

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Douglass School
Bristol, VA

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Summary

The Douglass School, located at 711 Oakview Street, was built in 1921. Additions were added to the building c. 1929 and in 1963. All parts of the building are brick veneer with a flat roof. Some architectural changes were made to the original building at the time of later additions.

Site Description

The 1921 Douglass School building is situated on a corner of Oakview at a five-points intersection near downtown Bristol, Virginia-Tennessee. The site is 1.879 acres. The school building is close to the street on all sides and encircled by a concrete sidewalk. A short concrete path leads from the corner to the front entrance. The site was not originally considered desirable but "as the years passed, the spot was leveled and graded, grass sown, shrubbery and trees tastefully planted, until it became a desirable campus."¹

Across Oakview Street is a large cluster of white apartments stretching down the street. A small day care sits at the corner. This is the Johnson Court government housing complex. Moving counter-clockwise around the intersection along Moore St. are some commercial or industrial buildings and more clustered apartment buildings. In the final pie-shaped corner block around the five-point intersection are some small single-family homes and a brick church. Lee Highway forms the boundary on the west side of the school.

The Douglass School occupies most of the block on which it sits. As the block widens going back along Oakview and Lee Highway. The original building faces the corner with the earliest addition situated along the highway behind the original building. The larger addition from 1963 projects at an angle to the east side of the building, along Oakview. Parking is provided along Oakview Street and in a large lot behind the building additions. A public park with tennis courts continues behind the lot and a small fenced jungle gym area sits behind the 1963 addition.

Exterior

The Douglass School stands two stories in height and rests upon a raised foundation. The original school building was completed in 1921. The brick façade is divided into three bays. Side bays feature bands of glazed brick headers that form a decorative rectangular pattern. Corners of the design are anchored with decorative concrete squares. A row of header bricks forms a water table atop a concrete foundation. The brick is laid in a 5-1 common bond, and the newer brick parapet was added later. The two brick bays flank the central bay that features a large rectangular panel of glass block above the pedimented entrance. Concrete surrounds the recessed glass block panel. The original building had steps elevated to a main entrance on the first floor. This entrance was later changed to simple double metal doors covered by a single-gabled pediment entering on the ground floor. Before this change, a set of straight-run concrete stairs carried students up to the first floor into a recessed arched entry. Pilasters framed the stairway, arch and windows. In 1963, these pilasters were covered by the current concrete surround. At the same time the glass block panel and flat roof were added. The flat roof replaced the original low, hipped roof. A brick parapet, capped with concrete coping, was added also.

The double window of the façade matched those along both side elevations; paired six-over-six pierces the second story above the original arched entry. Banks of six-over-six, double-hung wooden sash windows pierce each story of both the east and west elevations. A metal lintel with bolts provides a detail

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over the windows. There are two brick chimneys symmetrically located one on each side of the original building.

Two additions were made to the original school building. The first was built c. 1929, as seen in two photographs from that date. It was a two-story, brick addition made along the south elevation. This addition is approximately 12 feet shorter than the original building. It is constructed with brick veneer in a 5-1 common bond. Originally it had a low-hipped roof and six-over-six windows. The original roof has been replaced with a flat roof. The original windows were double six-over-six double-hung windows. They are now fitted with wooden vertical boards with two small window openings in the center of the original opening.

The final addition was made in 1963. Added along the west elevation, this brick addition stands two-stories high and has a flat roof. A concrete foundation of approximately four feet blends into the 7-1 common bond brick veneer. Banks of metal, hopper-style windows fill the north and south elevations. Large rectangular panels of glass block surmount double-leaf entries into two locations in the north elevation. A double-leaf entry in the east elevation is flanked by sidelights and capped with a transom. A set of hopper-style windows penetrates the second story of the east elevation directly above the entry.

Interior

The current configuration of the school's first floor interior houses the former workroom and coal storage as well as boys and girls dressing rooms in the original building. The former gym, stage and present ballroom are in the 1930's addition. The later wing houses the kitchen, cafeteria and various classrooms. The entire second floor has classrooms and administrative offices.

The configuration of original building and the 1930's addition will be primarily intact. The corridor of the large, later addition will remain and apartments will exist where classrooms were.