

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

## 1. Name of Property

historic name Bridgeport School  
other names/site number FR-404

## 2. Location

street & number 555 Bridgeport Road

NA
NA

 not for publication  
city or town Bridgeport vicinity  
state Kentucky code KY county Franklin code 073 zip code 40422

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national  statewide  local

Signature of certifying official/Title Craig Potts/SHPO Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Kentucky Heritage Council/State Historic Preservation Office**  
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register  determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register  removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Action \_\_\_\_\_

## 5. Classification

Bridgeport School  
Name of Property

Franklin, KY  
County and State

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

**Category of Property**  
(Check only **one** box.)

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	private
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
		district
		site
		structure
		object
1	0	<b>Total</b>

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Education - School  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Vacant-not in use  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Modern Movement – Art Moderne  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Poured Concrete  
walls: Concrete Block/Brick veneer  
\_\_\_\_\_  
roof: Flat/Coping  
other: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

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**Summary Paragraph:** The Bridgeport Elementary School (FR- ) was built in 1942. It was designed by architect John F. Williams of Lexington, Ky, and subsequently built by Gilson-Taylor Contractors, also of Lexington. It was built in the community of Bridgeport, an area that is about 5 miles west of downtown Frankfort, Kentucky. It was built along the old US 60 Highway, which at the time was one of the most widely traveled roads in the state. The school was built in response to a statewide effort to consolidate the county's one-room schools into larger and more efficient buildings. The school is a two-story building constructed of poured concrete foundation elements, concrete block walls that are clad in a brick veneer. Also, the building has stylistic elements that show the influence of Art Moderne design. The building features a rear ell section that is the gym. The gym was part of a previous school that was on this site, which burned down in the late 1930s. It has a "Quonset" style roof. The building sits on 7.2 acres and the original playground elements no longer exist. The lot has paved areas for parking and there are remnants of a baseball field that remain. There are no other historic resources associated with this site.

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## Narrative Description

### Character of the School Site

Bridgeport is a small community west of Frankfort along the old portion of US 60. The community is comprised of nineteenth and early- to mid-twentieth-century buildings that include residential, religious, and commercial structures. While Bridgeport was largely a farming community, its proximity to Frankfort's west side made it an ideal location for a consolidated school. Many of the back roads that served as access routes to the outer parts of the county had been modernized in the 1920s. Those roads tied back to US 60 in such a way that it made Bridgeport, and the new school, very accessible and convenient for modern buses to transport students. Bridgeport Elementary School was located on 7.2 acres that allowed for an open campus environment with clear visibility in all directions. The lot is a level grade with the school bus egress located in front of the building, while parking for automobiles was placed to the side and back of the building. The school is located roughly in the center of the lot, which has a variety of large trees in the front lawn of the campus (figure 1). The perimeter of the site is also defined by a heavy growth of trees and brush that demarcate its original boundary edge.

### Exterior

The school building is three stories in height, with the first floor partially below grade. There are two major sections to the building that make up its total plan. First: The front elevation (figure 1) is parallel to old US 60, and it is approximately 150' in length. The façade is characterized by a central entrance that is flanked by multiple adjoining bays on both sides that create a symmetrical appearance. The entrance (figure 2) is offset in plane from the flanked linear bays and it features a split-story central door way with concrete steps leading up to the entry landing.

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**Figure 1: View of front elevation**



**Figure 2: Main Entrance**

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The second major element in the plan is a wing of similar construction to the main façade located to the east side of the building that is about 50' in length (figure 3). The wing section is placed at a south-east angle to the front façade (approximately 30°), with a secondary entrance that joins the two sections to form an elbow (figure 4). It too is a split-story entrance with concrete stairs leading to a landing.



Figure 3: Offset wing of the building



Figure 4: "Elbow" Entrance

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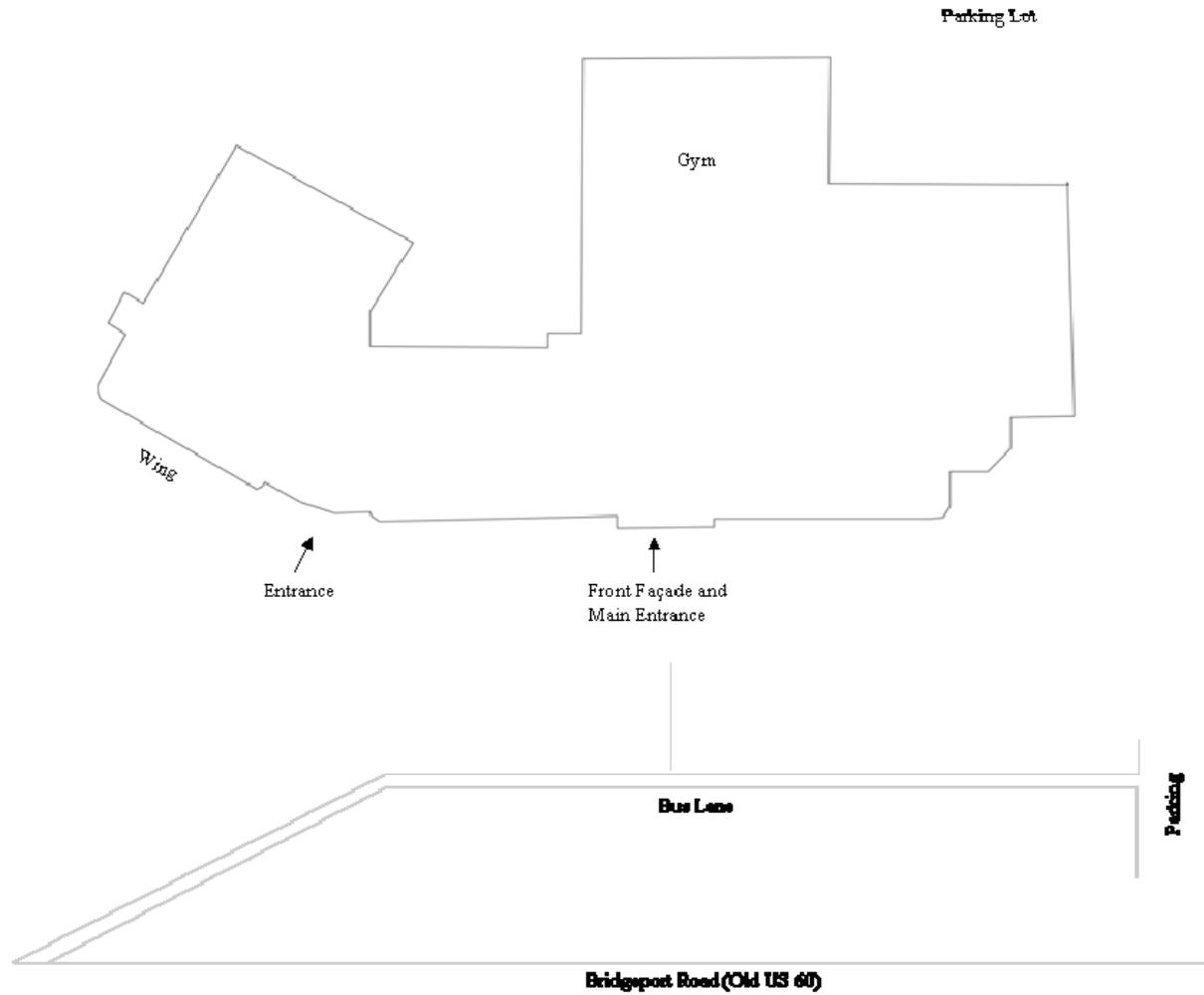


Figure 5: Site Plan

Taken together the front façade and the east wing of the building form an irregular plan that features a compartmentalized, mostly linear form. Each of the three stories repeats its spatial configuration of classrooms, stairwells, hallways, and administrative or service areas. There is a large gym to the rear of the building.

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Figure 6: School Gym, Constructed ca. 1937

The school gym pre-dates the rest of the structure. It was built during the late 1930s as part of another school building that burned down. The structure is a rectangular Quonset Style building with an arched roof that is clad in asphalt shingles. The gym features glass block windows throughout that appear to be original to the structure.

### **Design, Materials, Workmanship**

The school was built in the Art Moderne style that typically featured horizontal orientation, rounded edges, horizontal grooves or lines in the exterior walls, and flat roofs with coping (among other things). Art Moderne was a style that swept the country between 1925-1940 in everything from airplanes, cars, and trains, to boats, campers, and appliances. Like many architectural terms, Art Moderne was widely used to convey any number of industrial schemes that promoted speed and efficiency, with little or no attention given to classical forms. Its guiding principle was “streamlining,” which often introduced smooth edges and sleek surfaces to create an aerodynamic profile. Many examples of Art Moderne structures exist in America (and the world). As an architectural style, it was applied to everything from houses, churches, and diners, to ships, hotels, and auditoriums.<sup>1</sup>

The entire building is constructed using poured concrete foundation floors and walls. The walls are constructed of concrete blocks throughout and the entire building is clad in brick veneer. The roof is flat with coping stones throughout (except the gym), and the building features rounded edges on the front façade and east wing (figure 7). Likewise, there are inset horizontal stones above and below the window sills that run the entire distance of the façade and east wing (figure 8). These are designed to accent the horizontality of the building.

<sup>1</sup> For a good explanation of Art Moderne and to see many examples see:  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Streamline\\_Moderne#In\\_architecture](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Streamline_Moderne#In_architecture)

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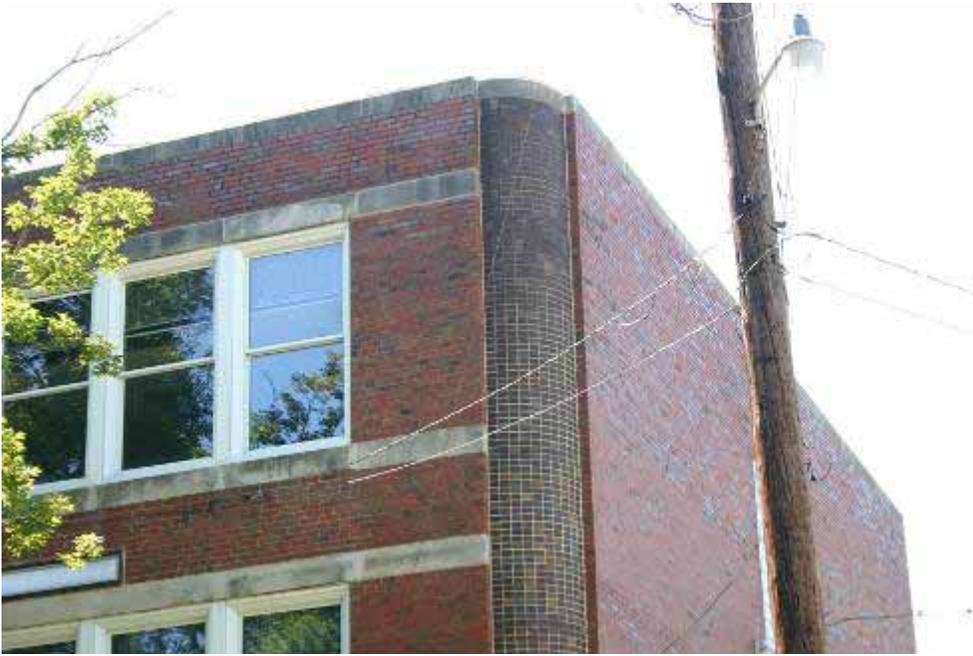


Figure 7: Example of rounded edge, flat roof, and coping.



Figure 8: Horizontal inset stones

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The curvilinear or streamlined design of the building carried over to the stairs on the front and east wing entrances. The walls to the steps are curved to give them a smooth appearance, while the hand rails are bent or contoured tubing. The bricks used in construction are smooth in appearance. The curvilinear forms and smooth edges are key features designed to soften the appearance of the concrete and bricks.



Figure 9: Curved concrete forms, handrails, and brick walls.

## Interior

In architect Wilson's plans, the new building called for three full stories of modern classrooms and other features. The basement had six classrooms that were accessed along a hallway that ran on an east/west axis. The first floor also included a kitchen, maintenance shops and a boiler room. The second floor (main floor of the building) had nine classrooms, the school offices, and a stage/assembly area that was integrated from the old gym.

Wilson's plan carefully included the gym as an extension of his new building. In so doing, and because some of the stylistic features of the new building were consistent with the building that burned, the gym appeared to be original to the new school. The third floor had eleven classrooms and a mechanical room as well. The entire building was fitted with modern bathrooms, lighting, and electricity. The new school was fully consolidated—the third floor housed the senior high students, while the remaining grades were divided between the other floors. The original classrooms spaces, hallways, and general spatial arrangement as intended by Wilson remain intact.

The building was designed in the very popular Art Moderne style. The style emphasized curvilinear forms that Wilson showcased in the rounded edges of the building as well as the concrete stair casements on the exterior. The smooth edges gave relief to the rectilinear effect commonly associated with other forms of modern architecture. Curved lines also gave the building a suggestion of lightness, alluding to aerodynamic and nautical vessels. The style Wilson chose demanded a flat roof that

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used a coping stone to emphasize the horizontal character of the structure. In addition, long horizontal stones were placed the entire length of the building above and below the windows, to further accent the horizontal perspective of the design.

To take the curvilinear form that was popular in Art Moderne a step further, Wilson placed the building (in plan) on a broken axis that introduced a 30 degree bend for the east swing of the building. The setback provided even greater relief for the façade, which tended to be symmetrical and repetitive. The fenestration pattern introduced large openings that were filled in by divided 8-over-8 metal casement windows. Capturing the natural light was part of the building's design efficiency, which forced Wilson to stray away from more popular schemes of Art Moderne illumination that relied on glass blocks, or small portal style windows. The windows did not fully jeopardize the design intent. The building's horizontal accent, rounded edges, and smooth surfaces projected the Art Moderne vocabulary in a way that harmonized with the windows.

### **Changes to the Original Building**

The building has undergone some changes to its original materials and design. All of the windows in the building are modern replacements (with the exception of the gym). The replacement windows are 1-over-1 double-hung vinyl sashes that are paired in groups of five to a wide bay, and two in a narrow bay. Nevertheless, all the fenestration patterns remain intact.

Perhaps the most substantial alterations are to the rear of the building are in the form of additions. The east wing has a modern addition that is a two-story (with a basement), and brick veneer with a flat roof and coping that follows the profile of the original roof. The windows are framed by square concrete blocks and the addition spans the entire rear section of the east wing (figure 10).

There is also a single-story side/rear addition on the west end of the school. That addition introduces a secondary entrance to the side of the building and it too has a flat roof with coping. It extends to the rear of the building and abuts to the gym. Likewise, it has windows that are framed with square concrete blocks that mirror the east wing rear addition.



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**Figure 10: Rear Addition**



**Figure 11: West side addition**

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**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

**Areas of Significance**

Education

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1942-1963

\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1942 Date of Construction

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

NA

\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

NA

\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Wilson, John F. (Architect)

\_\_\_\_\_

Gilson-Taylor Contractors (Builder)

\_\_\_\_\_

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

**Period of Significance (justification)**

The Period of Significance is the span of time from when the Bridgeport School was built and opened until the close of the historic period, 1941-1963. The school continued to be significant within local education for all the years it was open. It closed in 2005.

**Criteria Considerations: NA**

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## Statement of Significance

### Summary Paragraph

The historic Bridgeport School (FR- ) meets National Register Criterion A for its significant role in local education within west Franklin County and the Bridgeport community. The building's historic significance is being evaluated within the context of "Education in Bridgeport, West Franklin County, Kentucky, 1937-1965." Bridgeport has long been a community in Franklin County associated with both public and private schools dating to the early nineteenth century. Over time, the Franklin County School Board met the challenges of changing needs in education through the erection and maintenance of its public school facilities in the community. Specifically, the Bridgeport School remains as a physical reminder that shows us how the overall efforts made to improve Kentucky's schools and its education system materialized at the local level in Bridgeport. Those in Franklin County, and the community of Bridgeport celebrated the school as a beacon of hope for the future of their children, and for the advancement of Kentucky's citizens in the modern age. Additionally, the Bridgeport School exhibits a high degree of integrity, sufficient to convey its original design, materials, and workmanship, as well as its historic association, setting, and feeling.

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### Historic Context: Education in Bridgeport, Franklin County, Kentucky, 1860-1963

#### Research Findings:

This nomination of Bridgeport School drew upon Kennedy and Johnson's *Kentucky Historic Schools Survey: An Examination of the History and Condition of Kentucky's Older School Buildings* (Kentucky Heritage Council, 2002). The authors may have intended their study to perform as a Multiple Property Submission, but they did not formally submit the study to National Register evaluation. The study offers much to help evaluating the significance of a local school, so it was consulted in this study. It is useful to explain how the Bridgeport School fits into that study, as well as how the school fits into the Bridgeport community within western Franklin County. While the Bridgeport School was not specifically part of the 2002 study, many of its attributes fit into the categories of analysis that were used for the study.

The KHC study draws attention to the earliest patterns for Kentucky's efforts (or lack thereof) to educate its population from 1800-1950s. In so doing, it described those efforts to be primarily the responsibility of the local community. The history of schools in Bridgeport certainly fits that model. Specifically, Bridgeport is an example of a community that emphasized a system of open education before statewide efforts occurred in 1906 to centralize public education through a matrix of districts that were controlled by a single body of county officials. Bridgeport's origins are rooted in Kentucky's settlement era, yet the community established a school as early as the 1820s. From that time, until the Bridgeport School closed in 2005, there has been one or more public and/or private schools that have served citizens of western Franklin County in Bridgeport. The earliest public schools were funded by subscription, which relied on private citizens to donate time and money for the public benefit of education. It is not known for certain who attended those early schools. Some of Bridgeport's 19<sup>th</sup> century schools were strictly for women, however, later efforts to facilitate education in Bridgeport placed a local tax on its citizens for the benefit of improved schools for all.

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Kennedy and Johnson also examine the transformation of public education through the Progressive Era into the early twentieth century. Kentucky embarked on efforts to consolidate county schools into a single bureaucracy that promoted professional standards for teachers and broader taxation measures. The Bridgeport community experienced numerous changes to its school system as statewide efforts were made to standardize and expand the influence of public education. As the 1920s dawned, Bridgeport was fully integrated into the county-wide matrix of school districts (it was district No. 23) that were controlled by county officials. Likewise, the community had its first Progressive educator, G. D. Henley, who brought standardized instruction to the schools in Bridgeport. Bridgeport had been a functional school district in the county for many decades, with a reputation for supporting public education long before state support mechanisms were in place.

Kennedy and Johnson described the 1930s as a time when Kentucky schools underwent their first large-scale attempts to consolidate. The effort to consolidate brought with it Federal programs that were aimed at constructing new, larger and certainly more efficient buildings. According to the study, 132 new schools and 37 gymnasiums were built in Kentucky from 1937-1939. In 1937, Bridgeport received a new, consolidated school that was organized and funded through the Division of Operations for the Works Progress Administration. Additionally, the school received a gymnasium. Unfortunately, that school burned down in 1941, leaving only the gym standing (implying that it may have been a stand-alone structure).

Kennedy and Johnson also describe many aspects of school design that were features of the WPA era. Specifically, the schools that were built during this period in Kentucky (and elsewhere) featured design elements of Art Deco combined with emerging "Streamlined" or Art Moderne elements. The blended styles came to be known as WPA Moderne. While the exact details of the school that burned down are not known, we can tell from the gym that it was in the WPA Moderne style. The gym featured a large arched roof, glass block windows, false pilasters with decorative coping, and smooth surfaces. Those features were characteristic of WPA Moderne buildings. Despite nationwide setbacks in construction of schools during WWII, Bridgeport was able to replace the burned building with another Art Moderne structure, which is the subject of this nomination.

Kennedy and Johnson explained the struggle that many Kentucky school systems went through to desegregate the public schools. Despite the 1954 ruling in *Brown vs. The Board of Education*, Kentucky's dual school system was slow to integrate as a rule. It was not until the mid-1960s that about 95 percent of the state's schools had accomplished integration. Bridgeport was something of an exception to that rule. While it is not known for certain the exact date of integration for the Bridgeport School, a copy of the 1957 yearbook clearly features black students, although very few in number. Again, Bridgeport appears to have led the way for desegregation in western Franklin County, and perhaps most of the state at that time.

The study generalizes many common characteristics of Kentucky's public schools. In so doing it suggests that there are two basic kinds of historic schools in the state. One type are the schools which underwent steps to improve their building over time, which led to an association of permanence within its school district. This was the case with the Bridgeport School, which received some additions and alterations to the windows, as a well as improvements to the interior of the building over time. The school was declassified in 2005 and sold to private individuals. The other type of school identified by

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Kennedy and Johnson are those buildings that have undergone little or no maintenance or repairs, and are abandoned or in a state of ruin.

The study featured only one school in Franklin County—the Franklin County High School, 1925—and nearly all were built in the 1920s. Additionally, the study included only one WPA school—Morgan County High School, 1937. That school was built using local stone and timbers, and it appears to have WPA Moderne design elements. It is this nomination author’s belief that the Bridgeport School complements the KHC study in a couple of ways. The building was built in the 1940s, and it is a very good example of the Art Moderne style of design. In those ways, it adds to the study’s ability to showcase community schools from periods beyond the 1920s and 1930s, in particular in Franklin County. The Bridgeport School meets the eligibility requirements mentioned in the study. Because it is being evaluated under Criterion A, for its association with education in Bridgeport and western Franklin County, it fits within the statewide context provided in the study. Likewise, it meets the standard eligibility requirements set forth by the National Park Service.

### **Historic Overview of Bridgeport, Kentucky**

The community of Bridgeport is located about five miles west from downtown Frankfort. The rural settlement of Bridgeport was located along the “Big Road” which was a vital transportation and trade route that linked Frankfort, Shelbyville, and Louisville together. The community was not unlike other small settlement pockets throughout the state. It featured taverns, and a general store with various residences and specialty shops to service the community’s needs.

The beginning of land acquisitions in the Bridgeport area was first acquired by William Armstrong, who made an entry for 300 acres on the Kentucky River, March 6, 1781. Governor Benjamin Harrison of Virginia approved this grant on the Little Benson and the stream became known as Armstrong’s Branch. The second grant was issued to Sherman Nunnery on August 9, 1785 for 773 acres. The northern section of the Nunnery grant is what became village of Bridgeport. As property was sold or deeded to heirs, successive generations remained in the area and sustained the community as it grew.

In 1810, the Franklin County Court passed a motion to build a bridge over the south fork of Benson Creek, in an attempt to stabilize the transportation route and improve travel conditions. From that time on, the community was known as “Bridgeport.” In 1817, with a good bridge over the creek and a more substantial road, James Johnson established the first stage coach line in the community, known as the Old Line and the Opposition Line. Bridgeport, because of its location, had become a routine rest stop for people traveling to Louisville. By 1826, the area was well established with taverns, livery stables, and other amenities. A post office was established in 1837, and in 1848, an act was passed by the state legislature incorporating Bridgeport as a town, not to exceed more than fifty acres. John Jenkins, Frederick Robb and H. Edwards were appointed trustees. Some of the leading citizens were chosen as magistrates and constables.

While Bridgeport continued to grow during the antebellum period, it lacked a public school, as did most early-nineteenth-century Kentucky towns. Children from Kentucky’s wealthiest families usually employed a household tutor to educate their children, while others of middle income status often sent their children to private schools in nearby locations. One wealthy farmer in the Bridgeport area, Charles Julian, hired a private tutor for his family, but most Bridgeport residents could afford neither tutors nor private schools, and there were no public schools sustained by local taxes at the time. Much of the

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“formal” education for local citizens of Bridgeport fell to the churches, which were sure to provide the moral and biblical training that was expected at that time.

Disturbed by the lack of available education, Charles Julian, along with others, organized a subscription school in 1820 that drew in folks from the Bridgeport community (known then as Lower Benson Creek). The school relied on volunteers to serve short, three-to-four month terms beginning in August through November. The local Presbyterian Church served as the school house for Bridgeport until the middle of the nineteenth century.

During the time that the subscription school operated in Bridgeport, strides were being made by the state to establish a “literary fund” for common schools. In 1821, Kentucky received a one million dollar gift from the federal government from the sale of public lands for the purpose of investing into the public schools. By 1838, public law mandated the establishment of district schools with administrative officers at both the state and local levels. It was stipulated that no district could receive money until a school building was erected and a local tax was implemented to support the school financially. Together the local tax and the state allotment would meet the expenses of the school.

Bridgeport’s proximity to Frankfort, the state’s capital, certainly benefitted its overall fortunes. In 1847, Dr. Robert J. Breckinridge was appointed the state’s new education superintendent. A leader with a national reputation in education, Breckinridge moved forward with the establishment of school districts, which had not made much progress in the years following the mandate. Within a few short years, Bridgeport had met the prerequisites for local taxation and was designated as Franklin County’s 29<sup>th</sup> school district. Following the inspiration and leadership of the new superintendent, William Hall made an application in March, 1851, on behalf of the citizens of Bridgeport to build its first common school. The application was approved locally and the school was built.

According to one source, the school building was completed in 1851 and it was a one-room building that measured 18’ x 22’. The school served Bridgeport and the surrounding area for a distance of about a mile in all directions. The first teacher at the school was a man named Andrew Hershiser from Virginia, and many others followed after him. By all accounts the school was very successful and remained in service throughout the rest of the nineteenth century.

The public school effort was only one aspect of Bridgeport’s ability to attract and facilitate education for the citizens of western Franklin County. An early female institute was established in the 1830s, called the Belle Collins or “Beautiful Hill” finishing school. That school burned down in the mid-1850s. Afterward, the Bridgeport Female Institute was established in the 1850s, but it failed after only a couple of years due to lack of funding.

Nevertheless, in the fall of 1865, another private school for young ladies took its place and adopted the name of “The Lattice School”, so named for the lattice features on the front porch of the building. It served as a boarding and day school for mostly high school ages, but eventually it accepted all age groups. Once it began accepting all ages, it received financial assistance from the Franklin County school system until its demise in 1875.

By 1880, the number of grade-school-age children in western Franklin County was on the rise. The one-room public school building was no longer sufficient alone to accommodate the population of

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students. Bridgeport citizens petitioned the Franklin County School Board in July, 1885, for the creation of an additional, larger school. The citizens of the community raised the money to build the school on a lot purchased for three hundred twenty five dollars from a local resident. This was the first school to front the Louisville-Frankfort Pike and a new T-plan wood-framed building was erected, which greatly expanded the public education outreach for west Franklin County. The school house was designed to hold about sixty students and the first classes were held in September, 1885.

In 1893, G. D. Findley became the headmaster of the Bridgeport Public Schools. Findley was responsible for facilitating yet another expansion of the Franklin County public schools facilities. By that time the Bridgeport public schools were an integral part of the community and the numbers of students continued to increase. Findley's effort to build another new school in the 1890s was met with opposition by the local school board. Subsequently, he obtained local funding to erect several additions to the existing school, and widely promoted public education among Bridgeport and western Franklin County citizens. While enrollment increased, Findley became discouraged for the lack of county support; he resigned and started his own professional business school in Frankfort.

During Findley's time as headmaster, he laid the foundation in Bridgeport's public schools for modern high-level public instruction that had become a convention of the industrial age. During the remainder of the 1890s, Bridgeport continued to support its constantly growing public school system that had become more rigidly standardized going into the twentieth century.

The Bridgeport graded public school was torn down in 1912, due to its obsolete condition. In its place, another two-room school was built with subsequent additions that included two halls, six rooms, and three cloakrooms. Likewise, to keep up with increases in west Franklin County's growing population, the county school board purchased a local Presbyterian Church and converted it into a four year High School facility. By 1924, additions to the building expanded it to include more classrooms. By the 1930s, there were two substantial public schools in operation in Bridgeport, and they served the residents of western Franklin County until June, 1937, after which they were sold to private individuals in the community.

The 1930s were a very difficult time for public education in Franklin County and the rest of Kentucky. Governor Ruby Laffoon proposed massive cuts in the state budget, and due to the Great Depression, local tax collections had dramatically fallen from the previous years. Perhaps no other sector of the state budget was affected as severely as education. This prompted school boards to find ways to run the schools more efficiently. Part of the plan was to consolidate the numerous one- and two-room schools into larger buildings that combined both elementary and high schools into the same facilities. Federal programs for relief were introduced all over America through the Work Progress Administration, aimed at building new roads, dams, bridges, and even schools. By the mid-930s, many Kentucky communities were experiencing some relief in their efforts to build new schools and consolidate them. Bridgeport was among them.

Plans for a new brick consolidated school had been approved in the previous year, as Franklin County and many other areas in the state began to implement new streamlined costs and efficiencies in public education. The site chosen for the new consolidated school was an open parcel of pasture land (the current site for this nomination) that fronted the newly improved US 60 Highway. Improved roads and

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advances in transportation meant that buses had long since been hauling students from the western portion of the county to attend the public schools at Bridgeport, which had grown to be an important school district and precinct of the Franklin County government.

Overcrowding was the biggest obstacle to anticipate and overcome as the student population continued to grow. Franklin County's population in 1870 was 15,600. By the 1930s that number had grown to more than 25,000. The population growth was due in part to growing industries and agricultural production, but also the expansion of state government in nearby Frankfort, which rapidly increased by the 1950s. The new school had to be spacious and modern in terms of plumbing, lighting, electricity, and heating. The open lot allowed for easy access to traffic and lots of room for schoolyard activities.

By all accounts, the new school was built in the WPA Moderne style, which combined aspects of Art Deco and Art Moderne elements. It was completed in 1937, but after just three years in operation, the building caught fire and burned down, leaving only the gym as a reminder of its existence. From the design elements that are located on the gym one can clearly see the stylistic features that would have been characteristic of the whole building. The gym has a widely arched roof, glass block windows, smooth bricks, and capped pilasters that were typical in Moderne public buildings often built with WPA support.

By the 1940s, Bridgeport had long been a hub for public education in west Franklin County. The unfortunate demise of its first consolidated school left the community desperate to build a replacement. A decision was made to keep the gym as a testimony to the previous structure, and the new school would have to be grafted onto the gym. By 1941, the replacement building's plans were laid out and the lot was cleared to accept the new building.

### **The Locations of Schools in the Bridgeport Area**

As people in any location began establishing schools, the spatial characteristics associated with the location of these schools would have created "spheres of education", each with unique economic, social, and political attributes that could be explored and compared. Outcomes from such a study might produce patterns that could be used to further and more accurately categorize historic schools based on expanded sets of evaluation criteria. This hypothesis drove a quick study of the locations of historic school locations in Bridgeport, to see if any patterning could be detected. Some of these locations at present are speculative, or simply unlearned. Still, this section of the nomination is included so that what has been learned on this topic could be collected into one place, and used as a model for future efforts on this front.

**1820, tutor on the Julian Farm** – The Julian Family still owns the farm, which celebrated its 200<sup>th</sup> year during the year of this nomination. This form's author spoke with Jane Julian, who resides on the farm. She said that there was a church near the farm, along with some other buildings, none of which are still standing. The sources consulted for this nomination say that the 1820s subscription school that Mr. Julian started was in a Presbyterian Church that was "an old log building" that was eventually replaced (1844-45) by the "Franklin Presbyterian Church." The source seems to suggest the new church was located above of the old one. If that is true, then the 1884 atlas locates a "Franklin Presbyterian Church" very near the Julian farm. This author is not sure if that church is still standing. Finding this early school associated with Julian would require some more research. Its name was the "Lower Benson Creek Subscription School". Ms. Julian has the diary (1830s) of her great-great-great Grandfather Charles, which might mention the school.

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**1830s, Belle Collins:** According to Willard Jilson, this school was located “at the end of a long lane a little over a mile by the road southeast of Bridgeport on land owned in recent years by the late Warren Van Hoose. This author has not been able to corroborate that description with the 1884 atlas, which may indicate it was simply a private lane of no significance when the atlas was made. Anyhow, the school burned down in 1857. Willard Rouse Jilson, a long-time state geologist whose interest led to the publication of many historical studies, said a diploma from this school hung in the Historical Society. His writings were during the 1930s.

**1851, first public school in Bridgeport:** Located on the “Farmdale Road,” which again does not show up on the atlas. One source said this school was demolished.

**1850s, Bridgeport Female Institute:** said to have been located on the “north side of Main Street in Bridgeport”. It was described as a two-story house with the first floor acting as classrooms and the second floor was dorms. It only lasted 2 years and sold. The people who bought the school started another school in 1865 called the Lattice School for girls. In 1880, there was a massive fire in Bridgeport that burned several buildings down, including the Lattice School.

**1885, Public School:** It is believed that this building belongs at present to John Cardwell, who lives in it.

### **The Bridgeport School, 1942-2005**

Following the fire, the Franklin County School Board approved the construction of a new building. The superintendent was Roy True, a long-time education and public school official for the county. Together with the school board that consisted of Lawrence Hutcherson, Louis Fitzgerald, Olney Patrick, Neville Hulette and Robert Tracy, the board hired architect John F. Wilson to design the new building. Wilson’s practice was located in Lexington, as was the general contractor, Gilson-Taylor, Incorporated.

The building was finished in 1942, and classes started right away. The building quickly became the pride of the community and once again demonstrated the commitment and passion that Bridgeport citizens had for the public education system. The building served the community as a recreational facility where baseball games were played by summer leagues and civic, religious, and other kinds of educational event were held throughout the year. By the end of the decade, the school began issuing annual yearbooks that featured sporting events in the gym, student performance in the classrooms, as well as group and club activities.

By 1952, the population had once again forced the community to seek other avenues to expand the school system. Franklin County launched an effort to build consolidated high schools that serviced freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and senior in separate facilities. Franklin County High School was built, and most of the county’s high school students joined together in their education. Bridgeport School became strictly an elementary school and remained a leading public school in western Franklin County for nearly fifty years.

Like many rural settlement areas of Kentucky, Bridgeport saw a decline in population, while many of its residents passed away or moved on to other towns. The modern US 60 replaced the old road, bypassing the community altogether. Some of its churches and residences remain that date to the nineteenth century, but the community is nearly entirely residential now. What does remain, however, is the Bridgeport School that stands as a testimony to the community’s long standing ties and devotion to public education in Franklin County.

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The Bridgeport School closed in 2005, and was replaced by another large consolidated facility, not in the community, but within the city of Frankfort. Despite its new location, this new school was named "Bridgeport Elementary School," a testimony to the depth of commitment to education that the community showed for more than a century.

### **Significance of the school within the context of Education in Bridgeport, Western Franklin County, Kentucky 1942-1965**

Bridgeport School was one of many public education facilities to be built in the community of Bridgeport over its long existence. The citizens of Bridgeport demonstrated time after time their devotion to fostering and maintaining school buildings, with the aim of providing education to the public. The building that remains today is certainly a physical reminder of the role education played in the lives of folks living in western Franklin County, in particular School District 23.

The current Bridgeport School, although it replaced a previous school on this site, also demonstrates a triumph in public education where rural school facilities entered a stage of modernizing, using popular design styles that set the building apart from anything else around it. It was instantly recognizable as a school and it provided a backdrop for civic pride and accomplishments for many generations of Franklin County residents.

For nearly forty years Bridgeport School was the leading elementary school in all of Western Franklin County. Students from all walks of life attended the school and it was eventually desegregated in the 1950s to include black students. As with many public schools in Kentucky, Bridgeport School served generations of Kentucky citizens who valued their public education and who see the school building a vital part of their lives and community.

### **Evaluation of Integrity between the Bridgeport School's Significance and its Current Physical Condition**

If a historic school in Franklin County said to meet National Register Criterion A, retains integrity between its historic significance and its physical plant, then it retains sufficient integrity of **associations** needed for eligibility. Integrity of associations becomes the primary factor in the eligibility determination, following from the wording of Criterion A: it is a property that "is **associated** with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history." The Bridgeport School retains its Integrity of Association on the basis that it remains as a physical reminder of the importance of education in Bridgeport (and Franklin County), while also conveying the broader notions and importance of public education in Kentucky.

The Bridgeport School building possesses integrity of **location** in that it still occupies its original site. The site has conferred a great deal of significance to the building in that it served as a hub of public education in Bridgeport (and west Franklin County) for more than sixty years. The prominent location of the site along old US 60 (now Bridgeport Road), and its location in the center of the Bridgeport means that the building has become a local landmark, a symbolic place of education for members of the entire community.

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The building possesses integrity of **setting**. The original seven-acre lot that the school was built on is intact and continues to be associated with the rural farmland that surrounds it. Bridgeport retains a bucolic vista and many of the adjacent resources to the school date to the nineteenth and early-twentieth century. Likewise, the old US 60 Highway contributes to the setting as well. The school's setting is very pronounced in a way that one can readily understand that the site has an important educational role in the community.

The building possesses a high integrity of original **materials**. These include the foundation and structural supports (concrete block), as well as the smooth textured brick veneer coursing throughout the building. Some of the original glass-block windows remain, as well as the poured concrete steps that were integrated as both functional and design elements. Taken together, the original materials are readily apparent to the observer and they convey a strong physical sense of the design principles at work in the Art Moderne building style.

The building maintains integrity of **design and workmanship** as its present-day appearance resembles its original design. The building still exhibits its Art Moderne style, which conveys an attitude of Minimalism in its design intent. The building's curvilinear form in plan is a striking feature of its design that reflects the architect's devotion to the Art Moderne style that was very popular in the 1940s. Likewise, the building's flat roof, rounded edges, and smooth surfaces are all intact, which ties the building to its distinct design style and period. Overall, the design of the building and its physical characteristics readily convey a sense of the past, and because so few alterations have occurred, the workmanship is highly visible through the physical elements that make up the building in plan and elevation. Thus, its architectural style and its educational mission are identifiable as associated conceptions in the 1940s. Both the style, and notions of education, connoted modernity, efficiency, and practicality. The most substantial change to the building's design has been the replacement of exterior doors and windows, with a rear addition. It is difficult to find other schools of the same vintage elsewhere which have escaped similar changes. Schools *as a class of structures* have undergone design changes, as their administrators have sought to provide modernizing changes both within and outside the classroom.

Despite changes to the building over time, the Bridgeport School is a good candidate for telling the community's story of how it valued education. Its exterior design and interior spaces provide us the ability to know its identity and to understand how it functioned as a valuable place of local education. The historic Bridgeport School still clearly exhibits its identity as a school, and its high retention of interior room arrangements and materials give the viewer the ability to perceive the way that it supported the education of local children during the Period of Significance.

Due to its retention of integrity factors of location, setting, materials, design, and workmanship the building can be said to have integrity of **associations**, the primary factor leading to the eligibility conclusion. Anyone who toured the building upon its opening in 1942, or who views its appearance in the photographic record from that period, would recognize the building today. A student who attended the school in its earliest years would have much the same visual memory of the school as one who attended as late as 2005. For this reason, the Bridgeport School building meets the National Register's criteria for integrity. It therefore should be considered for preservation as a major local structure in the development of education in Bridgeport and western Franklin County.

Bridgeport School  
Name of Property

Franklin, KY  
County and State

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

### Books

- Collins, Lewis, *A History of Kentucky*, (Collins and Company, Covington, Ky), 1882,
- Jillson, Willard Rouse, *Early Frankfort and Franklin County: A Chronology of Historical Sketches Covering the Century 1750-1850*. (The Standard Printing Company, Louisville), 1936
- Harrison, L. and Klotter, J., *A New History of Kentucky* (University Press of Kentucky, Lexington), 1997
- Johnson, L.F., *The History of Franklin County, Ky.* (Roberts Printing Company, Frankfort, Ky), 1912
- Kleber, John E., *The Kentucky Encyclopedia*, (University Press of Kentucky, Lexington), 1992
- Kramer, Carl E., *Capital on the Kentucky: A Two Hundred Year History of Frankfort and Franklin County*. (Historic Frankfort, Inc., Frankfort, Ky), 1986

Google Maps were consulted for this nomination

### KHC Reports

- Kennedy, Rachel and Cynthia Johnson  
2002 Kentucky Historic Schools Survey: An Examination of the History and Condition of Kentucky's Older School Buildings. Frankfort, Kentucky: The Kentucky Heritage Council.  
Available on-line at <http://www.heritage.ky.gov/NR/rdonlyres/186485D6-1783-488E-ACBC-F6E18166F284/0/KYHistoricSchoolsSurvey.pdf>

### Miscellaneous Sources

- 1949 Bridgeport School Yearbook  
1957 Bridgeport School Yearbook  
Abstract written by Ted Sloan in 1996 taken from an unpublished source titled "History of Bridgeport Christian Church, Its Community, and its Future". This was provided by local resident Brian Harney.

### National Register Nominations

- Wayne County High School, Roger Guffey, 2013  
Wolfe County High School, Bruce Carter, 2013

### Personal Interview

- Brian Harney, local resident and former student of the Bridgeport School, June 20, 24, 25, 2013

### Websites

- <http://oldbridgeportschool.com/school.html>, accessed June, 2013

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<http://www.usgennet.org/usa/ky/county/franklin/index/bridgeport.html>, accessed June, 2013

**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 # \_\_\_\_\_  
 recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

State Historic Preservation Office  
 Other State agency  
 Federal agency  
 Local government  
 University  
 Other  
Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): \_ FA-404

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreeage of Property** 7.4 acres

**UTM References**

**Frankfort West quad**

**Coordinates calculated via ArcGIS Explorer**

**Coordinates expressed according to NAD 83: Zone 16; Easting 679 760.92; Northing 4225 618.04**

**Coordinates expressed according to NAD 27:**

16	679 765.43	4225 412.03	3	_____	_____	_____
Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing	
2	_____	_____	4	_____	_____	_____
Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing	

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)  
**(see Continuation Sheet)**

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The selected boundaries were chosen because they represent the original 7.4 acre tract that was purchased by the Franklin County School Board in 1937. The boundaries chosen best represent the historic period in which the Bridgeport School came to exist.

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Fred J. Rogers, Owner  
organization PSATG, LLC date July, 2013  
street & number 627 Main Street telephone 859-270-3413  
city or town Shelbyville state KY zip code 40065  
e-mail fredj.rogers@gmail.com

**Additional Documentation**

Bridgeport School  
Name of Property

Franklin, KY  
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Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location. A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

**Photographs:**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

**Name of Property: Bridgeport School**

**City or Vicinity: Bridgeport/Frankfort**

**County: Franklin**

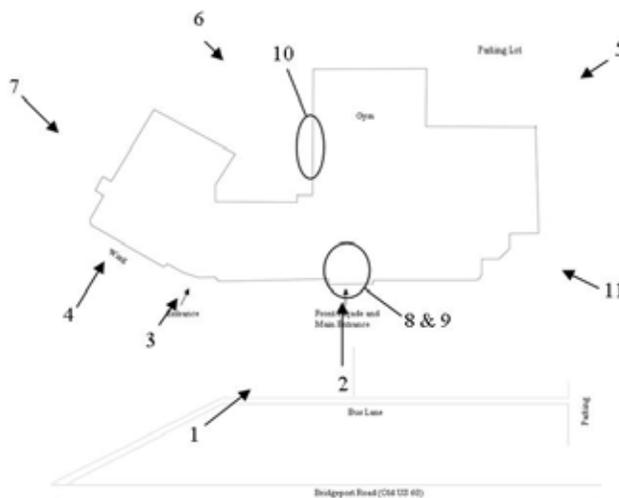
**State: KY**

**Photographer: Fred J. Rogers**

**Date Photographed: June, 2013**

**Description of Photograph(s) and number: 1-11**

1. Front Façade, view facing S
2. Main Entrance, view facing S
3. Secondary Entrance, view facing S
4. East Wing of School, view facing S
5. Gym and read addition, view facing NE
6. Gymnasium, view facing NW
7. Rear addition, view facing W
8. Detail of poured concrete steps at main entrance
9. Detail of entrance canopy on main entrance
10. Detail of glass block windows on gymnasium
11. Side entrance addition, view facing E



**Property Owner:**

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Ronald Turner, Tamara Hurst, & Wm. G. Yokley

Bridgeport School  
Name of Property

Franklin, KY  
County and State

street & number 555 Bridgeport Road telephone N/A  
city or town Bridgeport state KY zip code 40601

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.





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