

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*

Type all entries—complete applicable sections

## 1. Name

historic Gallaudet College Historic District

and/or common

## 2. Location

street &amp; number Florida Avenue and 7th Street, N.E. not for publication

city, town Washington vicinity of

state D.C. code 11 county D.C. code 001

## 3. Classification

| Category                                     | Ownership                                   | Status                                              | Present Use                                     |
|----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district | <input type="checkbox"/> public             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied        | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture            |
| <input 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                | <b>Public Acquisition</b>                   | <b>Accessible</b>                                   | <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 type="checkbox"/> no                         | <input type="checkbox"/> military               |
|                                              |                                             |                                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> museum                 |
|                                              |                                             |                                                     | <input checked="" 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 Gallaudet College

street &amp; number 7th Street and Florida Avenue, N.E.

city, town Washington vicinity of state D.C.

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Recorder of Deeds

street &amp; number 6th and D Streets, N.W.

city, town Washington, state D.C.

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

(See continuation sheet) District of Columbia's

title Inventory of Historic Sites has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date March 26, 1974 federal state county local

depository for survey records National Capital Planning Commission

city, town Washington state D.C.

## 7. Description

### Condition

☐ excellent  
☐ good  
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated  
☐ ruins  
☐ unexposed

### Check one

☐ unaltered  
☐ altered

### Check one

☐ original site  
☐ moved      date \_\_\_\_\_

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The district consists of an L-shaped, 14 plus acre plot of land which included the entire rectangular area planned by Olmsted, Vaux, & Co. in 1866 except the northeast corner. This district is outlined on Map 2. The northeast corner is excluded because the nineteenth century buildings and landscaping there have been replaced by the southern section of an overly large 20th century quadrangle. The 1866 plan divided the campus into two parts separated by a large green. At the east are the academic buildings and at the west is a row of faculty residences. Chapel Hall, the focal building, is on a small hill while the President's House is on a knoll. The elaborate network of roads and paths planned by Olmsted, Vaux & Co. were never built and the present road plans are a simplification of the planned circulation. The general pattern of indirect communication among buildings was maintained. The most notable difference between the existing plan and the original plan is the main entrance and the placement of the gatekeeper's house. The change was made before the gatekeeper's house was built in 1877-78. Also, several buildings, which were not called for in the original plan, were added after 1878.

Below are descriptions of the buildings in the district. The numbers are keyed to the maps.

1. Chapel Hall. The "Main Central Building" at Gallaudet College, Chapel Hall is one of the finest examples of post-Civil War collegiate architecture in the United States and is the focal point of this nationally significant educational institution. It is a picturesque, brownstone, High Victorian Gothic Revival building designed by Frederick C. Withers of the leading mid-19th century firm of Vaux, Withers and Co. Its design reflects the romantic architectural associationalism prevalent in post-Civil War America. The building was consciously designed to be a symbol of the national importance of the institution—the only collegiate institution for the deaf in the United States. The building has a rather ecclesiastical character and was an early important building in Washington in the Ruskinian Gothic Revival style with constructional polychromy and asymmetrical planning.

The siting of Chapel Hall was determined by Olmsted, Vaux & Co. when that leading landscape architecture and planning firm made a general plan for the school's grounds in 1866. The site chosen for this focal building was previously the site of "Rose Cottage," one of the two houses occupied by the school when it opened in 1857. Chapel Hall was erected in 1867-71 as a multipurpose buildings housing the institution's main assembly hall or chapel, a lecture room, dining rooms for college and primary students, a servants' dormitory, and kitchens and services in the basement. The architectural importance of the building was immediately recognized and drawings of it were published by the contemporary architectural press.

Chapel Hall is in the Ruskinian Gothic Revival style which was popular in the 1870's, but it exhibits a restraint and fine handling of materials which creates a subdued coloristic harmony unusual in buildings in this polychrome style.

## 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 checked="" 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/ |
| <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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–     | <input type="checkbox"/> communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> politics/government               | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation     |
|                                               |                                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> invention              |                                                            | <input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)    |

**Specific dates** 1866–1878; 1878–1918 **Builder/Architect**

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Gallaudet College, founded in 1864 as the National Deaf Mute College, has been since its inception the only institution of higher learning in the United States devoted specifically to the education of the deaf. Significant periods of construction include the initial phase (1866–1878), and a smaller construction phase between 1878 and 1918 during which the historic core of the campus was completed.

The National Deaf Mute College was an outgrowth of the Columbia Institution of the Deaf, Dumb, and Blind, and elementary and secondary school that had been established in 1857 primarily through the efforts of Amos Kendall, a Washington philanthropist. The College opened in September, 1864, with 13 students. Edward Miner Gallaudet, who had served as superintendent of the Columbia Institution since its founding, became the first president of the College and continued to serve in both positions until his retirement in 1910. Under his able leadership both schools grew rapidly and had a profound influence on the education of the deaf throughout the world.

In 1894 the name of the college was changed to Gallaudet in honor of Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet, father of Edward Miner Gallaudet and founder in 1817 of the first permanent school for the deaf in the United States. In 1954 Gallaudet College became the name of the overall institution, which today is composed of Kendall School, the pre-school, elementary, and secondary school for deaf children; a training center for teachers of the deaf; and the undergraduate college awarding both Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science degrees.

The historic district consists of most of the original campus which was planned in 1866 by Olmsted, Vaux & Co. This leading late 19th century landscape architecture and planning firm felt that since the college's students lacked the ability to hear extra care should be taken so that "the senses of sight and smell are gratified in a most complete and innocent way." Gallaudet College's romantic informal plan was one of the firm's earliest collegiate works and is contemporary with their work at the University of California at Berkeley. This plan was substantially carried out between 1866 and 1878 although landscaping plans were simplified in execution. The 1878 campus is in a remarkable state of preservation except in the northeast section, an area excluded from the historic district.

The institution received support from the United States Government and care was taken to insure that it expanded in an orderly fashion. In 1866, Olmsted, Vaux & Co. made a master plan of the campus. From 1866 to 1878 substantial development took place and great care was taken to follow the 1866 plan.

On December 14, 1866, Edward Gallaudet, the Institution's president, requested Olmsted, Vaux & Co. to proceed to design three buildings for the campus, as he hoped to begin the central building (Chapel Hall), the president's house and one professor's house the next year. Gallaudet requested that the Central Building be Gothic or Romanesque and that it have brownstone walls and a clock tower. The plans for the buildings were actually made by the architectural firm of Vaux, Withers & Co. This firm was closely associated with the school's planners, as Vaux was a member of both firms. James G. Naylor was the contractor and Emil S. Frederick the supervising architect.

# 9. Major Bibliographical Reference

(See Continuation Sheet)

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property approximately 15 acres

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

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

UTM References

A 

|   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 | 8 |
|---|---|

|   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | 2 | 7 | 0 | 8 | 0 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 3 | 0 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

  
Zone Easting Northing

B 

|   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 | 8 |
|---|---|

|   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | 2 | 7 | 0 | 3 | 0 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 3 | 0 | 7 | 8 | 6 | 0 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

  
Zone Easting Northing

C 

|   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 | 8 |
|---|---|

|   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | 2 | 6 | 7 | 4 | 0 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 3 | 0 | 8 | 0 | 3 | 0 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

D 

|   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 | 8 |
|---|---|

|   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | 2 | 6 | 8 | 9 | 0 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 3 | 0 | 8 | 2 | 8 | 0 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

E 

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  |  |
|--|--|

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

F 

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  |  |
|--|--|

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

G 

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  |  |
|--|--|

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

H 

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  |  |
|--|--|

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

Verbal boundary description and justification

(See Continuation Sheet)

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 T. Robins Brown, Architectural Historian/Patrick Andrus - National Park Service  
3/85

organization Joint District of Columbia/National Capital  
Planning Commission Historic Preservation Office date June 1974

street & number 1325 G Street, N.W.

telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town Washington

state D.C.

## 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 \_\_\_\_\_

title \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

For NPS use only

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

date \_\_\_\_\_

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date \_\_\_\_\_

Chief of Registration

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Gallaudet College Historic District

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 6

Page 2

TITLE: National Register of Historic Places

DATE: 1974      \_\_\_Federal \_\_\_State \_\_\_County \_\_\_Local

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS:

CITY, TOWN: Washington

STATE: D.C.

TITLE: Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE: 1970      \_\_\_Federal \_\_\_State \_\_\_County \_\_\_Local

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS:

CITY, TOWN: Washington

STATE: D.C.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 2

Its brownstone walls with cream-colored bands of Ohio sandstone, its gray and red slate roofs, and its decorative details using other materials such as pink granite illustrate the constructional polychromy of the time. The building is asymmetrically massed as the architect carefully differentiated the various parts of the building according to use.<sup>1</sup>

There are three main sections, each with its own steep mansard roof. The one-story west wing originally housed the college's dining room. The almost square central section with two story high walls contained the assembly room or chapel. The east wing was subdivided into two parts. The one-story part closest to the central block has a lecture room which opened on to the assembly room by sliding doors. The one and one-half story eastern part had the primary school's dining room on the first floor and a servant's dormitory on the second floor. A full basement under all sections contained kitchens and services.

Although the east and west wings are neither aligned nor the same size, their steep mansard roofs have ridge poles at the same height and this enables the building to be viewed as a long horizontal mass asymmetrically intersected by a large cubic mass. The horizontality is increased by the stone bands. A vertical emphasis comes from the clock tower at the southwest of the central block. This tower has a steep hipped roof which reaches above the other roofs of the building and acts as a focal point tying the parts into a unified asymmetrical composition.

The west wing is approximately 49 feet long and 41 feet wide. It has an apsidal projection at the east. The central block is 61 feet long and 56 feet wide. At the southwest corner is the square clock tower whose walls are flush with the walls of the central block. A one-story porch with its own shed roof extends along the south facade to the clock tower. The roof of the central block has a fleche and is broken by a gablet on the south side. The east wing is approximately 70 feet long and 47½ feet wide. Its roof breaks after the lecture room to reflect the differentiation in function and the eastern section is one and one-half stories stories with a large hipped gablet on the south side.

Each section of the building has different window treatment on the main (south) facade. The west section has rectangular windows. The central section above the porch has a band of five large tracery windows under pointed arches with voussoirs of two alternating kinds of stone. The east section has groupings of small Gothic windows except the gablet has rectangular windows.

<sup>1</sup> Much of the descriptive information is from Frank Kowsky's "The 19th Century Buildings on the Campus of Gallaudet College, Washington, D.C."

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 3

Most decorative details have English Gothic Revival origins. Many carved designs are derived from designs in James K. Colling's Art Foliage (1865). An outstanding decorative feature is the entrance porch with three pointed arches carried on pink Scotch granite columns. In a triangular gablet above the central arch carved in half-relief is an American eagle with breast shield with stars and stripes. The open arcade linking Chapel Hall and College Hall is a picturesque element. It has slender white and pink granite columns with very ornate capitals supporting wide pointed arches. Both entrance porch and arcade are paved with black and white marble tiles. Originally all roofs had iron cresting but only those on the west wing have survived.

The interior has been considerably altered. The rooms in the wings have been subdivided. Fortunately the open space of the 56 foot square assembly room has been preserved as movable dividers are employed there. An outstanding feature is this room's 38 foot high, paneled ceiling with its original dark stain.

2. College Hall. This fine example of polychrome High Victorian Gothic Revival architecture was included in the 1866 plan. The east wing, designed by architect E. S. Friedrich, was erected in 1866. The main block of the building, designed by architect F. C. Withers, was erected in 1874-77 with J. G. Meyers as supervising architect. At this time alterations were made to the Friedrich wing. Important in its own right, College Hall is an irreplaceable structure complementing and enhancing Chapel Hall. The north west wing is the oldest remaining building erected for the college.

3. Sophia Fowler Hall. Erected in 1916-18, this building was designed by architects O. A. Mechlin, L. Charles Stair, and F. L. Pearsons under Elliott Wood, Architect of the Capitol. The Primary School built in 1859, 1862, and 1865-6 was located on the site now occupied by Fowler Hall. The building is not part of the original plan.

4. Gatekeeper's House. The architect of this house erected in 1877-78 was probably F. C. Withers. It was located in front of Chapel Hall in the 1866 plan but was resited prior to construction in 1877-78. The Gate Keeper's House is a picturesque small Gothic Revival building.

5. The President's House. This is a large, red brick high Victorian Gothic Revival house located on a knoll at the southwest corner of the campus. The house, erected in 1867-68 and designed by F. C. Withers, is approximately 60 feet north of Florida Avenue. It is surrounded by informally landscaped open space. A circular drive separates it from a row of three High Victorian Gothic Revival Professors' Houses at the north. A large green separates it from academic and administrative buildings at the northeast. The house is oriented so that its main facade faces north toward the faculty houses. Most of the buildings on the campus visible from the President's House were designed by F. C. Withers and were built between 1867 and 1885.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 4

The house is very suburban or rural in character and it is important to remember that in the 1860's the school had a suburban location. The building's design is in the mid 19th century Downing tradition of a dwelling with informal landscaping, picturesque features, and an open plan. There are also features characteristic of post-Civil War architecture such as the "constructional coloration" and the greater plasticity (particularly present in the entrance portal).

The building has a number of parts and numerous accents from dormers, gables, chimneys, and projections. However, there is a unity from the general compactness of the outline and the careful organization of openings. This unity is enhanced by the use of similar decorative motifs.

The house has a 2½ story, brick main block approximately 53'8" by 48'. This block has a broadly overhanging, steep mansard roof broken over each bay by a dormer, gable, or hipped gable. The main block has three bays on its north-south facades and two on its east facade. Centrally located on the north side is a projecting 2½ story brick entrance bay, 14'5" by 10'. Extending the full length of the east side is a one-story frame veranda. A semi-elliptical, one-story bay projects from the southwest bay of the south facade. At the west is a two-story brick service wing, 30'9" by 26'. This wing has a steep mansard roof broken by gables over 2nd story windows. Attached to the service wing at the west is an enclosed, one-story, frame porch, one bay wide. A frame, 1½ story stair wing with shed roof occupies the north west corner between the main block and the service wing.

The main block and service wing have red brick walls laid in common bond in Flemish variation. There is variegation due to the brownstone foundation and the brownstone bands connecting window lintels. Most openings are rectangular with 2/2-lights. Over major windows are alternating brick and brownstone voussoirs in pointed arches. The arches are filled in with thin bricks laid in a recessed herringbone pattern. Around the main entrance is a very plastic, one-story brownstone portal with buttresses. The ornament on this portal and on the tympanum of the window above the door is derived from James K. Colling's Art Foliage (1865). The frame porch at the east has king post braces and quatrefoil ensemble. This porch is in poor condition.

The first floor plan of the main block has a central hall with plant room at the south and two rooms on each side. Between the west rooms is a handsome stair. The plan exhibits the openness, concern for views, and separation of service wing characteristic of Downing's plans. The addition of the plant room is a post-Civil War characteristic and possibly derived from a design in Robert Kerr's The Gentlemen's House (1864).

The interior has a number of outstanding decorative features. The main rooms of the first floor have dark woodwork and handsome wood and tile mantels. The newel of the stair supports an intricate wood carving of an Indian. Handsome stain glass panels separate the plant room and the central hall.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 5

6. Professor's House. Designed by Vaux, Withers & Co. and erected in 1867, this house is on the 1866 plan. It is a good example of Gothic Revival domestic architecture. It is the first building on the campus designed by Withers.

7. & 8. Professors' Houses. F. C. Withers was architect of these houses erected in 1874-75. They are on the 1866 plan, and are good examples of Gothic Revival domestic architecture.

9. Professor's House (gone). Erected prior to 1885 and demolished since 1967, the architect of this house is not known. On the 1866 plan, it was a typical late 19th century frame residence of no particular architectural significance.

10. Faculty House (gone). Erected prior to 1885, and demolished in the 1970s, the architect of this house is unknown. It was within the area planned by Olmsted, Vaux and Co., but the plan locates the fifth house in the row with the other faculty houses. It was a typical late 19th century frame dwelling, in scale with the other buildings.

NOTE: Due to the demolition of buildings #9 and 10, and the loss of integrity of the sites on which they were built (now covered by parking lots and tennis courts), these areas are excluded from the National Historic Landmark boundary.

11. Old Gymnasium. Designed by F. C. Withers, this building was erected in 1879-81 with J. C. Meyers as supervising architect. Its picturesque design is derived from Swiss architecture. It is within the area planned in 1866 but is not included in the plan, and was once one of the finest gymnasiums in the East.

12. Kendall Hall. The architect of the building erected in 1884-85 was F. C. Withers. Within the area planned in 1886, it is not included in the plan. It is in scale with the older buildings and is the last building on the campus designed by Withers.

13. Statue of Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet. This sensitive bronze group by sculptor Daniel C. French was unveiled on June 26, 1889. It portrays Gallaudet with his first pupil. Given by the National Association of the Deaf, it is an important work by French and one of Washington's finest statues.

14. Dawes House. Completed in 1895, Olof Hanson, an alumnus of the college, designed this red brick building. Not part of the original plan but part of the central complex of Gallaudet for 80 years, the buildings is equipped to assist students with special academic problems.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 2

Frederick C. Withers (1828-1901) designed the buildings at Gallaudet. Withers was an English architect who immigrated to the United States around 1852 to work with Andrew J. Downing. Withers worked with Olmsted and Vaux on Central Park in New York City. In 1866 he formed a partnership with Vaux which lasted until 1871. This firm is best known for their High Victorian Gothic Revival designs, such as Jefferson Market Courthouse in New York City (on the National Register of Historic Places).

The first building by Withers completed at Gallaudet was the Professor's House erected in 1867. The President's House and Chapel Hall were begun at the same time but due to their larger size and more elaborated designs took longer to complete. Both the President's House and the Professor's House are located on land purchased from Capt. Patterson after the Olmsted, Vaux and Co. plan was made. However, both buildings are sited as determined by the plan as it called for the purchase of this property. The existing original plans for the President's House are dated March 16, 1867. The house's design largely conforms with these plans. By August 1867 the building was ready for rafters and was roofed by the winter of 1867. Gallaudet in the Annual Report dated October 26, 1868, stated that the house was nearly complete. The house was occupied by Gallaudet and his family in December 1868.

Probably in 1887 a frame stair wing was added in the north west corner where the main block joins the service wing. From 1887 to 1889 the newly admitted female students in the college were temporarily living on the third floor of the President's House. The stairs were probably built to enable the students to reach their rooms without going through the President's quarters. The house has undergone relatively little modification excepting the addition of modern utilities. It contains a considerable amount of furniture dating from the occupancy of Edward M. Gallaudet.

The foundations and basement of Chapel Hall were built in 1867. In early 1867 preliminary plans for the building were altered when a second story was added over the primary school dining room in the east wing. The existing original plans for the building are dated April 30, 1868, and the completed building largely conforms to these plans. By October 1869 parts of the building were being roofed and in 1870 the dining rooms and basement were occupied. The completed structure was dedicated on January 29, 1871, during a ceremony attended by President Grant.

In 1874-77 College Hall, also designed by Withers, was erected northwest of Chapel Hall and connected to it by a handsome pointed arched arcade. College Hall, a brick High Victorian Gothic Revival building forms a unified composition with Chapel Hall. During the construction of College Hall the terrace and steps in front of Chapel Hall were constructed. Also in the 1870's the wooden veranda on the north side of the west wing of Chapel Hall was bricked in. On June 26, 1889, a statue of Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet by Daniel C. French was unveiled. This statue, one of the finest in Washington, is located in front of the main entrance of Chapel Hall.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 3

Today the exterior of Chapel Hall retains its 1870's appearance. The interior has undergone considerable alteration. At present the building contains offices in the east and west wings and in the basement. The central assembly room is used by the public relations department.

In 1870 the college purchased Kendall Green, an area of approximately 90 acres behind the original campus. This land enabled the school to expand in recent years to the north and has preserved the 19th century campus. From 1879 to 1885 a few buildings were added in the area planned by Olmsted, Vaux & Co., but their placement is in keeping with the general concept of the plan and the late Victorian designs are in scale with earlier structures. In 1889 French's statue was unveiled in front of Chapel Hall. The district has undergone little change since 1885. The most significant is the demolition of the Primary School erected in 1859, 1862, and 1865-6 and the erection on its site in 1916-18 of Sophia Fowler Hall. Since 1967 a small frame house, not designed by Withers, was replaced by tennis courts, and buildings #9 and 10 were demolished.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 9

Page 1

American Architecture and Building News I (March 18, 1876), p. 93 Atwood, A. W.  
Gallaudet College: Its First One Hundred Years Lancaster, Pa.: Intelligencer, 1964.

Atwood, A. W. "Gallaudet in Washington: The World's Only College for the Deaf"  
Records of the Columbia Historical Society of Washington, D.C., 1963-65, pp.  
432-447.

Brady, S. M. "The Silent Schools of Kendall Green" Harpers. LXIX (July, 1884),  
pp.181-187.

Centennial Souvenir Book Committee. Our Heritage 1864-1964. Sponsored by D.C.  
Chapter of Gallaudet College Alumni. Washington: Ass. Graphic Arts Press.  
June 1964.

Draper, A. G. "The Silent College" Scribner's Magazine. April, 1872, pp. 727-733.

Gallaudet, E. M. "A History of the Columbia Institution for the Deaf and Dumb."  
Records of the Columbia Historic Society. XV (1912), pp. 1-22.

Gallaudet Library: Original Plans and elevations of Chapel Hall, dated April 30, 1868.  
Letterbooks of President of Columbia Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, 1866-1869.  
Letters from Olmsted, Vaux & Co. and from Vaux, Withers & Co. to President of  
Columbia Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, 1865-1868.

Hamlin, T. "Withers, F. C." Dictionary of American Biography. XX New York:  
Charles Scribner's Sons. 1936, p. 435.

Kowsky, Francis R. "The Architecture of Frederick C. Withers (1828-1901)"  
Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians. May 1976 XXXV, No. 2  
pp. 83-107.

Kowsky, Francis R. "The 19th Century Buildings on the Campus of Gallaudet College,  
Washington, D.C." State University College at Buffalo, New York, 1970. Copy in  
Gallaudet Library.

National Capital Planning Commission. Landmarks File.

Newspaper Articles. Washingtoniana Collection. D.C. Public Library.

Vaux, C. Church Architecture: Plan, Elevations and Views of 21 Churches and  
two School Houses, 1873.

Withey, H. F. and E. R. Withey. "Withers, F. C." Biographical Dictionary  
of American Architects (Deceased). Los Angeles: Hennessey & Ingalls, 1970, p.668.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 10

Page 1

The Gallaudet College National Historic Landmark boundary encloses approximately 15 acres, facing on Florida Avenue, including the major, and best, extant portion of the campus plan and buildings designed by Withers, Olmsted and Vaux, and other historic structures. They are all located within a concentrated area, free of modern intrusions (although surrounded by the more modern campus on the north and east). They comprise the major structures and landscape features of the original central campus, as developed during the 19th century, and still in use (though not necessarily original use), including administration buildings, classrooms, old dormitories, president's and faculty residences, old gymnasium, landscaped lawns with gatehouse and an important sculpture by Daniel Chester French.

As seen on the enclosed sketch map, the boundary (in red) begins at the southeastern corner of the district, at a point on the north curb of Florida Avenue, N.W., approximately 150 feet east of the east front entrance drive, then proceeds in a generally northerly direction to the west curb of the driveway just east of Dawes Hall; thence in a generally north westerly direction from a point just north of Dawes Hall, following the north side of the sidewalk between the historic and non-historic campus features; thence across the college green (along a line directly south of the 1961 statue of E. M. Gallaudet) to a sidewalk just north of College Hall; then following this sidewalk to the west curb of the drive east of the Old Gymnasium; thence north along this curb, then westerly in a line approximately 25 feet north of the Old Gymnasium, to the sidewalk just west of this building; then following the sidewalk in a southwesterly direction to the northern curb of the driveway located just south of the gym; following this curbline as it curves to the southwest (so as to exclude the tennis court and parking lot on the north - the site of the now demolished building #10), continuing along this curb to a point where the sidewalk that runs along the north side of building #8 intersects with the drive; then proceed generally west along this sidewalk to the northwest corner of building #8; then continue west for approximately 30 feet to a concrete embankment; then head south west in a straight line to the northwest curbline of Florida Avenue (excluding the modern one story brick building on the property to the west of the President's House); thence in a southeasterly direction along this north curb to the beginning point.

# GALLAUDET COLLEGE HISTORIC DISTRICT WASHINGTON, D.C.

