

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

The Charles Sumner School

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Seventeenth and M Streets, NW

___NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Washington

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

___ VICINITY OF

Walter E. Fauntroy

STATE

District of Columbia

CODE

11

COUNTY

District of Columbia

CODE

001

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

___DISTRICT

 BUILDING(S)

___STRUCTURE

___SITE

___OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

 PUBLIC

___PRIVATE

___BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

___IN PROCESS

___BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

___OCCUPIED

 UNOCCUPIED

___WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

 YES: RESTRICTED

___YES: UNRESTRICTED

___NO

PRESENT USE

___AGRICULTURE

___COMMERCIAL

___EDUCATIONAL

___ENTERTAINMENT

___GOVERNMENT

___INDUSTRIAL

___MILITARY

___MUSEUM

___PARK

___PRIVATE RESIDENCE

___RELIGIOUS

___SCIENTIFIC

___TRANSPORTATION

 OTHER: Vacant

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

District of Columbia Government

STREET & NUMBER

The District Building, Fourteenth and E Streets, NW

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE

___ VICINITY OF

District of Columbia

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Recorder of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

6th & D Streets, NW

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE

District of Columbia

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

District of Columbia's Inventory of Historic Sites

DATE

___FEDERAL STATE ___COUNTY ___LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDSJoint District of Columbia/National Capital Planning Commission
Historic Preservation Office

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE

District of Columbia

7 DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Charles Sumner School (1872) was designed by Washington architect Adolph Cluss and erected by builder Robert I. Fleming. Apart from the loss of the tower roof and the corner crenelated cornice detail, the Second Empire style building is substantially unaltered on both interior and exterior. There has been considerable water damage recently in the northwest corner of the upper story and the interior generally needs refurbishing and minor restoration. The following description of the building was prepared by the architect in 1872 and still applies today.

"The Sumner School Building, located on the northeast corner of M and Seventeenth Streets, was commenced in April, 1871, and finished in August, 1872.

"It is 94 feet in length by 69 feet in width, and has a tower 16 feet square in centre of front. It contains a basement, three stories, and trussed roof. The clear height of basement is 10 feet. The clear height of first and second story is 14 feet each. The clear height of school-rooms on third story is 15 feet, but the hall is 18 feet high in the clear.

"The building is approached by wide doors from front, side and rear, opening outward, so as to facilitate egress in case of alarm. The area of tower forms a large open vestibule. The basement is appropriated to play-grounds, wash-rooms, and necessary rooms for janitor. The boiler-room and coal cellar are located in a vault under sidewalk.

"The first story, the window-sills of which are elevated nine feet four inches above ground for obvious reasons, contains four school-rooms and airy passage.

"The second story has the same accommodations; but besides, it contains the offices of the Board of Trustees and the Superintendent, above side entrance and in tower, and the third story contains a public hall, occupying 3,000 square feet, inclusive of a raised platform, and is large enough to assemble all the pupils of the house therein.

"This hall has a coved stucco cornice around the ceiling and a large ventilator in centre. Finish and proportions of the room are planned with special regard to the law of acoustics and a thorough ventilation. Two school-rooms with their dependencies are located in rear of hall; a loft above them affords ample room for storage. There is a private room in the tower adjoining the hall, and a plainly finished room over it.

"Two flights of wide stairs lead up from basement to roof on the north and south sides of the building. The heating of the building is done by low-pressure steam. The smoke-flues of the boilers consist of iron piping carried up above the roof. They are encased in a chamber forming an "aspirator," which is constructed of brick work.

"The smoke-pipe heating this chamber by radiation creates an ascending current in it, which, brought in connection by a brick duct under ground with a large sized shaft communicating with registers into the school-rooms, establishes down draughts in the latter, and thereby serves to remove the vitiated air from the rooms and passages by suction - in other words, to ventilate them in winter. The summer ventilation is performed by the same shaft, supplied with heat by gas-heaters within it. All the rooms of the house are supplied with electric bells and clocks. The battery - furnishing

(Continued on Form 10-300a)

8 SIGNIFICANCE

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

SPECIFIC DATES 1872

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Adolph Cluss

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Joint Committee on Landmarks has designated the Charles Sumner School a Category II Landmark of importance which contributes significantly to the cultural heritage and visual beauty of the District of Columbia. Named for Charles Sumner, a major figure in the fight for abolition of slavery and the establishment of equal rights for Blacks, it was one of the first public school buildings erected for the education of Blacks in Washington and encompasses in its history a sense of the evolving educational opportunities for Blacks in the District of Columbia since that time. It is the work of Adolph Cluss--a major Washington Architect during one of the city's most significant periods of growth--who received national and international recognition for his innovative urban public school designs.

Since its dedication in 1872, Sumner School has housed a broad spectrum of the developing Black educational opportunities in the city. School that were directly associated with Sumner include the Preparatory High School (1872-77), which later moved to M Street High School and along with its successor, Dunbar, developed into the first high school for Blacks in the United States; the Miner Normal School (1907-14); and a variety of community-oriented educational activities. Built on the site of a school constructed in 1866 under the auspices of the Freedmen's Bureau, with lumber salvaged from barracks, it is named for Charles Sumner, one of the U.S. Senate's earliest and most fiery advocates of black emancipation and black equality. He opposed the Kansas-Nebraska Act and the return of fugitive slaves by Union troops. He also fought for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, the creation of a Freedmen's Bureau, the admission of testimony from Blacks in the proceedings of the U.S. Supreme Court, pay for Black soliders equal to that of whites, and the right of Blacks to use street cars in the District of Columbia.

Sumner School is one of a series of award-winning, modern public school buildings constructed by the District of Columbia government during that period of intensive municipal improvement which culminated in Alexander R. Shepherd's remarkable transformation of the city in the early 1870's. It was designed by Adolph Cluss whose work had a major visual impact on the city during one of its most significant periods of development and included virtually all of the public buildings constructed by the city government between 1862 and 1876 as well as a large proportion of both federal and private buildings constructed here in the 1860's, 70's and 80's. Other buildings designed by Cluss which are individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places include the Arts and Industries Building of the Smithsonian Institution (18877-79), Franklin School (1866), Eastern Market (1872), and the Old Masonic Temple (1866-68).

(Continued on Form 10-300a)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See Continuation Sheet Form No. 10-300a

~~UTM NOT VERIFIED~~

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approximately .3 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	1 8	3 2 3 2 4 0	4 3 0 8 0 9 0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C			

B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property occupies lot 804, in Square 182 and is approximately 110' x 120' in size.

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

Tanya Beauchamp, Architectural Historian

October 1979

ORGANIZATION

DATE

District of Columbia Historic Preservation Office

724-8795

STREET & NUMBER Department of Housing & Community Development

TELEPHONE

1325 G Street, NW

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Washington

District of Columbia

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

Carol B. Thompson

TITLE

Special Assistant to the Director

DATE

NOV 1979

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I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Sally J. Odell

DATE

12/20/79

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHITECTURE AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

Maria M. Davis

DATE

12/18/79

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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the ^hnotive power for the regulator, the sympathetic clocks, and the tower clock, which has three dials, each eight feet in diameter, giving the time far off toward the East, West, and South - is in the office of the Superintendent. This is the only clock of the kind in the United States.

"The water closets are located in a separate building in the yard.

"The outside walls are faced with pressed bricks; the trimmings of doors and windows consist of gray Ohio sandstone; the architecture is designed in the spirit of a modernized Norman style, with ornamental arches and recesses around the windows and doors; all the windows are double, with intermediate columns. A heavy brick cornice, with battlements, crowns the building. Building and tower are covered in with ornamental slate roof, enlivened by dormer windows. The principal inside partitions consist of brick-work. The school-rooms, passages and play-grounds are all wainscoted, with a capping formed for the school-rooms of boxes for chalk and sponges. Strips of black plastering, four feet in width, form black-boards all around the rooms. All the interior finish of the house, such as wainscoting, architraves, frames, doors and sash, consist of a combination of best-seasoned heart yellow pine and oak, left in its native color and oiled. The school-rooms are all tinted in pleasant colors, and the large hall has an ornamental frescoing with appropriate emblems.

"The gas fixtures are of the latest and most improved style, being made to order specially by Shepherd & Bros. The large hall, as well as the teacher's platform, is covered with rich and tasty carpets, which together with the delicate and chaste tints of the frescoed walls, give the rooms a very cheerful appearance. The superintendent's office, as well as the trustees', are marvels of neatness, there being a complete blending of taste and uniformity.

"The outside play-grounds will be supplied with the latest modern arrangements for gymnastics and athletic exercises generally. The ground around the building facing on M and Seventeenth Streets will be sodded, while in the centre there will be planted choice plants and flowers, the whole to be enclosed with a neat iron railing. The building is furnished throughout with the latest style of school furniture, particularly that placed in the large hall, which, by its superior adaptability, permits the use of the hall for school purposes without destroying the original intention of using it for lectures. The building in every respect is as near perfect as is possible to get one, wherein not only space has to be utilized, but a degree of economy has to be gained without impairing the general comfort of the many daily in attendance, and by reason of its prominence attracts general attention, and reflects great credit upon the architect, Adolf Cluss, Esq., and Robert I. Fleming, builder. Its cost was about \$70,000."

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An architecturally distinctive building, Summer School incorporates many of the award-winning, innovative design ideas developed by Cluss in the prototypical Wallach and Franklin Schools. The design of these buildings represented solutions to problems of plan, structure, lighting, acoustics, heating and ventilation in one of the new building types of the Reconstruction period--the urban public school building. Located two blocks from the Metropolitan AME Church and within a block of the Massachusetts Avenue, Sixteenth Street and Dupont Circle Historic Districts, it is one of the few remaining physical reminders of the presence and history of Blacks in one of the most historic areas of the city. It is the oldest Black public school building still extant which is substantially unaltered on both the exterior and interior.

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The following comprehensive bibliography was prepared by the Board of Education as part of their application to the Joint Committee on Landmarks of the National Capital to designate the Summer School building as a Historic Landmark and includes all sources used in the preparation of this nomination form.

BIOGRAPHIES.

Beauchamp, Tanya E.: "Adolph Cluss: An Architect in Washington during Civil War and Reconstruction.", in Records of the Columbia Historical Society of Washington, D.C.: 1971-1972.: Washington, D.C.: Published by The Society: Waverly Press: pages 338-358, 1973.1/

Biographical Directory of the Public Schools of the District of Columbia: article on "Charles Sumner.": Office of the Statistician, Washington, D.C.: Revised Edition, 1953.

Encyclopedia Americana: article on "Charles Sumner.": New York, New York: Americana Corporation: Volume XXVI, 1963.

Mattingly, Robert N.: "William Syphax, The Younger.", Final Addenda, pages 21A, 21B, 21C, 21D, to Birth of M Street High School, Washington, District of Columbia: A documented and illustrated narrative: 1892-1898: Washington, D.C.: Published by the Author: 1977.

Merit Students Encyclopedia: article on "Charles Sumner.": New York, New York: Macmillan Educational Corporation: Volume 17, 1974.

COLLECTED FILES.

Board of Education of the District of Columbia: Division of Buildings and Grounds: pictorial files on schools past and present.

Public Libraries of the District of Columbia: Martin Luther King, Jr., Memorial Library: Washingtoniana Division: newspaper clipping files: D.C. Public Schools-Elementary.

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- Hine, Harry Oram: "Public Education in the District of Columbia - 1805 to 1928.", in Washington Past and Present. Edited by John C. Proctor. New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company.: Volume I: Chapter XXXIX, 1930.
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JOURNALS and MINUTES.

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January 18, 1977, and March 16, 1977.

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June 16, 1926; July 1, 1938; June 7, 1939; March 19, 1941; February 4, 1942;
September 12, 1945; June 5, 1946; November 6, 1946; November 5, 1947; April 7, 1948;
May 19, 1948; December 6, 1950; December 20, 1950; July 10, 1952; November 18, 1953;
June 20, 1956; June 21, 1972; June 27, 1973; April 17, 1974; May 15, 1974;
and June 19, 1974.

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Washington, 1871-'72: Washington City: M'Gill & Witherow, Printers and
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The Report of a Survey of The Public Schools of the District of Columbia: Conducted Under the Auspices of the Chairmen of the Subcommittees on District of Columbia Appropriations of the Respective Appropriations Committees of the Senate and House of Representatives: pursuant to Public Law 80-724: George D. Strayer, Director: Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1949.

UNPUBLISHED DOCUMENT.

"History of The Charles Sumner School", in draft form prepared by the students of The Hawthorne School as a historical research project under the direction of Headmaster Alexander Orr, and Headmistress Eleanor Orr. 1/

1/ Appreciation is gratefully acknowledged to Ms. Tanya E. Beauchamp, and to Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Orr for their assistance and guidance in the preparation of this application.

2/ Unless otherwise indicated, materials are archived at the Board of Education, D.C., Presidential Building, 415 Twelfth Street, NW, Washington, DC 20004.