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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

1. Name of Property

historic name John Fox Slater Elementary School

other names/site number Slater-Langston School

2. Location

street & number 45 P Street, NW

not for publication

city or town Washington

vicinity

state DC code DC county USA code 001 zip code 20001

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national statewide local

DAUD MURPHY DC SHPO 2/13/2013
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

DC HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register determined eligible for the National Register

determined not eligible for the National Register removed from the National Register

other (explain:)

Joe Edson H. Beall 4.9.13
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Slater Elementary School
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5. Classification

Ownership of Property
 (Check as many boxes as apply.)

Category of Property
 (Check only one box.)

Number of Resources within Property
 (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		Total

Name of related multiple property listing

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

Public School Buildings of Washington, D.C.,
 1862-1960

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

Current Functions

Education/public elementary school

Other/day-care center

7. Description

Architectural Classification

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Late Victorian/Romanesque, Queen Anne

foundation: Brick

walls: Brick

roof: Slate, Sheet metal

other:

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Narrative Description

Summary Paragraph

The John Fox Slater School is located at 45 P Street, NW, in a center-city neighborhood of Washington, D.C. known as Shaw East. Completed in 1891 for African American students by the city's Office of the Building Inspector, the Queen Anne/Romanesque Revival-style building is a turreted red brick, eight classroom, two-story school structure, emblematic of the public school buildings subtype "The Office of the Building Inspector, 1874-1897," as defined in the Multiple Property Document *Public Schools Buildings of Washington, DC, 1862-1960*. Designed according to the same plans as the 1889 Jackson Elementary School on R Street in Georgetown (built for white students), Slater School is characterized by its Victorian massing replete with projecting pavilions, gables, towers, and molded brick string courses. Slater's most prominent feature, its corner tower, is capped by an eight-sided conical roof, sheathed in tin.

As described in the Multiple Property Document, this sub-type of public schools designed by the Office of the Building Inspector "tended to emphasize simplicity, efficiency, and durability... [S]mall in size, generally Romanesque in style, often picturesque in composition... [they] blended in with the surrounding community." Indeed, the red brick Slater Elementary School blended in with its red brick row house neighborhood, and over time, the school formed part of a complex of African American schools along First Street, NW between L and P Streets, NW. This complex of schools, including Slater and Langston elementary schools, Margaret Murray Washington and Armstrong High School, survive intact, though they are no longer serving the D.C. Public School system. The schools are each being re-purposed, generally serving educational uses and accommodating children.

Narrative Description

Exterior

Slater School at 45 P Street NW, built 1891, is a two-story, red-brick, Victorian-era school building with a prominent tower located at its southeastern end. Designed in a Queen Anne/Romanesque Revival style, the school is defined by its robust massing, projecting pavilions, gables, towers, brick string courses, molded brick lintels, and bluestone trimming. Its form echoes the surrounding red brick row house residential architecture though on a considerably larger scale. The two-story school building is set upon a raised, full-story basement and is covered with a hipped roof over the main block, with intersecting gables covering the projecting bays, and an octagonal roof over the corner tower. The main roof is covered with slate and features a massive chimney with brick corbelling and recessed brick panels. The corner tower is covered with tin. The building is rectangular in plan, with its shorter sides facing P Street to the south and the alley between P and Bates Streets to the north. Its longer sides face east and west and provide the principal entries into the historic school building.

Slater School had eight classrooms, four on each floor, with adjoining cloakrooms, all opening off of a central hall. It has a basement which houses additional rooms and the furnace.

The south elevation faces P Street, and although it does not offer an entry to the school, is the most publicly visible and thus is considered a principal façade. It is divided into five bays with a projecting central pavilion connected to two end wings by two-story hyphens forming the main block of the building. The end wings consist of the corner tower at the southeast corner, and a single bay projecting slightly from the main block at the southwest end. The central pavilion is defined by pairs of windows on each of its floors and by its gable roof projecting above the main roof and corner turrets framing its north and south edges. The first story features rectangular window openings set within segmentally arched openings with brick lintels and brick hood moldings above. The windows—6/6 wood windows with three-light transoms above—are set behind metal grilles for security. The second story has the same 6/6 wood windows with three-light transoms above, but rather than being set within a segmental arched opening, are simply capped by brick jack-arched lintels. Between the first and second stories of this elevation is the school name: SLATER SCHOOL in raised metal letters original to the building's construction.

A brick stringcourse separates the second story from the projecting gabled pavilion. This gable is filled with a pair of 4/4 windows letting light into the attic level. The gable is framed by a molded wood raking cornice and is flanked to the sides by metal corner turrets.

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The hyphens between this central pavilion and the end wings are two bays wide and feature the same arrangement of window openings as in the first and second stories of the central pavilion, though with 1/1 replacement windows in the second story of the southern hyphen.

The corner tower is five-sided with windows in each of the beveled walls alternating between 4/4 and 6/6 wood sash. Like elsewhere, the first-story windows of the tower are set within segmental arched openings, while those of the second story are within rectangular openings. The tower is covered by an eight-sided conical roof, clad in tin and culminating at its apex with a metal finial ball. The southern end wing is a single-bay wide with slightly narrow window openings on the first and second stories and a 1/1 replacement window in the second story. A heavy metal cornice with large modillions extends across the hyphens and end wings, but abuts the central pavilion allowing that pavilion to project in front of the main block and stand proud of it.

The east elevation of the school is nine bays wide with the corner tower and central pavilion each counting as a single bay. The central pavilion, like that of the south elevation, projects forward from the main block of the building. A double entry door is located at the ground level, spanning the raised basement level and first floor sill level on the exterior. The door is set beneath a long metal door lintel with rosettes stamped into it. A plain brick frieze area separates the door from a set of three windows. These windows correspond on the interior with the stair landing, and are thus located between the first and second floors. Three narrower 1/1 replacement windows rise above these windows and can be found, on the interior, at the top of the third floor stair landing. The projecting pavilion is capped by an enclosed pediment with a lunette window at the attic level. To either side of the central pavilion are single bays of windows; those on the first story are set within segmentally arched openings, and those above are set within rectangular openings. Metal security grilles cover all of the first-story windows, and most of the second-story ones. The metal cornice extends across this façade, including the central projecting pavilion. The east elevation faces the black-top playground.

The west elevation faces a narrow passage between the school and the row houses extending along P Street. This elevation is arranged with a projecting gable on-center with wings to either side, defined by single bays of windows. This elevation has no corner tower or corresponding end wing and is thus the simplest of the four elevations. The main entrance door is located in the central pavilion, as on the east elevation, providing egress on a level between the basement and first floor. Here, the doors face an alley that runs between the school building and a neighboring row house. As on the east elevation, a metal lintel decorated with rosettes spans the double door opening and windows rise above. There is a half-moon-shaped roof vent in the pavilion's gable.

The north elevation of the building, which faces the rear alley, maintains the basic window pattern of the south elevation but lacks a central pavilion. It has two service doors below grade.

A playground is located to the east of Slater School and separates the building from the adjacent Langston Elementary School.

Interior

Slater School includes a basement level and four classrooms on both the first and second floors. The interior of the school is reached by the central entries (Girls and Boys) on the east and west exterior elevations whose double doors open directly onto a stair landing leading down to the basement and up to the first and second floors. The basement level historically included playrooms, bathrooms, a "fuel" room and "foul air gathering" room. The first and second floors are identically arranged with four classrooms and their adjoining cloakrooms opening off of a square hall. Each classroom, measuring approximately 25' x 34' is entered through double wood doors (each one with five panels) with large single light transoms above the doors, while the adjoining cloakrooms are entered from the hall through single, five-paneled wood doors with a single-light transom above. The cloakrooms are also connected directly from inside of the classroom. The classrooms and cloak closets feature wooden floors and beaded board wainscoting. The classrooms are lit on three sides by large windows. The two classrooms (on first and second floors) within the tower are slightly larger and particularly well-lit with five narrow windows located on all five sides of the corner tower. A small library is located on the second floor behind the stair landing in a small 10' x 12' space between the stair and the outside window.

Integrity

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Slater School is highly intact to its original condition with no additions or substantial alterations, including the interior of the school building which retains its original floor plan, materials and details. The building does show the effects of deferred maintenance, however, and many of the original windows are obscured by metal security grilles. Since the school's closing in 1975, Slater has been used for various social service purposes. It is currently occupied by Associates for Renewal in Education.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Areas of Significance

Ethnic Heritage/African American

Architecture

Period of Significance

1891-1951

Significant Dates

1891, 1951

Criteria Considerations

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Significant Person

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Office of the Building Inspector, Approved by

Edward Clark, Architect of the Capitol

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance extends from 1891, the date the school was opened as a public school for African American students to 1951, the year that Slater ceased serving as an elementary school and became an annex to the Margaret Murray Washington Vocational School.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

Slater Elementary School is a purpose-built public school building constructed in 1891 for African-American students. Built when public education was segregated by race, it forms part of a complex of black schools along First Street, NW between L and P Streets. The school is named for John Fox Slater (1815-1884), a white industrialist and philanthropist from Rhode Island. In the school's eight-classroom building, representing grades one through eight, the course of study was fairly standard, including language arts, penmanship, grammar, arithmetic, algebra, geography, history, physiology, physical science, nature study, physical exercises, music, moral training, and practical life skills. When Slater opened in 1891, it was almost immediately overcrowded with students from the surrounding community clearly indicating its necessity in educating the city's African American students.

In 1902, in an effort to relieve the overcrowding, the city built a second school, Langston School, immediately adjacent to Slater. In the late 1910s, Slater was joined functionally with Langston School to become Slater-Langston School. Both schools were part of a cluster of African American public schools. By 1919, within a few blocks were three elementary schools, a junior high school, a vocational school and Washington's only two black high schools. By 1925, this African-American academic campus was educating a quarter of the District's black public school students. In 1951, Slater became an annex for the nearby vocational school, Margaret Murray Washington.

Slater Elementary School is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under the Multiple Property Document *Public School Buildings of Washington, D.C., 1862-1960*. The building is representative of the school building sub-type, "The Office of the Building Inspector, 1874-1897." As described in the Multiple Property document, the schools designed in the Office of the Building Inspector were approved by the three District Commissioners and by the Architect of the Capitol, Edward Clark. The schools were distinctive in that they followed a predictable floor plan (two-story buildings with four classrooms on each floor and play areas in the basement; they were built close to their residential neighbors and were an important part of the neighborhood. Indeed, Slater School was approved by the Commissioners and the architect of the Capitol, Edward Clark; it is a two-story, eight-room school building, constructed immediately adjacent to its residential neighbors and contributes significantly to the identity of the neighborhood.

Slater School is eligible for listing in the National Register according to the registration criteria established in the Multiple Property Document with Education and Cultural Heritage/Black, and Architecture as its Areas of Significance. Slater School is a purpose-built public school building; it is more than 50 years old; it is in its original location; it retains integrity; it retains original fabric and its character-defining features.

Slater School is eligible under Criterion A according to the registration criteria since it conveys important information regarding the evolution of public education for African Americans in the District of Columbia. In particular, Slater School was built for African-American pupils in a segregated educational system but is virtually identical to a contemporary elementary school built in Georgetown for white students, exemplifying the standard of the times: separate but equal. Slater is part of a large complex of African-American schools clustered along First Street, NW between L and P Streets, defining the historical racial character of this part of the city.

The Slater School is also eligible under Criterion C as an outstanding example of a public school building subtype referenced in the Multiple Property Documentation Form *Public School Buildings of Washington, D.C., 1862-1960* under the associated property type "The Office of the Building Inspector, 1874-1897."

Narrative Statement of Significance

Slater School is significant in the Areas of Education and Ethnic Heritage-Black since it conveys important information regarding the development of the District of Columbia public school system, including a) the evolution of public education for African Americans, especially the neglect and the relief of school overcrowding, and b) segregation.

Slater School is significant in the Area of Architecture since it provides an excellent example of a public school building built for African American students by The Office of the Building Inspector. Schools of this period were designed by the Office of the Building Inspector and followed an established model that emphasized simplicity, efficiency and durability and generally offered four classrooms on each floor. In this instance, Slater is a simple red brick box school building,

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embellished with an elaborate cornice, corner tower and projecting pavilions. Its form mirrors the surrounding residential architecture, but on a larger scale.

African-American education and the development of the District of Columbia public school system

The history of the Slater School follows major themes in the development of the city as a whole. The school was built in an era marked of rapid growth, with attendant strain upon the city's social fabric and economic capacity. In addition, like so much of Washington life, the District of Columbia public schools were rigidly segregated by race throughout the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth. While racial separation was not mandated by a specific law, it was an official policy that courts had held legally enforceable and which shaped the most basic elements of the system.¹ A third theme is the influence of Congress in making funding decisions and appointing boards to make what in other cities would be local government decisions.

Public education in the city of Washington dates to 1804, when the first board of school trustees met under the titular leadership of President Thomas Jefferson to establish schools for white students. Early public schools were considered an essentially charitable endeavor for students whose parents could not afford private instruction. The schools were to be provided with an annual endowment of \$1,500 from the proceeds of taxes on "slaves, dogs, licenses from carriages and hacks, for ordinaries and taverns, for retailing wines and spirituous liquors, for billiard tables, for theatrical and other amusements, and for hawkers and peddlers."² By the late 1840s, public schools were open to white children regardless of their family income.³

The movement for public education of African Americans in the District of Columbia finally took root in 1862, some 58 years after the initiation of the public school system for white children. But black residents of the District had taken matters into their own hands, establishing a first private school for African Americans in 1807, near 3rd and D Streets, SE. It was founded by three formerly enslaved black men who installed a white teacher. Thereafter, several schools for African Americans opened as private ventures subsidized by individuals and churches. Pupils were "free blacks," as it had long been a crime to instruct enslaved people.⁴

In May 1862, a month after passage of the law enacting the emancipation of the enslaved of the District, Congress authorized a Board of Trustees of Colored Schools for Washington and Georgetown, members of which were to be appointed by the Secretary of the Interior. Initially, the public primary schools for African Americans were funded by 10 percent of the taxes "collected from persons of color in Washington and Georgetown." This funding was too insignificant to open a single school, but in 1864 Congress mandated that funds be allocated to "colored schools" in the same proportion as African-American children were to white children in the city population.⁵ Several private schools for blacks were incorporated into the new system at the invitation of the Trustees, so that by 1864 there were eleven schools including a high school, 21 teachers and 1,000 pupils.⁶ The first new, black public school opened in Ebenezer Church at 4th and D, SE in 1864 and moved the following year to its own frame schoolhouse at Second and C Streets, SE. Although there was continued opposition to providing education and educational facilities for the District's African-American children, more substantial buildings were built within the next few years. The brick John O. Cook School at 4th and O Streets, NW opened in 1867, followed by the original Thaddeus Stevens (1868) and Charles Sumner Schools (1872), designs prepared by the eminent architect Adolph Cluss.⁷

¹ The justification for segregation rested upon an interpretation of Congress' intention in authorizing and appropriating funds specifically for the creation of separate "colored schools" and empowering the District Commissioners to administer the affairs of the District. The Commissioners had in turn authorized the Board of Public Schools to administer the school system and the Board had determined that the "first rule of the public schools of the District of Columbia provides that separate schools for white and colored children should be established in accordance with existing laws". Although this was deemed insufficient by some, efforts to enact statutes requiring segregation were unsuccessful.

² Quoted in "62 Public Schools Here in 1877; City Now Has 164," *The Washington Post*, December 6, 1927, p. F14.

³ Beauchamp, Section E, pp. 5-6

⁴ G.F.T. Cook, "Superintendent Cook's Report" in *Report of the Board of Trustees of Public Schools of the District of Columbia. 1891-1892*, Washington, D.C., 1892, pp. 175-176.

⁵ Cook, p. 180.

⁶ Cook, p. 179.

⁷ Beauchamp, Section E, pp. 9-10.

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In 1873 the black school system was formally transferred to the District of Columbia government under a reorganized Board of Trustees and an integrated board, but under which African-American schools remained separate from white ones. George F.T. Cook was appointed superintendent and served until 1900. In 1875, black schools had a total enrollment of more than 5,400 and a total of ten buildings, one of which was a high school. (The first white public high school did not open until seven years later.) School construction lagged population growth because of scant funds and successive congressionally controlled governmental reorganizations. In 1878, a more stable system of construction planning was put in place under the immediate oversight of the District of Columbia's Engineer Commissioner and its Inspector of Buildings, with design contributions from the Architect of the Capitol.⁸

In 1882 the District Commissioners put all the schools under the supervision of a nine-member Board of Public School Trustees that included three African-American members.⁹ In 1900 black and white schools were administratively merged under a single superintendent and integrated board of education. The ultimate result of these reorganizations was increased, yet still insufficient, funding for the construction of the earliest public schools for African-American students.

Slater School construction

With the rapid growth of government after the Civil War, Washington experienced robust population increases, drawing whites mostly from the North, and blacks, many of whom were only recently free from slavery, from the South. As the population grew, residents redistributed themselves across the District of Columbia. Especially during the 1880s, settlements sprang up in what had been rural backwaters within the District limits, with blocks of brick row houses replacing scattered frame dwellings.

While the African-American population roughly doubled from 1870 to 1890, the number of African-American public school students in the city more than quadrupled during the same period. The city's whole enrollment ratio of students to classrooms surged from 62:1 in 1872 to 74:1 in 1880.¹⁰ It was not uncommon for schools, black and white, to be on split sessions, with different groups of students occupying the same classroom in morning and afternoon.

An increasingly efficient city government opened a staggering 62 schools between 1880 and 1893, with more than half of these opening in the last six years of this period.¹¹ Even so, African-American student-to-classroom ratios were not reduced below their 1868 level until 1892. Even in the latter year, some of the newest schools still divided their students between split sessions. In 1886, the school board noted, based upon a report by the Colored School Superintendent Cook, that the entire academic career of four-fifths of black children in the District was the first four grades. Further, the insufficient classrooms leading to half day attendance was depriving African Americans of "half their whole school life."¹² In the year that Slater was built, school enrollment for African Americans had increased 4.63 percent.¹³

The Slater School was one of six new schools proposed by the public school trustees on September 26, 1889.¹⁴ On August 14, 1890 Building Inspector Thomas B. Entwisle reminded the district commissioners that they had committed congressionally appropriated funds for four schools whose sites still needed to be selected.¹⁵ In October, the commissioners purchased lots 12 through 16 in Square 615 for the new Eighth District African-American school. This location in the unit block of P Street NW was just a few blocks from the city's first high school for African-American students, whose basement excavation had begun a month earlier.¹⁶ Both locations were in a predominantly African-American community. The schools were undoubtedly welcomed by the underserved African-American community and the selection of these sites drew no reported protest from neighboring white residents.

⁸ "Passed By The House," *The Washington Post*, May 8, 1878, p. 2.

⁹ "The School Board," *The Washington Post*, July 28, 1882, p. 2.

¹⁰ Cook, p. 181.

¹¹ Based on data in Public Schools of the District of Columbia, *School Buildings Past and Present*.

¹² *Report of the Board of Trustees of Public Schools of the District of Columbia*, June 30, 1886, pp. 4 and 5.

¹³ *Report of the Board of Trustees of the Public Schools of the District of Columbia*, June 1892, p. 158.

¹⁴ "A Million for Schools," *The Washington Post*, September 26, 1889, p. 2

¹⁵ "Four New School Buildings," *The Washington Post*, August 14, 1890, p. 2.

¹⁶ A government auditor reported that the commissioners had paid \$11,000 for a parcel previously appraised at \$1,800, and for land that the government already owned. "Paid For Its Own Land," *The Washington Post*, March 17, 1891, p. 12. However, a second auditor charged with re-examining the record concluded that other land had been properly substituted for the original alley during an 1887 subdivision of the property. Whether the commissioners paid more than the fair market value of the land was left unresolved. "First Auditor Wrong," *The Washington Post*, March 21, 1891, p. 6.

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Slater was among four black schools built in 1891. Kirby Brothers began construction of the yet-unnamed P Street school in January 1891.¹⁷ Completed in time for the 1891-92 school year, it was named for John Fox Slater (1815-1884), a white industrialist from Rhode Island who devoted much of his fortune to funding educational projects for freed slaves and their descendants.¹⁸ Slater School's first principal, Eva A. Chase, was a veteran teacher whose career in the public schools began before 1878.¹⁹

The earliest extant enrollment record for Slater School, which dates to 1901-1902, presents a snapshot of the school's student body. The eight classrooms housed students ranging from five-year-old first-graders to a few eighteen-year-old eighth-graders. The age span in some classes might be as much as three years, and siblings of differing ages were often placed in the same class. At registration each student listed the name and address of a parent. The most common occupation for fathers was "laborer," although there were many listings for "government employee," as well as a few coachmen, several painters and carpenters, and one silversmith. The most common occupation for mothers was "laundress," although there were numerous listings for "domestics" and some for dressmakers or seamstresses. Pupils tended to live within walking distance, although some lived as far away as the 1600 block of Fourth Street or the 1800 block of First Street NW. Many lived on long-vanished alleys such as Decatur Court. A few students gave such distant parental home locations as Brookland, but presumably they lived with relatives closer to the school.²⁰

Like other elementary schools in the District since the 1876-1877 school year, Slater was an eight-year elementary school, with grades one to four known as primary, and grades five to eight as "grammar" grades. The course of study was fairly standard. The curriculum included language arts, penmanship, grammar, arithmetic, algebra, geography, history, physiology, physical science, nature study, physical exercises, music, moral training, shop work and drawing. Superintendent Cook emphasized instruction in practical life skills provided at the African-American schools, including sewing for girls.²¹ In 1891, it was reported that there were close to 40,000 students in the District school system, 30 to 32 percent of whom were "colored".²²

From its opening, Slater School was as overcrowded as many existing African-American schools. The 1890-1891 school board report had noted that the enrollment for African-American students had increased. The 1891-1892 Supervising Principal's Report for District 8A notes that three first-grade and two-second grade classes at Slater School were on split sessions.²³

Slater continued as an elementary school and was joined in 1902 in the adjacent lot by another elementary school, John Mercer Langston. As was fairly typical in segregated cities, schools for blacks tended to be clustered in the same community, one that is ostensibly all-black. This neighborhood, which later became known as Shaw, was no exception. Although there were many African-American communities in Washington, nowhere else in the city was there to be found three elementary schools, a junior high school, a vocational school and Washington's only two black high schools. John F. Cook Elementary built in 1877 on P Street between First and North Capitol was located across P Street from Slater and Langston. Armstrong Technical High School opened on P between First and Third in 1902. The building at M between First and New Jersey was the M Street High School from 1891 until 1916 when the school moved into a new building on First between N and O Streets and became the Paul Lawrence Dunbar High School. The building on M (Perry School) became M Street (and later Shaw) Junior High in 1919 when the District instituted junior high schools. What was first the O Street Vocational School and later the Margaret Murray Washington School was built in 1912 on O Street between North

¹⁷ "Colored High School," *The Washington Post*, September 11, 1891, p. 2.

¹⁸ Slater Vertical File, Sumner School Museum and Archives. Although the John F. Slater Fund, which was first directed by former president Rutherford B. Hayes, often contributed to privately funded southern schools, there is no indication that it provided funds to erect Slater School.

¹⁹ On November 6, 1902, Chase was promoted and transferred to be principal of the Jones School. She was replaced by her sister, Lucinda S. Chase. The Chases were the sisters of Calvin Chase, the fiery editor of *The Washington Bee*.

²⁰ Enrollment Record Book of the Slater School 1901-1902, microfilm copy of original on file at the Sumner School Museum and Archives, Washington, D.C.

²¹ The curriculum is described extensively in the section of the *Report of the Trustees* prepared by Superintendent Cook and his supervision principals, pp. 153-211.

²² "Vacation Slips Away," *The Washington Post*.

²³ Cook, p. 181.

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Capitol and First Streets. By 1925, this African American academic campus was educating a quarter of the District's black public school students.²⁴

For almost two decades, Slater and neighbor Langston School operated as independent entities with separate programs despite their proximity. However, in the late 1910s, Slater's third principal, Anna E. Thompson, became principal of both schools. In early 1922 the parent-teacher associations (PTAs) of both schools combined, and the schools were referred to as Slater-Langston. By the early 1920s, the school buildings were showing their age and exhibiting inadequacies when compared to modern buildings. The PTAs pushed for improvements such as adequate ventilation and drainage, concreting the basement at Slater, enhanced recreational facilities, and—remarkably, at this late date—a classroom seat for every child. The school board in 1922 attained lots for an addition but eventually allowed use of the land as a playground.

In 1951, Slater became an annex to the Margaret Murray Washington Vocational School before returning in 1958 to its original use. In 1965, the deterioration of the facility had escalated to the point that it was featured in a *Washington Post* article entitled, "Moldy Shaw Fed by Even Moldier Schools."²⁵ Slater was cited as an example of an inadequate, overcrowded facility. The article noted that the school had 650 students in a building with a capacity of 500 and that 37 children were being taught in a 20-foot-wide basement classroom. Two classes shared one classroom and the school had no library, lunchroom or auditorium and limited playground space.

In 1975, Slater was closed as an elementary school. The building now houses a daycare and social service concern.

Architecture

In the 1870s, the District of Columbia Government moved through successive reorganizations with oversight of municipal functions becoming increasingly consolidated. By 1878, the city was governed by a Board of Commissioners with three members, one elected by the Senate, one by the House, and one a member of the Army Corps of Engineers appointed by the U.S. President. The Commissioners oversaw the city government, appointing staff and approving expenditures from a budget set by Congress, which exercised ultimate oversight over city government. An "Engineer Commissioner" had oversight of public buildings in the District, including maintaining, repairing, and building schools. A Building Inspector's Office, created and made subordinate to the Engineer Commissioner, assumed many of the hands-on responsibilities for design, construction and repair. Many school designs were created or reviewed by Architect of the Capitol, Edward Clark.

Slater is significant in that it typifies the buildings constructed by the Office of the Building Inspector. Its red-brick building was an almost standardized, turreted, Romanesque Revival school design with four classrooms on each of two floors that emphasized simplicity, efficiency and durability. It was designed to blend in with buildings in the surrounding community, most of which were row houses constructed of similar materials and designed in similar styles. Most of schools from this era were located in the populated areas closest to the central city. While some criticized these buildings as uninspired in design, they were sturdy and represented an advance beyond the less-durable frame buildings of the past. Indeed, Superintendent Cook commented in 1891: "These buildings [Slater and Phillips Schools] add two more to that comparatively recent eight-room type, which, as a rule, shows in the good conditions of light, heat, and ventilation, in general convenience and adaptedness to school purposes, marked advance in school architecture."²⁶

The design for the school on P Street was identical to that for Georgetown's Andrew Jackson School for white students. The use of the standard design, served to provide a "separate but equal" facility eventually affirmed in 1896 by the Supreme Court ruling in the *Plessy v. Ferguson* case regarding the legality of segregation in public facilities. The distinctions between the racially segregated facilities were more often ones of maintenance and crowding.

²⁴ Schmeckebier, Laurence F., *The District of Columbia, Its Government and Administration*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press), 1928, pp. 572-573 and 578-579.

²⁵ *The Washington Post*, September 27, 1965.

²⁶ *Report of the Board of Trustees of the Public Schools of the District of Columbia, 1890-91*, p. 132. In the same report, Cook pointed out that the 21 buildings in the black school system at that time were an inadequate number and that many required remediation of "ill conditions in the existing accommodation." He cited the Stevens, Anthony Bowen, Sumner and Lincoln Schools as egregious examples.

Slater Elementary School
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.
County and State

Verbal Boundary Description

The Slater School stands at 43 P Street, NW on the eastern part of Lot 827 in Square 615. The school stands on the north side of the unit block of P Street NW.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries correspond with the city lots upon which the school was built.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Patsy M. Fletcher and D. P. Sefton
organization DC Historic Preservation Office & DC Preservation
League date July 28, 2011
street & number 100 4th Street, SW telephone 202-442-7600
city or town Washington state DC zip code 20024
e-mail Patsy.fletcher@dc.gov

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

Sanborn Insurance Map

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: **The John Fox Slater Elementary School**

City or Vicinity: **Washington, D.C.**

County:

State:

Slater Elementary School
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.
County and State

Photographer: **Angeliki Kourelis**

Date Photographed: January 2013

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

View looking north showing south elevation
1 of 7

View looking northeast showing south elevation
2 of 7

View looking northwest showing south and east elevations
3 of 7

View looking southwest showing east and north elevations
4 of 7

View looking west showing east elevation
5 of 7

View showing detail of central pediment and chimney stack
6 of 7

Detail of metal cornice
7 of 7

2 of 2 View looking west, east elevation

Property Owner:

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name District of Columbia
street & number 1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW telephone _____
city or town Washington, DC state 20001

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

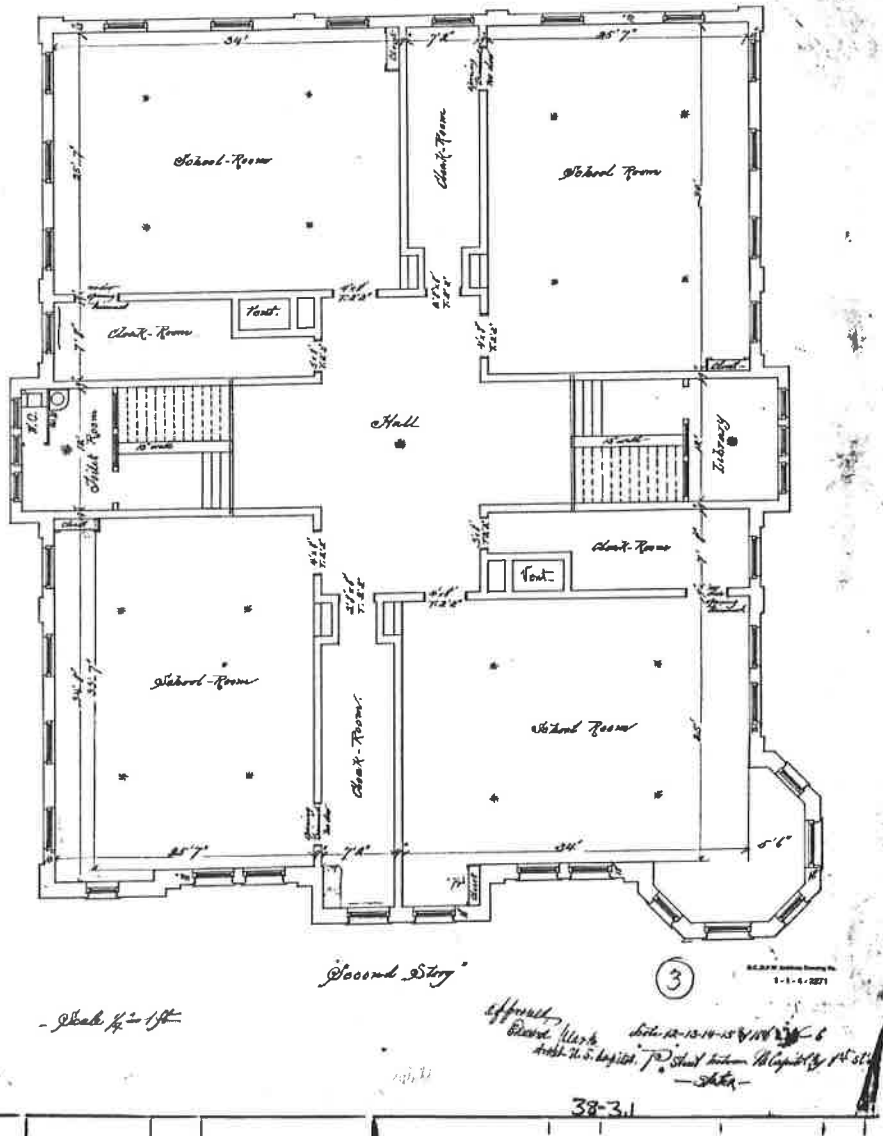
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Slater Elementary School	
Name of Property	Washington, D.C.
County and State	Public School Buildings of Washington, D.C. (1862-1960)
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)	

Section number Maps and Historic Images

Page 1



**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Slater Elementary School
Name of Property Washington, D.C.
County and State Public School Buildings of Washington, D.C. (1862-1960)
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Maps and Historic Images

Page 2



Slater School Classroom, Second Floor, SE Corner with tower
Patricia Fisher, Photographer, July 1986



Slater School, Central Hall, Second Floor
Patricia Fisher, Photographer, 1986

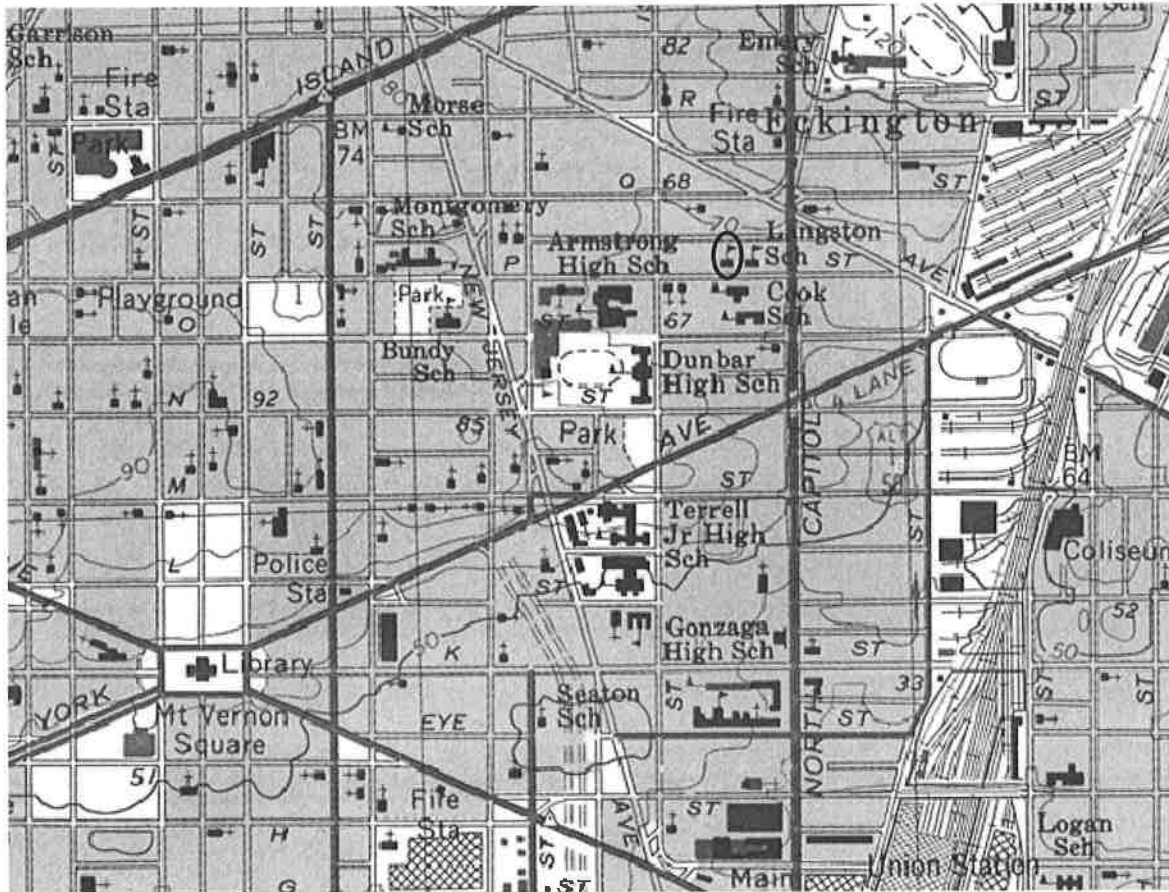
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Slater Elementary School	
Name of Property	Washington, D.C.
County and State	Public School Buildings of Washington, D.C. (1862-1960)
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Section number Maps and Historic Images

Page 3



USGS Quad Map indicating location of Slater School

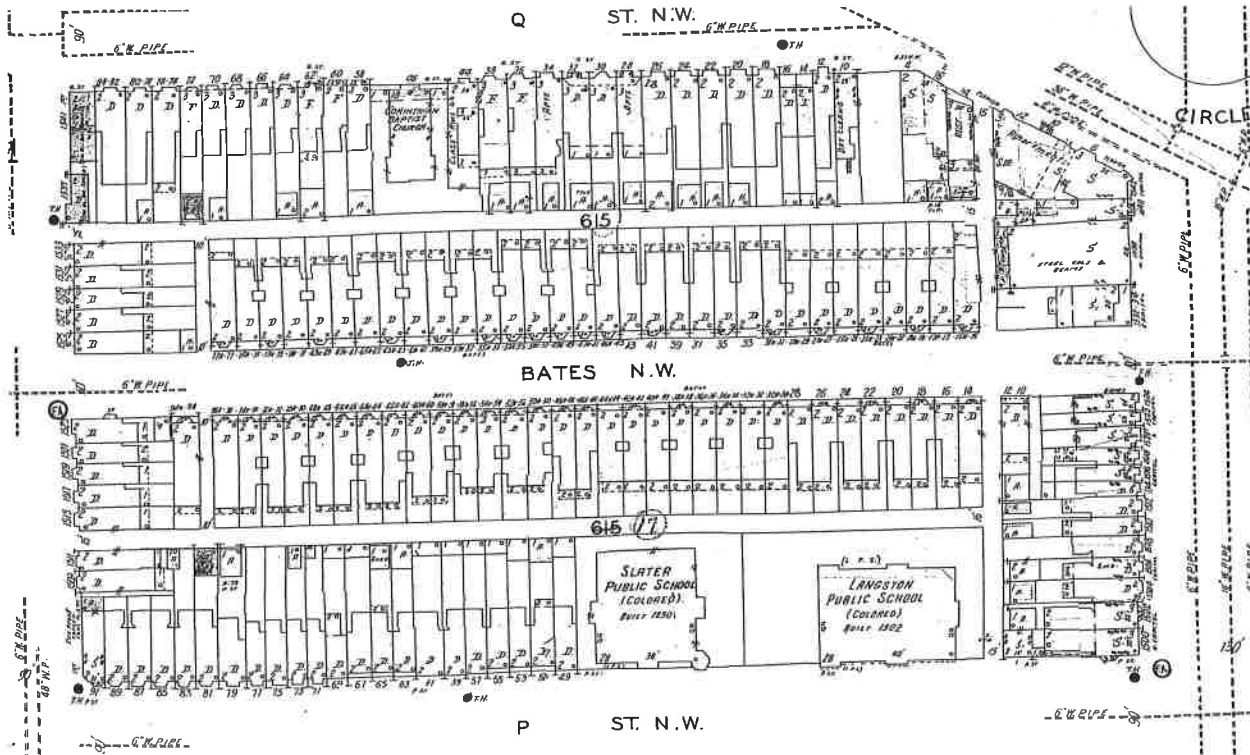
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

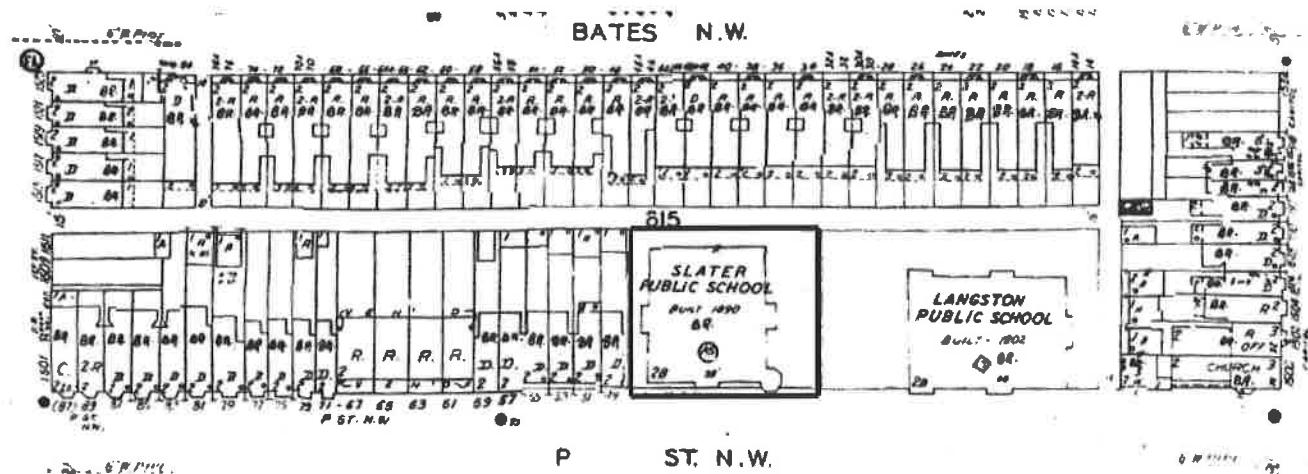
Slater Elementary School
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Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Maps and Historic Images

Page 4



Site Map showing Slater School
(From Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1959)



Site Plan Showing National Register Boundary



SLATER SCHOOL

ASSOCIATES FOR RENEWAL IN EDUCATION
89 P STREET, NW, WDC 20003
PH: 202/483-9424 FAX: 202/662-1111
WWW.AREINC.ORG
Serving the DC Community Since
1984
Providing Collaborative, Career & Professional Education, Life &
Alternative Programs for Youth, Health Enhancement, Training & C
Other Development Activities, 10000 Training & and More

10000 TRAINING & MORE
10000 TRAINING & MORE
10000 TRAINING & MORE

10000 TRAINING & MORE
10000 TRAINING & MORE
10000 TRAINING & MORE



SLATER SCHOOL

ASSOCIATES FOR RENOVATION IN CHICAGO
25 W. DIVERSE, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60604
PH: 202/463-9434 FAX: 202/997-
WWW.ARENCO.ORG
Serving the City's Homeless Youth
Other Services Offered: Shelter, Food, Transportation, Laundry, & More
*All Homeless Youth Welcome 24/7



SLATER SCHOOL

DRUG FREE ZONE

NO PARKING

capitals





45

Playground Rules
1. No running
2. No roughhousing
3. No climbing on equipment
4. No throwing objects
5. No eating or drinking
6. No littering
7. No smoking
8. No alcohol
9. No drugs
10. No weapons
11. No fire
12. No fire arms
13. No explosives
14. No incendiaries
15. No poisons
16. No corrosives
17. No toxic substances
18. No radioactive materials
19. No biohazards
20. No other hazardous materials

DOZERM
MANHOOD





UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Slater, John Fox, Elementary School
NAME:

MULTIPLE Public School Buildings of Washington, DC MPS
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, District of Columbia

DATE RECEIVED: 2/22/13 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 3/21/13
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 4/05/13 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 4/10/13
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 13000144

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 4.9.13 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in
The National Register
of
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.