RECEIVED 2280
JAN - 6 2014
NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

15

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 Marjorie Webster Junior College Historic District

other names/site number Marjorie Webster School; Marjorie Webster School of Expression and Physical Education

2. Location

street & number 1638 and 1640 Kalmia Road, NW; 7753 and 7775 17th Street, NW ☐ not for publication

city or town Washington ☐ vicinity

state District of Columbia code DC county N/A code 001 zip code 20012

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

I hereby certify that this X 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 X 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 X local

DAVID MALONEY — Signature of certifying official

12/31/2013 — Date

DC SHPO — Title

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 N. Beall — Signature of the Keeper

2.24.14 — Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- [x] private
- [ ] public - Local
- [ ] public - State
- [ ] public - Federal

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box)

- [ ] building(s)
- [x] district
- [ ] site
- [ ] structure
- [ ] building(s)
- [ ] object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
3	2	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
		buildings
3	2	**Total**

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION/School
AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE/Outbuilding

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION/School

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

EARLY 20TH CENTURY REVIVAL/Mediterranean Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: Concrete and Brick
walls: Brick, Tile and Stucco
roof: Red Tiles
other:

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Description Summary:

The Marjorie Webster Junior College Historic District is located in the suburban residential neighborhood of Colonial Village in upper northwest Washington, D.C. The neighborhood abuts Rock Creek Park and is defined by its wooded setting, its curving street layout and its mid-20th-century detached dwellings reflecting a variety of revival styles. The historic Marjorie Webster Junior College (now the Lowell School) contains 6.8 acres that was historically part of a 145-acre farm known as the Fenwick Farm, and occupies a comanding site in the neighborhood atop a hill at the edge of Rock Creek Park, west of 16th Street, NW. The main school building, designed in a Mediterranean Revival style by engineer and architectural designer, Colonel Peter M. Anderson was built in 1928. It is sited at the height of the hill and overlooks the campus below it. The campus includes an open landscape, sports fields and parking, and is punctuated by two former dormitory buildings, the school president's house (now administration building), and a nineteenth-century spring house associated with the historic Fenwick Farm.

The Marjorie Webster Junior College is named after the school founder and longtime president, Marjorie Webster. The historic district, named after the school, includes five buildings on the 6.8-acre site.

General Description:

The Marjorie Webster Junior College is a picturesque campus with Mediterranean Revival-style school buildings set upon its hilly terrain. The buildings, the mature shade trees and open grassy and marshy areas crossed by a stream together present a scenic and tranquil country atmosphere in the midst of a suburban residential neighborhood. The campus property includes five buildings of which three are contributing and two are non-contributing. The three contributing buildings are: 1) the Main school building (1928); 2) the Marjorie Webster House (1928); and 3) the Fenwick Farm Springhouse (mid-19th century). The two non-contributing buildings are: 1) Parkside (formerly Memorial Hall) (1950); and Fraser Hall (1965-67).

Site:

The Marjorie Webster School and College Campus occupies current lots 815 and 817 in Square 2745F in northwest Washington, D.C. The campus property is a large 6.8 acre polygonal tract that includes about 780 feet of frontage on the 1600 block of Kalmia Road, NW and about 620 feet of frontage on the 7700 block of Seventeenth Street, NW. The campus contains four buildings associated with the former Marjorie Webster Junior College, as well as a mid-nineteenth century springhouse. The springhouse is a rare survivor from the area's agrarian past and is the sole remnant of a pre-Civil War Washington County farm.

The topography of the campus area is both hilly and marshy, and the campus itself is crossed by a small stream which creates a wetlands area. In laying out the streets and platting the area in the 1920s, District government engineers and the area's major developer are reported to have attempted to follow the contours of the land and the water features related to nearby Rock Creek. As a result, local streets curve and intersect at angles, and lots may be less regular polygons, which are factors that shape the Webster campus.

Preserving the natural beauty of this area adjoining Rock Creek Park was a goal of the early 20th-century developer of the suburban neigbhorhood, and the Webster campus has long been noted for its sylvan beauty. Today, a portion of the campus surrounding the stream and wetlands area retains its natural foliage. Other areas of the campus are green athletic fields interspersed with trees and foliage.

Contributing Buildings:

Main School Building

The Main school building, built in 1928 and designed by architect/engineer Colonel P.M. Anderson, is reflective of a Mediterranean country "villa." The long and low-lying campus building, designed in a Mediterranean Revival style, is sited atop a hill and oriented toward the western end of the campus, which slopes appreciably before leveling out as it approaches the intersection of Seventeenth Street and Kalmia Road. The main building, characterized by its villa form, its stucco-clad walls, its asymmetrical massing created by projecting towers, bays and pavilions, and its red tile roof, is a

dominant feature in the landscape. The octagonal clock tower and belvedere at the northeastern corner of the building is particularly reminiscent of an Italian hilltown villa, where such features provided both a vantage point to and from the neighboring villages or towns.

As originally constructed in 1928, the building measured 250 feet by 50 feet and included the principal building and a rear gymnasium wing that diverges from the main block at an obtuse angle articulated by a polygonal clock tower. The building has been added onto over the years, in particular at the rear, where two non-descript and functional wings extend as appendages towards the rear of the property out of view of the public. The main block of the school stands three stories tall though it is nestled into the hillside, so appears much lowe. A 3-1/2-story entry tower is located toward its western end, while a three-story clock tower or *campanile* is at the opposing end. The masonry walls are clad in stucco and feature a series of progressions and recessions, including the towers, balconies and loggias. The tower, and main entrance to the school, is square in plan and is covered with a pyramidal, red tiled roof. The entry door is reached by a set of double-flight stairs leading from the driveway to above ground level, as the school is built into the hillside. The double entry door is capped at the second story level by a long, double-height, tri-partite window set atop a balcony. The balcony is supported by corbelled arches springing from the wall. The central window and side lights are separated by long and narrow torsaded columns. The three window openings are arched with spandrels dividing the long windows into two. To either side of this central tri-partite window are four smaller windows, two atop each other, three of which are embrasure type slits punched into the stuccoed walls. A row of five windows rises above the tri-partite window and below the broad eaves of the tower roof. All of the original window sash have been replaced with simulated divided lights.

The tower is flanked by lower three-story wings, both of which have projecting bays that are flush with the central tower. The eastern wing features rectangular and arched openings on the first story and a loggia, formed by a row of windows grouped in threes, on the second story. The western window opening has a pair of arched windows separated by a central colonette and set beneath a blind, round arch. The center opening is a single, arched window, while those to the east consists of a group of three rectangular window openings. The projecting bay is covered by a shed roof clad with red tiles. The western wing features a row of arched openings on the first story and a rectangular window openings punched into the stuccoed wall surface at the second story. The roof is flat, with a balustrade wall providing a sizeable exterior balcony. The third story behind these projecting bays similary features rectangular openings punched into the stuccoed wall surfaces. Towards the end of the western wing, but on the north facade, a tall chimney with a bishop's cap, cuts through the wide eaves and rises above the roofline. The bishop's cap has a gable roof covered with red tiles like that of the main building.

The eastern wing extends four more bays easterly beyond its projecting loggia before being interrupted by a tall,octagonal clock tower. This tower marks the end of the main school building and the beginning of the gymnasium wing of the building. The tower is clad in stucco and punctuated by a series of windows of varying size and type, but primarily including rectangular openings and smaller embrassure-type openings, all punched into the smooth wall surface. The tower is divided horizontally with beltcourses and is capped by an octagonal roof, clad with tiles. A row of horizontal windows defines the attic level just below the roof. A clock is located on center of the polygonal shaped tower and is visible from afar. The tower contributes architectural importance to the school's pioneering athletic program for women.

The gymnasium wing extends in a southerly way off of the clock tower and is characterized by its long side wall with a large arched opening on-center at the second story level. This side wall, once clearly visible from below, is now obscured by Fraser Hall, an imposing 1960 dormitory building.

Marjorie Webster House

The Marjorie Webster House, currently serving as the school administration building, is set below the main school building and was constructed simultaneous to it. It is similarly executed in a Mediterranean Revival style as designed by Colonel Anderson. The dwelling is a smaller domestic "villa" form, constructed for school founder and president, Marjorie Webster as her residence,. Reflective of its style, the house is characterized by its stucco walls and red tile roof. It is essentially a cube-like building with the west-facing front elevation providing visual interest by its second-story projecting gabled bay. This bay is actually an oriel, supported by paired brackets extending off of the main wall, and creating a sort of entrance porch below it. Indeed, the main entry—a single replacement door—is located below the gabled oriel along with a window to its side. The gabled oriel features a grouping of three windows on-center with a narrow arched opening at the center flanked by two wider arched openings, all with multi-paned wood sash. A trefoil window fills the gable end above this tri-partite window. To one side of the central gable and oriel is a two-story shed roof wing, and to the other a two-story wing with a projecting and enclosed first-story porch. This porch, is divided into three bays with blind arch openings forming each bay, separated by torsaded colonettes, like those of the entry tower of the main school building, but on a smaller scale.

Fenwick Farm Springhouse
The Fenwick Farm Springhouse, probably built in the mid-19th century, has a square footprint and is covered with a pyramidal hipped roof. The structure is set upon a rubble stone foundation and has brick walls. The springhouse sits atop a spring which is channeled through the building. A brick basin on the southern side of the springhouse captures and stores water. This same elevation holds a wide door opening, while the western side features a single window with shutters. The roof is clad in wood shingles. The building survives in excellent condition and is a rare surviving agricultural outbuilding in the city.

Non-Contributing Buildings:

Parkside
The building known as Parkside is a three-story rectangular block building constructed as a dormitory (historially called Memorial Hall), but also built to house a theater, a science laboratory and a radio and television station. It is located at 7775 Seventeenth Street NW and is the only campus building to directly front on a public street. Constructed in 1950 and currently undergoing major renovation and alteration, Parkside is a three-story stucco-clad building, rectangular in plan. The mid-20th century building relfects a Modernm, minimalist design aesthetic typical of the period, and though it lacks the distinctive massing and decorative elements of the main school building, it makes appropriate historicist references to it its use of stucco and red tiles. Currently, the building is being completely gutted. All of the original windows have been removed and many of the openings have been filled in. The walls on the east front elevation have been largely removed in preparation for a substantial front addition. Although built within the Period of Significance, the building has lost its integrity and is thus considered non-contributing.

Fraser Hall
The dormitory presently named Fraser Hall was built circa 1965-67 in a Mediterranean Revival style characterized by its stucco wall surfaces and its red-tiled roof. Because Fraser Hall was built beyond the Period of Significance, it is considered a non-contributing building to the historic district. Located slightly downslope on the northeast side of the main building, it has a U-shaped footprint and consists of two, three story wings linked by a three-story connecting hyphen recessed from them. The building is designed in a Mediterranean Revival style that is sympathetic to the original campus buildings and characterized by stucco wall surfaces, and a broad, hipped red tile roof. The windows are rectangular shaped openings punched into the stucco-clad wall surfaces with ornamental rosette-shaped windows between the rectangular windows on the front facade of each wing. A single-story entrance portico with arched openings and a castellated arch in the hyphen wing provides access to the main entry in the recessed hyphen. The building was constructed immediately northeast of the gymnasium wing, obscuring the visibility of that wing from below.

Interior:

The interior of the main school building essentially features a long corridor running the length of the main building to the gymnasium wing with offices and classrooms off of it and metal stairs providing access to the upper floors. The interior room partitions, walls and floor materials have been re-configured or replaced, leaving little historic fabric intact, save for some special features such as a recreation room with a large fireplace. The original gymnasium and pool do remain from their original period of construction.

The interior of the Marjorie Webster House, now administrative offices, has similarly been re-configured to accommodate offices. However, many of the original features such as the curving metal stair with a niche in the inside wall, arched openings and rustic stone fireplace surrounds survive.

INTEGRITY

The Marjorie Webster Junior College Historic District has integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. The campus occupies a 6.8-acre portion of a former 19th-century farm and retains an open landscape with rural character adjacent to Rock Creek Park. The property retains integrity of feeling and association to its 19th-century agrarian history, due to this openness, as well as to the existence of the springhouse which survives as a remnant of the farm complex that once occupied the land. The main school building and the president's house, built in 1928-29, have integrity of design, materials and workmanship reflective of the Mediterranean Revival style. Although all of the windows have been replaced on both the main school building and the residence, the original openings are intact, as are other important character-defining features such as stucco wall surfaces and red tile roofs. The original massing, including projecting towers and bays are intact. Additions to the main school building are at the rear of the building and not visible to the public as the building is built against a hillside. The property visually represents the farmland-to-campus property, and thus retains its integrity of feeling and association related to the 20th-century transformation of the cultural landscape of the District of Columbia.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- [X] 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.
- [X] 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.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply)

Property is:

- [ ] A owed 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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE
EDUCATION
AGRICULTURE

Period of Significance

Mid-19th century-1963

Significant Dates

Mid-19th Century; 1928; 1948; 1963

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Colonel P.M. Anderson

Period of Significance (justification)

The Period of Significance extends from the mid-19th century to include the Fenwick Farm Springhouse to 1963 which marks the death of school founder and president, Marjorie Webster.

Criteria Consideratons (explanation, if necessary)

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (provide a summary paragraph that includes level of signficance and applicable criteria)

The Marjorie Webster Junior College meets National Register criteria A and C at the local level of significance.

The Marjorie Webster campus is significant under Criterion A as the site of the Marjorie Webster School and Junior College, a private institution which functioned on the site from 1928 until 1971. The Marjorie Webster School was an early example of a private educational institution which focused on the educational needs of working women. Throughout its fifty-one years of existence, the Webster School provided instruction in the career fields open to women, growing its educational focus to keep pace with the times. While conventional "business schools" in the District of Columbia taught specific skills like typing or stenography, the Marjorie Webster program provided more academic depth and breadth by offering liberal arts classes in addition to technical instruction. The school provided classes for both non-resident "day" students, who tended to be employed, as well as a residential program more typical of a four-year college. The Marjorie Webster School and Junior College was also an important influence on the development of women's athletics in the District of Columbia. Founded as "The Marjorie Webster School of Expression and Physical Education," it offered pioneering training in the administration of women's recreation programs and athletics.

The Marjorie Webster campus is significant for its association with Marjorie Fraser Webster (1896-1963), an important figure in the development of education for women in Washington, D.C. She was also an important figure in women's business and professional organizations and promoted women's sports through the school's very active participation in local athletic leagues. As president of the school, she founded or served as a key organizer in several associations and conferences which sought to organize and promote women's sports in the pre-Title IX era and played an important role in the development of women's athletics in the District of Columbia.

In addition, the campus, which was established on former farm land provides important information on the rural heritage of the nation's capital. The springhouse on the property remains from the mid-19th century when the land was part of a 145-acre farm owned and operated by Philip Fenwick. Prior to the Civil War, Fenwick was a slaveholder, and one of the largest area landowners, using his slave labor to operate his farm. The conversion of the former farm into a school campus in the mid-20th century is also reflective of a trend, as the city's 19th-century farms and estates were divided and sold, often finding new purposes as schools and other institutions.

The Marjorie Webster School and Junior College campus is also significant under Criterion C as an excellent example of a small, privately-funded and developed college campus. The original buildings with their Mediterranean Revival-style massing and detailing, reflect a coherent architectural theme. The campus is located in an area of the city noted for its rustic beauty that was capitalized upon by the area's developer who sought to reflect the contours and physical features of the land in laying out streets and platting the lots. The school sought to maintain this sylvan quality in its campus development, siting its buildings to take advantage of the campus' varied terrain. Even today, a significant area of the campus is maintained as a natural area.

The period of significance for the Marjorie Webster School campus spans the period from the mid-nineteenth century to reflect the property's use as a farm, through the establishment of the school in 1928, until 1963, which marks the death of Marjorie Webster. Although the college survived its founder's death, remaining in operation until 1971, the school was principally a product of the vision of Marjorie Webster and reflected her academic and athletic ambitions for young women in Washington for four decades.

Although no identification survey has been conducted to-date, it is possible, given the property's location and land-use history, that intact prehistoric and/or historic archaeological resources may be present.

Narrative Statement of Significance (provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance)

Summary Paragraph:

Architecture—The Marjorie Webster School and Junior College campus is significant in the Area of Architecture for its picturesque campus plan and layout, and for the Mediterranean Revival-style design aesthetic of the individual buildings. In particular, the Main school building—a sprawling Mediterranean Revival-style building—is reflective of a Mediterranean country "villa" commanding its site atop a hill. The school building is characterized by its stuccoed wall surfaces, its red tiled roof, and by its asymmetrical massing created by canted wings, projecting towers, bays and pavilions. The octagonal clock tower and belveder at the northeastern corner of the building is particularly reminiscent of hilltop villas.

Agriculture—The Marjorie Webster Junior College is significant in the area of Agriculture for its associations with the agrarian heritage of the former Washington County. Until the Organic Act of 1871 that consolidated Washington City, Georgetown and Washington County into a single municipality, Washington County was a separate political entity, and was generally rural character. Throughout the 19th and well into the 20th century, wooded and cultivated lands, punctuated by working farmsteads and gentlemen estates, defined the Washington County landscape. The springhouse on the school campus survives from this period of landuse and is an important cultural relic of a bygone era. The springhouse was built during the mid-19th century when the property was part of 145-acre farm owned and operated by Philip Fenwick. The springhouse is one of just five known springhouses in the District of Columbia and is thus a rare and important remnant of the city's cultural landscape.

Education—The Marjorie Webster School is significant in the Area of Education for the role that it played in the education of women in the District of Columbia, particularly from its establishment in 1920 until the end of World War II. Initially, the Webster School provided instruction in the career fields open to women, but it evolved with the times, growing its educational focus, and ultimately offering a four-year college degree. The school is also significant for its associations with its founder and president, Marjorie Webster, who did much to further the education of women.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

Marjorie Webster – Educational Innovator

Marjorie Webster's path to founding college president was circuitous. She was born in Chicago on March 23, 1896, the daughter of George A. and Jessie Fraser Webster. In 1900, the Webster family resided at 5200 Washington Avenue in the Hyde Park neighborhood, but they soon afterwards moved to suburban Evanston.[1] George Webster, an army first lieutenant during the Spanish-American War was a principal in the firm of E. Webster's Sons, manufacturers of pocketbooks and fine leather goods, located at 66 Wabash Avenue in Chicago's "Loop".

Late in life Marjorie Webster remarked that, from earliest girlhood, her ambitions were to be a missionary, an actress, or head of a school. She apparently dreamed of these careers against a background of financial uncertainty. Her uncle, who partnered with her father in E. Webster's Sons, committed suicide in 1903[2], and, just two years later, a discount dry goods emporium advertised bargains on the entire stock of G.A. Webster Leathers, purchased at 20 cents on the dollar.[3] In 1916, when Marjorie was twenty, her maternal grandmother and others filed a petition to have her father's leather business declared bankrupt.[4]

Marjorie Webster received her early education in Chicago. Later biographies report that she worked for a time at Jane Adams' Hull House, then taught physical education and drama at the Starrett School in Chicago.[5] Her coming of age coincided with a period of great dislocation, marked by growing industrialization and a mass migration from farms, as well as an accelerating trend for women to work outside the home. Young Marjorie Webster, who was of a theatrical bent, performed as a celebrity impressionist. She later estimated that, during the war, she had appeared at every "Red Cross cantonment in the United States", imitating male stars like Charlie Chaplin and Scottish song and dance man Harry Lauder, as well as Ethel Barrymore and Elsie Janis, and "the sweetheart of the AEF".[6]

During World War I, the Webster family became part of the war's mass relocation. In 1917, the year following the filing of the Webster Company's bankruptcy petition, Jessie and George Webster left Chicago for Washington.[7] When the "U.S. hotels" opened to house women war workers in the nation's capital, Jessie Webster became manager of the N-O dormitory. In 1920, George A. Webster listed his occupation as real estate agent and boareded, with his five children, at 1402 Massachusetts Avenue, NW. Jessie Webster was enumerated as a resident-manager at the dormitory. The Webster household on Massachusetts Avenue included Marjorie, who, after a stint as a physical education teacher at Shorter College in Rome, Georgia, had come to Washington as a dormitory recreation manager.[8] Years later, she

[1] See 1900 US Census results.
[2] *Chicago Daily Tribune*. "Chicago Man Is a Suicide". March 18, 1903. P. 15.
[3] *Chicago Daily Tribune*. Display Advertisement for "The Fair". February 12, 1905. P. B5.
[4] *Chicago Daily Tribune*. "Petitions in Bankruptcy". February 11, 1916. P.18.
[5] Flora Gill. "Miss Webster Realized Her Ambitions". *The Washington Post*. November 17, 1950. P. C7
[6] Flora Gill. "Miss Webster Realized Her Ambitions". *The Washington Post*. November 17, 1950. P. C7
[7] Washington Post. "Mrs. G. A. Webster Dies".
[8] Flora Gill. ."Miss Webster Realized Her Ambitions". *The Washington Post*. November 17, 1950. P. C7

reminisced about how her first classes and activities for the residents drew hundreds of young women to the dormitories' spacious recreation rooms.[9] Plainly there was a demand for such services.

After the armistice, the "delightful" atmosphere that prevailed at the dormitories during the War apparently evaporated, along with the wartime spirit of shared purpose. There was soon conflict between the tenants and management, and the government housing program fell under attack by members of congress like Representative Martin Madden of Illinois, who opined that "those girls should be at home under the influence of their fathers and mothers"[10], and Representative Blanton of Texas, who thundered "it is outrageous for the government to be in the hotel business".[11] Neither Jessie Fraser nor Marjorie Webster continued long in their federal jobs. Their next endeavor partook of much of what Marjorie had been doing at the dormitories.

The Downtown Years

There is much evidence, including a 1950 interview and a 20th-anniversary brochure published in 1940, to establish that Marjorie Webster opened a night school which soon expanded to days, in 1920. At the same time, she apparently worked with the ballet of the Washington Opera Company, training dancers and performing several dance solos in the company's performances of "Aida" at Poli's Theatre in December 1920.[12] *The Washington Post* first acknowledged the existence of "The Marjorie Webster School" in a sports article on January 22, 1922. In the previous evening's basketball game in the Eastern High School gymnasium, the "Webster Sextet" had crushed the "Veterans Bureau Girls", unbeaten for three years. In August, the *Post* featured a photo of the Webster School's dancing class performing in Grecian costumes on "the speedway" near the Washington Monument.[13] By Christmas, "The Marjorie Webster School of Expression and Physical Education", located at 1415 Massachusetts Avenue NW, was regularly advertising in the *Washington Post*.

At the beginning, the Marjorie Webster School's ran small advertisements with type almost as small as a baseball box score, offering a two-year normal course providing diplomas and degrees, as well as a one year "professional course". The ads offered day and night classes, as well as a "children's program".[14] The year 1924 proved to be a breakthrough year for the new school, whose athletic contests and other activities were frequently reported in the local press. After an up-and-down 1923 season, the basketball team became a powerhouse.[15] During the spring and summer, local press reported on the school's teams in swimming and field hockey, as well as a sport called soccer, which was apparently so unique that Webster players could only scrimmage among themselves.[16] On December 7, 1924, Dorothy E. Greene's "The Sportswoman" column in the *Washington Post* reported that the Marjorie Webster School would clash with much larger George Washington University in the newly-popular sport of field hockey. Marjorie Webster was again classed with the area's large four-year universities in Ms. Greene's year-end column, when she commended Marjorie Webster, George Washington University, and Wilson Normal for having "exceptional" basketball teams.[17]

In November, Marjorie Webster became the president of the D.C. General Women's Athletic Conference, an organization which sought to organize a citywide woman's basketball league and championship.[18] The Conference included school and church teams, as well as athletic club, company, and organization-sponsored teams apparently composed of adult, employed women, such as the Walter Reed nurses. While the School of Expression was not as highly publicized as the Physical Education Department, it, too, was highly active. Reflecting the political news of the day, its dancers performed a satiric "Teapot Dome Ballet" at the Belasco Theatre.[19]

Marjorie Webster's own activities also drew attention to the school. On August, just three years after the first commercial radio station had taken to the airwaves, Ms. Webster broadcast a program of humorous monologues on WRC.[20] One of

---

[9] Ibid.
[10] *The Washington Post*. "Denies Girls are Idle". December 19, 1919. P 9.
[11] *The Washington Post*. "Lie Passed In House in Plaza Hotels Tilt". April 4,1924 . P 2. Fiscal conservatives, generally from far-away rural states made numerous attempts to close the dormitories, which appear to gradually empty out as the twenties played out. Some appear to have still had residents as late as 1929. Today, there footprint is part of the green space between the Capitol and Union Station, as well as parking lots.
[12] *Washington Post*. "Music and Musicians". November 12, 1920. P. 33 and "Ladies First" (photograph). December 20, 1920. P. 81.
[13] *Washington Post*. Untitled Photograph. August 23, 1922. P. 18.
[14] See, for example, the small boxed advertisement in "Schools and Colleges" on page 12 of the September 2, 1923 *Washington Post*.
[15] *Washington Post*. "Marjorie Webster Turns in 60-22 Win". March 6, 1924. P. S1
[16] See the Washington Post articles "Girls Games Wanted" (March 21, 1924, p.S3), "Washington's Best Mermaids to Race" (April 9, 1924, p.S3), Untitled field Hockey photograph (December 8, 1923, p. 18. Dorothy E. Greene's "The Sportswoman" column in the Post frequently mentioned the successes and occasional failures of the Webster School teams and individual athletes.
[17] Dorothy Greene. "1924 Sees Increase In Sports For Girls" *Washington Post*. December 28, 1924. P. S2.
[18] *Washington Post*. "Women's Council Plans DC Basketball League" November 17, 1924. P. S2
[19] *Washington Post*. "Twentieth Century in Winter's Tale of Washington". May 11, 1924. P. A2.
[20] *Washington Post*. "Listening In" August 26, 1924. P. 14.

Ms. Webster's odder promotional activities involved displaying a blood-stained pillow which was reportedly under Abraham Lincoln's head at the time of his death. The pillow, which had been donated to the school by a Mrs. Wenzing, was given to the National Archives in the 1950s.[21] The Post reported that Ms. Webster held an alumnae banquet at the Willard Hotel, despite her school being just two years old.[22]

By September 1924, Marjorie Webster's tiny box advertisements had been replaced by display advertisements, which showed that the school now occupied the entire row of houses from 1401 through 1409 Massachusetts Avenue NW. However, the difference between these old and new ads was more than size. The advertising copy now stressed "preparation for a definite vocation in a two year accredited course, offering a diploma and a degree." Among the possible graduate occupations listed were "Physical Directors, Playground Supervisors, Public Speakers, Recreational Leaders, Chautauqua Readers, and Teachers of Dancing and Expression".[23]

The next three years built upon the successes of 1924. In 1925, the *Washington Post* printed portraits of the "feminine Babe Ruths" of the Marjorie Webster School baseball squad and announced that the school was seeking opponents.[24] The DC General Women's Athletic Conference successfully concluded its first season of play. That same year, an article announced that the Marjorie Webster School had acquired the adjacent Sunset Inn property with an auditorium suitable for classes in song-leading, platform reading, and drama.[25] The instructional staff expanded to eight women and one, man, who was in charge of song-leading instruction. Music instruction was augmented with the addition of Katherine Morgan, a professional musician who had studied widely in Europe and several prestigious conservatories.[26] In November, a production called "Marjorie Webster School Night" was staged at the Masonic Temple at 13th and New York Avenue.[27] In 1926, the school held an archery tournament on the mall that was covered by the press.[28] In September of that year, the Post reported that Marjorie Webster School would open its fall semester with the largest enrollment in its history.[29] In 1927, a third year "post-graduate course" was added to the curriculum. But that year saw the rise of a serious threat, which Ms. Webster met with characteristic boldness. It began with the announcement that the school's landlord, the Vermont Avenue Christian Church, would demolish the row houses the school occupied to build its new church.[30]

Building the Rock Creek Park Campus

Well into the 20th century, the area within the northern point of the diamond-shaped boundaries of the District of Columbia remained agricultural land or rural countryside which merged into the forested Rock Creek Park. The area was not a pristine wilderness, as sections had been under cultivation since the 18th century. The acreage that would become the Marjorie Webster School and Junior College was, during the mid-19th century, a working farm owned an operated by Philip Fenwick (see below). In 1919, Sixteenth Street NW remained unpaved above Montague Street NW. Between Military Road and the District Line, Kalmia Road NW was one of very few streets that ran west into Rock Creek Park from Fourteenth Street NW and its streetcar line. Otherwise, local streets, including the extension of Seventeenth Street, existed only as dotted lines on the map.[31] But, by 1926, the area's days as idyllic countryside were numbered.

In March, 1926, the Fine Arts Commission announced a plan to enhance the section of Sixteenth Street from Kalmia Road to the District line as a formal "portal" to the city. Traffic circles were to be built at the highest point on Sixteenth Street, as well as at the intersection of Eastern and Western Avenues at the District line, and roads built to connect them with both Rock Creek Park and Walter Reed Army Medical Center.[32] Less than six weeks later, the Washington Post reported on "Rock Creek Estates", a planned one hundred acre development just east of Sixteenth Street and centered around Kalmia Road NW.[33]

---

[21] *Washington Post*. "Camera News of the Day". February 12, 1926. P. 18.
[22] *Washington Post*. "Webster School Holds Alumnae Banquet". May2 9, 1924. P.9.
[23] See *Washington Post*. Untitled display advertisements September 7, 1924 (P. ES15) and January 18, 1925 (p. R4).
[24] *Washington Post*. Untitled photographs. April 12, 1924. P. 23.
[25] *Washington Post*. "Marjorie Webster School Is Enlarged". September 30, 1925. P. AF9.
[26] *Washington Post*. Elizabeth E. Poe. Untitled Music Column. September 6, 1929. P. S9.
[27] *Washington Post*. "Dancing to Feature Community Program". November 16, 1925. P.16.
[28] *Washington Post*. "Camera Views In The Day's News". December 2, 1926. P.24.
[29] *Washington Post*. "Webster School To Open". September 19, 1926. P. M24.
[30] *Washington Post*. "Marjorie Webster School Has Moved". August 19, 1928. P. ES9.
[31] George W. Baist Company. Baist's Real Estate Atlas Surveys of Washington, District of Columbia. (V. 3) (1919-1921). Philadelphia, PA. Locator Sheet and Plate 35.
[32] *Washington Post*. "Arts Commission Approves Plans for New Parkway". March 30, 1826. P. 10.
[33] *Washington Post*. "New Development Opened To Public By Briggs Concern". May 9, 1926. P. R8.

Rock Creek Estates was developed by Edson W. Briggs (1885-1962), later the developer of Locust Hill, White Flint, Congressional Plaza, and Alta Vista in Montgomery County.[34] Rock Creek Estates, Briggs' first large-scale development, was presented in the local press as a suburban subdivision where the developer was "resolved to preserve...not only the trees, but the brooks, hills, and dales throughout the property", and had worked out" a plan of curving driveways along the streams and following the natural contours."[35] The *Post* reported that the Briggs Company had to approve all house designs, and that, "to further promote and safeguard the attractiveness and desirability of the neighborhood", cryptically-described "necessary protective restrictions have been imposed".[36]

The first building in the new development was "The Lodge," a sales office resembling a rural cottage that the Briggs Company erected at 1702 Kalmia Road in June 1926.[37] As the grading of Sixteenth Street from Kalmia Road to the District Line continued through the summer of 1927,[38] the Briggs Company ran an elaborate series of advertisements in the *Washington Post*, which fancifully presented Rock Creek Estates as the Arcadian refuge pictured in the dreams of wandering Bedouins and buccaneers.[39] Perhaps as a reward, the *Post* ran a feature article on an elaborately-landscaped Porter and Lockey-designed "English-Georgian" mansion at 7800 Orchid Street, and described "elaborately-landscaped" 10 room, 4 bath stone houses at 1673 Myrtle and 1701 Kalmia as "reflect[ing] the ideals of the development".[40]

Although Briggs Company officials stated that lots were 35% sold within the first years, building on the lots progressed slowly. Only a handful of permits were issued in 1926, including one for a Briggs-built stone and stucco house at 7760 Sixteenth Street, and less than ten permits were issued in 1927.[41] So, at the point that Marjorie Webster was looking for a campus, the opportunity to sell a six-acre plot may have seemed like an excellent opportunity to the Briggs firm.

The Philip Fenwick Farm

The development of the square in which Marjorie Webster relocated her school presents a microcosm of the development of this area. Before its development as a residential subdivision, the area had been part of the "old Fenwick Farm." According to the 1855 Assessment Records for Washington County, District of Columbia, Philip Fenwick was owner of 145 acres, six slaves (named and valued in the assessments), eight cows, four horses and carts and wagon. His total property, including land, improvements, slaves, animals, and furniture was valued at $9,555.00.[42] With 145 acres and seven slaves, Fenwick, who had been born in the county in 1790 before the establishment of the federal city, was in the upper socio-economic strata of Washington County. Philip Fenwick died in 1863 before the end of the Civil War, but not before he was required by D.C. Emancipation Law to free all of his slaves. As indicated by the 1861 Boscke Map, the Fenwick Farm consisted of a sizeable clustering of buildings, most likely including the still extant springhouse on the property. Following Fenwick's death, his land largely remained in the hands of his daughter, Mary Van Riswick and her husband John Van Riswick who continued to farm the land while living in the city. During the early to mid-20th century, as the city expanded beyond its original borders, the former farmland became ripe for suburban residential development. By 1919, the "old Fenwick Farm" had been subdivided into squares, with the future campus site designated as Square 2745, stretching east of Sixteenth Street and as far west as the edge of Rock Creek Park. By the late 1920s, Square 2745 was further divided, with the Webster campus site situated in newly-designated Square 2745F, bounded by Kalmia Road, Sixteenth Street, and the newly-cut through Jonquil and extension of Seventeenth Street.[43] Other than the spring house which managed to survive demolition, the square remained devoid of any other buildings until the Briggs Company constructed 7760 Sixteenth Street in 1926.

Marjorie Webster School

On April 1, 1928, the local press announced the school construction project beneath an architectural rendering suggesting a lushly landscaped Mediterranean palace. A *Post* headline proclaimed that "Marjorie Webster Classes Will Have the

---

[34] *Washington Post*. "E.W. Briggs, Real Estate Developer". February 2, 1962. P.B4.
[35] This last statement was perhaps an exaggeration, as the 1919-1921 Baist Atlas maps showed the major present day streets as dotted lines. However, the Briggs Company did add a few non-arterial lanes and perhaps had a few rights of way realigned.
[36] *Washington Post*. "New Development Opened To Public By Briggs Concern". May 9, 1926. P. R8.
[37] *Washington Post* . "Rock Creek Park Estates Protects Natural Beauties". May 8, 1927. P. R8 and "The Lodge is Realty Office". June 27, 1926. P. R3.
[38] *Washington Post*, "Developers Exhibit Model in Restricted Section". October 30, 1927. P. 51.
[39] See *Washington Post* of June 6, 1926 (p. R5) for an example of the "Bedouin" themed advertisement and August 22, 1926 (p. R2)for an example of the "Buccaneer" themed advertisement
[40] *Washington Post*, "Developers Exhibit Model In Restricted Section". October 30, 1927. P. 51.
[41] District of Columbia Office of Planning. District of Columbia Building Permits Database. (cyber product)
[42] County of Washington Assessment Records, 1855-1864, National Archives, RG 351, Volume 1 of 12.
[43] George W. Baist Company. Real Estate Atlas Surveys of the District of Columbia.1927 edition. Philadelphia, PA(reviewed at Library of Congress map collection)

Handsomest Home of Kind Near Capital." Reporting that the building would be four stories tall and cost $450,000, the article described its "imposing Spanish monastic design, with mission tile roof and...tile and stucco finish". The landscape plan for the six-acre plot suggested the grounds of a great country estate, with "rolling terraces, shrubbery, and flowers...and an artificial lake for swimming...about one-half acre in size."

The *Post* described the building's interior, noting that the first floor was devoted to classrooms and faculty offices, as well as parlors and lounges. The second floor included dining rooms, dormitories, and a gymnasium, with the third floor devoted to another gymnasium and more dormitories. A "spacious roof garden" surmounted the building, and somewhere there was even room for a 30 by 70 foot indoor swimming pool. The projected completion date was October, 1928.[44]

Construction began during the last week of March under an excavation permit issued on March 26, with the building permit issued on April 6, 1928. Permit 7340 listed the school's address as 7753 Seventeenth Street NW.[45] The building's dimensions were given as 250 by 52 feet, its height as 3 stories, and its estimated cost as $180,000, the latter two figures representing significant reductions from the Post report. The foundation was concrete, with terra cotta tile walls, and a tile and slag roof. The permit, applied for on March 14, 1928, listed "The Marjorie Webster School of Expression and Physical Education" as owner, over the signature of Jessie F. Webster. The builder was the William R. Lipscomb Company

To meet the October deadline for starting the school year on the new campus, construction had to proceed rapidly. At the time of the first building inspector's report on April 9, 1928, trenching was partially done, and, by April 13, work had commenced on forms and footings for the foundation. By April 16, some footings were poured. During this phase of construction, the inspector expressed some concerns about the footings and soil, which were addressed by excavating to solid soil below the bed of the nearby creek.

Construction had begun with the western wing, but by June 5, workers were pouring a two inch concrete floor and laying brick in the northeastern wing. By June 12th, the northeastern wing steel roof trusses were up and its second story was being framed. The city inspectors estimated that construction was 30% complete. A July 26 inspection report noted that "purlins at either side of the roof trusses at either end of the auditorium are too short ...have been pieced out unsatisfactorily", resulting in not enough bearing surface on the wall." Less than a week after this situation was corrected, inspectors ordered that the tiles be filled with concrete under the supports for the roof trusses. By August 18, steel work was complete.

By August 23, workers were trimming out the western wing and putting the roof on the northeastern wing, with construction reported 80% complete. On August 31, the concrete floor of the gymnasium was being laid, and by September 12, the northeasern wing was being plastered.

On August 19, the *Post* reported that the Webster School's move was indeed on track for classes to start at the new location by October 1.[46] On the first day of October, the inspector's report found the building 98% complete, with trimming still going on. The October 12 report found workers "still finishing odds and end's" but on October 16, the building was noted to be 100% complete, with a completion certificate issued on October 20. The job had taken just 6 months and 2 weeks from the issuance of the building permit.

The permit for Ms. Webster's house was issued on September 5, 1928, as the school building approached completion.[47] Although the permit bears the notation "not as big as planned", it was still a substantial two story brick and tile house, originally estimated to cost $25,000 in an era when a typical row house cost less than $10,000. The house was erected by a residential contractor, Carl R. Markham.

Colonel P.M. Anderson – Architect of the Marjorie Webster School Campus

Colonel Peter Melvin Anderson, who designed the original Marjorie Webster campus buildings, also made major architectural contributions to the American University campus and was noted as a consulting engineer. Born in 1884, he graduated from the University of Wisconsin in mechanical engineering and embarked on an army career.[48] During World

[44] *Washington Post*. "Marjorie Webster School Now Being Constructed" April 1,1928. P, R1,
[45] District of Columbia Building Permit 7340, issued April 6, 1928. All references to details of the original construction of the school building are drawn from the inspectors' notes and other documentation associated with this permit on the microfilm records of the National Archives.
[46] *Washington Post*. "Marjorie Webster School Has Moved". August 19, 1928. P. ES9.
[47] District of Columbia Building Permit (September 5, 1928). All notes about this building's construction refer to this permit and associated notes on the National Archives microfilm copy of the permit.
[48] District of Columbia Office of Planning. Building Permits Database. (Architects Information)

War I, he became involved in an inter-service program that built several experimental concrete vessels.[49] He spent 1920-21 as a civilian War Department engineer before executing his first architectural commission in 1922.

Anderson's first building permit was for a bakery shop and garage on Georgia Avenue, and industrial and institutional buildings remained his career-long focus. His connection with American University began in 1925 with the design of a large dwelling on the campus, a women's dormitory that was the first student residence on campus, and a power plant[50]. After receiving his District of Columbia architect's license in December 1925, Anderson continued to design for American University, contributing the Battelle Library[51] and a gymnasium in 1926[52] and a men's dormitory in 1929-30[53].

Other than the Marjorie Webster main building, Colonel Anderson's most publicly-noted designs were never built. Approximately two weeks after the Post's enthusiastic appraisal of the Marjorie Webster building, the newspaper devoted an even larger article to Colonel Anderson's plan for the $3,500,000 campus of a Lutheran woman's college on a 189 acre tract just north of Silver Spring.[54] Plans for the college, slated to open in 1930, were apparently derailed by the economic developments of the next year. In April, 1929, Colonel Anderson made front page news with a rather prescient speech to the Board of Trade advocating the construction of a system of tubes to carry trains under the Potomac between the District and the airport planned for Gravely Point, Virginia. The tunnel, which would double as the foundation for a highway bridge connecting Washington Boulevard and downtown, was intended to replace the Potomac River railroad bridge and eliminate the possibility that smoke clouds from coal-burning engines would interfere with pilots' vision.[55]

With the onset of the depression, Colonel Anderson's career became focused on engineering. Other than the Metropolitan ME Church at Foxhall Road and Nebraska Avenue in 1932 and the handsome Gospel Mission at 810 Fifth Street NW in 1935, his architectural commissions were limited to a few nondescript warehouses, garages, and hospital buildings.[56] For a time, he worked for the Rural Electrification Agency in Virginia.[57] In the late 1930s he was sometimes in the news as a critic of New Deal public works projects. In 1937 he told a congressional committee that "expense was terrific and the waste about 99%" on the soil erosion control projects he had inspected on Navajo tribal lands. In 1938, he made a speech to the Board of Trade that sought to resurrect his bridge-tunnel plan.[58]

Colonel Anderson had one more final, publically-noted connection with the Webster School. In 1940, while returning from a dance at University of Maryland, his son drove off Wise Road NW and struck a tree, killing one Webster student and horribly injuring another.[59] Colonel Anderson died in January, 1942 aged 57, after an illness had limited his activity for two years.[60]

The Rock Creek Park Campus Years

Marjorie Webster's reasons for moving her school to a remote corner of the District are not documented, but this daring decision proved to be a shrewd, long-term business calculation. Although the new campus could be reached by streetcar from either Silver Spring or Washington, its key connection was by the newly paved route which made it accessible by automobile. The campus' estate-like atmosphere lent the school, which had been in existence for just eight years, a sense of tradition and refinement.

Indeed, proximity to the fine houses of Rock Creek Estates and the high style of the school's architecture were mutually reinforcing in terms of prestige. The 1928 *Washington Post* article had opined that the opening of the Webster campus would have a major impact on the development of that area of Washington. An article from the *National Real Estate Journal* reprinted in the *Post* during April 1931 approvingly described the development as an "exclusive, carefully-restricted community of high grade homes" which included "the Marjorie Webster School for girls" which had invested $160,000 in its site and spent $250,000 on improvements.

---

[49] *Washington Post*. "Col. Anderson, DC Resident 25 Years, Dies". January 11, 1942. P.13.
[50] *Washington Post*. "Guild of American U to Mark Anniversary" (November 15, 1925. P. F12) describes the dormitory. Additional projects are listed in the District of Columbia Office of Planning Building Permits Database.
[51] *Washington Post*. "Battele Memorial Library Dedicated". December 8, 1926. P, 4.
[52] *Washington Post*. "American U. Names Groups to Effect Cooperative Work" December 19, 1926. P. F13.
[53] *Washington Post* "Appointed Architect for American University". February 7, 1929. P.5.
[54] *Washington Post*. "Site of $3,500,000 Lutheran College Near Silver Spring". April 15, 1928. P.R3.
[55] *Washington Post*. "Dream of Tube, New Bridge on Potomac Told". April 24, 1929. P. 1.
[56] District of Columbia Office of Planning. Building Permits Database.
[57] *Washington Post*. "Col. Anderson Quits". July 13, 1938. P.15.
[58] *Washington Post*. "Board of Trade Is Given Plan To Junk 2 Bridges". April 12, 1938. P X2
[59] *Washington Post*. "7 Killed in District Area Crashes". December 1, 1940. P. 1.
[60] *Washington Post*. "Col. Anderson, DC Resident 25 Years, Dies". January 11, 1942. P.13.

The location also elevated the school's stature by providing a college-style campus, in contrast to the rented spaces in downtown office buildings common to business or "night" schools. The move also suggested a shift in emphasis from part-time students attending individual classes to full-time boarding students, and an increasing educational seriousness and formality. Also, although the school continued to compete in a variety of sports, news reports about its academic programs became as common as items about its sports teams.

Not just the school's location was new. Marjorie Webster quickly embraced the new technology of mass communications, and grasped the modern concept of marketing synergy. Recognizing the power of radio to publicize the school as well as the potential demand for instruction in the skills it demanded, she had arranged the school glee club to broadcast on WMAL on February 15, 1928.[61] Within a few months, the glee club was appearing on radio for an hour each week, and performed on special programs such as a widely-hear newspaper reporters-versus-congressmen spelling bee in 1930.[62] Within a few years, the school also set up a laboratory radio studio and began offering instruction in radio broadcasting performance skills.

Surviving the Depression

The coming of the Depression, just a year after the opening of the new campus, limited both the number of students who could afford tuition and the availability of jobs for graduates. However, Marjorie Webster responded to this threat with characteristic boldness by expanding rather than contracting the school's program. In 1930, the Webster School moved closer to the college model by beginning a liberal arts program. Saturday classes were also offered, along with swimming lessons and pool use.[63] Advertisements were written in language that always stressed "the beautiful natural setting in which the school is placed."[64] In 1931, the school added a special program in play production and public speaking for schoolteachers.[65] It also promoted this same program to business persons eager to enhance their presentation skills.[66] Also, the *Post* reported that the School of Physical Education had hired an alumna of the Bertram School of Copenhagen to teach a special course in Danish gymnastics.[67]

In 1932, as the depression deepened, the Webster School resumed its downtown classes in speech, play production, radio announcing, and platform reading. For the first time since the move, the School for Secretaries and the School of Physical Education resumed night school classes, which were held at the Rock Creek campus.[68] Day students were offered transportation from downtown, while employed women were eligible to board while taking evening classes.[69] A fourth year course was added to the Schools of Speech and Physical Education, and offerings on the campus were also expanded by the addition of a demonstration radio studio.[70] That same year, the school opened a new library donated by the family of Carolyn Cole, a student killed in an automobile accident.[71]

The attractiveness of the sylvan campus was an asset that the school used as a site for conferences and events, with the added benefit of generating newspaper publicity and bringing the public onto the campus. Beginning in the 1930s, the Webster School operated a summer day and sleep-away camp for children.[72] The Baltimore Presbyterian Synod met in campus amphitheater during the summer of 1932 and participants reportedly enjoyed refreshing swims in the pool. [73] The school hosted evening concerts, like a 1933 performance by baritone Howard Moore.[74]

In 1932, Ms. Webster announced the dramatic step of renaming her school "The Marjorie Webster Junior College," to be effective in 1933. This step was taken in recognition of the school's tripartite functions of qualifying students to continue in a four year liberal arts college, providing instruction to students specializing in one of the school's "professional" fields of physical education, speech, or secretarial science, or a "terminal education" in business, school office administration, leadership, community recreation, music, camping, newspaper work, commercial art production techniques, radio

---

[61] *Washington Post*. "Maine Memorial Rights Going on Air Tonight" February 15, 1928. P,16..
[62] Heinl, Robert. "Off the Antenna". Washington Post. April 6, 1930. p. A3.
[63] *Washington Post*. "Intensive Study of Drama Given" and display advertisement. September 14, 1930. P. SP8t
[64] *Washington Evening Star*. "Miss Webster Has Saturday Classes Also". September 12, 1937.
[65] *Washington Daily News*. "Marjorie Webster School Will Offer Courses in Speech". August 31, 1931.
[66] *Washington Post*. "Voices Are Trained At Webster School". September 18, 1932.
[67] *Washington Post*. "School Will Teach Danish Folk Dance". September 13, 1931. P. R1.
[68] *Washington Herald*. "Night Classes for Webster". August 28, 1932.
[69] *Washington Post*. "Evening Classes Will Be Resumed" September 18,1932. P. S8.
[70] *Washington Post*. "Memorial Library Founded in Marjorie Webster school". August 21, 1932. P.s5.
[71] *Washington Post*. "School Announces Fourth Year Course". January 24, 1932, P. S7.
[72] *Washington Post*. See classified advertisement. June 13, 1936. p.22 and "Webster-Neal Camp" June 19, 1949 p. I-5, as examples. Ruby Neal, the first boarding student at the Webster School in the early 1920s, was long the school's director of physical education.
[73] *Washington Post*. Training School of Synod Will Have Notable Faculty" June 11, 1932 p.11
[74] Baker, Morgan. "The Federal Diary". Washington Post. November 26, 1933. p.4.

techniques, and social arts. Ms. Webster announced that the school would begin to issue Bachelor of Arts degrees, but this plan was never realized.[75]

The 1930s were a time of personal success and recognition for Marjorie Webster, even as she struggled to keep her school afloat. At the time she had founded the school in 1920, she was not a college graduate, but subsequently received a bachelor's degree from George Washington University. In the mid-1930s, she received her Master's Degree from American University. She also published poetry in an anthology in 1937, following up on a volume of verse titled *My Girls,* which had appeared in 1928, followed by the instruction book *Clog and Character Dancing* in 1929.[76]

But perhaps Ms. Webster's most significant accomplishments were the offices to which she was elected in women's business, professional, and civic organizations. These organizations were not simply social clubs. In an era when women were excluded from playing an active role in most business groups and political circles, they were an important forum for women to make their voices heard. Ms. Webster continued to leadership role in women's athletic organizations, such as the Physical Education Association of the District of Columbia, which she served as vice-president in 1931. In addition, Ms. Webster was elected president of the Washington Soroptimist Club in 1934.[77] By 1935, Ms. Webster was a significant enough local figure for the Post to publish several articles about a European trip she took with her mother.

By 1936, she had become active in the Women's City Club, a civic organization, and in 1938 was elected its president.[78] On January 22, 1939, Ms. Webster presided at a meeting of the club attended by Eleanor Roosevelt, who made a speech to its members.[79] Illustration 10 shows a newspaper photograph of Ms. Roosevelt with Ms. Webster. The school campus played an adjunct role in these organizations, as its campus was frequently the site of their meetings, fairs, and other events. By 1935, Ms. Webster was a significant enough local figure for the Post to publish several articles about a European trip she took with her mother.[80]

The Marjorie Webster Junior College survived hard times by innovating and diversifying to meet women's students' needs. In 1934, it graduated just 29 students,[81] but, as the depression began to subside, it boasted an enrollment of 102 by 1938. In 1938, it offered four different courses of instruction, a school for secretaries, a school of fine and applied art, a school of physical education, and the junior college curriculum.[82] Among the Webster teaching staff were several former college instructors. Eventually it would include schools of fine and applied arts, kindergarten and nursery school administration, merchandising, and music.

Expansion

In the fall of 1929, the Webster School and 7760 16th Street, NW had gained their first neighbors in Square 2745F when J. E. Fox erected smaller brick and tile houses at 1601 and 1619 Jonquil Street, NW. Immediately thereafter, the Depression essentially froze residential building across the country, putting a stop to construction in Square 2745F for almost six years.[83] In 1931, the Briggs Company reported that a total of twenty-five houses had been sold in all of Rock Creek Park Estates, then in its fifth year of existence[84]. However, the developers did not alter their vision of creating an enclave of expensive homes in a sylvan setting. It was not until 1936-1938 that Square 2745F experienced a gentle wave of building, which included large houses by such locally known architects as Joseph H. Abell and George Santmyers.[85]

---

[75] *Washington Post*. "School Announces Fourth Year Course". January 24, 1932, P. S7
[76] *Washington Post*. "Capitol Clubwomen Have Poems Published". December 12, 193y. p. S8.
[77] *Washington Post*. "Marjorie Webster Is Elected Soroptimist President". December 16, 1934. P. MB4.
[78] *Washington Post*. "100 Attend First Meeting of Women's City Club Here" October 5, 1938. P. X19.
[79] *Washington Post*. "First Lady Honored". January 3, 1939. P. 2.
[80] *Washington Post*. "Mrs. Webster To Go Abroad". June 30, 1935. P. 15.
[81] *Washington Post*. "29 Are Graduated At Webster". June 3, 1934. P. 7
[82] *Washington Post*. "Marjorie Webster School Offers New Program". September 11, 1939. P. SE3
[83] District of Columbia Office of Planning. DC Building Permits Database. (Buildings By Square Listing)
[84] In late 1930, the Briggs Company had focused its advertising on Colonial Village, a northwest tract adjacent to Rock Creek Park Estates which fronted on Beach Drive. Colonial Village had approximately 100 lots on which "only dwellings that are architecturally representative of the period of the thirteen colonies" were permitted (Washington Post, November 28, 1930, p.9 and April 5, 1931, p.R1). In Colonial Village advertising illustrations, bandanna-wearing buccaneers burying treasure chests were replaced by gentleman bowing to ladies in hoop skirts, but articles described the development as an "exclusive, carefully restricted community of high grade homes" in much the same language as had been used for Rock Creek Estates. Today, Colonial Village, which has given its name to the general area between 16th Street and Rock Creek Park on many local street maps, is a racially diverse community of upscale homes, but, among the "careful restrictions" and "sturdy traditions" of the development in the 1930s were the exclusion of African-Americans and Jews. (Paul Valentine. "Colonial Village: DC's Hidden Enclave", in Washington Post, April 30, 1988, p. E1)
[85] District of Columbia Office of Planning. Building Permit database. (Permit By Square Listing)

By 1938, Marjorie Webster Junior College was recovering with the real estate market. On September 18, 1939, Marjorie Webster's application to build a 46,000 square-foot, two story, seventeen room, brick, concrete, and tile addition to the school was submitted to the Commission of Fine Arts. After the Commission's approval, she received a permit to build the addition, at an estimated cost of $35,000. As the Evening Star noted, the addition was necessary because:

> Marjorie Webster has kept abreast of the times-with its rapid changes and demands of modern young women- by gradual addition of schools offering interesting courses of study as well as profitable professions to its graduates.[86]

The addition, essentially a south wing, was constructed by the firm of E. A. Pessagno. Irwin D. Matthew (1903-1993) was credited as the addition's "designer" (Matthew was apparently not licensed as an architect in the District of Columbia). A native of Canada and a Virginia resident, Matthew had an office at 7th Street and Constitution Avenue NW from 1937 at least through the issuance of the Webster School permit. He was not thereafter listed in local directories except in 1946-47, when he maintained an architectural office at 201 South Washington Street in Old Town Alexandria.[87] Although Matthew's D.C. career was brief, he is known for his design of "Stanton Road" in Cohasset, Massachusetts, a neighborhood of historicist-style houses he developed and largely designed during the early 1950s.[88]

Building the new wing was complicated by the sloped and terraced contours of the campus. On October 15, 1939, inspectors noted that a shovel was working to excavate footings, but as late as mid-November; the site was still not ready for steel. There was then an apparent problem in obtaining the steel beams required which apparently delayed erection of the structure for several weeks. On December 11, the inspector noted that bolting some joists would be required rather than riveting, but by December 19, the second floor was erected with satisfactory welds. On January 15, 1940, the inspector pronounced the structural steelwork complete. By January 27, roofing was well underway and the structure was pronounced 70% complete. By early February, brickwork was in progress. March was devoted to plastering and grading around the structure, which was pronounced 99% complete on April 22, 1940. The most substantial part of the construction had taken five months, as compared to six and one-half months to erect the entire main building in 1928.

At the same time the new wing was being constructed, extensive modifications were made to existing interior spaces. Following a design by Matthew, the Passagno Company transformed portions of the dining area into dormitory rooms, and installed an elevator[89]

The new wing was dedicated on February 24, 1940, just in time to accommodate the first mid-year entry students in the school's history. This new admissions policy addressed the needs of the women who chose to attend Webster to learn a marketable skill, for, as the Evening Star advised, "A young woman who knows the professional interest she wishes to follow is wise to pursue her educational convictions now!"[90]

Wartime And Beyond

World War II had a significant effect on the employment of women. The number of employed women grew from 14 million in 1940 to 19 million in 1945, and women's share of the labor force increased from 26 to 36 percent.[91] Women became a highly-important part of the civilian workforce that supported military operations, assuming many of the occupational roles previously reserved for men. The increasing expectation that women would work outside the home made the type of educational programs offered by the Marjorie Webster Junior College even more necessary. Following Pearl Harbor, the Marjorie Webster School announced it was at capacity enrollment and expected its student body of approximately 128 students to represent every state in the union. By November, 1942, Marjorie Webster, the school's 15 faculty members, and all 135 students had joined the American Women's Voluntary Services. They marched in military formations in the gymnasium and on Beach Drive, drilled for an hour each day in Rock Creek Park, trained in map reading and first aid, and chauffeured visiting allied officers around Washington.[92] Every one of the school's 150 students contributed to the Red Cross War Relief Fund in 1944.[93]

---

[86] *Washington Evening Star*. "Marjorie Webster Schools Ready to Build New Unit". September 1, 1939.
[87] District of Columbia Office of Planning. Building Permits Database. (Architect Information)
[88] Ibid.
[89] Department of Labor, Women's' Bureau. "Women War Workers in Ten War Production Areas and Their Postwar Employment Plans". (Bulletin 209), U.S. Government Printing Office. Washington, DC. Excerpted online at "History Matters". (http://www.historymatters.gmu.edu)
[90] Washington Evening Star. "Marjorie Webster Announces the First February Class in Its History". January 21, 1940.
[91] "Women War Workers in Ten War Production Areas". Excerpted online at "History Matters". (http://www.historymatters.gmu.edu)
[92] *Washington Post*. "Marjorie Webster Joins the AWVS". November 27, 1942. P.14.
[93] *Washington Post*. "Webster Students Give 100 Percent to Red Cross". March 18, 1944. P. 5.

Full-time enrollment appears to have grown 50% over the previous five years, so it is not surprising that the school needed to expand again in 1944. At one point, the school received temporary permission to use 1623 Jonquil, one of the houses erected by J.E. Fox in 1929, as student rooming house. Although the war had put building materials in extremely short supply, on December 8, 1943, Marjorie Webster filed an application with the Commission of Fine Arts to build a one story brick and cinderblock addition to the main building. With the Commission's approval, the District of Columbia issued a permit for the four room addition on December 13, 1943, at an estimated cost of $7,000. By March 21, 1944, inspectors pronounced the addition 90% complete.

The 1943 addition was much less extensive than the 1939 new wing, but is noteworthy, since it is the design work of African American architect Romulus Cornelius Archer, Jr., known professionally by the initials "R.C." Born in Norfolk, Virginia on March 11, 1890, Archer was the son of a plastering and building contractor. He attended Norfolk Mission College from 1908 until 1910. While working as a carpenter, he studied architecture through the International Correspondence School of Scranton, Pennsylvania. Although his obituary reported that he attended New York University, Archer's entry in *African-American Architects: A Biographical Dictionary* states that he studied at Columbia University in 1913.[94]

By 1917, Archer listed his occupation as architect.[95] After serving in World War I, Archer worked in Norfolk as a self-employed civil engineer and architect.[96] In 1921 he moved to Washington, DC to become one of two black architects in the Office of the Supervising Architect, United States Treasury. After his Treasury Department appointment, which lasted only from June 1 through November 15, 1921, Archer opened a solo practice, designing churches and church-related structures in both Virginia and Washington.[97] On January 15, 1926, Archer received District of Columbia Architect License 117 as the city's second African-American registered architect, the first having been John A. Lankford.[98] At this time he was one of about sixty African-American licensed architects in the United States.[99]

The grim 1930's marked the beginning of the most active phase of Archer's four-decade career, with commissions for a wide variety of residences, storefronts, and additions. Among his most notable works were eleven red brick Georgian-style homes in Brookland he designed for private clients during the late 1930s. After teaching drafting for the government during World War II, he began to receive larger commissions, including churches, a five-story, forty-room addition to a hotel, one of the District's first motels, and the widely-beloved Yenching Palace Restaurant exterior on Connecticut Avenue NW.[100] In 1955, Archer's work on a house at 1027 Cecil Place NW won the Residential Remodeling Certificate of Merit at the Washington Board of Trade's Biennial Architectural Competition, whose judges included Charles M. Goodwin and Eero Saarinen.[101] Four years before his death on November 29, 1968, he received a YMCA award as "Citizen of the Year", in part for his mentorship of young African-American architects.[102]

R.C. Archer practiced between two cohorts of Washington's African-American architects. About fifteen years younger than John Lankford and Sidney Pittman, he was nonetheless a pioneer who faced many of the same professional and social barriers. A decade older than architects like Hilyard Robinson who won major New Deal era commissions, Archer had long been ensconced in designing smaller structures at the time when large public works projects became available to African-American architects.[103] Like many other African-American designers, Archer was forced to subsist on commissions for

---

[94] Biographical information on Romulus Cornelius Archer is drawn from Wilson, Dreck Spurlock. African-American Architects: A Biographical Dictionary. Taylor & Francis 2007. p. 12-14., unless otherwise noted
[95] See Norfolk Virginia Draft Card 787, Number 1945, June 15, 1917.
[96] Page 7B of Enumeration District 121, Norfolk, Virginia (City), Fourteenth Census of the United States – 1920.
[97] Among these was Saint Paul AUMP Church at 401 I Street SE, currently a nominee to the DC Inventory of Historic Sites.
[98] There has long been argument about whether Calvin Brent should be considered the first African-American architect in the District of Columbia. Although Brent passed the draftsman's civil service examination, the qualification system was vastly different in his era. See the exchange of letters to the editor of the *Washington Post* from John H. Paynter (October 10, 1909 --p. 12) and William Jennifer (October 15, 1909 – p.5) for a very early airing of this dispute.
[99] Craven, Jackie. Online at http://architecture.about.com/od/greatarchitects/tp/blackarchitects.htm.
[100] District of Columbia Office of Planning. Building Permits Database. (Architect Permit Listing)
[101] "Trade Board Cites Outstanding Area Architecture". *Washington Post*. May 15, 1955. p. G1
[102] "Today's Events". *Washington Post*. April 17, 1964. p. D12.
[103] As Wolf von Eckhardt has written, "it was not until the New Deal that the federal government gave black design professionals a real opportunity" to design large-scale projects. That is certainly not to say that African-Americans did not create significant buildings before that time. Washington's earliest major building credited to an African-American designer is the 1877 St. Luke's Church by Calvin Brent, who also designed the Mount Jezreel Baptist Church on Capitol Hill in 1883. John A. Lankford, who became the city's first African-American registered architect in 1925, designed the True Reformers Building in 1902. Sidney Pittman, reportedly the first African-American architect to have plans accepted by the federal government, designed both the magnificent Garfield School (1908) at Alabama Avenue and Twenty-fifth Street SE and the Anthony Bowen YMCA (1910) in the Shaw neighborhood. However, these commissions were exceptional.

smaller projects, most of which were within the African-American community. The Marjorie Webster Junior College project was not among his most significant commissions and was not on the same scale as the 1939 addition. However, the execution of such a commission by an African-American architect at the time was a significant step forward.

The 1940s also saw Ms. Webster elected president of the Business and Professional Women's Club of the District of Columbia, which frequently met on the Webster campus. In 1948, she was a candidate for the national presidency of the group.[104]

The Postwar Years

By the late 1940s, enrollment was booming at the Webster campus. In 1949, Marjorie Webster Junior College had 220 students, more than any other local junior college besides the publically-funded Montgomery Junior College.[105] In May, 1948, when the dormitories were apparently bursting at the seams, the school's request to extend the "temporary" permit to house students at 1623 Jonquil was opposed by neighbors, who reportedly protested that "youthful swains who whiz up and down the street in jeeps and jalopies to visit the girls provide a traffic hazard for children."[106] In November, 1948, the school won permission from the Board of Zoning Adjustment to expand so long as all construction remained at least 200 feet from a property line.[107] This set the stage for the largest building project since the original campus construction.

In 1949, Marjorie Webster had freed her original home for other uses by moving to a "massive" Colonial Revival house at 1815 East Beach Drive.[108] On May 29, 1949, the *Washington Post* announced that the Marjorie Webster Junior College would build a three story-and-basement dormitory (present-day Parkside building) and in August, a permit was issued.[109] At almost the same time, Marjorie Webster announced plans for the school's first new building since the opening of the campus. The August 28, 1949 issue of the *Washington Post* reported the construction of a "$215,000 building" of "Spanish design", housing a theatre, science laboratory, radio and television studio, and living quarters for 68 students" on campus. The broadcast studio offered instruction in "radio station routine, microphone technique, use of recording equipment, and production methods...[with] all of the equipment and facilities of a regular studio". This building, later named Parkside, is currently undergoing major alteration.

The architects for the new building were the emerging firm of Corning and Moore. Edward Burton Corning and Raymond G. Moore were both born in Washington in 1889. Moore attended the YMCA School of Drafting from 1908 to 1910, and then began two years of night school at George Washington University, which Corning entered in 1912.

The early years of Corning's career are obscure, but by 1920 he had joined the firm of Washington architectural lion Arthur B. Heaton, rising to partner before his departure for private practice in 1932. Moore's career was even more circuitous. The city directory lists him as a student in 1927 and as a carpenter in 1928. In 1930, he joined Heaton's firm as an architect, then served as a draftsman from 1931 until 1935. After a year on his own, he returned to the Heaton firm as an architect and remained there until the founding of Corning and Moore in 1945.[110]

Corning and Moore was a prolific firm which tapped into the postwar building boom and rode the wave of suburbanization. After receiving initial commissions for modest houses and small industrial buildings, the firm quickly began to specialize in garden apartment complexes, often constructed in outlying areas along the Georgia Avenue corridor and in far southeast Anacostia.[111] Corning and Moore were plainly branching out at the time they took on the Marjorie Webster commission. A college dormitory was a new departure, as was the upscale housing develop the firm had just designed for Waggaman and Brawner in Chevy Chase DC.[112] But just two months before the dormitory permit was issued, the firm had received the permit for its breakthrough commission; the $4,000,000, nine-story luxury Berkshire Apartments at 4201 Massachusetts Avenue NW. Other large commissions in upscale neighborhoods followed quickly. Within a brief period, Corning & Moore designed the mildly modernist Greenbrier, the Calvert-Woodley, the 630-unit Brandywine on Connecticut Avenue[113], and the 452-unit 4000 Massachusetts apartment complex.[114] By the time Moore died in 1957, the firm's portfolio included the

[104] *Washington Post*, "Miss Webster to be Nominated for BPW Head". July 2, 1948. P. C2
[105] *Washington Post*. "Area Colleges Show Enrollment Gains". December 12, 1948. P. M21.
[106] *Washington Post*. "More Than 60 Swarm District Building". March 25, 1948. P B1.
[107] *Washington Post*. "Zone Board Authorizes 4 Schools". November 25, 1948. p. 12.
[108] *Washington Evening Star*. "Bought By Marjorie Webster Junior College". March 27, 1949.
[109] *Washington Post*. "Dormitory to be Built at Marjorie Webster". May 25, 1949 and *Washington Post,* "New Building at Webster". August 28, 1949. P. I3.
[110] District of Columbia Office of Planning. Building Permits Database (architect information)
[111] District of Columbia Office of Planning. Building Permits (architect permit listing)
[112] Ibid
[113] *Washington Post*. "$4 Million Connecticut Avenue Apartment Started". November 2, 1952 p. R1.
[114] District of Columbia Office of Planning. Building Permits (architect permit listing)

B'nai B'rith National Headquarters at Scott Circle, major downtown office buildings at 1100 Connecticut Avenue and 1700 K Street NW, more apartment complexes in Virginia, the Chevy Chase Baptist Church, and the Maryland National Park and Planning Commission Headquarters in Silver Spring.[115] Directed by Moore, who survived Corning by ten years, the firm continued as Corning, Moore, Elmore, and Fischer, building apartment complexes like the Calvert House and office buildings across the city and in suburban locations like the redeveloping Rosslyn. A high-water mark occurred in the early 1960s, when the firm served as the local associate for Luigi Moretti on the construction of the Watergate.[116]

In 1950, Marjorie Webster Junior College advertisements presented a new view of the college under a romantic pen-and-ink sketch of the classroom building. Webster College now offered "transfer courses" and "Associate in Arts" degrees, as well as "career courses". The curriculum now included "liberal arts, fine and commercial art, merchandising, speech and dramatics" as well as old standbys "secretarial, physical education, kindergarten, and music".[117]

This program was apparently popular with prospective students. In 1952, educators confronted a national enrollment drop of 7% to 9%, ascribed to the low birthrate of the depression years, the graduation of World War II veterans, and the conflict in Korea. However, Marjorie Webster Junior College announced capacity enrollment.[118] By 1954, when 76 students graduated, enrollment was again exerting pressure on the campus.[119] During the fall semester, there was new conflict with neighbors after the college moved 16 students into the mansion-sized house at 1701 Kalmia Road NW without zoning approval. Although neighbors had apparently agreed with this informally as a temporary measure, they protested when the school sought to formalize the arrangement, because, in the words of one homeowner, "the girls tend to make a lot of noise and 'they get noisier in the spring'". The Board of Zoning Appeals refused the school's request, which would become moot with the opening of McNeal Hall the following spring [120], and ordered the house vacated immediately.[121] McNeal Hall was described as a new building, but was permitted as an addition. It included two classrooms, a nine bed infirmary, office space, and a faculty lounge, and was built with contributions from two alumnae.[122] Another addition was constructed in 1957.

The Space Age and the Sixties

Marjorie Webster Junior College remained a popular educational choice for the remainder of Marjorie Webster's life and beyond. According to the 1950 yearbook, enrollment was capped at 250, because Ms. Webster wished to have a personal acquaintance with each.[123]

As the 1950s progressed and she transitioned into her mid-sixties, Ms. Webster was frequently quoted as an expert on women's educational and employment needs. In 1958, a year that produced 97 graduates[124], Ms. Webster addressed representatives of eight women's business and professional organizations at the Mayflower Hotel on the topic of women in the "space age" of education and employment. To some in the audience, Ms. Webster's remarks may have begun to sound outdated. Although Ms. Webster acknowledged that "there are some restrictions on women's participation in some fields", she diagnosed "lack of ability to communicate easily with others" and "a negative approach" as the source of many limitations. [125]In May, 1962, the Marjorie Webster Junior College included a 40th reunion of its original graduating class as part of its annual homecoming.[126]

The last weeks of Marjorie Webster's life were wrapped in controversy. In early June 1963, the college was set to host the annual weekend book and art sale held by Neighbors, Incorporated, a northwest Washington civic association that promoted the maintenance of racially-integrated neighborhoods. Literally the day before the event, leaders of the organization were advised that a child had been excluded from the day camp held at the school on the basis of race. The fair, which drew such notable guests as Attorney General Robert Kennedy, was moved overnight to a public school. Afterwards, Neighbors, Incorporated leaders expressed surprise, noting that the school "had been most generous and hospitable in agreeing to act as host to what it knew to be an integrated affair". Marjorie Webster was described as travelling and not reachable for

[115] *Washington Post*. "Architect Corning Dies at 68". December 10, 1957. P. B2.
[116] Ibid.
[117] *Washington Post*. Advertisement. September 4, 1950. p. F4.
[118] Jeanne Rogers. "College Rolls Due To Drop About 10%". P. C6.
[119] *Washington Post*. "76 Graduate at Webster". May 26, 1954. P. 45.
[120] Richard Lyons. "Associations Win Zoning Approval". in Washington Post, December 16, 1954, P. 25.
[121] *Washington Evening Star*. "Zoners Terminate Dormitory Use". December 16, 1954.
[122] *Washington Post*. "College Lays Cornerstone". November 24, 1954. P. 23.
[123] Marjorie Webster Junior College Yearbook. Washington, DC. 1960.
[124] *Washington Post*. "Marjorie Webster College". June 3, 1958. P. B6
[125] *Washington Post*. "Women Need to Evaluate". October 13, 1958. P. B3.
[126] *Washington Post*. "Marjorie Webster Homecoming Today". June 5, 1962. P. A11.

comment.[127] Just two weeks later, she was dead at age 67 after what was termed "a long illness". In addition to local newspapers, obituaries ran in the New York Times and Chicago Tribune.

Marjorie Webster Junior College continued to prosper for some years after the death of its founder, who was succeeded as president by Dr. Martha Sager, a microbiologist.[128] Enrollment is said to have reached a peak in the mid-1960s. In the mid-sixties, the college built Fraser Hall, a large new dormitory, and, freed of its founder's requirement that she know each student personally, enrolled more than 500 students. But times were about to change suddenly.

During the 1960s, the publically-funded community college movement forced a re-examination of the junior college concept, resulting in increasingly formalized standards for curricula and faculty, and making accreditation by a national or regional academic body an important criterion for prospective students. During the mid-to-late 1960s, Marjorie Webster Junior College sought to become accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, which allowed only non-profit schools to be members. When the Middle States Association refused to consider Marjorie Webster for accreditation because it was a profit-making corporation , its directors, who were all members of the Webster family, sued the Association for restraint of trade and exercising inherently governmental functions.. After Marjorie Webster won at the District Court level, , the United States Court of Appeals reversed the decision in 1970.[129] This oft-quoted decision is frequently cited as "the Marjorie Webster decision.[130]

By 1971, the Webster Junior College's situation was untenable, as it lost $250,000 during the previous year. The lack of accreditation, as well as the rise of cheaper public community colleges, and the riots of 1968 had depressed enrollment from 550 in 1967 to 235 in 1970 to an estimated 120 for the fall 1971 semester. On August 13, 1971, the Post reported that the Webster campus had been sold to an educational research firm that planned to open a two, and possibly even a four year college.[131]

The few years that University Research Corporation owned the campus were wracked with controversy. Neighbors raised zoning objections to the firm's plan to bring a school for children with learning difficulties to the campus. Later, the owners rented the campus to a Massachusetts firm which operated a training program for drug counselors under a federal grant. After Neighbors, Incorporated and other civic associations complained, the Zoning Commission ruled that the drug treatment education program was not a use permitted under the college's zoning. Although the ruling was stayed by both the DC Court of Appeals and Chief Justice Warren Burger the Supreme Court Justice responsible for reviewing District of Columbia matters, it was ultimately upheld.[132] A few months later, the historically African-American Cortez Peters Business College, which had transferred its operations to the Webster campus, was forced to close after losing accreditation.[133]

The Webster campus remained unutilized after Cortez Peters' students left through 1976, when a proposal to relocate the International School of Law there drew new zoning controversy.[134] Later that year, it was purchased by the federal government and used to house the National Fire Prevention and Control Administration until 1983.[135] In that year, it became the Northwest campus of Gallaudet College, which was faced with expanded demands for the education of deaf students as the result of the Rubella epidemic 1963-1966.[136] Gallaudet, which renamed Fraser Hall "Schreiber Hall" after Frederick Schreiber, a founder of the DC Association of the Deaf (DCAD), conducted classes at the campus until 1995.

The campus is presently the home of the Lowell School, a private elementary institution. Lowell School is currently undertaking a renovation of the school property. The grounds, including the springhouse and a boardwalk over the stream, are being maintained as an outdoor education area; the former Fraser dormitory (non-contributing) is slated for demolition; and the former dormitory and classroom building known as Parkside is being renovated and enlarged. There are no plans for the main classroom building or the former Marjorie Webster House.

---

[127] Jean M. White. Washington Post. "Neighborhood Group Moves Festival Site" June 8, 1963. P. C2.
[128] Elizabeth Shelton. "She Sparks a Revolution at Marjorie Webster", in Washington Post. August 7, 1966. p. F3.
[129] Washington Post. School Loses Accreditation Bid". July 1, 1970. P. 47.
[130] James D. Koerner. "The Case of Marjorie Webster". "The Public Interest". (Number 20). July, 1970.
[131] Washington Post. "Webster College Is Sold". August 13, 1971. P. C1
[132] See Eugene L. Meyer. "Residents File Suit to Bar Drug Center: in Washington Post, May 11, 1972, p. M1, Judy Nicol. "Drug Unit Allowed to Operate" in Washington Post, August 21, 1972 P. A8 and Laurence Feinberg. "Drug Unit Ban Is Upheld", in Washington Post, September 16, 1973. P. B1..
[133] See Eugene L. Meyer. "Business College Gets a New Campus Home" October 16, 1973 p. C1 and "Accrediting Lost, School Near Closing", in Washington Post, December 12, 1973. P. B1..
[134] Jack Eisen, "Webster: A New Zoning Dispute" in Washington Post, May 20. 1976. P. DC5/
[135] Bruce Howard. "City Campus Proposed As Fire Academy Site" in Washington Post, July 6, 1976, p. C1..
[136] Nicholas McBride. "Gallaudet Gears Up" in Washington Post, March 16, 1983, P. DC1.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

____preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested
____previously listed in the National Register
____previously determined eligible by the National Register
____designated a National Historic Landmark
____recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #_____
____recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #_____

Primary location of additional data:

X State Historic Preservation Office
X Other State agency
____Federal agency
____Local government
____University
____Other

Name of repository: **Charles Sumner School Museum and Archives**

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Published Sources

D.C. Building Permits Database, online at Washingtoniana Room, Martin Luther King, Jr. Library, Washington, D.C.

Sanborn Maps. 1888-1970. Sanborn Library, LLC.

United States Federal Census (1850, 1900, 1910, 1920). U.S. Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C.

The Washington Post. 1877-Present

Boyer, Paul S., Clifford Clark, Sandra Hawley, Joseph F. Kett, and Andrew Rieser. *The Enduring Vision: A History of the American People*, Volume 2: From 1865, Cengage Learning, 2009. P. 451.

Rotella, Elyce, J. "Women's Labor Force Participation and the Growth of Clerical Employment in the United States, 1870-1930," *The Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 39, No. 1, The Tasks of Economic History (March 1979), pp. 331.

Rossiter, William S. *Increase of Population in the United States, 1910-1920* (Census Monograph 1). Government Printing Office. Washington, D.C., 1921.

Wilson, Dreck Spurlock. *African American Architects: A Biographical Dictionary*. Taylor & Francis. 2007.

"Women War Workers in Ten War Production Areas and their Postwar Employment Plans," *Bulletin 209*, U.S. Government Printing Office. Washington, D.C.

Williams, Kim. "Rural Remnants of Washin gton County: An Architectural Survey of Washington's Historic Farms and Estates," D.C. Historic Preservation Office, Office of Planning, 2013.

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 6.8 acres
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage)

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	18	323 463 E	4317047	3			
2				4			

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates
Datum if other than WGS84:_____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: **38.986064° N** Longitude: **77.0367° W**

Verbal Boundary Description (describe the boundaries of the property)

Park View School occupies Square 3033, Lot 830 (old lot 1-2, 5-10) in the District of Columbia.

Boundary Justification (explain why the boundaries were selected)

Park View School has occupied this lot and square since its original construction in 1916 and its expansion in 1931.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title D. Peter Sefton (researcher and writer)
organization D.C. Preservation League date 8/2010; updated 11/2013
street & number 401 F Street, NW telephone
city or town Washington state D.C. zip code 20010
e-mail

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.

  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 black and white 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: Marjorie Webster Junior College Historic District
City or Vicinity: Washington
County: N/A **State: DC**
Photographer: Kim Prothro Williams

Date Photographed: November 2013

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

1) General View of campus from Kalmia Road looking southeast to classroom building on hill with springhouse in foreground
1 of 24

2) View looking southwest showing classroom building, northwest elevation, and corner of former Fraser dormitory
2 of 24

3) View looking southwest showing northwest elevation of classroom building
3 of 24

4) View looking southwest sshowing detail of northwest elevation of the classroom building
4 of 24

5) View looking easterly showing main classroom building, northwest elevation
5 of 24

6) Detail of clock tower on main classroom building
6 of 24

7) Detail of central entry tower, main classroom building
7 of 24

8) Detail of central entry tower, main classroom building
8 of 24

9) Detail of clock tower looking northeast
9 of 24

10) Interior view showing entry corridor looking towards entry door
10 of 24

11) Interior, lower level recreation room with fireplace
11 of 24

12) Interior, gymnasium
12 of 24

13) Interior of main classroom building, detail of stair
13 of 24

14) Interior, swimming pool
14 of 24

15) View looking north from rooftop of main classroom building to Marjorie Webster House, now administrative building showing south and east elevations
15 of 24

16) View looking north at south elevation of Marjorie Webster house
16 of 24

17) View looking south showing north elevation of Marjorie Webster house
17 of 24

18) Interior of Marjorie Webster House showing entrance vestibule
18 of 24

19) Interior of Marjorie Webster House showing stair
19 of 24

20) Interior of Marjorie Webster House showing fireplace in front room to right of entrance
20 of 24

21) View looking north showing south and west walls of spring house
21 of 24

22) View looking north at former dormitory (Parkside), showing southern and western elevations
22 of 24

23) View looking northwest at Parkside buidling showing eastern elevation
23 of 24

24) View looking southeasterly at former dormitory (Fraser Hall)
24 of 24

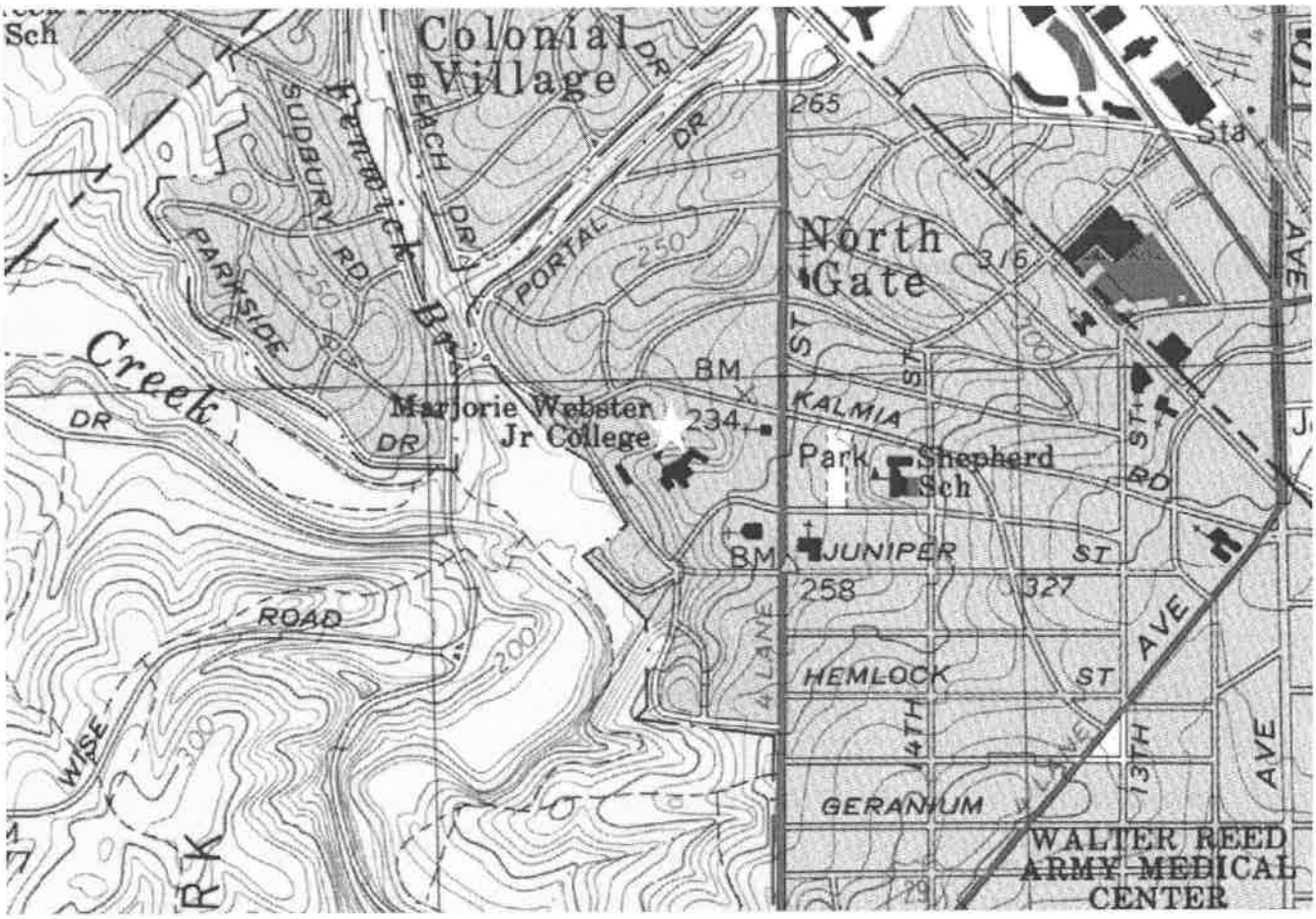
Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain 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. fo the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

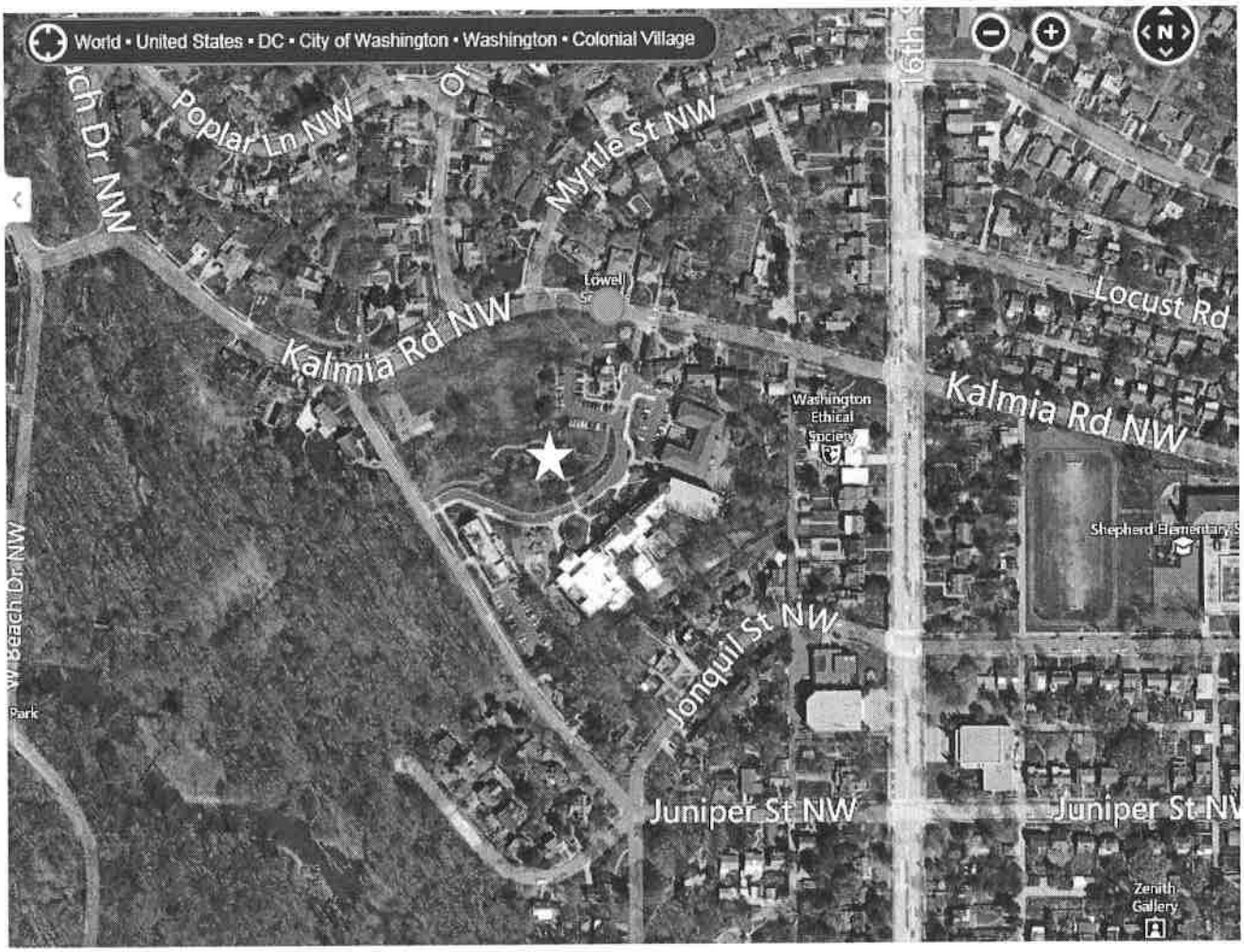
National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Marjorie Webster Junior College Historic District
Name of Property
Washington, D.C.
County and State
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

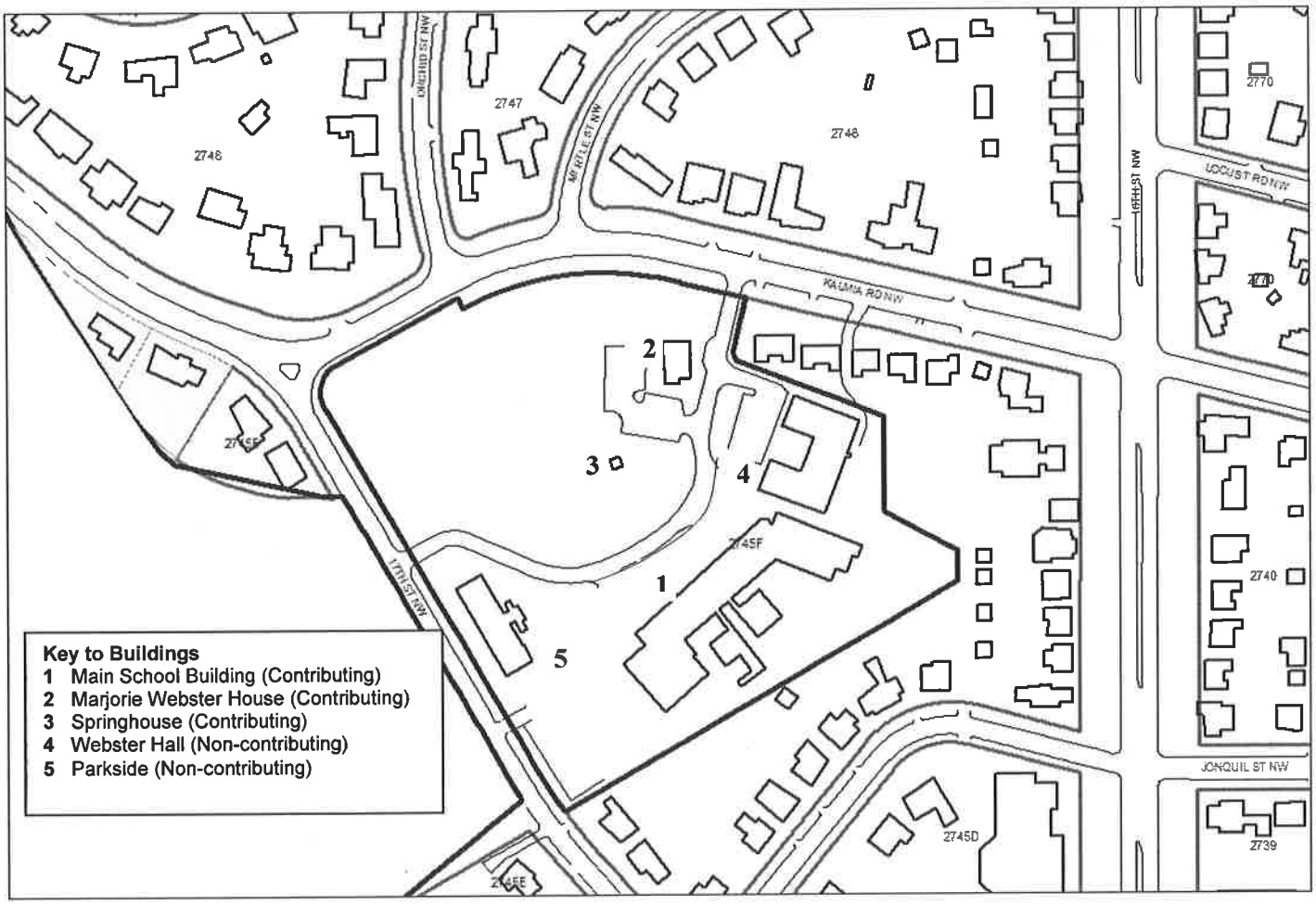
Section number Maps and Images Page 1



Marjorie Webster Junior College Historic District
Small Scale Map (USGS Quad-Washington West)
UTMS: 18 323 463 E and 4317047 N
LAT/LONG Coordinates: 38.986° N/77.0367° W

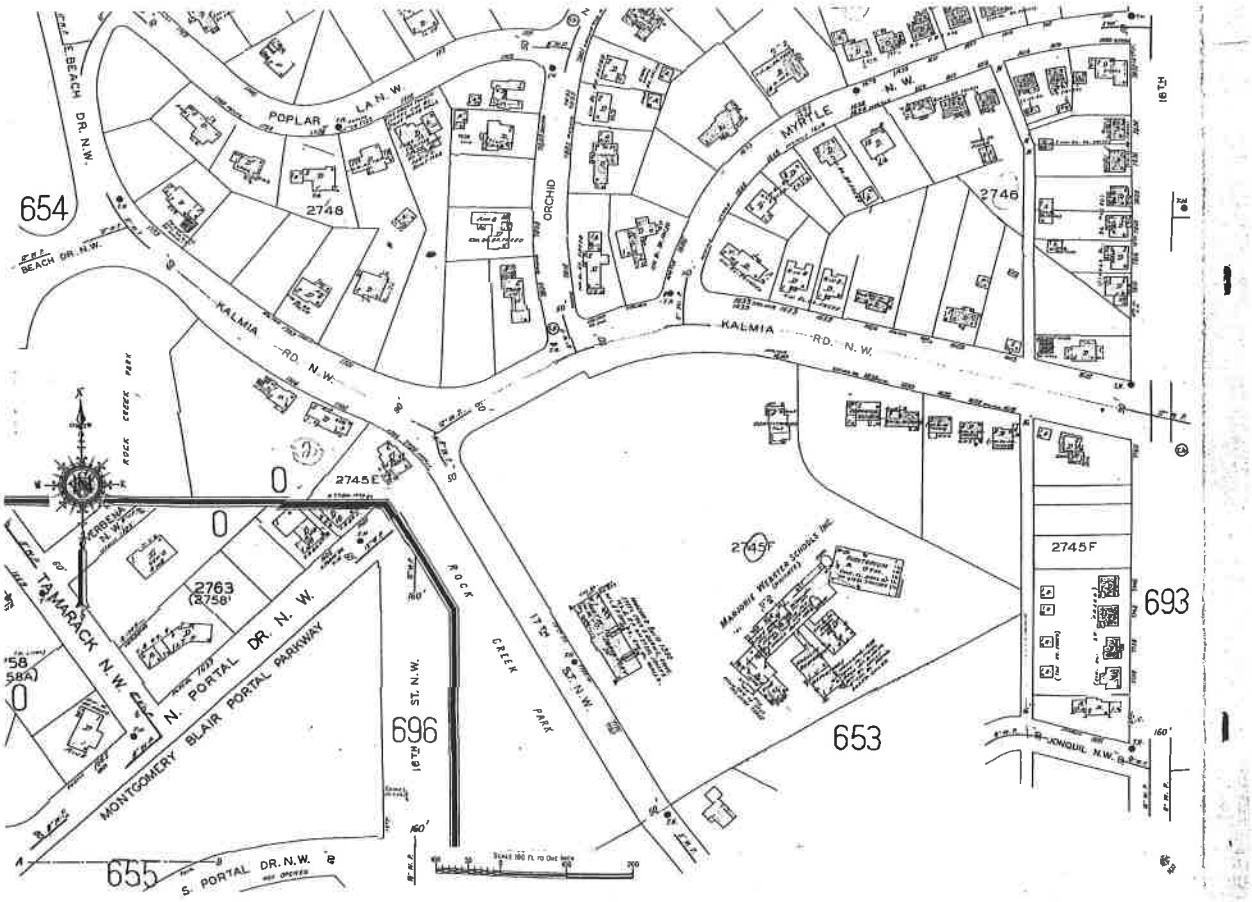


Marjorie Webster Junior College Historic District Aerial View
(Bing Maps)



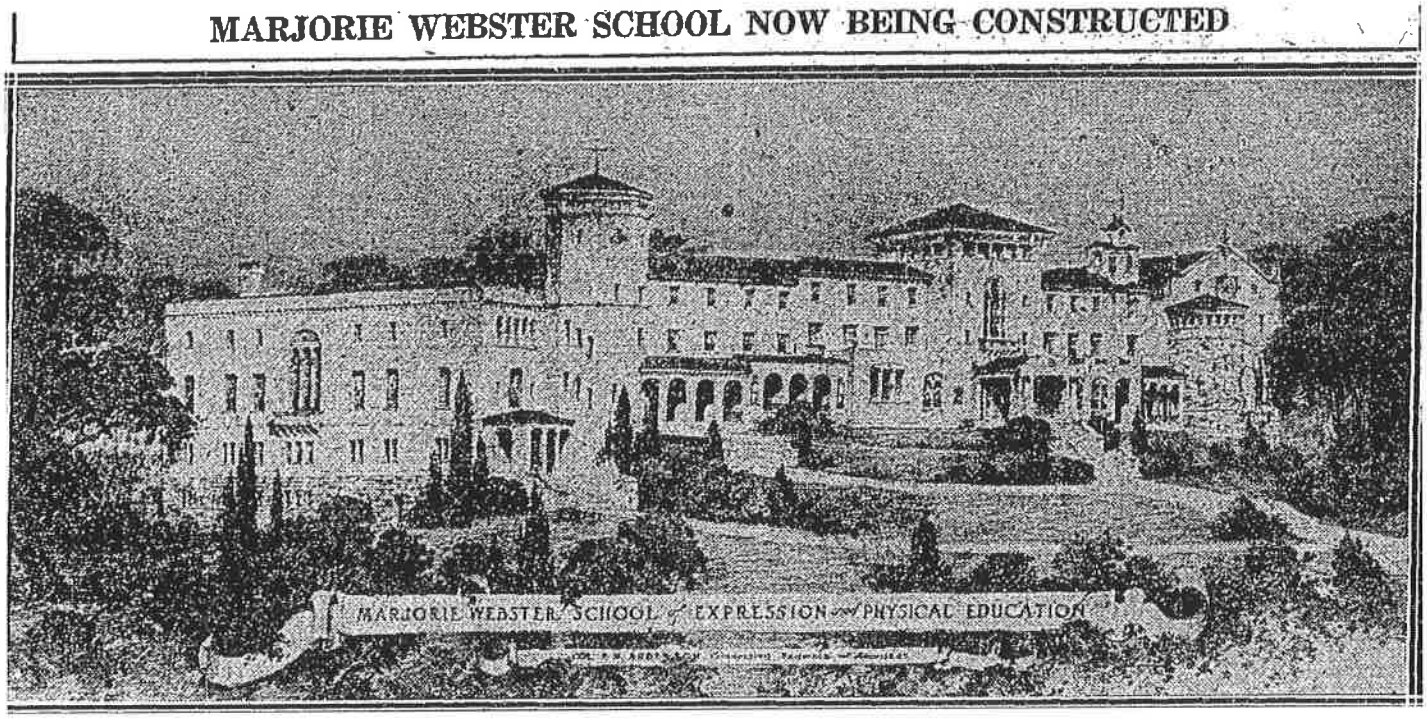
Site Plan of Marjorie Webster Junior College Historic District with National Register Boundaries
(ARC GIS Maps, Washington, D.C., Office of Planning, 2013)

Marjorie Webster Junior College Historic District
Key to Photographs



Marjorie Webster Junior College Historic District
(from Sanborn Map, 1959 Update)

Map Showing the Fenwick Farm, site of the Marjorie Webster Junior College Historic District (springhouse is the building shown on map to the east of Ice Pond)
(from USC&G Survey Map, 1888)



Rendering of Marjorie Webster School (from *The Washington Post*, April 1, 1928)

POOL ENTRANCE

Congrats
LEXUS

Pre-
Primary
Drop-Off
and
Pick-up

POOL ENTRANCE

PARENT-TEACHER
CONFERENCES
Thurs. Feb 9th & Fri. Feb 10th
* NO SCHOOL FOR STUDENTS *
CONFERENCE CARE & CONFERENCE CAMP AVAILABLE
NO
PARKING
ANY
TIME

EXIT
¿Qué hora es?
Es la .../Son las...
GREAT PRICE!
check it out.
PLEASE RECYCLE THIS BAG
After School Programs
Lowell School

Welcome to the
LOWELL DOME!
Home of the Leopards
HONORING INDIVIDUALITY
ENSURING EQUITY
GUEST
HOME
EXIT

CAUTION
Do Not
Dive
Please SHOWER
BEFORE
ENTERING POOL
CAUTION
Do Not
Dive

6FG-Y96
WWJ-4972
358339

Lowell School Brampton
Welcome to
Lowell School

FIRE

LOWELL
LOWELL SCHOOL
1994 AUCTION

15
MPH
KELLER