

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Westbrook Elementary School

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

5110 Allen Terrace

CITY, TOWN

Bethesda

___ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

8th

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Montgomery

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Board of Education, Montgomery County Public Schools Telephone #: 279-3617

STREET & NUMBER

850 Hungerford Drive

CITY, TOWN

Rockville

___ VICINITY OF

MD

20850

STATE, zip code

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Department of Assessments and Taxation

Liber #: 720
Folio #: 458

STREET & NUMBER

51 Monroe Street, 3rd Floor

CITY, TOWN

Rockville

MD

20850

STATE

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

___ FEDERAL ___ STATE ___ COUNTY ___ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

M:35-50

CONDITION		CHECK ONE		CHECK ONE	
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED	DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED			
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED	<i>somewhat</i>			

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

I have visited the location.

Westbrook Elementary School (1939) still reflects its original character. It was designed by Howard Cutler as a small, intimate school with a sense of tradition and dignity created by the symmetrical balance and classical Georgian style. Westbrook Elementary School is an all masonry construction of red brick walls, white trim (wood cornice), slate (and metal) roof with wood dormer windows, concrete footings and base, and some steel beams. Although the building needs restoration, its finest features, such as the classical entrance porch, multi-window bay windows (with copper roofs) of the wings, and interior fireplaces still exist.

The original plan called for a six classroom school comprised of a laterally extended five-part plan: central building (75' X 56') and two identical laterally extended pavilions (32'2" X 27') connected by halls (which were 19'4" X 9'6" work rooms). The end pavilions were terminated by chimney stacks. This composition was derived from traditional Georgian domestic architecture. The design was ruled by external and internal symmetry, which continued into the landscape plan and lay-out of (5' wide) concrete sidewalks. The architect's plan also called for the extension of a road (later Allan Terrace) to the school.

Cutler's drawings reveal that the one-story pavilion (with full second floor in attic under hipped roof) was designed to house two classrooms on each floor; a reading room, bathrooms and office were on the first floor; work and activity rooms were situated on the second floor. Cutler's plans called for display cases in the first floor entry hall (which was perpendicular to the long, lateral hall) and two staircases (one in the rear; the other off the central hall). Each of the smaller one-story pavilions housed one classroom (with second level balcony on the inside). This overall plan became the basis for school; however, this conception was modified (probably for financial reasons) to create a more compact, economy-conscious T-shape design without articulated connecting halls (work rooms).

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION (CONTINUED)

The center pavilion with its high hipped Georgian roof (copper roof surmounting slate roof) and simple classical entry portico is the focus of the design. The classical porch with four 14" wide round wood columns, fanlight, and slate roof stands on a concrete platform. Wrought iron railings were included in Cutler's plan. The front door is flanked by three 4' wide windows with shutters (above were two dormer windows on each side). All front and rear windows are 4' wide; side windows are 3'6" wide. The side and rear elevations also reflect the original character, fenestration and Georgian style of this school.

Cutler's design also called for asphalt tile floors on concrete in the halls, tile bathroom floors with 4'6" wainscot, wood floors in classrooms, built-in books shelves (often below windows), slate blackboards, ample natural light and high ceilings to give a spacious quality. The most outstanding rooms are those in the wings: what are described as the kindergartens (although they have been used for other purposes). Today, one of them is the school's music room. These rooms still have their original brick fireplaces, woodwork and rafters. The fireplaces, which were not needed for heating, were used by the architect as symbols of home, hearth and family.

The building was erected in 1938-9. With the exception of some plastering and plumbing, the school was completed by January 9, 1940. The children were moved in the next month. Concrete sidewalks were finished during the Spring. The growth of the student population during the war years necessitated the erected of a temporary two-room building in 1942 (destroyed in 1955). Other so-called temporary structures were built. Finally, major permanent additions were completed in 1948 and 1955. Fortunately, these building campaigns were in the rear and side, but did involve modifying the northeast section of Cutler design with a connecting corridor with skydomes (1955).

REPOSITORIES AND SOURCES

Central Records, Montgomery County Public Schools;
Construction Division, Montgomery County Public Schools;
Archives, The American Institute of Architects;
"History of Westbrook Elementary School," Westbrook
P.T.A. File, Westbrook Elementary School;

SIGNIFICANCE

M:35-50

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

1938-9

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Howard Wright Cutler

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Westbrook Elementary School (1939) is an important architectural landmark in the history of Montgomery County and its public schools. It is the only Federal Public Works school in the county. A plaque in the school's main hall identifies the building as a project of the Federal Works Agency, Public Works Administration and includes the names John M. Carmody, Federal Works Agency and Franklin Delano Roosevelt, President of the United States.

This elementary school is also the product of the phenomenal growth of the Washington, D.C. suburbs in Montgomery County, Maryland. Between 1920 and 1940 the number of students attending public school rose from 6,195 to 15,096. During the same period, the county's expenditures on schools dramatically increased, reaching \$2,437,770.83 in 1945.¹

In particular, Westmoreland Hills was opened in 1933 and was soon followed by other subdivisions and developments, such as Westgate, Westhaven and Green Acres. At this time, the children attended Somerset Elementary School. However, three factors led to the establishment of Westbrook Elementary School: the growing number of young children; the distance from their neighborhoods to Somerset Elementary School; and the lack of busses for elementary school children in their area. A fourth problem was created by the great distance between home and school. It was impossible for children in Westmoreland Hills to walk home for lunch. A cafeteria was needed for those children who could not walk home. Eventually, all these problems were resolved with the building of Westbrook Elementary School.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (CONTINUED)

In 1938, architect Howard Cutler was commissioned to design Massachusetts Avenue Extended School (which became Westbrook Elementary School). The commission was sponsored and built by the labor of the Federal Works Agency (Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works), which was one of the federal government's answers to the Great Depression of the 1930s.

During the 1920s and 1930s, the educational architecture in Montgomery County was shaped and transformed by architect Howard Wright Cutler (1891-1948). Cutler was not a nationally known architect, but he was a professional. Selecting Howard Cutler as the principal designer of Montgomery County public schools reveals the county's desire to project an image of professionalism and modernity, and to create a new academic image.

Howard Cutler came to Washington from New York State with a professional training. In New York, he worked in the architectural offices of J. Foster Warner for one year and Gordon & Madden for seven years. Cutler was a member of the Central New York Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) before he was elected to the national organization of the AIA in 1915. At this time, he had been in practice with his own firm, Hutchinson & Cutler, for five years.²

As an architect, Cutler well represented the spirit of early 20th century America ----- its preoccupation with tradition and the American Renaissance (late 19th and early 20th century), as well as its devotion to new and modern approaches. At the same time, Cutler was a practical architect who seems to have given thought to economical and practical modern design. As Cutler brought standards of professionalism and an academic vision to his work, he transformed county school architecture. During the 1930s, Howard Cutler defined the academic image along traditional lines by often relying upon or making reference to classical architecture. Cutler was concerned with the great traditions and symbolic potential of architecture.

The classical disposition and Georgian style of Westbrook relate to Cutler's grand academic institutions of the 1930s (such as Bethesda-Chevy Chase). The Georgian is the name given to the English Baroque, a classical 17th and 18th century style. The English Baroque is known for its symmetry, dignity and academicism, and for being more restrained than continental Baroque styles. A variation of the Georgian was transplanted to the English colonies in North America, including Virginia and Maryland. Both

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

(CONTINUED)

Williamsburg, Virginia, and Annapolis, Maryland, are known for their Georgian Colonial architecture. Georgian architecture was rejected by Americans after the American Revolution because the style was associated with English rule. The revived classicism of the American Renaissance during the late 19th and early 20th century fostered a Georgian Revival.

During the 1930s, John D. Rockefeller's restoration of Williamsburg, Virginia, resulted in another Georgian Revival. By this time, the public's perception of Georgian architecture was positive. As a classical style, the Georgian represented tradition, civility, and stability. Most importantly, it was associated with the roots of American culture, and perceived of as an American style. The Georgian was self-consciously viewed as a style that linked American culture to European civilization.

Howard Cutler was one of many architects inspired by the Georgian Revival. His choice of the Georgian style for schools in Montgomery County was more logical than one might initially think. By selecting the Georgian, Cutler made reference to Maryland's early history and to early American educational traditions. Harvard College, Massachusetts, and William & Mary College, Williamsburg, Virginia, were the two oldest colleges in America. Their early buildings were rendered in the Georgian style.

All of this endows Westbrook Elementary School with the character of a civic institution. Yet, at the same time, Cutler's use of Georgian domestic architecture as his point of departure makes this school more house-like, thereby recalling the school house tradition of early 20th century Montgomery County.

NOTES

1. See Appendix, E. Guy Jewell, From One Room to Open Space: A History of Montgomery County Schools From 1732 to 1965, Rockville, Maryland: Montgomery County Public Schools, 1976, 320-1.
2. Karin M.E. Alexis's manuscript (1988) on the architectural history of educational institutions in Montgomery County, 1900-1945 (Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission and Maryland Historic Trust) includes a summary of Howard Cutler's architectural career and his work for the Montgomery County Board of Education. Some valuable information on Cutler was found in the Archives of the American Institute of Architects (RG 803 Box 221, Folder 71).

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

M:35-50

see attached

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATAACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 10.02A building: roughly 141' X 56'**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

Allan Terrace, Westridge, between the communities of Westhaven, Glen Cove and Greenacres;

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

STATE

COUNTY

STATE

COUNTY

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

KARIN M.E. ALEXIS, PH.D., ART & ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY

ORGANIZATION

DATE

JUNE 1988

STREET & NUMBER

2449 Villanova Drive

TELEPHONE

280-1107

CITY OR TOWN

Vienna, Virginia 22180

STATE

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 267-1438