

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

**1. Name of Property**

historic name The Military Road School

other names/site number N/A

**2. Location**

street & number 1375 Missouri Avenue, N. W.

not for publication N/A

city or town Washington

vicinity N/A

state District of Columbia code DC county N/A zip code 20011

**3. 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant \_\_\_ nationally  statewide \_\_\_ locally. ( \_\_\_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Asia M. Buchanan  
Signature of certifying official

6/10/03  
Date

DC State Historic Preservation Office  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria. ( \_\_\_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Asia M. Buchanan  
Signature of commenting or other official

6/10/03  
Date

DC State Historic Preservation Office  
State or Federal agency and bureau



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**6. Function or Use**

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Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: EDUCATION Sub: school

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: VACANT/NOT IN USE Sub: \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

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**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals / Italian Renaissance

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK  
roof STONE: slate  
walls BRICK  
other STONE: limestone  
WOOD

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

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**8. Statement of Significance**  
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Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- 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 (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- a owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- b removed from its original location.
- c a birthplace or a grave.
- d a cemetery.
- e a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- f a commemorative property.
- g less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE  
EDUCATION  
ETHNIC HERITAGE: BLACK  
SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance 1864-1954

Significant Dates 1864-65  
1911-12

Significant Person  
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above) N/A  
Cultural Affiliation BLACK FREEDMAN

Architect/Builder Snowden Ashford, Office of the Municipal Architect/Skinker & Garrett (Cleveland Skinker & Wilbur R. Garrett)

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

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9. Major Bibliographical References
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(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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

- [X] State Historic Preservation Office
[X] Other State agency
\_\_\_ Federal agency
\_\_\_ Local government
\_\_\_ University
\_\_\_ Other

Name of repository: Charles Sumner School Museum & Archives

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10. Geographical Data
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Acreage of Property less than one acre (28,985 sq. ft.)

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Table with 6 columns: Zone, Easting, Northing, Zone, Easting, Northing. Row 1: 1, 18, 323880, 4314320, 3, blank, blank, blank. Row 2: 2, blank, blank, blank, 4, blank, blank, blank.

\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

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**11. Form Prepared By**  
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name/title Tanya Edwards Beauchamp/Architectural Historian  
organization Tanya Edwards Beauchamp, Associates date September 30, 2001  
street & number 930 Leigh Mill Road telephone 703-759-3796  
city or town Great Falls state VA zip code 22066  
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**Additional Documentation**  
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Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

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.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

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

name \_\_\_\_\_  
street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_  
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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. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Section 7 Page 1

The Military Road School  
name of property  
Washington, D. C.  
county and State  
Public School Buildings of the  
District of Columbia, 1862-1960  
name of multiple property listing

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**NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION**

The Military Road School was designed by Municipal Architect Snowden Ashford in 1911. It is located at 1375 Missouri Avenue, N. W., on 28,985 sq. ft. trapezoidal lot 87/536-537 in Square 2792. It is a free-standing building with generous grassy open-space on all sides. It is sited parallel to and approximately near the center of the Missouri Avenue frontage, facing south toward Missouri Avenue, a wide street distinguished by fine old street trees. Missouri Avenue was originally built as Military Road connecting the District's Civil War forts. The Civil War Fort Sites and Fort Circle Park System of the District of Columbia, including Fort Stevens and Military Road, are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The Military Road School is located near Fort Stevens Park one block east of Rock Creek Park and approximately one block west of Georgia Avenue. Georgia Avenue, originally called the Seventh Street Road, was the main wagon road of the District of Columbia, connecting Maryland farmland with the O Street, Northern Liberties, and Center Markets. Municipal Architect Snowden Ashford designed this building in 1911 in an Italian Renaissance style. The building was constructed by Skinker & Garrett (Cleveland Skinker and Wilbur R. Garrett) and completed in 1912. There have been no substantial alterations.

The Military Road School is a red brick building two stories high and three bays wide with full English basement. The main building block is a long rectangle with a central entrance porch and rear stair projection creating a shallow cross in plan. The hipped roof is slate, with an octagonal cupola, gently flared slope, and wide overhanging eaves supported on scrolled rafters. Above the entrance porch, which is supported on six wooden Doric columns, is a Palladian window set within an arched stucco surround. Smaller windows to the side of this central feature are enhanced by decorative stucco panels and limestone trim. The original wooden paired double entrance doors, with eight lights above three horizontal panels, are still in place. A six light transom occurs above each pair with carved limestone panels with swags above the transoms.

The flanking classroom wings are denoted by the large banks of multi-paned windows, with paneled brick spandrels. There are two classrooms on each floor flanking the central stair hall, and because the building is one room deep, the classrooms are bounded by exterior walls on three sides. Interestingly, however, each classroom has windows on only two sides--those to the right of the entrance at the front and side, and those to the left of the entrance at the side and rear. This reversed window arrangement would have maintained the standard classroom arrangement with daylight coming from the left--as would be preferable for the majority of right-handed writers. On the exterior, this

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lends an unusual asymmetry to both front and rear facades, where recessed brick panels on one side balance the window banks on the other.

The building is set on a high basement containing boys' and girls' playrooms with side entrances to the adjacent playgrounds. The site is now surrounded by a high chain link fence. There is some deterioration and need for repair, but overall the building retains a high degree of integrity, with its original form and materials largely intact.



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Public School Buildings of the  
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**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

Constructed in 1912 on the site of one of the city's first public schools built for freedmen, the Military Road School retains its historical connection with the struggle by African Americans to secure the benefits of public education. Situated under the view of Fort Stevens, on the old military transport road, and now adjacent to the greensward of park lands connecting the Civil War forts, the school records the historic presence of Washington's refugee settlements and their interdependence with the military landscape. Designed in 1911 by the Office of the Municipal Architect, and reviewed by the Commission of Fine Arts, the school was among the first of Washington's public school buildings to be produced under this newly instituted system of municipal design as discussed in the multiple property listing "Public School Buildings of Washington, D. C., 1862-1960," property sub-type IV, "The Office of the Municipal Architect, Snowden Ashford, 1909-1921." Its design reflects the attempts to enhance the quality of public architecture throughout the city during the City Beautiful era. The building is a fine representative example of a small neighborhood public school, which particularly reflects the influence of programmatic requirements on architectural design. The building is also a fine representative example of the work of locally significant architect Snowden Ashford. It possesses sufficient integrity to convey the values and qualities for which it is judged significant, and sufficient time has passed since it was constructed to permit professional evaluation in its historic context.

The location of this relatively undisturbed site in the Rock Creek valley suggests that it is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history. It is located on The Girles Portion, the earliest land grant in this area. An 'Indian field' is noted in this general location as a landmark in the 1687 survey of The Girles Portion. The Carrolls farmed this land with the labor of African slaves. The proximity of the Military Road and Fort Stevens, where Union forces defended the city against the invasion of General Jubal A. Early in 1864, the location of the freedmen's school here in 1864 and 1865, and the possibility that foundations of the early school, construction trenches, privies, or other sites may still exist here all suggest its cultural significance.

**The Military Road School**

The location of the Military Road School at this site is significant, since it is the successor to a frame public schoolhouse that was among the first handful of Civil War era schools built in 1864 and 1865 to serve the great influx of

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freedmen into the capital city. Many refugees sought protection under the watch of the military, and settlements grew quickly around the city's forts. Directly under the gaze of Fort Stevens, this became the site for one of the city's first half dozen public schools for African Americans.

The outline of the original schoolhouse is shown on the construction plans for the present building, which replaced it in 1912. This more substantial building (designed in 1911) was among the first projects executed by the office of Municipal Architect Snowden Ashford. Early in his career, Ashford had been employed under Supervising Architect of the Treasury Alfred B. Mullett, and under John Smithmeyer, co-architect of the Library of Congress. He became the District's Assistant Inspector of Buildings in 1895, and Inspector in 1901. Ashford served as Municipal Architect from 1909, when the office was created, until 1921.

The Office of the Municipal Architect was responsible for preparing plans and supervising construction of all municipal buildings. The office was similar to those being established in other cities, and reflects the general attention being given during the City Beautiful era to elevating the standards of public architecture. The establishment of the Commission of Fine Arts in 1910 is a further example of this trend; with creation of the Commission, the design of public schools also passed review by the most respected members of the architectural profession.

The design of this small, jewel-like building is carefully crafted. It was apparently to be expanded later with additional classrooms and an assembly hall to the rear which were never built. Stylistic influences on the design include the Italian Renaissance, Classical Revival, and Arts and Crafts. Despite its modest size, ordinary materials, and limited embellishment, however, the building exemplifies the skill with which architects of the period created a dignified and often elegant public image using the simplest of means. This emphasis on quality of public architecture is also evident in the high standard of construction the building exhibits.

For many years the Military Road School served as the only school available to African American students in a large area of upper Northwest. Oral testimony also documents that the School served as a symbolic social and community center for residents in the area. With public school desegregation, it was closed in 1954, and it has been used for various public and education activities since that time.

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**MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Construction documents: Engineer Department (E. D.) Records. E. D. 99,021.

Architectural drawings, Plan Files. All architectural drawings available.

Charles Sumner School Museum & Archives. Standing files.

Cook, George F. T. "Historical Sketch of the Colored Schools, Past and Present." *First Report of the Board of Trustees of Public Schools of the District of Columbia, 1874-'75.* Washington City: M'Gill & Witherow, 1876.

Lee, Antoinette J. "Public School Buildings of the District of Columbia, 1804-1930." Charles Sumner School Museum and Archives, September 1989.

Maloney, David. Historic Preservation Review Board: Staff Report and Recommendation. Landmark Designation Case #98-3 (March 25, 1999).

The Military Road School Alumni Association. Historic Preservation Review Board: Application for Historic Landmark Designation, March 16, 1998.

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**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The Military Road School is located at 1375 Missouri Avenue, N. W., facing south. It is situated on lot 87/536-537 in Square 2792.

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

Legal recorded boundaries of historic site.