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: <u>Parrish Hill Rosenwald School</u> Other names/site number: <u>VDHR ID No. 018-0165</u> Name of related multiple property listing: Rosenwald Schools in Virginia

2. Location

Street & number: <u>12</u>	631 John Tyler Memor	ial Highway
City or town: _Charle	es City_State: VA_ C	ounty: Charles City
Not For Publication:	N/A Vicinity:	X

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this <u>X</u> nomination <u>request for determination of eligibility meets</u> 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 \underline{X} meets $\underline{\ }$ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national	<u>statewide</u>	<u>X</u> local
Applicable National Re	egister Criteria:	

Signature of certifying official/Title:

Date

Virginia Department of Historic Resources

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property _____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official:

Title :

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

Date

Parrish Hill Rosenwald School

Name of Property

Charles City County, VA County and State

4. National Park Service Certification	
I hereby certify that this property is:	
entered in the National Register	
determined eligible for the National Register	
determined not eligible for the National Register	
removed from the National Register	
other (explain:)	
Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
5. Classification	

Ownership of Property

Private:	
Public – Local	x
Public – State	
Public – Federal	
Category of Property	

Building(s)	x
District	
Site	
Structure	
Object	

Name of Property

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Number of Resources within Property

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register <u>0</u>

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions _EDUCATION: school_

 Parrish Hill Rosenwald School Name of Property

7. Description

Architectural Classification

OTHER: Rosenwald School

Materials:

Foundation: CONCRETE Walls: WOOD Roof: COMPOSITE

Narrative Description

Summary Paragraph

The Parrish Hill Rosenwald School (also spelled "Parish Hill") is located on a .77-acre parcel on the south side of John Tyler Memorial Highway, west of and adjacent to its intersection with Weyanoke Road. The parcel is lightly wooded, although the area immediately around the school is cleared. To the west of the school is a large, cleared lot, a portion of which is used as a cemetery. A wooden sign notes that is it the Dobson Family Cemetery, though county records show the parcel as owned by the Parrish Hill Baptist Church. A gravel drive along the south side of the parcel leads to the cemetery lot. There is no evidence of outbuildings on site. The school is a one-story, side-gabled frame Rosenwald school with a central, projecting, cross-gabled wing on the façade. The school rests on concrete piers. It is clad in weatherboard and has a composite shingle roof. The design is a variant with slight deviations of the Rosenwald Nashville Community School plan number 20, "Two Teacher Community School, to Face East or West."

Narrative Description

The Parrish Hill Rosenwald School is a bilaterally symmetrical, one-story, side-gabled building with a central, projecting, cross-gabled wing on the façade. Centered on the projecting wing is a bank of four windows (currently boarded). A fifth, smaller framed opening, likely a louvered vent, also boarded over, is centered above the bank of windows.

Recessed entrance vestibules, each housing a single-leaf door with a transom that leads to one of the two classrooms, flank the projecting wing. The north door is boarded on the interior and exterior but appears to be extant and visible from the interior. The vestibule ceilings are beadboard, and pendant light fixtures missing their globes hang on chains in each vestibule. Each vestibule has a single-leaf entrance on its interior wall accessing the central projecting wing, which houses the industrial room. These are five-panel doors with transoms above. The northern of these two has a screened door.

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North and south of the vestibules, in the exterior bays of the façade, are single windows (boarded), that service twin cloakrooms. The gable ends of the school each have a bank of three windows (boarded) centered under the gable. Visible from the interior, these windows are relatively intact. The rear elevation has four sets of paired windows (boarded), evenly spaced along the elevation. Some of these are visible from the interior and are relatively intact.

Set atop the projecting wing on the façade is a louvered belfry, square in footprint, that is clad in weatherboard with a composite shingle pyramidally hipped roof. It is set east of a brick chimney. The roof has broad eaves with exposed rafter tails. The undersides of the eaves are clad in beadboard and there is molded trim both at the cornice and along the ends of the rafter tails, partially boxing the eaves. The exterior cased openings have simple trim with board surrounds, and the windows have plain sills. The exterior corners of the building have plain flat cornerboards. The school sits on concrete piers, and the entrance vestibules have poured concrete decks accessed by poured concrete steps.¹

The interior contains two large classrooms at the west, divided by a partition wall with a single cased opening that connects them. Each classroom is serviced by a cloakroom to the northeast and southeast, respectively. The cloakrooms and an industrial room in the central projecting wing frame the twin entrance vestibules on the façade. Each classroom has a single entrance to its cloakroom. Only the northern classroom has a cased opening to the industrial room. A brick flue services the classrooms on the east side of their shared wall, and the corresponding corners of the rooms are slightly canted.

Floors throughout are wooden and appear to be pine. Walls are rough plaster on drywall over lathe. Ceilings appear to have been plaster on lathe, as exposed members show plaster-striped patterns, but have largely been replaced with particleboard.² The principal rooms and industrial room have simple flat baseboards. Save for the interior door to the industrial room and the door between the classrooms, interior door and window surrounds are stock Greek Revival with molded trim and bullseye corner blocks. Windows have plain dividers and continuous sills as applicable. The cloakrooms have no baseboards. They have beadboard wainscots with molded caps above the windowsill level. Flat boards with hooks affixed to the wall in the cloakrooms likely held coats and hats.

Windows remaining in place are six-over-six, wooden, double-hung sash in deteriorated condition. Doors are five-panel doors. There are some doors and windows stored inside the building that may be original to this building

The school has some minor deviations from the published Rosenwald plan (Figure 1), but deviation was common given local budgets and capacity. Changes from the published

¹ Concrete steps may date from Fall of 1943. In October 1943, a "committee from the Parrish Hill community" petitioned the school board for improvements, notably at the steps. The school board agreed to make improvements if the local committee would grade the area around the entrances with gravel. *School Board Meeting Minutes*, October 1943.

² This may be when sheetrock or Celotex was recommended to be used to replace the ceilings. *School Board Meeting Minutes*, December 1939.

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County and State Rosenwald plan and rendering are as follows: fenestration pattern on the west elevation, additions of windows on the north and south elevations in lieu of interior chalkboards, addition of small belfry, absence of pent roofs at vestibules, additional vestibule entrance to the industrial room, a solid partition wall dividing the two classrooms, and single interior doors to the industrial room and cloakrooms.

The school is the only building on the parcel. It has no plumbing, and records as late as 1950 show the school having a pit toilet, although there is no standing privy on site.³

Integrity Analysis

The Parrish Hill Rosenwald School has never been moved, thus retains its integrity of location. Though the design has some deviations from the Rosenwald pattern it has been little changed in plan or appearance since its construction, thus has a high degree of integrity of design. Charles City County remains a largely rural county and the area surrounding the school has changed little from the period of its construction beyond road improvements, thus its integrity of setting is high. Changes in material appear to be limited and include most notably new ceiling and roof cladding, the former added during the school's period of significance. Given the limited replacement of materials the integrity of workmanship is high, found notably in the interior trim, rafter tails and exterior trim. Though currently unused, the fact that it has not been altered or converted to new uses gives the school a high degree of integrity of association. And the high integrity of the six factors discussed combine to give the school a strong sense and integrity of feeling.

³ Willnette Davis Carter, "The Development of Education for Negroes in Charles City County, Virginia During the Period 1870-1950" (Master's degree thesis, Virginia State College, 1952), 41.

Parrish Hill Rosenwald School Name of Property

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

- 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

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location

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- 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

Parrish Hill Rosenwald School Name of Property Charles City County, VA County and State

Areas of Significance <u>EDUCATION</u> <u>ETHNIC HERITAGE: BLACK</u> <u>ARCHITECTURE</u>

Period of Significance _1920-1959_

Significant Dates _N/A____

Significant Person N/A

Cultural Affiliation _N/A_

Architect/Builder _Smith, Samuel L._

Name of Property

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

The Parrish Hill School is nominated under the Rosenwald Schools in Virginia Multiple Property Documentation Form and meets the registration requirements set forth therein. The property was first purchased for educational purposes by the Tyler School District, a predecessor of the unified county school district. A one-room school was erected there that served until 1920, when the current Rosenwald School was built. The Parrish Hill Rosenwald School operated from 1920 to 1959, when it was closed as part of a county school consolidation plan. It was the last of the county's six Rosenwald Schools to close. The school is significant at the local level under Criterion A in the areas of Education and Ethnic Heritage: Black as one of the thousands of schools constructed for African Americans in southern states during the first part of the twentieth century with the support of philanthropist Julius Rosenwald and the Rosenwald Fund and the expertise of the Tuskegee Institute under Booker T. Washington's leadership. In Virginia, 366 schools and 16 auxiliary buildings were constructed with assistance from the Rosenwald Fund between 1917 and 1932, of which an estimated 126 remain.⁴ Of the six Rosenwald Schools in Charles City County listed in the Rosenwald Schools in Virginia Multiple Properties Document, three remain: Wayside School, Mica School, and Parrish Hill School. Kimages School, Union Baptist School, and an early Ruthville School have all been demolished. Also significant at the local level under Criterion C for Architecture, the school follows a "two teacher" standard plan developed by architect Samuel L. Smith, a director of the Rosenwald Fund. The period of significance, 1920-1959, spans the period from the construction of the school until its closure.

Narrative Statement of Significance

Criterion A: Education and Ethnic Heritage: Black

In late December of 1894, trustees of the Tyler School District purchased from John P. Gordon one acre of the tract known as Fortunes Fork. On this site, a school known as the Parrish Hill School was built, named for the surrounding locality, which included Parrish Hill Church and Parrish Hill Creek. Before that time, African American children in the Parrish Hill community walked long distances to the Ruthville community or to a school building two miles west of the courthouse, which was moved to the Fortunes Fork site.⁵

By 1916, the one-room school at this location was overcrowded and in poor condition. Teacher Martha Davis submitted term reports on standardized forms. In 1916, she recorded teaching up to fifty-seven students in a single room. When asked when the school was built, she responded that she didn't know, but added, "it is so old."⁶ When asked about present state of repair she commented, "not worth it."⁷ She also reported that "we are raising money for a new building."⁸ Her reports from 1917 to 1919 are equally dismal. In 1918, when asked the number of days it

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⁴ "Rosenwald School Architectural Survey," Preservation Virginia,

https://preservationvirginia.org/ourwork/architectural-rosenwald-school-survey/.

⁵ Carter, "The Development of Education for Negroes in Charles City County," 70.

⁶ Parrish Hill School Term report, 1916.

⁷ Parrish Hill School Term report, 1916.

⁸ Parrish Hill School Term report, 1916.

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was impossible to keep children comfortable, she responded, "all the time because the school is no good."⁹ Alas, having endured poor teaching conditions, it appears that Ms. Davis left before a new school was built, as the 1920 report authored by Mamie Cotman noted that she (Ms. Cotman) was teaching in a three-room school at Parrish Hill. According to Rosenwald records at Fisk University, Parrish Hill School cost \$2,675 to build. The African American community provided \$300, county school funds provided \$1,875, and the Rosenwald program contributed \$500.

Records concerning Parrish Hill School are sparse. Early term reports note that the school had a "community league" or a group that helped support and fund the school. The local community appears to have been vocal advocates for the school, and ties between the school and the community were close. School board minutes of 1924 recorded the board's giving permission to use the school for a meeting of "the Negro Organization," perhaps the local league.¹⁰ In January of the following year, teachers and patrons of the school asked the board's permission to use the building for an additional month of teaching at their expense, if the board would or could not pay for it. "The request was granted and the spirit commended."¹¹ The school board also allowed the school to be used temporarily for church services while a new sanctuary for the Parrish Hill Church was completed.¹²

Various African American constituencies continued to meet with county officials to improve communication and advocate for educational issues through the 1920s. School board minutes document meetings with African American clergy members and congregations.¹³ Activists monitored building conditions and made requests for improvement to Parrish Hill's school building, noting the need for a new roof in the fall of 1926.¹⁴ Community members also did not shy from confrontation when they felt the quality of teaching was lacking. In the spring of 1928, a group of parents with children at Parrish Hill School went to the school board to complain about the teachers. They characterized the teachers as uncommunicative and refusing to visit homes within the community or speak to the church or the larger neighborhood. They were concerned that numerous children at the school did not complete seventh grade and complained that teachers often sent students to run personal errands for the teachers. The Parrish Hill School constituency clearly was engaged, active, vocal, and demanded quality education for their children.¹⁵ The African American community around Parrish Hill did not request supplies only of the school board. They continued to contribute as well. In March of 1930, the community raised funds for new library books for the school, in hopes that the school board would match their contribution.¹⁶

⁹ Parrish Hill School Term report, 1918.

¹⁰ School Board Meeting Minutes, March 1924.

¹¹ School Board Meeting Minutes, January 1925.

¹² School Board Meeting Minutes, January 1926.

¹³ School Board Meeting Minutes, July 1926.

¹⁴ School Board Meeting Minutes, October 1926.

¹⁵ School Board Meeting Minutes, April 1928.

¹⁶ School Board Meeting Minutes, March 1930.

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In January 1930, Parrish Hill School had three teachers who taught one-hundred students.¹⁷ The student body expanded in May 1930 when the Sturgeon Point school was closed and first-through third-graders from that school were transferred to Parrish Hill.¹⁸ The teaching force fluctuated, however, as by November 1945, one-hundred students were being taught by two teachers and the school board authorized a third instructor to begin in 1946.¹⁹ The school expanded again in 1949, when the Sandy Hill School closed and its students were transferred to Parrish Hill.²⁰

Although the county's white schools underwent consolidation beginning in the 1920s, schools for African Americans generally continued to be small, overcrowded, scattered, and deficient until at least midcentury. In 1954, the *Richmond Times Dispatch* reported that the school board in Charles City County was anticipating a tax increase to support the consolidation of elementary schools for African American students. A \$165,000 loan from the State Literary Fund would provide cashflow in anticipation of tax revenue. The plan had the support of the Charles City Citizens Association (White) and the Civic League (Black). A consolidated school at the site of Barnetts School would replace the existing Barnetts School, Wayside, Little Elam, Union Baptist, Kimages, Woodburn, and Alpine schools. The schools to be replaced comprised thirteen classrooms and served 446 students. The school board hoped to consolidate Parrish Hill into a complex at Ruthville "in the near future."²¹

Union Baptist, Woodburn, Little Elam, and Wayside closed in June of 1957. Their students transferred to the enlarged Barnetts School and the closed school buildings were slated to be sold. Kimages School was closed as well, but the building was retained to be repurposed as a community center. In the fall of 1957, Parrish Hill was one of only three schools for African Americans operating in the county, along with the consolidated elementary school at Barnetts and the Ruthville complex. Parrish Hill was planned to be shuttered after further improvements were made at Ruthville.

Parrish Hill closed after the 1958-59 school session. Although it was sold in September of 1959, it was pressed back into service briefly to house students displaced by a January 1960 fire at the Ruthville School. Parrish Hill was the last of the Rosenwald Schools in Charles City County to cease operation. It was privately owned until the county government purchased it in 2021.

The Parrish Hill School meets the registration requirements outlined in the Rosenwald Schools in Virginia Multiple Properties Document, namely:

To be eligible, a Rosenwald school in Virginia must have been built between 1917 and 1932 utilizing funds provided personally by Julius Rosenwald or the Julius Rosenwald Fund. The extant schools will also meet registration requirements because of their design, floor plans, workmanship and materials. Stylistics details are minimal, although some

¹⁷ School Board Meeting Minutes, January 1930.

¹⁸ School Board Meeting Minutes, May 1930.

¹⁹ School Board Meeting Minutes, November 1945.

²⁰ Carter, "The Development of Education for Negroes in Charles City County," 24.

²¹ Anonymous, "Charles City Will Build New School," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, January 14, 1954.

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County and State schools display Craftsman or Colonial Revival influences. In general, to qualify for registration, the schools should retain their original location in a rural setting and the design, floor plans, workmanship and materials that evoke their period of construction and the conditions of the time. They should retain a high degree of architectural integrity. The integrity of their association and feeling is greatly bolstered by their rural setting. Nevertheless, Rosenwald schools nominated solely under Criterion A for Education and Ethnic History do not have to possess as high a degree of integrity as those school buildings which are also nominated under Criterion C for Architecture.²²

Criterion C: Architecture

The Parrish Hill School the school follows a "two teacher" standard plan developed by architect Samuel L. Smith, a director of the Rosenwald Fund. It follows the design found in Community School Plans Bulletin No. 3 issued in 1924. The plan includes two classrooms, each with a cloak room and separate entrance vestibule, and an industrial room. The classrooms are lit by large banks of windows which also allow for good ventilation, and the classrooms themselves are relatively large. The design and construction requirements issued by the Rosenwald program were a departure from typical schools for Black children in that period in terms of quality and appearance. Despite some minor alterations the Parrish Hill school conforms to the published Rosenwald design and retains a high degree of integrity.

²² Bryan Clark Green, "Rosenwald Schools," Virginia National Register Multiple Properties Document, 2004.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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Charles City County, VA County and State

Name of Property gP1zYJFbs-3avZ4Sd3fdY45Q4-ZirOtqfstoJXPx2QPt2Uexj1G4XgvUpje3IEXJ1G46689fu2MCmR1c

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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:

- X State Historic Preservation Office
- ____ Other State agency
- _____ Federal agency
- ____ Local government
- _____ University
- X_Other

Name of repository: <u>Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richard M.</u> Bowman Center for Local History, Charles City County_____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): ____018-0165____

Parrish Hill Rosenwald School Name of Property Charles City County, VA County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property ______.77_____

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84:_____

1. Latitude: 37.335608° Longitude: -77.051478°

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is all of Charles City County tax parcel 54-7 as found in the Charle s City County On-line GIS map, noted June 24, 2024.

(https://charlescityvagis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=2b70fc5f91794 787b0d934ce43724a36)

Boundary Justification

The boundary encompasses all of the land associated with the property owned by the county. The parcel was re-measured in 2017 per tax records and found to be .77 acres. The boundary includes the property's historic setting and all known associated historic resources have been included within the nominated area's boundary.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: <u>Mary Ruffin Hanbury</u>			
organization:Hanbury Preservation Co	nsulting		
street & number:P.O. Box 6049			
city or town: _Raleigh	state: <u>NC</u>	zip code:	_27628
e-mail_maryruffin@hanburypreservation.co	om		
telephone:_(919) 828-1905			
date: June 24, 2024			

Parrish Hill Rosenwald School Name of Property Charles City County, VA County and State

Photo Log Parrish Hill Rosenwald School Charles City County, Virginia Mary Ruffin Hanbury January 25, 2024

Exterior, façade, view to WSW Photo 1 of 21

Exterior, S vestibule, view to S Photo 2 of 21

Exterior, S elevation, view to N Photo 3 of 21

Exterior, SW corner, view to NE Photo 4 of 21

Exterior, NE corner, view to WSW Photo 5 of 21

Exterior, N vestibule, view to SW Photo 6 of 21

Exterior, N vestibule, view to NW Photo 7 of 21

Exterior, façade, view to SW Photo 8 of 21

Exterior, belfry view to WSW Photo 9 of 21

Interior, industrial room, view to SSE Photo 10 of 21

Interior, S classroom, view to N Photo 11 of 21 Interior, S classroom, view to SE Photo 12 of 21

Interior, S classroom, view to S Photo 13 of 21

Interior, S classroom, view to W Photo 14 of 21

Interior, S classroom, trim & materials detail at entrance, view to NE Photo 15 of 21

Interior, S cloakroom, view to SE Photo 16 of 21

Interior, N classroom, view to NW Photo 17 of 21

Interior, N classroom, view to SSE Photo 18 of 21

Interior, N classroom, view to SE Photo 19 of 21

Interior, N classroom, view to E Photo 20 of 21

Interior, N cloakroom, trim detail, view to SE Photo 21 of 21

Parrish Hill Rosenwald School

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Figures

Figure 1: "Floor Plan No. 20, Two Teacher Community School, To Face East or West Only" from Rosenwald Foundation *Bulletin No. 3*, 1924

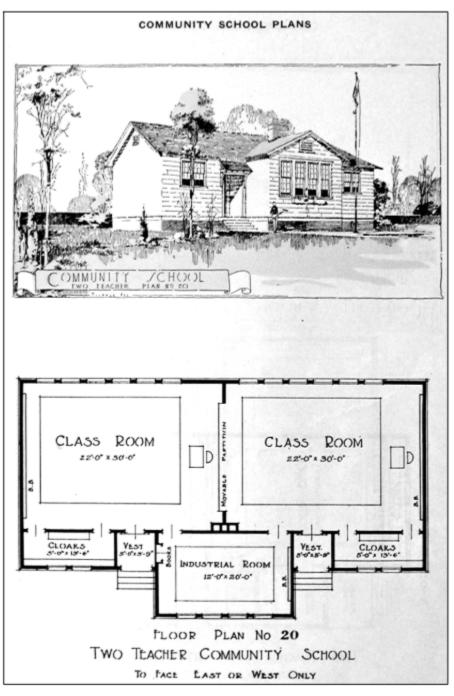


Figure 1

Sections 9-end page 17

Name of Property

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

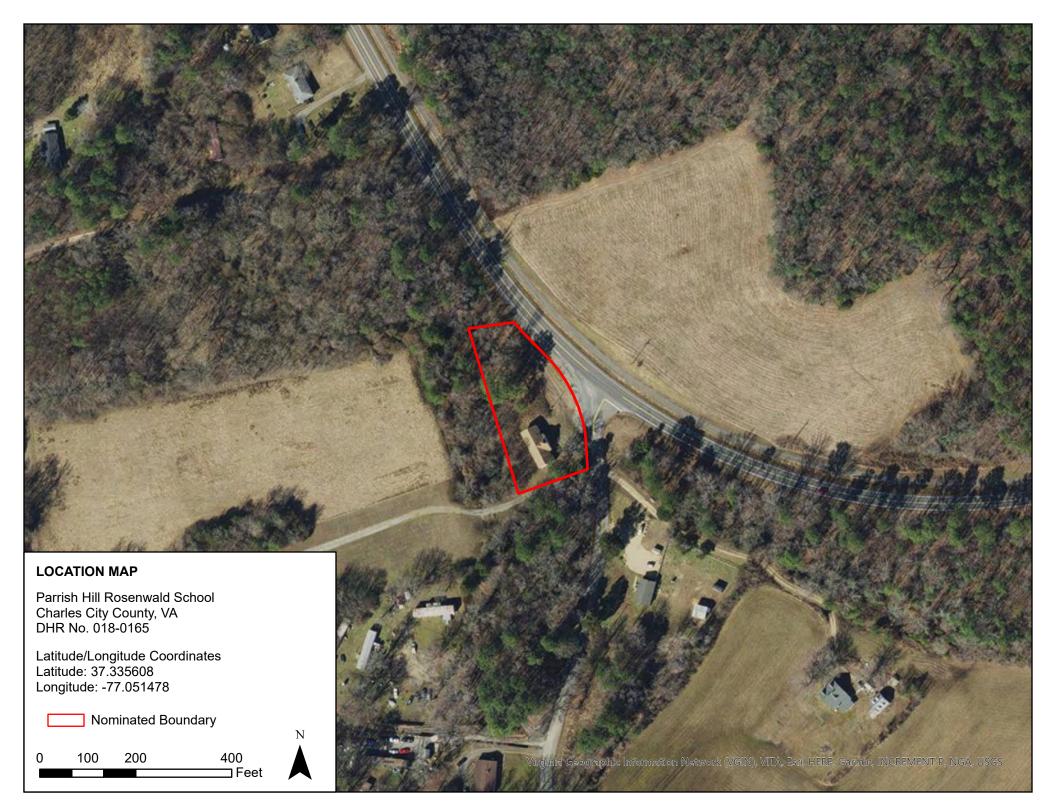
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

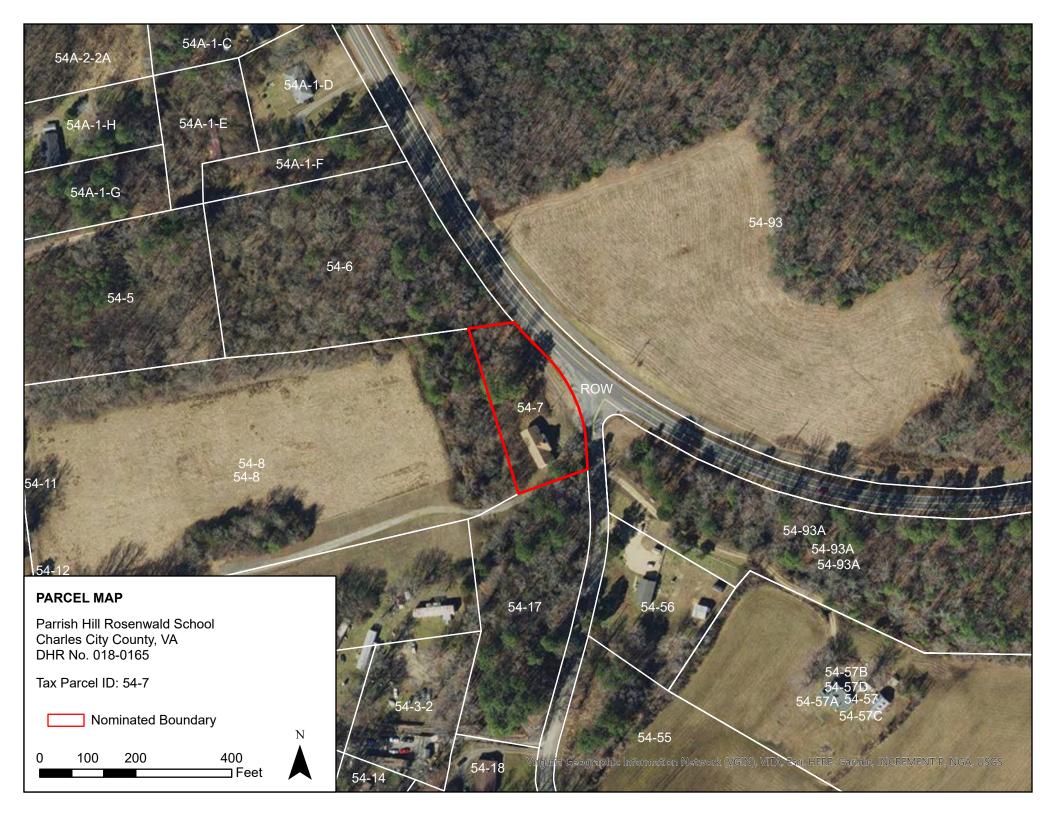
Tier 1 - 60-100 hours Tier 2 - 120 hours Tier 3 - 230 hours Tier 4 - 280 hours

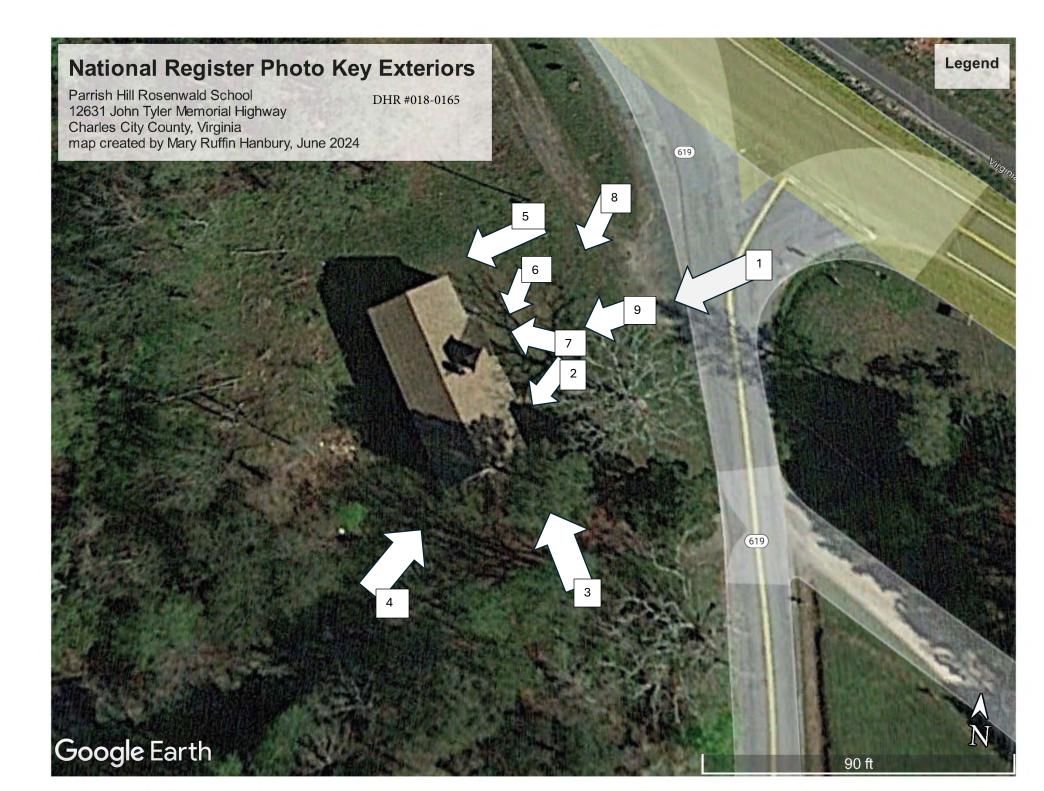
The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201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

Charles City County, VA

County and State







National Register Photo Key Interiors Parrish Hill Rosenwald School - 018-0165 12631 John Tyler Memorial Highway Charles City County, Virginia Map created by Mary Ruffin Hanbury, June 2024 Adapted from Rosenwald plan, not entirely to scale

