

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY  
HISTORIC SITE SUMMARY SHEET

Survey: PG#72-9-9 Building Date: 1912

Building Name: Fairmount Heights Elementary School (Mount Zion Church)

Location: 737 61<sup>st</sup> Avenue, Fairmount Heights, MD

Private/Religious/Occupied/Good/Inaccessible

Description

The Fairmount Heights Elementary School is a two-story, hip-roof frame school structure, of institutional Foursquare form, four bays by two; there is a one-story, flat-roof addition attached to the rear. Entrance is located asymmetrically in the second bay of the four-bay principal (north)west facade, through an enclosed shed-roof porch; a second entrance has been created between third and fourth bay to provide access to the sanctuary in the southern half of the first story. Windows of the building are large 6/6 wood frame double-hung sashes typical of early twentieth-century school buildings, except for the two windows that flank the sanctuary entrance; they have been reconfigured with round heads to suggest the church identification. The hip roof of the main block has deeply overhanging eaves punctuated by exposed rafter ends which have a curved jigsaw profile. The original wood siding of the building was many years ago covered with gray asphalt shingle which has (in 1999) been covered with cream-colored vinyl siding. A pyramidal-roof cupola rises from the west (front) plane of the roof; the cupola has been enclosed and covered with the vinyl siding, but the original school bell is preserved inside .

Significance

The Fairmount Heights Elementary School, constructed in 1912, is a focal point in Fairmount Heights, an African-American community which had its start in 1900. In 1911, the Board of School Commissioners, upon request from the community, agreed to build a school; April 1911 the Board ordered that the school be erected in accordance with the plans and specifications of architect W. Sidney Pittman, who lived in the Fairmount Heights community. The Board purchased four unimproved lots at the corner of Chapel Avenue and Addison Road, and the school was constructed and ready to open by June 1912. By 1915, *The Washington Bee* reported that enrollment had increased to 160 pupils; there were five teachers, four classrooms, three hallways, and a carpenter shop. The Fairmount Heights school was the first to offer industrial training for blacks in Prince George's County. This building served as the public school for Fairmount Heights until 1934, when a new eight-room brick school was built at the corner of Addison and Sheriff Roads. The old school was purchased by the Mount Zion Apostolic Faith Church, which continues to hold services there.

Acreage: 12,625 square feet.

**Maryland Historical Trust  
State Historical Sites Inventory Form**

Survey No. PG #72-9-9

Magi No.

DOE  yes  no

**1. Name** (Indicate preferred name)

historic Fairmount Heights Elementary School

and/or common Mount Zion Apostolic Faith Church

**2. Location**

street & number 737 61<sup>st</sup> Avenue

city, town Fairmount Heights vicinity of congregational district 4

state MD county Prince George's

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other

**4. Owner of Property** (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Mount Zion Apostolic Faith Church

street & number 737 61st Avenue telephone no.

city, town Fairmount Heights state MD zip code 20743

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Prince George's County Administration Bldg. liber 419

street & number 14741 Gov. Oden Bowie Drive folio 295

city, town Upper Marlboro state Maryland zip code 20772

**6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys**

title Prince George's County Historic Sites and Districts Plan

date 1992 federal state  county local

depository for survey records Planning & Preservation Section, M-NCPPC

City, town Upper Marlboro state MD

## 7. Description

Survey No. PG #72-9-9

Condition		Check One	Check One
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved Date of move _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Prepare both a summary and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today

The Fairmount Heights Elementary School is a two-story hip-roof frame school structure, of institutional Foursquare plan, typical of the larger and more substantial schools which were being built in this area in the early years of this century. The original entrance was through double doors centered in the four-bay west facade. Each leaf of the door has five panels and there is a large nine-pane transom above. The small one-story shed-roof porch which sheltered this entrance has been enclosed, thus obscuring the original entrance. This enclosed porch is lighted by a 6/6 double-hung-sash window on the west and also on the south, with entrance into the west by a modern double door; the interior of this porch is lined with vertical wainscoting. South of the porch, a new double-door entrance has been constructed between the third and fourth bays, providing access to the space which serves as the sanctuary. The two windows which flank this new entrance have been reconfigured with round arches for the current use of the building as a church; the individual panes of these windows are painted different colors (as are those of the two first-story south windows), giving the impression (from the sanctuary space) of stained-glass windows. The new entrance itself has recently been given a round-arch transom. The second story of the west facade is lighted by four 6/6 double-hung-sash windows, of the same configuration as the windows of the other elevations. There are no shutters.

The side elevations of the main block are two bays deep; there is an exterior brick chimney centered on each of the side elevations, rising between the windows and piercing the overhanging eaves of the roof. On the east rear elevation of the main block is a one-story, flat-roof addition, with entrance through a double door centered in the rear elevation. Four large 6/6 windows light the space to the north of the door, while the space to the south (which serves as the altar of the sanctuary) is lighted by two small 12-light windows; the individual panes of these two windows, which light the altar or stage of the sanctuary space, are painted. The building rests on a brick foundation.

The hip roof of the main block is covered with gray asbestos shingle, and has deeply overhanging eaves punctuated by exposed rafter ends which have a curved jigsaw profile. A small pyramidal-roof cupola rises from the west (front) plane of the hip roof. This cupola was originally built to house the school bell; the bell survives but has been enclosed within the cupola. There is a small octagonal window on the west face of the cupola. The entire building, including the cupola, was covered many years ago with gray asphalt shingle. All of this gray shingle was recently covered with cream-colored beveled vinyl siding.

The plan of the building originally consisted of a transverse front hallway and two large classrooms on each story. Some parts of this configuration have been changed, e.g., the southerly first-story classroom has been opened into a large space for church services, while the northerly space has been divided into service spaces. The main staircase, in the northwest corner of the building, however, remains, taking up the north end of the front hall. The open-string stair rises along the east wall of the hall to a landing at the north, then turns 180 degrees and rises along the west wall of the hall to the second story. It has plain rectangular balusters and a square fluted newel with incised floral decoration and cushion cap. The walls of the staircase are finished with narrow vertical wainscoting. Much of the early twentieth-century interior wood molding (multi-band with bull's-eye corner blocks) survives intact.

This large and noticeable building stands on a group of four lots at the corner of the main street through the Fairmount Heights community. From 61<sup>st</sup> Avenue, there is a flight of steps leading to each of the two west entrances, and there is a short driveway just south of the building. To the east is a small rear yard, planted in grass, as well as the outline of a concrete planter and remnants of another line of concrete foundation.

# 8. Significance

Survey No. PG #72-9-9

Period	Areas of Significance- check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archaeology-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"/> 1900-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
2000-		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		
Specific Dates: 1912		Builder/Architect: William Sidney Pittman		
check: Applicable Criteria	A	B	C	D
and/or				
Applicable Exception	A	B	C	D
Level of Significance	national	state	local	

The Fairmount Heights Elementary School is one of the largest of the historic buildings in Fairmount Heights, and a focal point in the community. It was designed by architect W. Sidney Pittman, and built in 1912 on several lots in the Fairmount Heights subdivision.

The Town of Fairmount Heights is located just outside the easternmost point of the District of Columbia in Prince George's County, Maryland; it is composed of a group of early twentieth-century subdivisions that form one of the earliest planned communities for African Americans in the Washington, D.C., area. The community began with the Fairmount Heights subdivision in 1900, followed by five adjoining subdivisions, the last being Sylvan Vista platted in 1923. The Town was incorporated in 1935, and grew steadily through the years before World War I, to become a notably progressive African-American community and the largest black municipality in Prince George's County.<sup>1</sup>

The land which was to become Fairmount Heights consisted, during the late nineteenth century, principally of parts of the small farms of John H. Wilson, John and Caroline Silence, Samuel Hoover, Mosby Brown and John Wiessner, all clustered around the east corner of the ten-mile-square District of Columbia. In the early years of the twentieth century, these farms were bought up and subdivided by land speculators, who then began to sell individual lots to black families, most of whom worked in the District of Columbia.

The first section of Fairmount Heights was subdivided in 1900 by Robinson White and Allen Clark (both white men) out of parts of several small farms which they had purchased from the Wilson, Godfrey, Belt and Lee families. Robinson White was a lawyer and developer who resided in the District of Columbia; Allen C. Clark was a lawyer and manager of the Equitable Live Insurance Company of Washington, D.C. White and Clark had approximately fifty acres surveyed by County Surveyor Edward L. Latimer, and laid out in lots and streets radiating from the northeast boundary of the District of Columbia. The deep, narrow lots were generally 25 by 125 feet; two of the streets were named for these first two developers. Sale of lots began almost immediately, and within a few years, dwellings were constructed and a community began to form.

<sup>1</sup>Prince George's County Plats JWB#5:652; #1:81, 91; #2:5, 12, 66.

From the beginning, African Americans were encouraged to buy lots and settle in the new community. White and Clark sold the lots at relatively low prices, making home ownership attainable for black families which had long sought that opportunity. Most of the earliest purchasers of lots worked for government agencies; many built their own houses, or relied on friends and family to help with construction. Many families were quick to seize the opportunity to move out of the city, determined to progress, by hard work and amid healthful surroundings, toward a better life.

The earliest dwellings were of frame construction, modest in size and form, and many of these have not survived. Within a few years, however, several substantial houses were constructed for individuals who would make significant contributions to the development of Fairmount Heights. Two of these individuals were James F. Armstrong and William Sidney Pittman, both of them associated with Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. Armstrong, a graduate of Tuskegee and Howard University Law School, came to Fairmount Heights and built his house in 1905. He later served as Supervisor of Colored Schools in Prince George's County.

W. Sidney Pittman received degrees in mechanical and architectural drawing from Tuskegee and from Drexel Institute in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; he came to Washington, D.C., in 1905, and within a year opened his own architectural office. Pittman soon gained great prominence by winning the competition for the design of the Negro Building at the Jamestown (Virginia) Ter-Centennial Exposition; in 1907 he supervised construction of the Negro Building, which proved to be a significant success, and launched the career of its architect.

At the same time, Pittman was working with other local individuals on the planning and development of Fairmount Heights. Throughout most of 1906 he had worked with Robinson White, the principal developer of Fairmount Heights, in planning the community. White had commissioned Pittman to help plan a model black community, and, in Pittman's opinion, "a better, cleaner, healthier place could hardly be found." White was interested in establishing in Fairmount Heights an independent trades school, and Pittman arranged for him to consult with Booker T. Washington on the subject. Washington had been Pittman's mentor at Tuskegee, and had supported his advanced study at Drexel. In the fall of 1907, Pittman married Portia Marshall Washington, daughter of the by then world-famous educator. Pittman designed a house in Fairmount Heights, and the newlywed couple moved into it in 1908. He was also active in the Washington chapter of the Negro Business League, serving as its president in 1908.<sup>2</sup>

In 1908, Pittman established the Fairmount Heights Mutual Improvement Company which had as its purpose "to develop Fairmount Heights as a viable alternative to inner city ghetto living". One of the goals of the Mutual Improvement Company was "to purchase lots and erect thereon . . . a building to be used as a public hall for religious, charitable and other similar purposes." The lots were bought, and Pittman designed a large hall (Charity Hall) which served not only as a social hall for the fledgling community, but also as the location of the first Methodist services before the church was built, and as a classroom in the years before a public school was established in the community.

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<sup>2</sup> Pearl, Susan G., *Fairmount Heights, Maryland: A History*, M-NCPPC, 1991; Pearl, Susan G., "William Sidney Pittman" in *American National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 1999; "Fairmount Heights: A Thriving Colored Settlement" in *The Washington Bee*, 12 December 1908. [The Pittmans had three children while they lived in Fairmount Heights. At the end of 1912, they moved to Dallas, Texas, where Pittman had received numerous architectural commissions.]

In January 1911 a group of residents approached the Board of School Commissioners, and requested that an elementary school be built in the community. The Board agreed, and a building committee (which included W. Sidney Pittman and James F. Armstrong) was appointed. Pittman was chosen to submit a design for the school, and in April of 1911 the Board ordered that the school be erected in accordance with Pittman's plans and specifications. In September of that year, the Board purchased four unimproved lots at the corner of Chapel Avenue and Addison Road. The school, to be known as "Colored School" #1 in District 18, opened in 1912. It was a large two-story frame building with hip roof, with interior divided into two large classrooms on the first story, connected by hallways at right angles, and a side staircase. Similar classrooms on the second story were completed in 1914.

In August 1914, the Board ordered the establishment of an "industrial department," and the Fairmount Heights Elementary School became the first school in Prince George's County to offer industrial training for black students. James F. Armstrong was named Director of Manual Training. By 1915, *The Washington Bee* reported that enrollment had increased to 160 pupils; there were five teachers, four classrooms, three hallways, and the carpenter shop.<sup>3</sup>

With the development of the community and the increase of local student population, the new school was soon overcrowded. In 1922, James Armstrong began to press the Board of Education (which had superseded the Board of School Commissioners) for the construction of an addition to the school building. The one-story addition was completed in 1923.<sup>4</sup>

This building served as the public school for Fairmount Heights until 1934, when a new eight-room brick school was built at the corner of Addison and Sheriff Roads. At that time, the old school property was purchased by the Mount Zion Apostolic Faith Church,<sup>5</sup> which continues to hold services there. On the first story, the large classroom on the south became the sanctuary, and that on the north was divided into service spaces. The second story was converted into an apartment for the first pastor, Olivia Marion. The belfry was enclosed, but the school bell was preserved inside. The principal west entrance, which was almost certainly originally centered in the west facade, was altered; it was replaced by an asymmetrical entrance (filling the second bay) with entry to provide access to the north part of the building. To the south of this, a new entrance to the sanctuary was created between the third and fourth bays, and its two flanking windows were given round heads.

In 1999 the congregation of Mount Zion undertook repairs to the building. The space over the double-door entrance to the sanctuary was opened to form a large fanlight. All of the gray asphalt shingle siding which sheathed the building was covered with cream-colored bevelled vinyl siding.

Although the Fairmount Heights Elementary School has undergone significant changes in the last 60 years, it still reflects its original use, and its important role in the formation and growth of the Fairmount Heights community: it exemplifies the social, educational and historic heritage of the County in its urban communities. In addition, it is identified with two important individuals who influenced society: architect William Sidney Pittman, who not only designed the building but played an important role in the

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<sup>3</sup> *Journal of the Prince George's County Board of School Commissioners, 1911-1915;*

<sup>4</sup> *Journal of the Prince George's Board of Education, 1921-1923.*

<sup>5</sup> Prince George's County Deed #419:295.

community's early development, and James F. Armstrong, teacher and first supervisor of Colored Schools in Prince George's County. In spite of exterior changes, the building still embodies, with its general configuration and detail, the distinctive character of the institutional Foursquare form and craftsman detail of the early twentieth century. It is the closest to its original configuration of the County's surviving school buildings of the same period and form: the Bowie School (also 1912, of similar form though somewhat larger and built of brick) has been significantly altered by additions in 1925, 1934 and 1982; the Surratts School, of similar period and form, has been renovated almost beyond recognition, as has the Edmonston School (1915). The Fairmount Heights School, therefore, is a nearly unique and important representative of an important but now rare form. And with its large size and immediately recognizable profile, the Fairmount Heights Elementary School is an established and familiar visual feature of the Fairmount Heights neighborhood.

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## 9. Major Biographical References

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Survey No. PG #72-9-9

See notes, item #8.

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## 10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of nominated property: 12,625 sq. ft.

Quadrangle name: Washington East

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References: Do NOT complete UTM references

TM #66, Fairmount Heights Blk I, lots 1-4

A			B		
	Zone Easting	Northing		Zone Easting	Northing
C			D		
E			F		
G			H		

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Verbal boundary description and justification

**Fairmount Heights, Block I, Lots 1-4**

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List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

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## 11. Form Prepared By

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name title	Susan G. Pearl, Research/Architectural Historian
organization	Prince George's County Historic Preservation Commission
date	June 1991, December 2000
street & number	c/o M-NCPPC, 14741 Gov. Oden Bowie Drive
telephone	(301) 952-3521
city or town	Upper Marlboro
state	MD 20772

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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  
100 Community Place  
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023

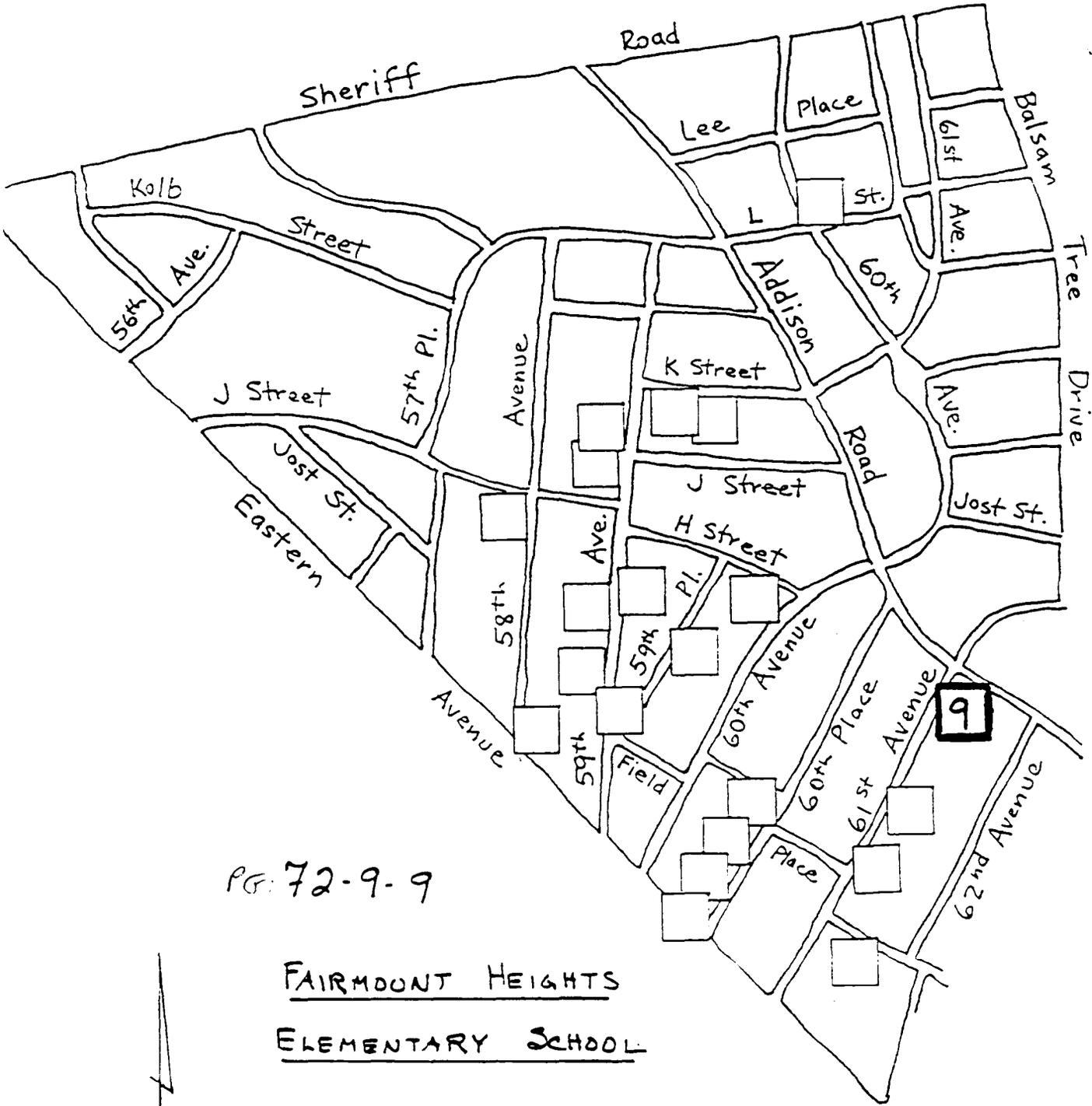
FAIRMOUNT HEIGHTS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
PG#72-9-9



(NORTH)WEST FACADE

1995

# Town of Fairmount Heights



PG: 72-9-9

FAIRMOUNT HEIGHTS  
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY  
HISTORIC SITE SUMMARY SHEET

Survey #: P.G.# 72-9-9 Building Date: 1912

Building Name: Fairmount Heights Elementary School

Location: 737 61st Avenue, Fairmount Heights, Md.

Private/Religious/Occupied/Good/Inaccessible

Description:

The Fairmount Heights School is a two-story hip-roof frame school structure, of institutional Foursquare plan, four bays by two; there is a one-story addition attached to the rear. There is an enclosed pyramidal-roof cupola at third level, rising from the main (north)west plane of the roof. The original entrance was through double doors in the second bay of the four-bay principal west facade. Each leaf of the door has five panels, and there is a large nine-pane transom above. A small one-story shed-roof porch which sheltered this entrance has been enclosed, and the interior of the porch is lined with vertical wainscoting. There is a one-story flat-roof addition to the rear of the building; centered in the rear elevation of this addition is a double door with the same type of large nine-pane transom as that of the main entrance. The entire building is covered with pink-gray asphalt shingle. Windows generally are large 6/6 double hung sash. The eaves have a deep overhang, punctuated by exposed rafter ends with a curved jigsaw profile. Windows are generally large 6/6 double hung sash.

Significance:

The Fairmount Heights Elementary School, constructed in 1912, is one of the largest buildings and a focal point in the community. Before its construction, classes were held in nearby Charity Hall, but in 1911, a group of residents approached the Board of School Commissioners, and requested that an elementary school be built in the community. The Board agreed, and a building committee (which included W. Sidney Pittman and James F. Armstrong) was appointed. Architect Pittman was chosen to submit a design for the school, and in April of 1911 the Board ordered that the school be erected in accordance with Pittman's plans and specifications. In September of that year, the Board purchased four unimproved lots at the corner of Chapel Avenue and Addison Road. The school was constructed and ready to open by June 1912. By 1915, the Washington Bee reported that enrollment had increased to 160 pupils; there were five teachers, four classrooms, three hallways, and a carpenter shop. At the time, the school had the only facilities for industrial training for blacks in Prince George's County. This building served as the public school for Fairmount Heights until 1934, when a new eight-room brick school was built at the corner of Addison and Sheriff Roads. At this time, the old school property was purchased by the Mount Zion Apostolic Faith Church, which continues to hold services there. School #1, District 18, is one of the largest buildings in Fairmount Heights, and as its first educational structure, is a focal point in the community.

Acreage: 12,625 square feet

Survey No. PG#72-9-9

Magi No.

DOE  yes  no

# Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

## 1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Fairmount Heights Elementary School

and/or common Mt. Zion Apostolic Faith Church

## 2. Location

street & number 737 61st Avenue  not for publication

city, town Fairmount Heights  vicinity of congressional district 5

state MD county Prince George's

## 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

## 4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Mt. Zion Apostolic Faith Church

street & number 737 61st Avenue telephone no.:

city, town Fairmount Heights state and zip code MD 20743

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Prince George's County Courthouse liber 419

street & number 14735 Main Street folio 295

city, town Upper Marlboro state Maryland

## 6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title Prince George's County Historic Sites Inventory

date 1974  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Historic Preservation Section, M-NCPPC

city, town Upper Marlboro state MD

## 7. Description

Survey No. PG#72-9-9

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date of move _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

The Fairmount Heights Elementary School (School #1, colored, District 18) is now the Mount Zion Apostolic Faith Church; it stands at 737 61st (originally Chapel) Avenue. It was built in 1912 on lots 2-4, Block I of the Fairmount Heights subdivision, which was platted in 1900.

This is a two-story hip-roof frame school structure, of institutional Foursquare plan, four bays by two; there is a one-story addition attached to the rear. There is an enclosed pyramidal-roof cupola at third level, rising from the main (north)west plane of the roof. The original entrance was through double doors in the second bay of the four-bay principal west facade. Each leaf of the door has five panels, and there is a large nine-pane transom above. A small one-story shed-roof porch which sheltered this entrance has been enclosed, and the interior of the porch is lined with vertical wainscoting.

There is a one-story flat-roof addition to the rear of the building; centered in the rear elevation of this addition is a double door with the same type of large nine-pane transom as that of the main entrance.

The entire building is covered with pink-gray asphalt shingle. Windows generally are large 6/6 double hung sash. The eaves have a deep overhang, punctuated by exposed rafter ends with a curved jigsaw profile. Windows are generally large 6/6 double hung sash.

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input checked="" 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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1912 **Builder/Architect** W.S. Pittman

check: Applicable Criteria:  A  B  C  D  
 and/or  
 Applicable Exception:  A  B  C  D  E  F  G  
 Level of Significance:  national  state  local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

The Fairmount Heights Elementary School is one of the largest buildings and a focal point in the community. It was designed by architect W. Sidney Pittman and built in 1912 on several lots in the Fairmount Heights subdivision.

The Town of Fairmount Heights is located just outside the easternmost point of the District of Columbia in Prince George's County, Maryland; it is composed of a group of early twentieth-century subdivisions that form one of the earliest planned communities for blacks in the Washington, D. C., area. The community began with the Fairmount Heights subdivision in 1900, followed by five adjoining subdivisions, the last being Sylvan Vista platted in 1923. The Town was incorporated in 1935, and grew steadily through the years before World War II.

The land which was to become Fairmount Heights consisted, during the late nineteenth century, principally of parts of the small farms of John H. Wilson, John and Caroline Silence, Samuel Hoover, Mosby Brown and John Wiessner, all clustered around the east corner of the District of Columbia. In the early years of the twentieth century, these farms were bought up and subdivided by land speculators, who then began to sell individual lots to black families, most of whom worked in the District of Columbia.

The first section of Fairmount Heights was subdivided in 1900 by Robinson White and Allen Clark (both white men) out of parts of several small farms which they had purchased from the Wilson, Godfrey, Belt and Lee families. Robinson White was a lawyer and developer who resided in the District of Columbia; Allen C. Clark was a lawyer and manager of the Equitable Life Insurance Company of Washington, D. C. White and Clark had approximately fifty acres surveyed by

County Surveyor Edward L. Latimer, and laid out in lots and streets radiating from the northeast boundary of the District of Columbia. The deep, narrow lots were generally 25 by 125 feet; two of the streets were named for these first two developers. Sale of lots began almost immediately, and within a few years, dwellings were constructed and a community began to form.

From the beginning, blacks were encouraged to buy lots and settle in the new community. White and Clark sold the lots at relatively low prices, making home ownership finally attainable for black families. Most of the earliest purchasers of lots worked for government agencies; many built their own houses, or relied on friends and family to help with construction. Many families were quick to seize the opportunity to move out of the city, determined to progress, by hard work and amid healthful surroundings, toward a better life.

The earliest dwellings were of frame construction, modest in size and form, and many of these have not survived. Within a few years, however, several interesting and substantial houses were constructed for individuals who would make significant contributions to the development of Fairmount Heights. Also in these early years, community institutions such as schools and churches, began to be established.

The Fairmount Heights Elementary School was constructed in 1912. Before its construction, classes were held in nearby Charity Hall, but in 1911, a group of residents approached the Board of School Commissioners, and requested that an elementary school be built in the community. The Board agreed, and a building committee (which included W. Sidney Pittman and James F. Armstrong) was appointed. Architect Pittman was chosen to submit a design for the school, and in April of 1911 the Board ordered that the school be erected in accordance with Pittman's plans and specifications. In September of that year, the Board purchased four unimproved lots at the corner of Chapel Avenue and Addison Road. The school was constructed and ready to open by June 1912. By 1915, the Washington Bee reported that enrollment had increased to 160 pupils; there were five teachers, four classrooms, three hallways, and a carpenter shop. At the time, the school had the only facilities for industrial training for blacks in Prince George's County.

This building served as the public school for Fairmount Heights until 1934, when a new eight-room brick school was built at the corner of Addison and Sheriff Roads. At this time, the old school property was purchased by the Mount Zion Apostolic Faith Church, which continues to hold services there. School #1, District 18, is one of the largest buildings in Fairmount Heights, and as its first

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST  
STATE HISTORIC SITES INVENTORY FORM  
Statement of Significance (continued)

Survey No. PG#79-9-9

Section 8 Page 3

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educational structure, is a focal point in the community.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. PG#72-9-9

Journal of Board of County School Commissioners, Vol. II, 1903-21  
Washington Bee, 5 November 1910, 19 November 1910, 18 March 1911,  
1 May 1915

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 12,625 sq ftQuadrangle name Washington EastQuadrangle scale 1:24,000UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

TM #66 FH Blk I, lots 1-4

A 

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Zone	Easting	Northing

B 

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Zone	Easting	Northing

C 

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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D 

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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E 

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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F 

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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G 

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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H 

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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Verbal boundary description and justification

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state code county code

state code county code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Susan G. Pearl, Research/Architectural HistorianPrince George's Countyorganization Historic Preservation Commission date June 1991street & number c/o M-NCPPC, 4th floor CAB telephone 301-952-3521city or town Upper Marlboro state MD 20772

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  
Shaw House  
21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 269-2438

Circa 1911-1912

P. G. #72~~7~~-9-9  
Fairmount Heights Elementary School  
737 61st Avenue, Fairmount Heights, Md.  
Priv/Occ/Relig/Good

The Fairmount Heights Elementary School is a large (ca. 60' x 60') two-story frame "four-square" building with a hipped roof. Its principal facade faces roughly north, and above this four-bay main facade, centered on the north plane of the roof, is a pyramidal roofed tower. Under this tower, projecting from the north facade, is a near-central two-bay entry vestibule, with a doorway in its second bay. There are a recent door and window in the third and fourth bays of the north facade; both are decorated with colored glass panes. The whole structure is sheathed with gray, brick-pattern synthetic siding.

Fairmount Heights, subdivided in 1900 out of six farms on the Prince George's County - District of Columbia border, was the first black community established on the edge of Washington. Families began to settle in Fairmount Heights in 1903. Classes for children were for many years held in private homes, but by January of 1911, the residents petitioned the County Board of School Commissioners for a local school. A building committee was appointed and within three months the plans drawn by architect W. Sidney Pittman were accepted. Four lots were purchased, and the school was ready to open in June 1912. Over the next three years the upper story of the school was completed; in the spring of 1915, the Washington Bee reported that the enrollment had increased from 17 to 160 pupils. At this time, the Fairmount Heights school had the only facilities for industrial training for blacks in the county.

In 1934, after the construction of the new brick elementary school, the old frame school was closed and sold to members of the Mt. Zion Apostolic Faith Church, which continues there today. The Fairmount Heights school is significant because, designed by a noted black architect, it was the first elementary school built in a planned black suburb of Washington, D. C.

# Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

## 1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Fairmount Heights Elementary School

and/or common Mt. Zion Apostolic Faith Church

## 2. Location

street & number 737 61st Avenue  not for publication

city, town Fairmount Heights  vicinity of congressional district 5

state Maryland county Prince George's

## 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input 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 type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input 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"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

## 4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Mt. Zion Apostolic Faith Church

street & number 737 61st Avenue telephone no.:

city, town Fairmount Heights state and zip code Maryland

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. P. G. Co. Courthouse liber 419

street & number Main Street folio 295

city, town Upper Marlboro state Maryland

## 6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title P.G. Co. Inventory of Historic Sites

date 1974  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records History Division M-NCPPC

city, town Riverdale state Md., 20737

# 7. Description

Survey No. P.G. 72A-9-9

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved    date of move _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

The Fairmount Heights Elementary School is a large (ca. 60' x 60') two-story frame "four-square" building with a hipped roof. It's principal facade faces roughly north, and above this four-bay main facade, centered on the north plane of the roof, is a pyramidal-roofed tower. Under this tower, projecting from the north facade, is a near-central two-bay entry vestibule. The door into this vestibule is in its second bay.

A recent (after 1936) doorway and window have been constructed in the third and fourth bays of the north facade. The window has a round arch, and both it and the double doors have colored glass panes. Above the double doors is an eight-light transom, which features alternate colored panes.

There is a one-story addition to the rear (south) of the building. The whole structure is presently sheathed with gray, brick-pattern, synthetic siding.

# 8. Significance

Survey No. P.G. 72A-9-9

<b>Period</b>	<b>Areas of Significance—Check and justify below</b>			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input checked="" 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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) Black History

**Specific dates** 1911/1912      **Builder/Architect** W. Sidney Pittman

check: Applicable Criteria:  A  B  C  D  
 and/or  
 Applicable Exception:  A  B  C  D  E  F  G  
 Level of Significance:  national  state  local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

Fairmount Heights, the first Black community to be established on the edge of Washington, was subdivided out of six farms which straddled the Prince George's County - - District of Columbia line. The first of six subdivisions was made in 1900, and families began to move into the new community as early as 1903. Because Fairmount Heights was located on the line of the Washington Baltimore and Annapolis electric railroad, it was easy for workers and students to get into Washington, but the residents soon felt the need of a local elementary school.

At first, classes were held in private homes, but in January of 1911, a delegation from Fairmount Heights approached the Board of School Commissioners and requested that an elementary school be built in their community. The Board agreed, and recommended a levy of \$2500 to buy a lot and erect the school. R. S. Nichols, James F. Armstrong, Frank Coalman, W. Sidney Pittman and W.T. Crown were appointed a building committee for the new school. Within three months, the plans drawn by architect W. Sidney Pittman (cf. #72A-18) were accepted; and in September of that year, the Board purchased lots 1 - 4 of Block I. The frame, "four-square" school was ready to open by June of 1912.<sup>1</sup> Apparently only the ground floor, with four rooms, was finished that first year, because in October 1913, the Board authorized the trustees of the school to accept bids for the completion of the upstairs of the school.<sup>2</sup> When this work was done, the Washington Bee reported that the enrollment had increased from 17 to 160 pupils, that there were five teachers, and that the school itself was large, with four classrooms, three hallways, and a carpenter shop.<sup>3</sup> At this time, Fairmount Heights school had the only facilities for industrial training for Blacks in the County.

By 1915, James F. Armstrong, who had settled in Fairmount Heights in 1906, was appointed Superintendent of Colored Schools of Prince George's County; at that time he resigned his position as trustee of the Fairmount Heights Elementary School.<sup>4</sup>

Finishing work was still going on inside the school in 1918; in that year the Board ordered that two classrooms be wainscoted up to the windows and blackboards, and that the hallway be wainscoted to a height of four feet. New blackboards also were ordered.<sup>5</sup>

In 1934, a new brick elementary school, with eight rooms, was built for Fairmount Heights, on the corner of Addison Road and Sheriff Road. At this time the old frame building was closed and offered for sale. It was purchased by members of a pentecostal church, the Mt. Zion Apostolic Faith Church, which continues there to the present.<sup>6</sup>

The Fairmount Heights school is significant because it was the first elementary school built in a planned Black suburb of Washington, D. C. It was designed by a noted Black architect, W. Sidney Pittman, and it was the largest Black school in its time period in all of Prince George's County.

## NOTES:

1. Journal, Board of School Commissioners, Vol. II, 1903-1921
2. Ibid
3. Washington Bee, 1 May 1915
4. Ibid 3 July 1915
5. Journal, Board of School Commissioners, Vol. II, 1903-1921
6. P. G. Co. Deed #419:295; Journal, Bd. of School Commissioners Vol. II, 1903-1921

W.P.A. records of churches-1937, M.H.R. Annapolis

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. P.G. 72\*-9-9

P.G. Deeds: #419:295; #63:220; #72:384; #43:297  
Washington Bee 1 May 1915, 3 July 1915  
Journal, Board of School Commissioners Vol. II, 1903-1921  
Fairmount Heights Yearbook - 1946 The Public Schools of Prince George's County, 1976

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle name \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle scale \_\_\_\_\_

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A 

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Zone Easting Northing

B 

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Zone Easting Northing

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H 

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Verbal boundary description and justification

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Susan G. Pearl

organization History Division date May 1983

street & number 4811 Riverdale Road telephone 779-2011

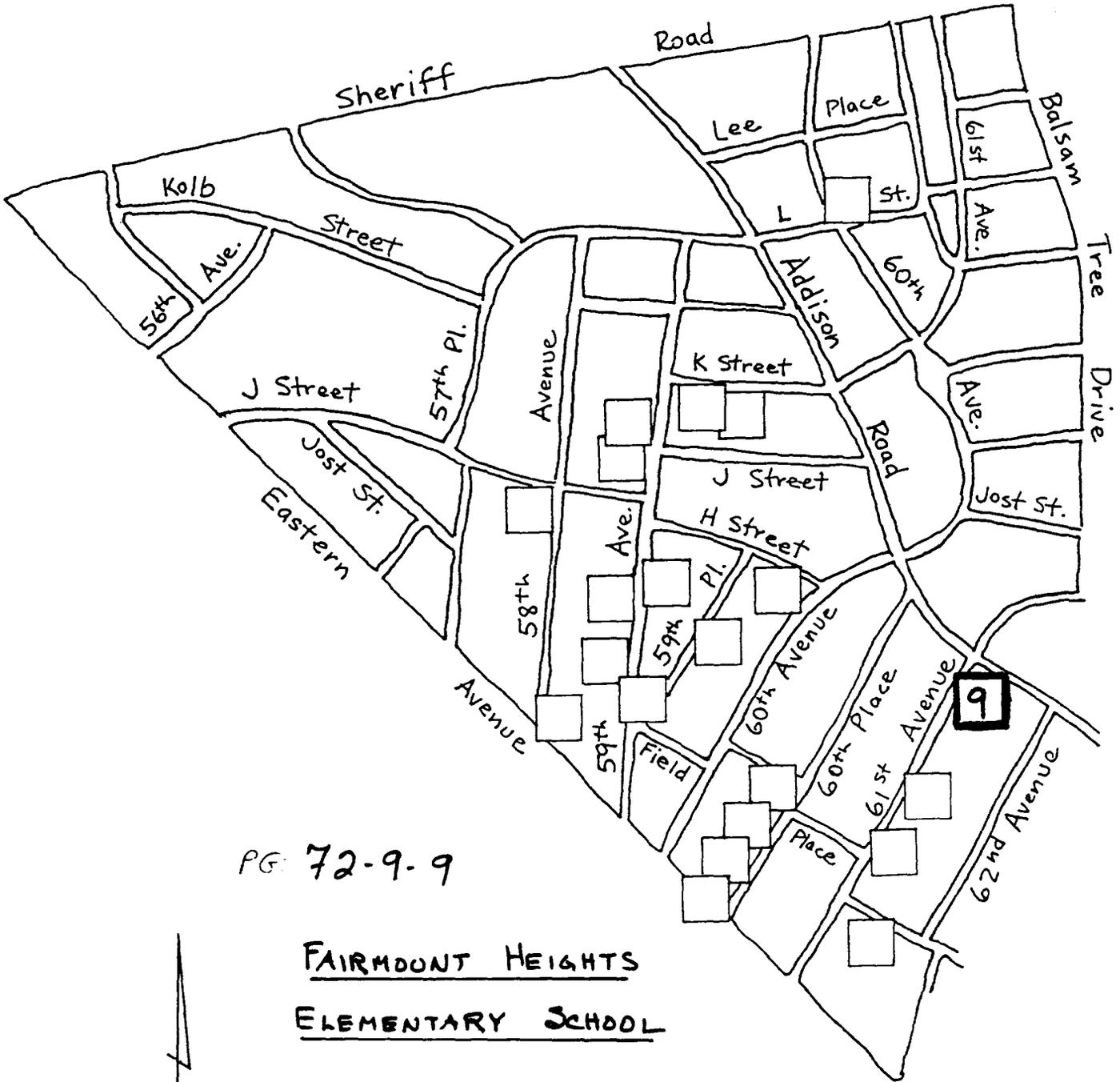
city or town Riverdale state Maryland

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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  
Shaw House  
21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 269-2438

# Town of Fairmount Heights



PG 72-9-9

FAIRMOUNT HEIGHTS  
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL





P.G.#72A-9-9  
**FAIRMOUNT HEIGHTS SCHOOL**

HEIGHTS 2.3 MI. ARBORO 11 MI. 55' 34 35 36 37 800m E 76° 52' 30" 38° 52' 30" 4305000m N. 1.5 MI TO INTERSTATE 95 HALL B M.



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Heavy-duty		Light-duty	
Medium-duty		Unimproved dirt	
	Interstate Route		U.S. Route
	State Route		



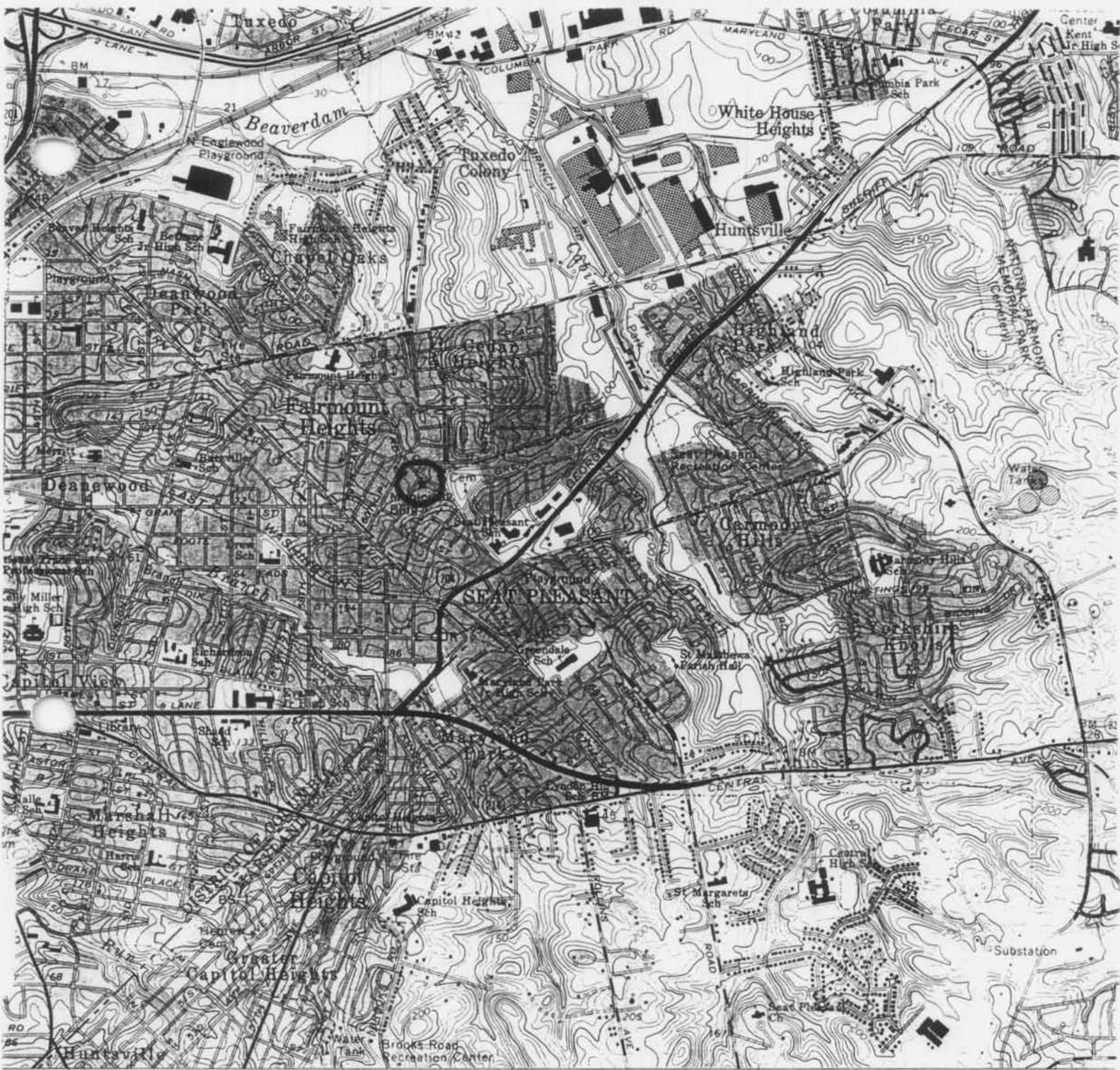
WASHINGTON EAST, D.C.-MD.  
 N3852.5—W7652.5/7.5

1965  
 PHOTOREVISED 1979  
 AMS-5661 IV NW—SERIES V833

There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map. Boundary lines shown in purple compiled from latest information available from the controlling authority.

DS  
 092  
 REQUEST

(UPPER MARLBORO)  
 5661 IV SE



DISTRICT HEIGHTS 2.3 MI UPPER MARLBORO 11 MI 55' 334 335000m E INTERIOR- GEOLOGICAL SURVEY WASHINGTON D C - 1971 76'



1 FEET  
EVEL  
TUM IS MEAN LOW WATER  
LINE OF MEAN HIGH WATER  
ATEL

72-9-9  
PG: 72-9-9



QUADRANGLE LOCATION

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Heavy-duty		Light-duty	
Medium-duty		Unimproved dirt	
	Interstate Route		U.S. Route
	State Ro		

WASHINGTON EAST, MD. - D. C.  
N3852.5 - W7652.5 / 7.5

ACCURACY STANDARDS  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20242  
ABOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

1965  
PHOTOREVISED 1971  
AMS 5661 IV NW-SERIES V833



NAME OLD SCHOOL BLDG. (NOW MT. ZION CHURCH)

LOCATION 61 ST. AVE + ADDISON Rd FAIRMOUNT HEIGHTS, Md

FACADE N

PHOTO TAKEN 10/25/74 MOWYER PG: 72-9-9



Fairmont Heights School  
Prince Georges County, MD.  
Susan H. Pearl  
January 1991  
Northwest election  
Ref: 1147 Chocomaile



~~PG. #72A-9~~

PG: 72-9-9

~~D. G. #72A-9~~

Fairmount Heights Elementary School  
Prince George's County, Md.  
Susan G. Pearl  
April 1983  
North Elevation  
Neg: Md. Hist. Trust, Annapolis, Md.



P6.72-9-9

~~P.G. #72A~~  
-9

P. G. #72A-9

Fairmount Heights Elementary School  
Prince George's County, Md.  
Susan G. Pearl  
April 1983  
Northeast 3/4 elevation  
Neg: Md. Hist. Trust, Annapolis, Md.