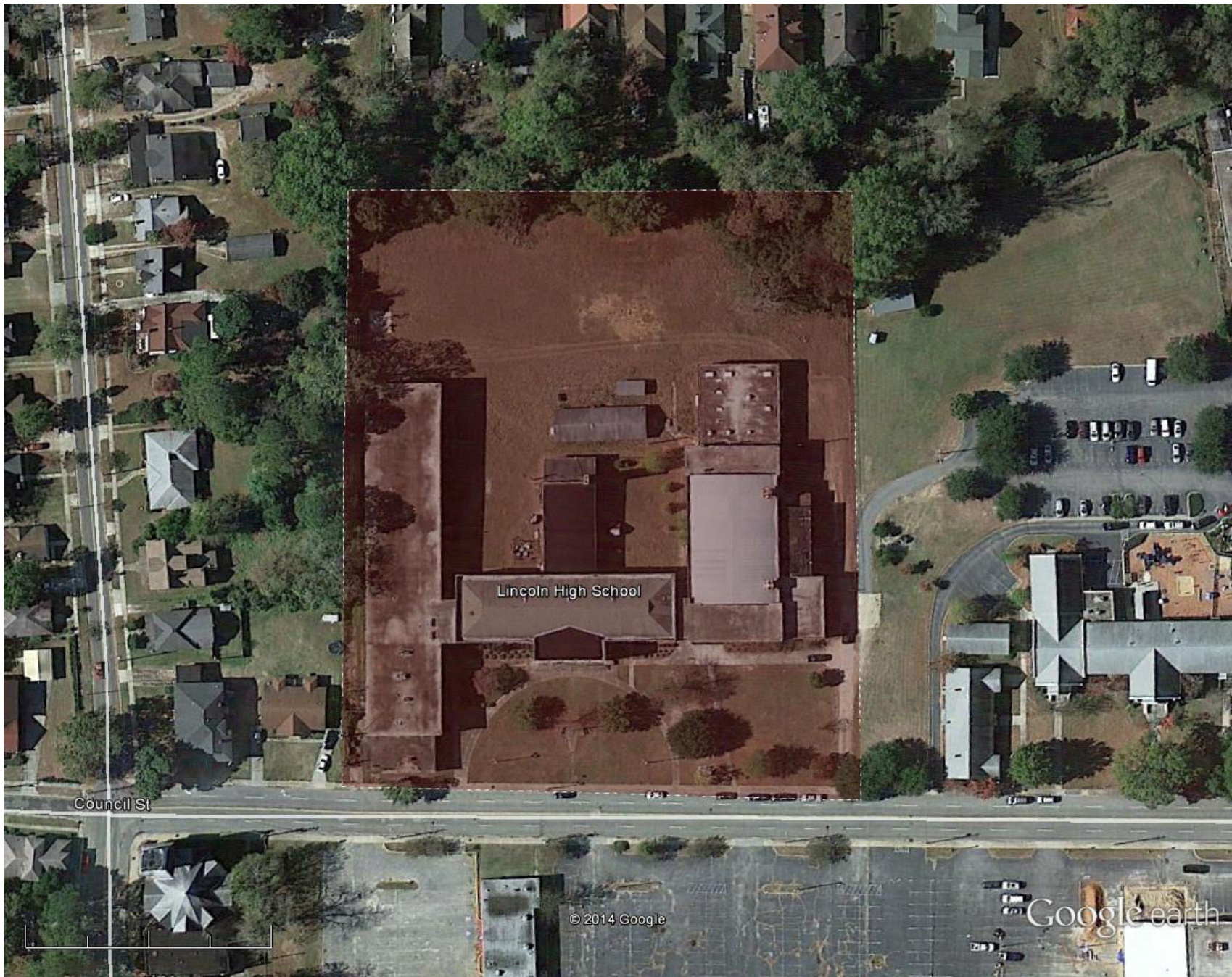






Lincoln High School  
33.918640, -80.347564



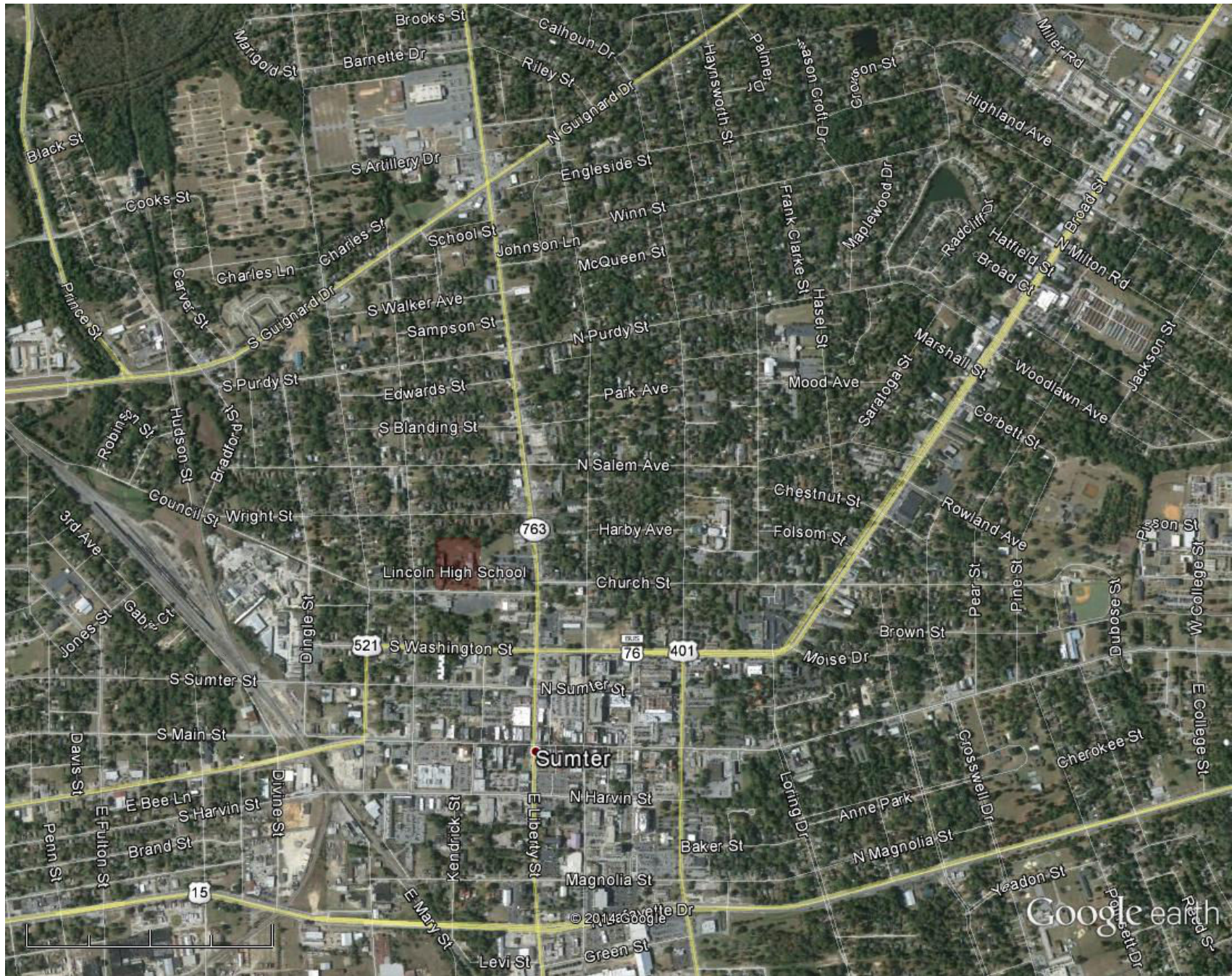


Google earth

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Google earth

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