



UNIVERSITY of WEST FLORIDA

HISTORIC TRUST



Mr. Joey Harrell
Assistant Superintendent
Administrative Services
Santa Rosa County School District
6544 Firehouse Road
Milton, FL 32507

January 4, 2018

Dear Mr. Harrell,

As the Historic Preservationist for the UWF Historic Trust, I toured the Jay High School Auditorium on January 3, 2018 to evaluate the historic significance of the building. On this visit, the primary focus was to assess the architectural significance and not the cultural significance. Determining cultural significance requires extensive research to show how the building has influenced, hosted, or contributed to the importance of the larger community. As a public school in a small town that has been around since the 1940s, the potential for cultural significance is likely, but additional research is needed.

The building as it stands today has been heavily modified since it was built in the late 1940s. Almost all of the interior has been changed, with no original seats remaining, plaster walls and wood flooring covered, and a drop ceiling installed. The only potential original feature is the wood proscenium around the opening of the stage that has the correct detailing for the period. Looking under the stage, the framing is modern and plywood has been used as the sub-floor for the wood flooring. This would suggest that the stage has been rebuilt or partially repaired in the recent past.

A future restoration of the interior will be challenging as large mechanical equipment and electrical upgrades have punctured walls and ceilings. The drop ceiling has also potentially damaged the original ceiling, as hundreds of anchors are needed to support the drop ceiling. At the time of the visit, access above the drop ceiling was not possible, but a small area could be seen where ceiling tiles were missing. The interior is also missing the original light fixtures, doors, and other important smaller details.

The exterior has relatively remained untouched, with the exception of a new roof, entry canopy, and storm windows. The simple brick exterior is in decent condition, but needs repointing work. The original wood windows remain and the wood frames and sashes appear to be in good condition. The window openings have storm windows and metal flashing over the wood trim. This condition has the potential to ruin the wood underneath the metal. All of the exterior doors have been replaced with modern doors that do not match the architectural style of the building. The original entry canopy has



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been removed and an inappropriate metal canopy has been installed. The roof has been replaced and the fascia and soffit has been coved with vinyl and metal flashing. The building as it sits on the campus, does not retain the same relationship as it originally had with the two flanking school buildings built at the same time. Modern infill has blocked the main façade of the auditorium and metal canopies cover the sidewalks.

The Jay High School Auditorium has a few good architectural elements, but the majority of the buildings has been heavily modified. The changes that have occurred have resulted in a loss of architectural elements that are required to qualify the building as architecturally significant. With this said, even if the building was to be restored, the interior would be a complete reconstruction. The exterior would also require major work to the roofline and entry canopy that would need to be reconstructed. If the goal is to keep the building functional, the entire exterior needs to be repointed and the windows need to be restored and/or rebuilt to be more energy efficient. The building as a whole has significant energy efficiency problems, which will require further modifications to the interior and exterior. A substantial amount of funding will be needed to undertake building improvements or a full restoration.

This assessment only looked at the physical building and my recommendation is that additional research is needed to determine the cultural significance. If you or the community have any questions regarding this assessment of questions about the building, please contact me.

Thank you,

Ross Pristera
Historic Preservationist