

Buford Public School Auditorium Listed in National Register

ATLANTA (August 18, 2009) – The Buford Public School Auditorium, located in Buford in Gwinnett County, was listed in the National Register on August 5, 2009. The property owner sponsored the nomination and prepared the nomination materials.

Buford, a small industrial town, was laid out along the Southern Railway line that runs through the center of town. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Allen family owned substantial real estate holdings and a number of manufacturing plants in town including a tannery, saddle and harness factory, and shoe and horse collar factory. As the town prospered, a bond issue was approved in 1905 for a new school for \$4,000, a waterworks for \$6,000, and \$10,000 for an electrical system. The two-story, brick Buford Public School, completed in 1908 from these funds, served as the grammar school and high school until 1922, when a two-story brick high school building was built adjacent to the grammar school.

Then in 1926, the Buford Public School Auditorium was built at the head of Church Street (now called Little Mill Road). This large, two-story brick auditorium, located adjacent to the grammar school, hosted school events such as plays and assemblies, and community events that included public meetings, political rallies, and dramatic performances and musicals. In 1946 a portion of the auditorium was converted for use as an undersized basketball court. Between 1950 and 1955, a new elementary school, high school, and gymnasium were built on Hill Street in Buford and the Church Street school buildings and auditorium were sold to the public. Today the auditorium is the only surviving building in the school complex.

The Buford Public School Auditorium is significant in the area of education and entertainment/recreation because the auditorium was integral to the education of Buford students for nearly 30 years and because the auditorium was used for community functions through the middle of the 20th century.

The Buford Public School Auditorium is significant in the area of architecture because it is a good representative example of an auditorium that includes the auditorium space, elevated stage, restrooms, ticket window, loggia, and a Renaissance Revival-style arcaded entrance. The side elevations are lined with tall, arched windows. The interior, which retains elements of the most significant spaces, was altered when the building was converted to office, manufacturing, and storage beginning in 1956.

The Historic Preservation Division (HPD) of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources serves as Georgia's state historic preservation office. Their mission is to promote the preservation and use of historic places for a better Georgia. HPD's programs include archaeology protection and education, environmental review, grants, historic resource surveys,

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tax incentives, the National Register of Historic Places, community planning and technical assistance.

The mission of the Department of Natural Resources is to sustain, enhance, protect and conserve Georgia's natural, historic and cultural resources for present and future generations, while recognizing the importance of promoting the development of commerce and industry that utilize sound environmental practices.

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