

National Register Coordinator, Jenn Broz reviewed the report and offers the following comments.

Additional construction history:

We recommend clarifying the date of construction for the gymnasium as well as the addition or “furnace room.”

- According to the report, voters approved a bond to fund construction in 1936, but it is unclear what the actual construction date was for the gym.
- The report does not approximate a date for the addition or indicate whether it is historic or more recent. Without documentation regarding the addition, if someone requests to demolish or alter that portion of the building, it may be difficult to make a justifiable decision to delay demolition as it is unclear if the addition is historic and contributes to the special character of the property.

MATERIALS

- It is unclear if the original multi-pane windows were originally wood or metal. Please update the report to include this information.
- It is unclear if the original roof was metal. The report should be revised to document the original roof materials.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

- The report states the gymnasium has special local significance because it “broke with tradition and was a bold and locally unique expression of pre-World War Two non-revivalist gymnasium design.” We recommend bolstering the argument for architectural significance to include a more detailed explanation about the building’s style and why it’s important, especially to Mecklenburg County.
 - The report tells us what the building *is not* (i.e. not “revivalist”) but does not specify what it *is*.
 - The physical description mentions several “references to classism.” The building appears to be an example of “stripped classism,” a prevalent design choice for depression-era architecture. This style took pre-depression-era classism and reinterpreted it to new ends. Likewise, over-scaled Classical forms were often utilized as it stripped the Classical language to its simplest possible underlying geometry and then sleekly elaborated with the barest of moldings and the slightest projections and recessions.

INTEGRITY

The report does not appear to contain information addressing how the property possesses requisite integrity for designation as a local landmark. The designation application requires the applicant to address integrity of design, setting, workmanship, materials, feelings, and/or association. However, none of these aspects were analyzed in the application. Further, the application simply states, “the physical description demonstrates that it meets this criterion.” A list of physical features is not an analysis of how the property retains requisite integrity to convey its special local significance. Thus, we recommend the report be updated to address all aspects of integrity.

For example:

- Setting: The high school does not exist, and the gym is part of a different campus. How does this affect integrity of setting, feeling, and association?
- Changes to exterior material: The windows were altered at an unknown date, not in keeping with the original windows. It is unclear whether the roof was originally metal. A proper analysis of a property's integrity should answer these questions about material changes over time.
- Changes to interior spaces or materials: We do not have dated or cited documentation regarding the interior. Does the interior still convey significance as a gymnasium? Gymnasiums typically feature an open plan, with historic flooring on the ball court, bleachers on the sides, occasionally balcony seating, ticket area, concession area, locker rooms for each team, and some have a raised stage at one end with associated dressing rooms or staging areas. **As the report does not provide information about these character-defining features for this building-type, it's difficult to determine whether the building has the requisite integrity to convey its special local significance.**

The report should be revised to account for changes to materials that occurred over time and provide a statement of integrity that addresses *each of the seven aspects* of integrity. The integrity statement should also include a specific *analysis* of *how* (or whether) the property retains the collective historic integrity required to convey its significance.