

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

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1. Name of Property

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Historic Name: Old Forest Avenue High School (1916)

Other Name/Site Number: James Madison High School THC Survey File: Phase IV-
South Dallas DAL/DA 49

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2. Location

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Street & Number: 3000 Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard

City/Town: Dallas

Not for Publication: N/A

State: TX County: Dallas Code: 113 Zip Code: 75214

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3. Classification

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Ownership of Property: Public

Category of Property: Building

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing
1	buildings sites structures objects
1	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

Name of related multiple property listing:

Historic & Architectural Resources of East and South Dallas

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of Certifying Official

Date

State of Federal Agency or Bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of Commenting or Other Official

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is

- entered in the National Register see continuation sheet.
determined eligible for the National Register see continuation sheet.
determined not eligible for the National Register
removed from the National Register
other (explain):

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic: Education

Sub: School

Current: Education

Sub: School

7. Description

Architectural Classification
Late 19th & 20th Century Revivals

Other Description
Italian Renaissance

Materials: foundation concrete
walls brick
roof unknown
other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

 x See continuation sheet.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria: A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance: Architecture

Period(s) of Significance: 1916

Significant Dates: 1916

Significance Person: N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: W.P. Ittner, architect

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

 x See continuation sheet.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Historic Context List of References

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 #

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: 3.4 acres

UTM References: Zone/Easting/Northing Zone/Easting/Northing

A	B
C	D

Verbal Boundary Description

Addition: Winchester Place Block: all of 12/1362 Lot: All

Boundary Justification

Property includes area historically associated with structure.

11. Form Prepared By

Name/Title: Daniel Hardy, Project Director
 Terri Myers, Historian

Organization: Daniel Hardy,
 Preservation Consultant

Date: July, 1991

Street & Number: 2112 Rio Grande St.

Telephone: 512-478-8014

City or Town: Austin

State: TX Zip: 78705

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7

Old Forest Avenue High School

The Old Forest Avenue High School (1916), at 3000 Martin Luther King Boulevard, is a massive 3-story institutional building that displays Italian Renaissance architectural features. With a rectangular plan, the building has brick exterior walls and a flat roof. The Palladian-like facade is distinguished by a large central bay that rises one-half story above the rest of the building. The school is in a mostly residential neighborhood that includes domestic buildings erected in the 1910s and 1920s, and it encompasses an entire city block in the Winchester Place Addition. The school is in good condition and is still used for educational purposes. The only nonhistoric alterations include 1949-50 rear additions and the installation of tinted-glass windows. The addition is relatively unobtrusive, and uses bricks that are similar in color to those on the original building. The windows, on the other hand, are an obtrusive element and detract from the building's overall historic character and integrity.

Like most structures in South Dallas, the Old Forest Avenue High School is built on relatively level terrain, although the building is on a grade that is slightly higher than that at the street level. This topographical feature was exploited by the original architects who used it to make the building appear to be more prominently sited. The two front entrances, with their concrete steps and solid brick balustrade, are an indication of the architect's desire for grandeur. Martin Luther King Boulevard (formerly Forest Avenue), which extends in front of the building, is lined with oak trees that are a significant landscaping feature. Concrete lots are to the southwest and southeast of the building.

According to Sanborn maps, the Old Forest Avenue High School is built of reinforced concrete that is faced with brick. The school has a half basement that, together with the siting and architectural detailing, reinforces a sense of importance and grandness to the building, especially on the facade (northwest elevation). The front of the building, which faces onto Martin Luther King Boulevard, has a 5-part Palladian-like arrangement with slightly projecting bays at the ends and in the center. The focus of the facade is the central bay, which is both larger and detailed more elaborately than the rest of the building. The central bay, which has cast-stone quoins, has two

entrances, both of which are framed with attached, cast-stone, Doric columns that support classically inspired entablatures. The second floor has five window openings and each has cast-stone surrounds and decorative balustrades. The outer windows have cast-stone broken pediments. Although the third-floor windows are unadorned, the roof line is distinguished by a cornice and balustrade. The quoins, cornice, and roofline balustrade are echoed on the side bays of the facade. Otherwise, the building is simply detailed.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 8

Old Forest Avenue High School

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The Old Forest Avenue High School (1916), constructed to serve the needs of South Dallas' burgeoning suburban communities in the first decades of the 20th century, is an excellent local example of the Italian Renaissance style and is nominated to the National Register under Criterion C for its architecture. Built on the site of the Rapid Transit Railway barn, the 3-story brick school building served the growing suburban community fostered by the construction of streetcar line through former South Dallas farmlands. Its impressive presence on Forest Avenue (now Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.), relatively unaltered exterior and Italian Renaissance architectural features combine to make Forest Avenue High School a notable South Dallas landmark worthy of recognition.

Dallas' tremendous population increase in the post-depression years following the turn of the century so strained the existing school facilities that school officials began to project physical plant needs for the decades to come. In 1914 it was estimated that Dallas' high school population would increase from a projected 2,801 in 1915 to 8,902 by 1925. Suburban settlement patterns prompted the Dallas School Board president to recommend that sites in the Oak Cliff and South Dallas areas be secured for "a high school building of the standard capacity [to] be forthwith constructed, furnished and installed..." (Schiebel, 1966:56). On July 21, 1915, a building permit was issued for the new high school, which opened for classes in 1916 and held its first graduation ceremony the following year (Schiebel, 1966). The school served the established suburban communities of the Colonial Hill and South Park additions, to the west and south, and the new, prestigious Edgewood Addition (1912) that was being developed in the 2300-2700 blocks of Forest Avenue, South Blvd. and Park Row, to the northwest.

Although E. B. Cauthorn was the first principal of Forest High School, Wylie Parker, who headed the school from 1916 to 1941, is best known and well-remembered by the hundreds of students who passed through the first quarter-century at Forest Avenue High School (Dallas Public Library, vertical files). After World War II, school officials and county taxpayers approved a plan to expand the physical plant at Forest Avenue High and in 1949 construction began on a Junior High School addition, which was a new concept for Dallas. Forest

Avenue High School was to be improved so that South Dallas would have "practically a new plant," according to Dr. David W. Carter, president of the school board (Dallas Morning News, November 17, 1949). Alterations to the original exterior of the building were minimal and do not compromise the building's integrity.

While there was a great influx of people to South Dallas during the post-World War II years, it was concentrated in the growing black community south of Warren Avenue and eventually it began to have an effect on the surrounding white additions of South Park, lower Colonial Hill, and eventually to the Edgewood Addition. By 1956, Forest Avenue High School was "discontinued as a white high school", as was Silberstein Elementary (now Charles B. Rice School), three years earlier. Some of the Forest Avenue High School alumni and members of the Dad's Club of the Parent Teacher Association petitioned the school board to discontinue the school name, colors, and emblem, as well, so that they would not be associated with a "Negro" school. The school board complied with their wishes and the school was renamed James Madison High School (Dallas Times Herald, June 22, 1956). Board president, Dr. Edwin L. Rippy, said that public opinion in the area was the deciding influence in the matter (Times Herald June, 21, 1956). Ironically, when students and parents requested a second name change in the 1970s to honor Dr. Martin Luther King, the Dallas school trustees refused their request and explained that they didn't rename schools at the pleasure of the public.

The first principal of James Madison High School was Dr. Thomas Tolbert, a man noted for his community involvement who still resides in the area on South Boulevard. Even though Dallas schools officially desegregated in the 1960s, James Madison High School's student body is overwhelmingly of African American descent. The Old Forest Avenue High School, one of Dallas' oldest surviving high school buildings, is an outstanding and well-maintained example of Italian Renaissance architecture, and retains its original features to a remarkable degree. Further, it is a testament to Dallas' suburban expansion and changing demographic composition in the first half of the 20th-century.

The Italian Renaissance style was a little-used architectural style in Dallas during the early 20th century, and still fewer examples have survived. The Old Forest Avenue High School is an outstanding local example of the Italian Renaissance style, and it retains its historic integrity to a high degree. While many of Dallas' other historic schools have been changed considerably since their original construction, the Old Forest Avenue High School is noteworthy for its lack of substantial changes.

