Form 10-300
(Rev. 6-72)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY – NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: District of Columbia
COUNTY:
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

1. NAME

COMMON: Howard Hall

AND/OR HISTORIC: General Oliver Otis Howard House

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: Howard University, 607 Howard Place

CITY OR TOWN: Washington

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:

STATE: District of Columbia

CODE:

COUNTY:

CODE:

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP		STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
☐ District ☒ Building ☐ Site ☐ Structure ☐ Object	☐ Public ☒ Private ☐ Both	Public Acquisition: ☐ In Process ☐ Being Considered	☒ Occupied ☐ Unoccupied ☐ Preservation work in progress	Yes: ☒ Restricted ☐ Unrestricted ☐ No

PRESENT USE *(Check One or More as Appropriate)*

☐ Agricultural	☐ Government	☐ Park	☐ Transportation	☐ Comments
☐ Commercial	☐ Industrial	☐ Private Residence	☐ Other *(Specify)*	
☒ Educational	☐ Military	☐ Religious		
☐ Entertainment	☐ Museum	☐ Scientific		

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: Howard University, c/o James E. Cheek, President

STREET AND NUMBER: 2400 - 6th Street NW, 4th floor

CITY OR TOWN: Washington

STATE: District of Columbia

CODE:

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC: Recorder of Deeds

STREET AND NUMBER: 6th and D Streets, NW

CITY OR TOWN: Washington

STATE: District of Columbia

CODE:

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: None

DATE OF SURVEY: ☐ Federal ☐ State ☐ County ☐ Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:

STATE:

CODE:

STATE:
COUNTY:
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ENTRY NUMBER
DATE

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One) ☐ Excellent ☐ Good ☒ Fair ☐ Deteriorated ☐ Ruins ☐ Unexposed	
	(Check One) ☒ Altered ☐ Unaltered	(Check One) ☐ Moved ☒ Original Site

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL *(if known)* PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The residence of General Oliver O. Howard, today known as Howard Hall, was one of a group of four early campus buildings at Howard University, and is the only one that has survived. Upon its completion in 1867, citizens of Washington, D.C. were informed by a reporter for the Evening Star that the house "comprises sixteen fine rooms, with a hall ten feet wide, and partitioned off with walls 14 inches thick. It is three stories high with an additional story to the southeast corner, forming a tower, and built on the Mexican castle style. Capping the building is a handsome French roof. . . ."[1] The reporter continued with a description of the construction: the basement and foundations are built of white granite, and the stories above are composed of hollow white brick--the latter both to economize and "to afford ventilation from damp vapor, thus rendering [the occupants] healthy and all times dry."

The description is accurate enough, except that the tower is situated at the southwest corner, not southeast as described. Since construction, the white brick has been painted red and the front porch removed. The exterior walls are in need of some repair. On the interior, many of the original mantels have been removed and the fireplaces closed. Several rooms have undergone alteration to provide modern office space and, unfortunately, much of the original woodwork has deteriorated (though presumably not beyond repair). Interior walls currently sport such colors as orange and royal blue.

Rayford W. Logan, in his recent history of Howard University, remarked that Howard Hall, still standing on its original site, "is such a delight to students of architecture that it deserves to be preserved as a historic landmark."[2] One wonders that this advice is not heeded, for a comparison of Howard Hall today with a photograph appearing in Logan's 1969 history reveals that the building has suffered rather extensive "demolition by neglect" during recent years.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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1. Evening Star, Washington, D.C., Friday, November 29, 1867, p. 1.

2. Howard University: The First Hundred Years, 1867-1967 (New York: New York University Press, 1969), p. 32.

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD *(Check One or More as Appropriate)*

- ☐ Pre-Columbian
- ☐ 15th Century
- ☐ 16th Century
- ☐ 17th Century
- ☐ 18th Century
- ☒ 19th Century
- ☒ 20th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) *(If Applicable and Known)* 1867-

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE *(Check One or More as Appropriate)*

- Aboriginal
  - ☐ Prehistoric
  - ☐ Historic
- ☐ Agriculture
- ☐ Architecture
- ☐ Art
- ☐ Commerce
- ☐ Communications
- ☐ Conservation
- ☒ Education
- ☐ Engineering
- ☐ Industry
- ☐ Invention
- ☐ Landscape Architecture
- ☐ Literature
- ☐ Military
- ☐ Music
- ☐ Political
- ☐ Religion/Philosophy
- ☐ Science
- ☐ Sculpture
- ☒ Social/Humanitarian
- ☐ Theater
- ☐ Transportation
- ☐ Urban Planning
- ☐ Other *(Specify)*

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

"Education underlies every hope of success for the freedmen," General Oliver Otis Howard observed when, in 1865, he assumed the position of Commissioner of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands. The following year the Missionary Society of the First Congregational Church of Washington, of which General Howard was a member, determined to found an institution of higher learning dedicated to the elevation of freedmen--a school that was to admit students "without regard to sex or color" but, nevertheless, a school with a special responsibility for the admission and training of Negro men and women. Thus the creation of Howard University was no less than an act of faith in the idea that the advantages of higher education should be made available to all persons.

Since its founding in 1866, Howard University has become a vital and vigorous center in the field of higher education. Its faculty and students have rendered distinguished service both to their many professions and to society as a whole. Howard University has helped to prepare a large proportion of the black men and women currently engaged in the fields of law, medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, engineering, social work, teaching, the ministry, and the armed services.

General Oliver O. Howard served as the third president of the University, from 1869 until 1874. His residence was one of four original campus buildings, and is the only one that has survived. Howard Hall, as it is now known, is a 16-room Victorian mansion, constructed of hollow white brick painted red. Though the house has suffered some alterations in recent years--the porch has been removed, as have many of the original mantels, and modern partitions now divide some of the larger rooms--the house holds much potential for restoration. Indeed, one historian at the University has even boasted that Howard Hall "is such a delight to students of architecture that it deserves to be preserved as a historic landmark." The building currently serves as office space for the University.

(Continued)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Dyson, Walter. Howard University: The Capstone of Negro Education, A History 1867-1940. Washington, D.C.: The Graduate School of Howard University, 1941.

Logan, Rayford W. Howard University: The First Hundred Years, 1867-1967. New York: New York University Press, 1969.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY						OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES					
CORNER	LATITUDE			LONGITUDE			LATITUDE			LONGITUDE		
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	°	'	"	°	'	"	38°	55'	23"	77°	01'	20"
NE	°	'	"	°	'	"						
SE	°	'	"	°	'	"						
SW	°	'	"	°	'	"						

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: less than one acre

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Carol Ann Poh, Survey Historian

ORGANIZATION: Division of History, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, National Park Service

DATE: 1/3/74

STREET AND NUMBER: 1100 L Street NW

CITY OR TOWN: Washington

STATE: District of Columbia

CODE:

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National ☐ State ☐ Local ☐

Name _____

Title _____

Date _____

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

_____

Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date _____

ATTEST:

_____

Keeper of The National Register

Date _____

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. Significance: (1) Howard Hall (General Oliver Otis Howard House)

History

Howard University "was established when the fervor of abolitionists and other supporters of equality for Negroes began to wane," reports Rayford W. Logan in his recent history of Howard University.[1] On November 17 or 19, 1866 (the exact date cannot be determined), Dr. Charles B. Boynton proposed the establishment of a theological school for freedmen. His proposal was made at a meeting of the Missionary Society of the First Congregational Church of Washington, of which General Oliver Otis Howard was a member. General Howard was then serving as Commissioner of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, and a recent visit to the South had particularly aroused his interest in providing educational opportunities for the freedmen. Both his position and his interest in the project led the Society to approve the name "Howard Theological Seminary" for the proposed school. Two months later, the seminary was changed to "The Howard Normal and Theological Institute for the Education of Teachers and Preachers," and that name was soon changed to "The Howard University."

The first trustees envisioned an institution for the training of colored preachers and teachers who, in turn, would help uplift some of the four million recently emancipated slaves and the quarter of a million Negroes who had been born free. President Andrew Johnson signed the bill incorporating Howard University on March 2, 1867, and the Normal Department of Howard was formally opened on May 1st. Since the educational standards were initially too high for the average Negro applicant, this first department began with four young white women, all daughters of faculty members. To encourage the enrollment of Negroes, the Normal Department was changed to the Normal and Preparatory Department, and later a Model School was added.

The curriculum at Howard expanded rapidly. In September 1868, the Collegiate Department was opened, and offered a classical course of study. Recognizing the need for Negro physicians, the trustees of Howard organized a Medical Department in November of the same year; the Freedmen's Hospital, which had opened in 1863, was used for instruction. The Law Department opened in 1869, and a Theological Department was organized in 1870. Commercial, Musical, and Military Departments were all added prior to 1874.

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1. Howard University: The First Hundred Years, 1867-1967 (New York: New York University Press, 1969), p. 577.

(Continued)

8. Significance: (2) Howard Hall (General Oliver Otis Howard House)

The first classes at Howard met in a large frame building on Georgia Avenue near W Street (since destroyed). By the fall of 1867, 150 acres of land had been purchased and construction of the first campus buildings was well underway. The original campus included the "University Building," as it was called, a dormitory, a medical building, and the private residence of General Howard. All but the last have been destroyed.

Howard University has traditionally been devoted largely, though not exclusively, to the education of black youth. Its founders and first trustees, all white, "hoped" in General Howard's words, "to preserve the cosmopolitan character of the University, drawing [its] pupils from all classes, conditions, and nationalities." [2] Historian Walter Dyson reports that at the commencement of 1884, "a white man was valedictorian in pharmacy; a black man, in dentistry; and a white woman in medicine. This was heralded abroad." [3] Yet the University has been, and is today, predominantly black. Howard recognizes a dual mission: it is committed to the philosophy that all persons, irrespective of race, creed, color, sex, or national origin, who are capable of pursuing a higher education should be given the opportunity to do so; in addition, Howard accepts a special responsibility for the education of capable Negro students disadvantaged by racial segregation and discrimination. President James M. Nabrit, the second black man to serve as president of the University, reasserted Howard's dual mission in a speech on March 2, 1967:

> The mission of Howard University for one hundred years has been especially, but not exclusively, to assist the Negro people in crossing the threshold of opportunity. As we peer into the future, this will continue to be a major concern, for the problems of race have not vanished. And while we have a special regard for Negro youth, as was true for our Founders, we draw no lines of racial, religious, or national distinction among the men and women who are moved to seek us out. Nevertheless, we have an historic commitment to the education of the Negro and we shall not forsake that role. [4]

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2. Quoted in Walter Dyson, Howard University: The Capstone of Negro Education, A History 1867-1940 (Washington, D.C.: The Graduate School of Howard University, 1941), p. 37.
3. Ibid., p. 36
4. Quoted from "The University in a Changing Society," The Howard University Magazine, April 1967, pp. 11-13, in Logan, Howard University, p. 579.