

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

BA-2

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received MAY 1 1986

date entered 5-30-86

~~JUN 6 1986~~

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Mount de Sales Academy of the Visitation

and/or common Mount de Sales Academy (preferred)

2. Location

street & number 700 Academy Road N/A not for publication

city, town Catonsville N/A vicinity of Third Congressional District

state Maryland code 24 county Baltimore code 005

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Trustees of Mount de Sales High School, Inc.
c/o Sister Frederick Mary

street & number 700 Academy Road

city, town Catonsville N/A vicinity of state Maryland 21228

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Baltimore County Courthouse

street & number

city, town Towson state Maryland 21204

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Maryland Historical Trust
Historic Sites Inventory has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1980 federal state county local

depository for survey records Maryland Historical Trust, 21 State Circle

city, town Annapolis state Maryland 21401

7. Description

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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 <u>N/A</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Number of Resources		Number of previously listed National Register properties included in this nomination: <u>0</u>
Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>4</u>	<u>0</u> buildings	
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> sites	
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> structures	Original and Historic functions and uses: educational, religious
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects	
<u>4</u>	<u>0</u> Total	

DESCRIPTION SUMMARY:

Located facing south on a prominent rise of ground northeast of Catonsville in Baltimore County, Maryland, Mount de Sales Academy is a massive four-story brick building, 21 bays wide by 5 bays deep, constructed in three stages beginning in 1852. The building comprises three pedimented pavilions connected by full-height hyphens; this final 5-part form was achieved in 1882, when a monastery to house the cloistered Sisters of the Visitation was added to the 1852 chapel and classrooms and 1857 music hall and dormitory. The building features restrained Classical detailing in its two-story Ionic entrance portico and modillioned cornice; the music hall (the easternmost section) displays Italianate influence in its molded window hoods supported on scrolled brackets. A multi-level gallery with cast iron posts and railings spans the entire rear elevation. A cupola caps the gabled roof. The interior of the building remains largely unaltered, and is particularly noteworthy for the original chapel furnishings and an elaborate trompe l'oeil fresco ceiling in the music hall. Interior spaces, including several floors of small cells occupied by sisters in the monastery, remain intact. Associated with the Academy are a pre-1860 Italianate gatehouse, a two-story brick infirmary building constructed in 1894, and a late 19th century brick ice house.

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GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

The main building, which faces south, is a Classical-influenced brick structure which stands four stories high above a basement. It consists of three three-bay-wide gable-fronted projecting blocks connected by six-bay-wide hyphens for a total of 21 bays in width. This complex structure was built in three stages. The original section, constructed in 1852, comprises the central projecting block and the six-bay-wide wing which extends to the east. The east block was added in 1857, balancing the composition, and the building's final five-part form was achieved in 1882, when the west block and its connecting wing were constructed. A two-story hip-roofed infirmary was constructed in 1894 adjacent to the northeast corner of the main building.

The central pavilion holds the main entrance under a two-story Ionic portico reached by granite steps. The fanlighted doorway is flanked on either side by paired 4/4 double-hung sash windows. At second-story level the 3 bays are defined by tall paired 4/4 sash with heavy wooden lintels set in recessed brick arches. The central opening on the third story has been bricked in; the remaining windows are similar in size and treatment to those on the first floor. The three paired windows lighting the fourth floor are shorter than those on the lower stories. The block is crowned by a modillioned cornice which forms a pediment, and capped by a cupola with a bell-cast roof.

The east hyphen is fenestrated and detailed in a manner similar to that of the central block just described, as these two sections were built contemporaneously (1852); the west hyphen, constructed in 1882 was designed to match. The 1882 west block repeats the pattern, with three paired windows at each level and a modillioned pediment.

The east block, constructed in 1857 to provide space for a music hall and dormitory, follows the general form and massing of the original central pavilion but is more ornately detailed with decoration reflecting Italianate influence. Its fanlighted central entrance is served by a brick stoop with a curving flight of steps at either side; the flanking bays hold exceptionally tall paired 6/6 sash in round-arched openings, with heavy molded wooden lintels supported on scrolled brackets. Above these windows, approximately at the level of the second story, recessed brick panels define the bays. The third-floor windows have heavy bracketed lintels. This section of the building has a bold modillioned cornice with a course of dentils in the frieze. The fenestration pattern and decoration are carried around the five-bay-wide east elevation of the block as well. A photograph taken before 1882 shows a one-bay entrance portico on this section with four Ionic columns supporting a full entablature; the portico, as well as all the window lintels, had anthemion-like decoration. This view also shows an iron-railed balcony spanning the facade of the 1852 building below the elongated second-story windows.

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Baltimore County, Maryland

GENERAL DESCRIPTION (continued)

An open, four-decked gallery with iron columns and balustrades formerly spanned the entire north elevation of the building; as the upper levels deteriorated, however, they were taken down, so that now only two levels remain across most of this facade. The full-height survives in the northeast corner of the building.

The main entrance opens into a receiving room, or small entrance vestibule with locked doors on all sides. Because the Sisters of the Visitation were a cloistered order, contact with the outside world was made through wooden grillwork, which survives in the vestibule. Adjacent to the vestibule on the right is a parlor which serves as office space; it retains a set of large double doors with a Victorian grain-painted finish. Behind the vestibule is the school library, called the "birdroom" for its display of works of the wildlife artist Rex Brashear.

A hallway opens off the birdroom to the east; it is flanked by classrooms and offices, and extends to the 1857 music hall. The music hall, which measures approximately 40' wide by 80' long, has a two-story-high ceiling decorated with elaborate trompe l'oeil fresco designs. Four marbleized columns support the ceiling, which also has molded coffering and a dentil cornice.

The third floor has additional classroom space. The fourth floor is given to a large open space devoted to art instruction, and two large dormitory rooms. The dormitories were partitioned with curtains in the manner of a hospital ward; each student had a bed and nightstand. The north end of the dormitory room located above the music hall had an altar, where students could say their prayers before retiring.

Many of the rooms in the 1852 and 1857 sections retain early furnishings and decorative detailing, including wainscoting, built-in cabinets and bookshelves, plaster cornice moldings and grain-painted woodwork. The interior of the chapel, located on the second floor above the entrance hall and library, is unaltered save for the stained glass windows added in 1884 and a baldacchino which was placed over the altar in the 1930s; the chapel retains its original pews, gallery with wrought-iron railing, and iron observation balcony as well as its original ceiling finish. The three-sided projections on the rear facade are stair towers, holding broad spiral stairs with turned balusters and scrolled step-ends.

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GENERAL DESCRIPTION (continued)

The interior of the 1882 monastery is laid out on a cross plan, with a longitudinal hallway running the length of the wing crossed by a short transverse passage near the west end. On the first floor, rooms of varying sizes open off either side of the hall, functioning as visitors' quarters, infirmary, dispensary, and meeting rooms. On the upper floors, numerous equal-sized sisters' cells flank the hallway; these small rectangular rooms were each provided with a window, bed, and washstand. Most of the cells are unheated, with the only heat in the monastery section provided by large radiators in the hall.

The basement contains storage, cooking, and dining facilities. In the original section it is paved with brick.

A two-story brick infirmary building, constructed in 1894, is attached at an angle to the northeast corner of the Academy. This building is comprised of three hip-roofed sections which intersect to form a "U", enclosing a recessed porch on the north elevation. Windows are paired on the south, east, and west sides; those on the second story have round-arched heads. The building rests on a stone foundation.

South of the infirmary and roughly contemporaneous with it is a small brick ice house, two bays wide by one bay deep.

A picturesque gatehouse lies southeast of the main building; it is an Italianate-influenced brick structure with a five-part symmetrical facade. A wide arched driveway runs through the central block; this section rises three stories high with a shallow-pitched, front-facing gable roof. A three-part round-arched window is centered on the second story; the third floor is lighted by an oculus window flanked by round-arched niches. Flanking the central section are two-story wings, one bay wide; the ridges of their gabled roofs run parallel to the facade. These wings project slightly from the plane of the central block, and have a stepped water table. On the first floor, a 6/6 window is set within a round-arched recess; another 6/6 sash lights the second story. Low one-story gabled wings, two bays wide, extend to the north and south, completing the five-part composition. All sections feature an elaborate bracketed cornice. At the rear, a three-bay ell extends to the west, and a balcony supported on heavy scrolled brackets spans the second story of the central block.

8. Significance

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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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input 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 1852; 1857; 1882; 1894 **Builder/Architect** see below

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

1852: James Curley and Son, builders	Applicable Criteria: A, C
1857: unknown	Applicable Exceptions: A
1882: E. F. Baldwin, architect; John Stack, builder	Significance Evaluated: local

SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY:

Mount de Sales Academy is significant for its association with the development of education for women in Maryland, and for its architecture. Still housed in its original 1852 building, the Academy reflects the pioneer era of women's boarding schools; prior to the Civil War, convent schools offered practically the only opportunity for formal education for women in the nation. Mount de Sales Academy is the oldest school for girls in Baltimore County and the oldest educational facility in the county still in use as a school. The Chapel is also the oldest Roman Catholic house of worship in Baltimore County. Architecturally, the massive Academy building presents a noteworthy example of mid-nineteenth-century institutional design combining Classical and Italianate detailing. The multi-decked cast-iron porches are uncommonly large in scale and represent perhaps the only surviving example of this feature in the county. The building retains a high level of integrity, especially on the interior, where all the original functional spaces remain unaltered including classrooms, dormitory, music hall, chapel, and sisters' cells; the vast majority of decorative detailing is also intact including grain-painted woodwork and a trompe l'oeil fresco ceiling in the music hall.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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See Continuation Sheet No. 8.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 10.2674 acres

Quadrangle name Baltimore West, Maryland

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A	<u>18</u>	<u>351600</u>	<u>4349750</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

B	<u>18</u>	<u>351700</u>	<u>4349630</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

C	<u>18</u>	<u>351480</u>	<u>4349440</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

D	<u>18</u>	<u>351360</u>	<u>4349670</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

E			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

F			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

G			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

H			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation Sheet No. 9

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

state	code	county	code
<u>N/A</u>			

state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Peter E. Kurtze (research by John McGrain 1979 and Rev. Michael Roach (1985))

organization Maryland Historical Trust date September 1985

street & number 21 State Circle telephone (301) 269-1438

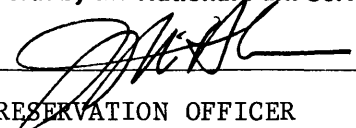
city or town Annapolis state Maryland 21401

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

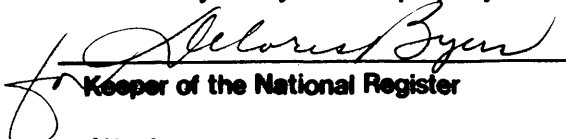
As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature  4-24-86

title STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER date

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

 5-30-86
 Keeper of the National Register

Attest: _____ date

Chief of Registration

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HISTORY AND SUPPORT:

Mount de Sales is the first academy in Baltimore County that offered formal education to young women of all denominations. Sisters of the Visitation had established an academy in Baltimore City in 1837 at the behest of Most Reverend Samuel Eccleston, the young fifth archbishop of Baltimore. At his prompting they bought land in Catonsville in 1850 for a country school that could accommodate boarders. The ground was acquired by Mother Mary Cecelia Brooks in her own name from William T. Somerville. The tract name was "Nancy's Fancy" and the survey began at Old Frederick Road and Five Mile Lane.¹ The Sisters had received a bequest from a New York friend that was exactly enough to cover the cost of the school site. The money was received on August 15 - a Catholic holy day - and spent by the 20th on the 76-acre site.²

The grounds were described as "having several fine springs of water, a good orchard, and a view of the Patapsco River, the Chesapeake Bay, and the surrounding country, even from some of the valleys of this beautiful spot."³

The church weekly reported that the site was near Franklin:

From what will be the southeast front, can be seen the harbor of Baltimore, Fort McHenry, and the Government works now going on at Sol-ler's Flats, and in clear weather the cupola of the capitol at Annapolis is visible to the naked eye.⁴

The digging of the cellar was begun on January 29, 1851, and the corner-stone was laid in May by Bishop Charbonnel.⁵ Twelve Sisters were assigned to the School from the Visitation Convent in Georgetown, D.C. and they arrived via Baltimore on August 11, 1852. It was a four-hour trip from the city convent and the new faculty dressed in ordinary bonnets and shawls rather than religious garb out of fear of the Know-Nothing party.⁶

The faculty kept detailed records and in the Centennial year, 1952, Sister Ignatia wrote, quoting original papers:

"The large sheets of tin which fashioned the roof were brought from England in wooden sailing vessels... large beams supporting the chapel ceiling were axe hewn with no mark of a saw upon them." When the Sisters arrived, there was still very much to be done and the Sisters helped to carry bricks and mortar up the four flights of stairs and even laid the bricks in the cellar. Because of the presence of the workmen, the sisters continued to wear secular clothing until the 15th of August, feast of the Assumption, when Mass was said and the house canonically erected.

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HISTORY AND SUPPORT (continued)

September 5, 1852, saw the opening of the academy with twenty-one boarders. By the end of the first year the number had increased to fifty-one. The first commencement exercises were held in June 1853, owing to the fact that all boarders were transferred from the Baltimore Visitation (then located at Park Avenue and Centre Street) which thenceforth remained a day school.⁷

The church paper was much impressed by the structure and the view was even better now that there was a fourth floor; one could hear the bell of the downtown cathedral from the deck and the drawing department of the school had a room with a view that "we are sure must give inspiration to the pencil and brush." The chapel was equipped with stained-glass windows and marble altar; the dormitories had low partitions between beds to allow the circulation of air. The structure was 105 feet front by 60 feet deep, and the contractor was James Curley and Son.⁸

Yet, what existed then was fairly small in comparison with the plan. The first installment included the central pavilion and a wing six bays wide. It was in 1857 that another block fronted by a pediment was added on the right end of the building. The new space provided dormitories and a music hall; a city paper described it as a five-story addition, 43x93 feet, with a "saloon" on the first floor that would accommodate a thousand persons.⁹

Students included children from Protestant and Jewish families, as well as Catholics, and girls from Latin America and the West Indies, as well as various regions of the United States. Enrollment plummeted during the Civil War since Catholicism was a largely Southern phenomenon prior to the age of immigration. One graduate of 1871 was Mary Pinkney Hardy, who later became the mother of General Douglas MacArthur. She was graduated with highest honors and "a crown and gold medal for excellence in conduct."¹⁰

Since life choices for women were limited in the mid-nineteenth century, those who came to Mount de Sales to live as nuns were drawn from diverse areas. The 1860 census lists forty-nine nuns from four countries and six states.

Mrs. Mary Teresa Waggaman (1846-1931) had been a member of the class of 1866 and wrote in a yearbook memoir that the gatehouse was of red bricks and served as the residence of Father Caton who was waiting for the Saint Agness Church (or more likely, its rectory) to be completed. Mrs. Waggaman had written

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HISTORY AND SUPPORT (continued)

a number of juvenile books. She recalled good times and treats, a musical event held on Saint Cecelia's day, and walks in the woods - after praying to Saint Patrick to drive off the snakes. The school infirmarian would give girls heading home to the south a dose of malaria preventative. Plays were given before candle footlights and the players had to memorize stretches of blank verse from Maria Stuart or Fabiola. The original bill of fare was plain but plentiful, but years later the Sister in charge of the menu told Mrs. Waggaman, "girls now would not stand for what girls stood for in your time. But I think our children loved us the best."¹¹ Old catalogs show that the school uniform was uniformly black and chapel attendance was mandatory. On the other hand, discussion of sectarian differences was not allowed.¹²

The main structure was doubled in width in 1882 and assumed the present facade of three pedimented pavilions instead of two:

Addition to Mt. DeSales - The Academy of the Visitation at Mt. DeSales, near Catonsville are about to add an additional wing to their building to correspond with the wing on the north end. It will require over a year's work to finish the new addition. Mr. E. F. Baldwin is the architect and Mr. John Stack the builder. The huge building already looms up on the horizon and from its elevated position serves as a guide to the mariners of the Chesapeake Bay. The thought must bring pleasant reflections to the Nuns that such a mission is characteristic and typical of their faith, and in raising such an addition to be building they increase and brighten their guide lamp.¹³

The addition provided the monastery, which had been called for in the original plans but postponed in execution until funds were available.

Gradually, in the present century, the institution became more day school than boarding academy and in 1933 the boarding school was discontinued. In the 1940s, the grammar school was discontinued. Finally in 1979, the Sisters, many of whom were of advanced years, gave the school up and left the monastery. In September of 1979, the convent furniture and the originals of the 'birdroom' prints were offered for sale at public auction.¹⁴ The school continues under the management of board of directors; the educational function has recently passed to a group of Dominican sisters.

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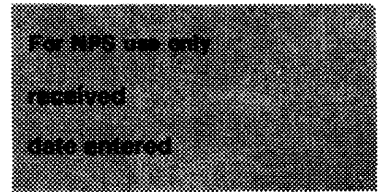
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HISTORY AND SUPPORT (continued)

Notes:

- ¹Baltimore City Deeds, AWB 440:359.
- ²Sister M. Aloysius Elkins, "History of Mount de Sales," ms., 1968, in Baltimore County Historical Society Library.
- ³Elkins, "History of Mount De Sales", p. 1.
- ⁴Catholic Mirror, Baltimore, November 27, 1850.
- ⁵Sister Ignatia, "Mount De Sales, Catonsville, Maryland,"ms. 1952, p. 2.
- ⁶Elkins, "History," pp. 1-2.
- ⁷Sister Ignatia, "Mount De Sales," p.2.
- ⁸Catholic Mirror, Baltimore, September 4, 1852.
- ⁹Baltimore American, November 13, 1858.
- ¹⁰Sister Ignatia, "Mount De Sales," p. 3.
- ¹¹Mary T. Waggaman (Minnie McKee), "In the Beginning," yearbook item prior to 1931.
- ¹²Prospectus of Mount de Sales Academy of the Visitation For Young Ladies Near Catonsville, 1876, p. 1.
- ¹³Maryland Journal, Towson, May 6, 1882.
- ¹⁴Sunday Sun, September 9, 1979, adv.

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MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES:

- Brooks, Neal A. and Eric G. Rockel. A History of Baltimore County (Towson, MD: Friends of the Towson Library, 1979).
- Lathrop, George Parsons and Rose Hawthorne Lathrop. A Story of Courage (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1894).
- Offutt, E. Francis. Baltimore County Landmarks. (Towson, MD: Baltimore County Library, 1971).
- Scharf, J. Thomas. History of Baltimore City and County (Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts, 1881).
- Sullivan, Eleanore. Georgetown Visitation: Since 1799 (Wash., D.C.: Privately published, 1975).
- Vertical files, Maryland Historical Trust: draft National Register applications for Mount de Sales Academy by John McGrain (1979) and Rev. Michael Roach (1985).
- Also see Footnotes, Continuation Sheet No. 7.

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GEOGRAPHICAL DATA:

Verbal Boundary Description: BEGINNING FOR THE SAME at a point on the southerly right of way line of Academy Road, 60 feet wide, said point being distant 335.38 feet, as measured northwesterly along said right of way line from the northerly end of the fillet curve connecting the southerly right of way line of Academy Road with the northerly right of way of Whitfield Road, located in Baltimore County, Maryland; thence from said beginning point south $41^{\circ} 32' 27''$ east 335.38 feet, thence along the aforementioned fillet curve 35.04 feet to the right, said fillet curve having a radius of 20.00 feet subtended by a chord bearing south $8^{\circ} 39' 01''$ west 30.73 feet, thence binding on the northerly right of way line of Whitfield Road, 60 feet wide, along a curve to the right 812.08 feet, said curve being subtended by a chord bearing south $48^{\circ} 43' 07''$ west 807.84 feet; thence binding on the northerly right of way line of Northdale Road 60 feet wide, along a curve to the right 50.00 feet, said curve being subtended by a chord bearing south $86^{\circ} 43' 23''$ west 50.00 feet, thence for lines of division the three following courses viz: (1) north $31^{\circ} 27' 03''$ west 498.93 feet (2) north $34^{\circ} 20' 39''$ east 440.00 feet (3) north $72^{\circ} 35' 57''$ east 386.75 feet to intersect the southerly right of way line of Academy Road, thence along a curve to the right 120.00 feet said curve being subtended by a chord bearing south $43^{\circ} 17' 09''$ east 119.98 feet to the point of beginning. (Baltimore County Land Records, Liber 6793, Folio 502).

Boundary Justification: The nominated property, 10.2674 acres, comprises the remnant of the original 74-acre tract which remains associated with the resource, encompassing the Academy and associated buildings within their surviving historic setting. The academy commands a prominent rise of ground, facing southeast across a broad open field. Dense suburban development immediately surrounds the Academy property on all sides.