

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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 Nathaniel Parker Gage School
other names _____

2. Location

street & number 2035 2nd Street, N.W. not for publication
city or town Washington, D.C. vicinity
state District of Columbia code DC county _____ code 001 zip code 20001

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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).

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

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).

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. 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 the Keeper	Date of Action
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____

Comment [LP1]: DO NOT DELETE!
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5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

Public School Buildings of Washington, D.C.: 1864-1945

number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION/Elementary School

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/Multiple Dwelling (condos)

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

20th CENTURY REVIVAL/Colonial Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick
walls Brick

roof Standing Seam Metal
other _____

Narrative Description

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

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Description Summary:

The Nathaniel Parker Gage School at 2nd & U Streets, N.W. was designed by architect Lemuel W. Norris in 1902, and built by Gleeson & Humphrey in 1904. The school is a two-story, high-style Colonial Revival-style red brick school building. The symmetrically arranged building rises two stories above a raised foundation level and is covered with a low hipped roof sheathed in standing seam metal. The brick walls, laid in Flemish bond with limestone trim, are divided into seven symmetrical bays on all four elevations, with the principal entry located on center of the west elevation and boys' and girls' entries on center of the north and south elevations. The building is carefully proportioned and richly detailed with generous, sensitively conceived limestone detail. A compatible T-shaped, four-room, two-story addition was constructed on the east in 1908. An addition proposed in 1918 which would have included an assembly hall and four additional classrooms was never built.

In 2004-2008, the Gage School was converted into condominiums and a new four-story condominium building was constructed north of the historic school house in the former playground area. +

General Description:

Exterior:

The primary façade (west elevation) faces 2nd Street and looks across the street to the National Register-listed Le Droit Park Historic District. It is divided into seven equal bays with emphasis placed on center by the main entry. This entryway, raised above ground level and reached by a short flight of sandstone stairs, features an engaged limestone architrave surround. This surround is formed by $\frac{3}{4}$ -engaged Doric columns which support a frieze and a segmental arched pediment. The school name is engraved in the frieze of the architrave surround. To either side of the central entry are arched windows with double-hung wood (replacement) sash, limestone keystones, imposts and sills.

The second story features seven bays of 9/9 double-hung wood windows, with the central window again having greater design emphasis. The central window has a broad limestone surround and sill, while the flanking windows are bordered by limestone lintels and sills. The jack-arched lintels are articulated with central keystones and slightly larger end stones. The second story windows are rectangular, as opposed to the round-arched windows of the first story. All of the windows in the building were replaced during the 2004-2008 renovation, but respect the originals in type, configuration and profile.

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A narrow cornice separates the second story from the roof, visually supported by wood modillions. Shed-roofed dormers, added in 2004-2008, emerge subtly from the original roof. At the lower level, a limestone beltcourse separates the raised ground story from the first story. Ground story windows are capped with jack-arched limestone lintels.

The north and south elevations are identically detailed, save for the central bay where a flat-headed engaged pediment surround forms the girls' and boys' entry doors. In addition, an arched window at the second story level, sits lower than the flanking windows, directly atop the entries.

The 1908 addition consists of a two-story brick connecting hyphen and a larger hipped roof wing next to it. This wing is stylistically sensitive to the original building, featuring a hipped roof and limestone trim, but is clearly differentiated from it.

At the north end of the lot, on the site of the school's playground, is a four-story red brick condominium building. Although located on the historic building's lot, it is separated from it and defers to it architecturally. The building is constructed of red brick and is covered with a mansard roof with shed dormers. It is symmetrically arranged in a Classical manner, but lacks the Classical ornamentation of the Gage School.

Interior Description:

The Gage School originally had an eight-room classroom plan typical of school building design of the period and based upon a model plan developed by the Office of the Building Inspector. As designed, four classrooms on each floor were located in each corner of the building, off of a central hall, providing lighting from two directions, and each classroom had an adjoining cloakroom. A library was located at the rear of the building across from the main entry on the first floor, while a teachers' room and principal's office occupied those central bays on the second floor. Stairs on the north and south sides lead to the playground (boys' and girls') entrances. A large central hall on each floor was used for assemblies and other functions. Basement rooms were used as playrooms.

When Gage School was renovated in 2004-2008 for use as condominiums, the floor plan was altered to accommodate individual apartments, while furnishings (cloakrooms) and finishes (blackboards, etc.) were removed. The principal entry to the renovated building leads up the original flight of stairs into the original hall. The doors that originally led into the classrooms and the adjoining cloakrooms, however, now lead into individual apartments. The apartment doors are furred out from the original door openings, projecting into the central hall. The original stairwells on either side of the building and leading to the girls' and boys' entrances survive intact.

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8. Statement of Significance

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 pattern of our history.
- B** Property 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)

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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

Area of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE, EDUCATION

Period of Significance

1902-1957 (50 years from the present)

Significant Dates

1902; 1904-05; 1908

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Lemuel Norris

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on files (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

Name of repository: _____

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Summary Statement of Significance:

The Nathaniel Parker Gage School Building is an important example of a D.C. Public School and qualifies for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under the Multiple Property Document, "Public School Buildings of Washington, D.C., 1864-1945." The building falls under the Associated Property Sub-Type: "*The Architects in Private Practice, 1897-1910.*" Designed in a Colonial Revival-style by architect Lemuel W. Norris, Gage School exemplifies the creative neighborhood-friendly approach that architects in private practice brought to the obligatory standards and guidelines for standard eight-room school design developed by the Office of the Building Inspector. The design of the Gage School reflects an early 20th-century expression of the Colonial (Georgian) Revival style of architecture, in particular as it was used for domestic buildings. Its architect, Virginia native Lemuel W. Norris, was an exceptionally sensitive and talented architect, with a diversified body of work both as an architect in private practice and in the Office of the Building Inspector (1904) and the Office of the Municipal Architect (1911-29). The school building contributes significantly to the ambience of the LeDroit Park Historic District and the Bloomingdale neighborhood, enhancing and complementing its neighbors.

Named for Nathaniel Parker Gage, the school building memorializes the excellence in teaching methods which this man brought to the nascent D. C. Public School System and which might otherwise be forgotten. The Nathaniel P. Gage School building is a purpose-built D.C. public school building constructed within the period of significance of the multiple property nomination. Despite the building's conversion to condominiums, completed 2007-2008, it still looks and feels like a neighborhood school, providing a palpable feeling of the past. As such, Gage School retains its integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association

It is eligible under Criteria A and C with Architecture and Education as the Areas of Significance. The Period of Significance extends from 1902, when the building was designed to 1957, a point fifty years from the present.

Resource History and Historic Context:

Designed in 1902 and constructed in 1904-05¹, the Gage School was built as a school for white students in the fashionable LeDroit Park/Bloomingdale neighborhoods of the Second School District. During this era of limited transportation availability, schools were located close to home (or vice versa). Rapidly developing neighborhoods created a demand for more schools and

¹ Construction bids were opened in October 1903; the school was dedicated in February 1905.

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the provision of nearby schools in turn made neighborhoods more attractive for development and purchase. In 1904, Le Droit Park was already densely developed, while the Bloomingdale and Eckington neighborhoods were, by contrast, still growing, though rapidly. This heavy residential growth necessitated the 1908 addition to Gage School, and even caused its overcrowding as early as 1912—a condition that continued into the 1920s.

As the African American population in the neighborhood increased during this period of segregation, local residents made a request to the District's Commissioners in 1929 to convert Gage School to educate blacks. Still, the school continued to serve a whites-only population. Later, in 1947, E.B. Henderson, an NAACP activist and prominent figure in the physical education and recreation of local African Americans, publicly complained about the schools' continued segregation of playgrounds, including that at Gage.

With the exception of Rhode Island Avenue in the vicinity, the area was almost entirely residential, making the school the only institutional and government building in surrounding blocks. As such, the Gage School became an important community meeting place and recreation venue, albeit for whites-only.

Nathaniel Parker Gage

Originally to be named after former Missouri Congressman and D.C. Commissioner Henry T. Blow, the school was renamed prior to construction for Nathaniel Parker Gage, an important local educator, as a memorial following his 1903 death. Gage's former students were responsible for pushing the name change.

Nathaniel Parker Gage (1838-1903) was born in Pelham, New Hampshire and educated at Phillips Andover Academy and Dartmouth College. Graduating in 1862, he was appointed as teacher of a male grammar school in the Second District in Washington, D. C. The school met at first in an old fire engine house which was later remodeled and enlarged as the Abbot School. In the fall of 1870 Gage and his class moved to the new Seaton School on I Street between 2nd and 3rd Streets, N. W. Seaton was one of the model schools designed by German American Architect Adolf Cluss as the nucleus of the new District of Columbia School System. Gage served as principal of that school until 1877 when he was named supervising principal of the public schools in the 2nd Division. He served in that position until his death in 1903.

Gage was an educator of extraordinary ability exemplifying the fine quality of instruction for which the District's public schools were then known. A beloved teacher, students from his earliest classes arranged an elaborate memorial service at the First Congregational Church, 10th and G Streets, N. W., where Gage had been a member. Commissioner H. B. F. MacFarland, presided, noting that Gage, while neither rich nor powerful nor famous, had lived the spiritually

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rich life of "those who minister, rather than those who are ministered unto, while it reminds us that there are many who are living in just that way, and in themselves and in their example and teaching keeping alive the true American spirit and advancing the best interests of their country." Joseph Stanley-Brown, a student from his first class, recalled the regrettable state of District public schools just before Gage arrived, the changes that were made, and the revolution of the free school system in the District. He described the trepidation with which the boys awaited the arrival of the new Yankee teacher at their makeshift school building at 14th & P Streets on the outskirts of town. Accustomed to classroom discipline enforced by beatings, the boys were surprised to find Gage's teaching method was entirely different-leading by quiet example and providing a course of study sufficient for college entrance although the boys were under fifteen years old at graduation. Gage established a school paper, organized a debating society, and provided the nucleus of military training by drilling a company equipped with wooden guns.

At the dedication of the Gage School on February 15, 1905, a large number of Gage's former pupils from that first Seaton grammar school class presented a memorial bronze tablet which was inscribed--

In memory of
NATHANIEL PARKER GAGE,
Supervising Principal, Second Division, Public Schools of
Washington, D. C., 1874 to 1903.
Born 1838. Died 1903.
Teacher of Male Grammar School, Second District, 1870 to 1878.
This tablet is erected by his former pupils of the classes of
1871 to 1877.

The teachers of the Second Division presented a portrait of Gage to hang in the new school praising Gage's clear vision, compassionate spirit, and gentle heritage. Clayton E. Emig, president of the North Washington Citizens' Association, thanked the Commissioners for building the school in this central and accessible location which the Association had favored.

Lemuel Norris

The Gage School was designed by architect Lemuel Norris and built by builders Gleeson & Humphrey. Lemuel W. Norris (1848-1930) was born in Leesburg, Virginia and educated at the Virginia Military Institute. Graduating in 1870, he returned to Leesburg to work in the family mill. Norris was in charge of the architectural and engineering activities of the firm, which designed and built a number of houses in Leesburg as well as the Leesburg Courthouse. Norris married Mary Catherine Turner, and circa 1888 moved to Washington. He was listed in the directories first as an engineer and then as an architect, apparently employed by a local firm. He opened his own architectural practice in 1895 with offices at 808 17th Street, N.W. In 1904 he

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was employed in the Office of the Building Inspector. From 1905-10 he was again listed as an architect in private practice, with offices again at 808 17th Street, N.W. From 1911-1929 he worked in the newly-created Office of the Municipal Architect, in charge of architectural design. Snowden Ashford, the Municipal Architect from 1909-1919, described him as "an architect of long experience and a civil engineer with a practice extending over 25 years. He was formerly employed as a civil engineer and computer in the inspector of buildings' office." In addition to the Gage School, Norris designed several residences and commercial buildings in D.C., plus a monastery and school for the Marist Fathers (1899) and an exuberant stable building (the Walsh Stables, built 1902-03. He is also credited with two additions to the McKinley Manual Training School (1908-09) at Rhode Island Avenue and 7th Street, N.W.

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Major Bibliographical References:

“His Memory Honored: Tribute Paid the Late Nathaniel P. Gage,” *Washington Evening Star*, November 14, 1903.

“In Memoriam: Nathaniel Parker Gage, 1838-1903.” Program of Memorial Service, First Congregational Church, Washington, D.C., November 13, 1903.

Lee, Antoinette J. “Public School Buildings of the District of Columbia, 1804-1930” and survey of existing buildings, 1864-1930, D.C. Historic Preservation Office, 1987-1988.

“Nathaniel P. Gage Dead: Prominent Washington Educator Succumbs to Apoplexy in Vermont.” *The Washington Post*, August 8, 1903, p.1.

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Report of the Schoolhouse Commission Upon a General Plan for the Consolidation of Public Schools in the District of Columbia, February 27, 1908. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1908.

Report of the Board of Education to the Commissioners of the District of Columbia, 1910-11. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1912.

“Twenty-fourth Report of the Board of Trustees of the Public Schools of the City of Washington, 1870-1871. Washington City: M’Gill & Witherow, Printers and Stereotypers, 1871.

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Verbal Boundary Description:

The Nathaniel Parker Gage School is located at 2035 2nd Street, N.W. and occupies lot 800 on Square 3115. +

Boundary Justification:

The Gage School has occupied lot 800 since its original construction in 1904-05. The lot includes the 1908 addition to the original school building and the new (2008) condominium building on the site of the original school playground. +

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HISTORIC PHOTOS



1904 View of Nathaniel Parker Gage School
(From D.C. Historic Preservation Office Vertical Files, Gage School)

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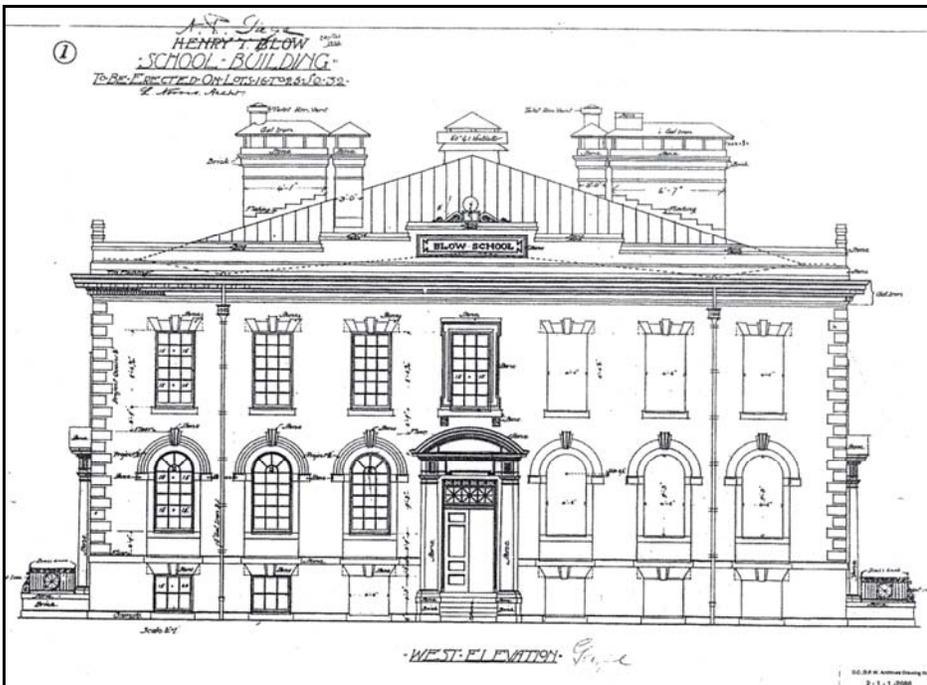
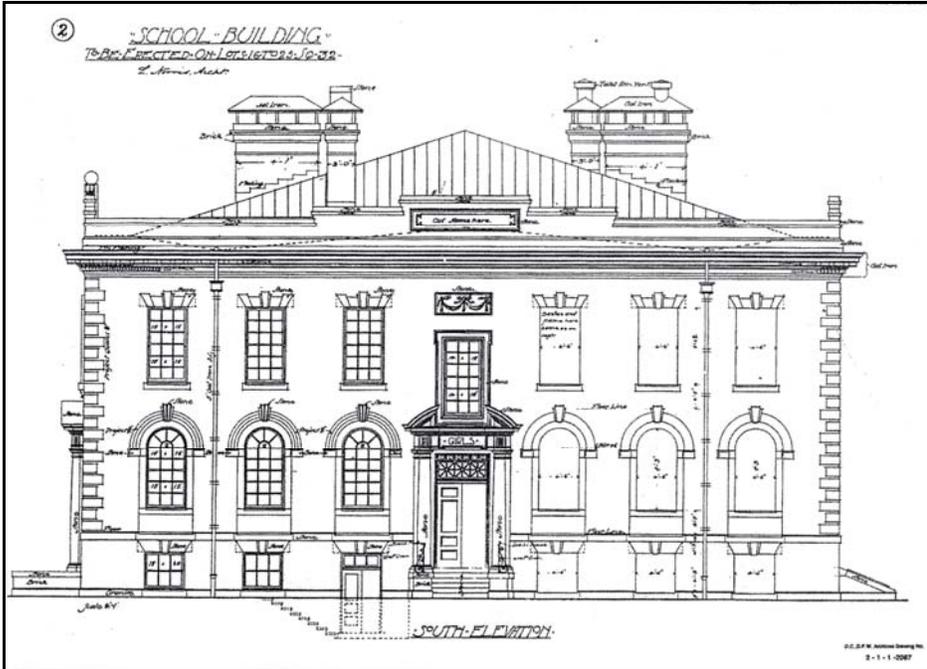
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HISTORIC DRAWINGS



South and West Elevation Drawings of [Blow] Gage School, 1902

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SITE MAP



Nathaniel Parker Gage School
2035 2nd Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C.
(From Sanborn Map, 1991)