

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE



HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD
APPLICATION FOR HISTORIC LANDMARK OR HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGNATION

New Designation X

Amendment of a previous designation —

Please summarize any amendment(s) _____

Property name St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church South

If any part of the interior is being nominated, it must be specifically identified and described in the narrative statements.

Address 150 S Street NW Washington, DC 20001

Square and lot number(s) Square 3104/ Lot 820

Affected Advisory Neighborhood Commission 5E

Date of construction 1904-1905 Date of major alteration(s) 1953

Architect(s) Speiden & Speiden

Architectural style(s) Late Victorian

Original use RELIGION/Religious facility

Property owner Medhane Alem Eritrean Orthodox Tewahdo Church

Legal address of property owner 150 S Street NW Washington, DC 20001

NAME OF APPLICANT(S) DC Preservation League

If the applicant is an organization, it must submit evidence that among its purposes is the promotion of historic preservation in the District of Columbia. A copy of its charter, articles of incorporation, or by-laws, setting forth such purpose, will satisfy this requirement.

Address/Telephone of applicant(s) 1221 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20036

Name and title of authorized representative Rebecca Miller, Executive Director

Signature of representative  Date 11/30/2017

Name and telephone of author of application DC Preservation League, 202.783.5144

Date received _____
H.P.O. staff _____

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.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church South

Other names/site number: Tabor Presbyterian Church, Greater Little Ark Baptist Church

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A

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

2. Location

Street & number: 150 S Street NW

City or town: Washington State: DC County: _____

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

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

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

___ national ___ statewide ___ local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

___A ___B ___C ___D

<p>_____</p> <p>Signature of certifying official/Title:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>Date</p>
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<p>In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.</p>	
<p>_____</p> <p>Signature of commenting official:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Title :</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>Date</p> <p>_____</p> <p>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>

St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church South
Name of Property

District of Columbia
County and State

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:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church South
Name of Property

District of Columbia
County and State

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION: religious facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT

St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church South
Name of Property

District of Columbia
County and State

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE VICTORIAN

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: BRICK

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church South was purpose-built between 1904 and 1905 at 150 S Street NW. The original red-brick structure is three bays wide, five bays deep, and two stories high. It includes a basement and attic. The adjoining 1953 brick addition is three bays wide, six bays deep, and two stories high. The church is asymmetrically planned, with double entrance doors located on its easternmost bay. The original building's street-facing façade features an asymmetrical roof line, square tower, brick ornament, and stone window treatments. Non-street facing sides are simpler, defined primarily by the use of brick and a chimney located on the building easternmost side. The building retains its overall integrity form, materials, workmanship, and associations despite its 1953 addition.

Narrative Description

St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church South was constructed between 1904 and 1905. The church is located on Square 3104, Lot 820, near the southeast corner of 2nd and S Streets NW. The main entrance façade faces S street. From 2nd Street only the building's 1953 addition is visible. The structure's other walls are not street-facing.

St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church South
Name of Property

District of Columbia
County and State

Square 3104 and the immediately surrounding area have a primarily residential character. Except for the church, the square and the streets facing it are lined with single family brick row houses built over the course of the first quarter of the 20th century.

The church was designed by Speiden & Speiden architects in an eclectic Late Victorian style, with a tower that incorporates medieval architectural elements. The original red brick structure is three bays wide, five bays deep, and two stories high. The foundation is concrete, and the walls are brick. The church's character is defined by a front facing gable roof that asymmetrically joins a squared medieval style tower, and by architectural elements such as ornamented stone window treatments.

The building's street-facing main entrance façade is the most elaborate. It is faced in pressed red brick set in a running bond.

The main façade's asymmetrical design features a square tower at the building's easternmost bay. The lower portion is painted red. The brickwork on the tower's first floor creates the effect of rustication by alternating broad bands the project slightly beyond the single courses that separate them. A half flight of stairs overhangs a side basement entrance and leads to the church's double door entrance. The pair of wooden doors set in the center of the tower are not original. The façade's main entrance and large windows are topped by deep stone hood moulds, their edges terminating in carved flowers. On either side of the door is a small light fixture. It is unclear whether these are the original fixtures, but they are in the same location as the original lighting elements. The stairs include two iron rails not depicted in 1905 photos of the building.

The tower's second story is defined by two small windows that recall embrasures in medieval castles. Each is set in an unornamented stone hood mould. The windows are staggered, with the easternmost window set lower than the western window. At the top of the tower is a string course composed of three rows of light-colored bricks, topped by three small windows, and a brick cornice. Topping the tower is a crenelated parapet that provides another nod to medieval castles. The parapet is elaborated with light-colored brick banding.

The center and western bays of the front façade are defined by their windows. On the center bay a pair of double hung basement windows are at ground level. They have a white-painted frame casing. Above the basement is a protruding element made of red-painted brick that runs across the entire wall. Below the first-floor windows is a string course of red-painted brick that extends from the center bay to the westernmost bay. The first-floor windows share a white-painted frame casing with the identical second floor windows. The second-floor windows are topped by a squared stone hood mould with flower ornaments like those on the entrance door hood mould. The western bay repeats all of these features identically.

Above the second story the center bay has a round window inset in a white-painted frame casing. The window is elaborated by four keystones. Above this window is a small arched window with stone accents.

St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church South

Name of Property

District of Columbia

County and State

The front facing gable roof meets the tower asymmetrically. The gable roofline is elaborated by a fascia of light-colored bricks, and includes a small chimney just west of its apex.

The westernmost corner of the original wall is capped by a 1.5 story solid buttress with stone caps.

The church's eastern side is minimally visible from the street. On its eastern wall common bond red brick is stitched into the more formal and expensive running bond brick that defines the street facing façade. There are two brick buttresses with stone caps. The eastern side of the tower has a full-sized window in a wooden casement elaborated by a jack arch and a smaller window matching the two small staggered windows on the tower's street facing wall. All of the upper portions of the tower—string course, three windows, cornice, and crenellation—are repeated.

Beyond the tower the gable roof slopes down to the second story. There are four identical bays with small basement windows, and single windows in white-painted frame casings on both the first and second story, all topped with jack arches. Staggered brick detailing elaborates the roofline. Each bay is separated by a stone capped solid buttress. Between the third and final bays is a three-story high brick chimney instead of a buttress.

The original church structure is joined on its western side by a 1953 addition that is three bays wide, six bays deep, and two stories high. Like the original structure, the flat-roofed addition is asymmetrically planned, with double entrance doors located on its easternmost bay. The addition is not a contributing element to

The church's back wall is not viewable from the street.

Integrity

The building retains its overall integrity form, materials, workmanship, and associations despite its 1953 addition and some alterations to the original church. The 1953 addition resulted in the obscuring or removal of the building's original western wall. However, as depicted in 1905 photos, the character of the main street-facing façade is largely unchanged from the time of the building's completion. The brick is worn in some areas, particularly where it was once painted white, but remains largely intact. None of the building's original stained glass windows are extant.

St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church South
Name of Property

District of Columbia
County and State

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.)

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

Criteria Considerations

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

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

African American heritage

Religion

Architecture

St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church South
Name of Property

District of Columbia
County and State

Period of Significance

1904-1975

Significant Dates

1905, 1927, 1953

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Speiden & Speiden, architects
George W. Barkman & Son, builder

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church South/Tabor Presbyterian Church merits designation under National Register Criterion A, and similar DC Criterion B (History), for its "association with historical periods, social movements and patterns of growth that contributed to the heritage and development of the District." It is particularly associated with the development of the Bloomingdale community as the earliest and best surviving example of a neighborhood church, and for its relation to patterns of demographic change in the city and local community as the church of the first African American congregation in Bloomingdale. Other neighborhoods also transitioned from white to African American majorities during the twentieth century, however, the social history of this process in the Bloomingdale neighborhood is extraordinarily significant because of its relation to the struggle for social justice and civil rights. This is particularly reflected in the fight against the neighborhood's racial housing covenants that led to a 1948 Supreme Court decision that the enforcement of racial covenants violated the 14th amendment to the Constitution and the Civil Rights Act of 1866. Located near the unofficial border between

St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church South

District of Columbia

Name of Property

County and State

white and African American populations during the years of segregation, the church served as a bulwark of African American civic involvement and social cohesion.

A key element of that social role was the fact that the Tabor Presbyterian Church served as the longtime meeting place of the Bloomingdale Civic Association. This pioneering citizens' group advocated for civic improvements within the Bloomingdale neighborhood and for equitable treatment of African American residents in the era of segregation.

The church is also significant under National Register Criterion C, as well as corresponding District of Columbia Criterion D (Architecture and Urbanism) as an excellent embodiment of the "neighborhood church" building type, Criterion E (Artistry) for applying high aesthetic qualities to a modestly-scaled, locally-visible building, and Criterion F (Creative Masters) as a notable work of architects whose work is significant to the development of the District of Columbia. Speiden & Speiden was an extremely prolific firm whose stature is recognized by its inclusion in the DC Builders, Architects, and Developers Database commissioned by the Historic Preservation Office. The firm's commissions were not restricted to any single neighborhood or building type. Its buildings contribute to several historic districts as well as to the cityscape at large. One specialty in Speiden & Speiden's practice was church-building; the firm received permits to build seven houses of worship. All but one of these were located in neighborhoods outside the L'Enfant City, and all but one designed within the decade that preceded the death of partner William Speiden in 1914. St. Paul's Church was the first of these commissions.

Today only four Speiden & Speiden churches stand, and one of these, the former Baltimore Yearly Friends Meeting House (1905) on Thirteenth Street NW, appears to have had its brick walls parched with stucco.¹ St. Paul's also differs in size and style from the light-colored brick and stone former Petworth Baptist Church at 557 Randolph Street NW (1913), which was extensively modified by another architect in 1922 and may no longer reflect the Speiden & Speiden design. St. Paul's is most comparable to the former Petworth Primitive Baptist Church at Ninth and Shepherd Streets NW, which received permits in 1911. Both of these two surviving red brick churches are outstanding examples of their building type and designers' work, with St. Paul's being the earliest example.

The church's period of significance begins with its construction in 1904 and ends with the departure of the Tabor Presbyterian congregation in 1975, which also ended its long tenure as the meeting place of the Bloomingdale Civic Association. National Register Criterion Consideration G does not apply because, although the period of significance ended just 42 years ago, the church had already achieved significance more than 50 years ago. District of Columbia historic preservation criteria require only that sufficient time must have elapsed to determine a building's significance. Despite a 1953 addition on the west side, the church maintains overall integrity of form, materials, workmanship, and associations.

¹ The Centennial Baptist Church at 700 I Street NE (1914) was south of Boundary Street. The Mount Pleasant Methodist Episcopal Church was built in 1916. Both have been demolished.

St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church South
Name of Property

District of Columbia
County and State

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

The significance of St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church South/Tabor Presbyterian Church is closely tied to the social context of its creation and use throughout the first three quarters of the twentieth century. A critical factor in its creation was its location at 2nd and S Streets NW, near the southern edge of the burgeoning new neighborhood of Bloomingdale. This mattered both to the Methodist church that established a new congregation at this location in 1904 as well as to the African American Presbyterians that likewise chose this location in 1927 as a center of communal support for the African American community that by then was growing in Bloomingdale. Through the Bloomingdale Civic Association, the church would remain the nucleus of African American civic life in the Bloomingdale area through the mid 1970s.

The Early Development of the Bloomingdale Neighborhood

Bloomingdale was among the first communities to carry urban patterns of settlement across Boundary Street, the nineteenth century border between the city and County of Washington. The earliest such community was LeDroit Park, Bloomingdale's neighbor to the west, platted and developed in the early 1870s. Bloomingdale began to take form a decade and a half later as the estates of the Beale, Smith, Moore, Barbour, and Emmert families were carved into subdivisions, which coalesced into a community named for the estate owned by Emily Beale.²

Like Eckington to its east, Bloomingdale predominantly became a community of row houses during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.³ However, there are both important differences and essential similarities between these neighbors. The Eckington neighborhood had at its core the Eckington subdivision, which bore the distinctive imprint of its developer, George Truesdell. Truesdell envisioned his subdivision as a suburban enclave of villas on large lots, which provided its residents amenities like household electric service, electric streetlights, paved streets, sewers, and sidewalks still rare in much of the city. Residents were linked to downtown by the city's first electric street railway.⁴ In part because of the gravitational pull of Truesdell's Eckington & Soldiers Home Railroad, adjacent subdivisions bonded with Eckington proper, and, although several dozen villas were built, most of the neighborhood was developed with row houses. In the early twentieth century, the construction of a large railroad yard led to the development of a warehouse corridor along Eckington's eastern border.⁵

Bloomingdale lacked a central street car line, proximity to the B&O tracks, and the influence of a visionary like Truesdell. However, its earliest subdivision, Dobbin's Addition, platted in 1887

² Cherkasky, Mara, and Shoenfeld, Sarah Jane, Bloomingdale Historic District proposed nomination to the *National Register of Historic Places*, (Mar. 2017), 27. Available at: <https://planning.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/op/publication/attachments/Proposed%20Bloomingdale%20Historic%20District%20Nomination.pdf> (accessed Nov. 2017).

³ This discussion, in addition to the Bloomingdale Historic District Nomination, draws heavily upon Marjorie Lightman, D.P. Sefton, and William Zeissel. *National Register Nomination: Eckington Historic District* (2015). Building dates were obtained from the District of Columbia Building Permits Database.

⁴ *Eckington Historic District Nomination*, Section 8, page 40-42.

⁵ *Eckington Historic District Nomination*, Section 8, page 70-73.

St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church South

District of Columbia

Name of Property

County and State

like Eckington, featured similarly large lots. This subdivision, north of V Street and west of First Street NW, was relatively distant from the Eckington & Soldiers Home trunk line and did not develop until the turn of the twentieth century, when it became populated with row houses. However, nearby land was soon subdivided. In 1889, the Bloomingdale estate, roughly bounded by today's Florida Avenue, T Street, Flagler Place NW, and Lincoln Road NE was platted as the Bloomingdale subdivision, followed by the Moore-Barbour property to its north during the 1890s and early 1900s. Like the Bloomingdale subdivision, Moore and Barbour's First and Second additions stretched east across North Capitol Street to Lincoln Road NE.⁶ In time the blocks between North Capitol Street and Lincoln Road became associated with Eckington rather than Bloomingdale.⁷ However, this original alignment perhaps benefitted both communities. While Truesdell effectively discouraged commercial development in the Eckington subdivision, the east side of the 1600 block of North Capitol Street became the location of the area's first retail stores.⁸

Although Bloomingdale included some freestanding houses, the earliest house identified in the Bloomingdale Historic District *National Register* nomination is a row house at 21 R Street NW constructed by Croney & Minnix in 1890. The community's first full row, which consisted of seven dwellings on First Street at the intersection of S Street, was constructed in 1891, shortly before Eckington's first true row at 225-241 R Street NE was permitted in February 1892.⁹ After a lull imposed by the Panic of 1893, both Bloomingdale and Eckington filled with row houses constructed by an often-overlapping set of architects, builders, and developers. Architect William Palmer designed a substantial number of houses in Bloomingdale for the firm of Middaugh & Shannon, which constructed 305 dwellings in the neighborhood, as well as thirty houses in the unit block of Q Street NE for developer B. H. Warner. Nicholas T. Haller, who designed some of Bloomingdale's earliest houses, was the architect for one of Eckington's most beautiful rows, which wraps the unit blocks of Q Street and Quincy Place and the connecting block of Lincoln Road NE. Prolific twentieth century architect George Santmyers designed 135 houses in Eckington, as well as several dozen dwellings in Bloomingdale. Harry Wardman, Washington's most notable developer, built more than a hundred houses in Bloomingdale and more than 275 in the Eckington neighborhood. Among the other architects and developers who contributed significantly to both neighborhoods were Thomas Haislip, Nicholas Grimm (in addition to his work for Wardman), and Hunter & Bell.

Bloomingdale's blocks filled in rapidly. By 1895, row houses were clustering in the unit blocks of R, Q, and Quincy Streets; and near the intersection of Second and T streets adjoining Le Droit Park. By 1895, 261 people lived in the Bloomingdale subdivision, and, by 1897, its population stood at 403.¹⁰ By the end of the 19th century, row houses lined the blocks between Florida Avenue and the north side of S Street, and had jumped undeveloped tracts to fill the south side of the unit block of V Street and the 2200 block of First Street. By 1905, all blocks south of V and

⁶ *Bloomingdale Historic District Nomination*, Section 8, pages 33-35.

⁷ *Eckington Historic District Nomination*, Section 7, Page 7.

⁸ *Eckington Historic District Nomination*, Section 8, page 41.

⁹ *Bloomingdale Historic District Nomination*, Section 8, page 37, and *Eckington Historic District Nomination*, Section 7, page 13.

¹⁰ *Bloomingdale Historic District Nomination*, Section 8, page 45.

St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church South

District of Columbia

Name of Property

County and State

east of First Street had been built out, as had the First Street corridor from Florida Avenue to Channing Street.¹¹ In 1909 Bloomingdale's 2209 residents made it the city's fifth most populous suburban neighborhood. By 1912, it was almost fully developed, with row houses comprising the majority of its 1,572 buildings.¹²

In 1900, the typical Bloomingdale household was a white family whose primary male wage-earner worked as a government clerk, telegraph operator, bookkeeper, store clerk, stenographer, printer, salesman, or bookbinder, or occasionally as an attorney or physician. Although significant numbers of African Americans were moving into neighboring LeDroit Park, less than two dozen African Americans lived in Bloomingdale. All worked as domestic servants.¹³ Church-building began as Bloomingdale was first being settled in the early 1890s, although most extant houses of worship were erected a decade later. As the area achieved the critical mass to support multiple congregations, residents likely worshipped at downtown churches a streetcar ride away or met in private homes. Presumably the community's six new churches served a wider area, as only two churches were built in Eckington between 1887 and 1940. Reflecting the population of both neighborhoods at the time, these churches were constructed for white congregations.

The United Brethren Memorial Church, constructed at North Capitol and R Streets NW in 1893, was Bloomingdale's earliest house of worship as well as the denomination's first church in Washington. Its congregation grew rapidly, and in 1905 its original sanctuary was replaced by the current ruddy sandstone, architecturally-embellished church designed by A.A. Richter.¹⁴ Richter, an architect in Lebanon, Pennsylvania, designed churches, banks, and campus buildings across the Mid-Atlantic states. His other notable Washington building is the Grace Reformed Church on Fifteenth Street NW, designed in collaboration with Paul J. Pelz in 1901.¹⁵

Bloomingdale's second house of worship was the Church of the Advent, constructed at Second and V Streets NW in 1894. The building was replaced by the mid-century modern St. George's Chapel in 1969.¹⁶

The oldest religious buildings that stand in Bloomingdale are the parish hall and rectory of St. Martin's Roman Catholic Church in the 1900 block of North Capitol Street NW. St. Martin's parish grew out of a Sunday school founded by members of St. Anthony's Church in Brookland that first met in the former David Moore mansion in the same block.¹⁷ The hall - which doubled as a sanctuary - and rectory were built in 1902 from the design of Albert von Herbulis (1860-1928), a Washington-based architect who designed Catholic churches as far away as Alabama and Montana.¹⁸ His other notable Washington works, all designed in 1903-1904, were St. Ann's

¹¹ *Bloomingdale Historic District Nomination*, Section 7, page 9.

¹² *Bloomingdale Historic District Nomination*, Section 8, page 24.

¹³ *Bloomingdale Historic District Nomination*, Section 8, page 45.

¹⁴ *Bloomingdale Historic District Nomination*, Section 7, page 17 and Section 8, page 50.

¹⁵ *Engineering Record, Building Record and Sanitary Engineer*, Volume 44, Number 25, (1901), 606.

¹⁶ *Bloomingdale Historic District Nomination*, Section 8, page 50-51.

¹⁷ *Bloomingdale Historic District Nomination*, Section 7, pages 16-17.

¹⁸ "A.O. Von Herbulis Dies on Falls Church, Va., Car," *Washington Post*; Apr 15, 1928; 7.

St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church South

District of Columbia

Name of Property

County and State

Academy and Immaculata Seminary in Tenleytown, Ryan Hall at Georgetown University, St Mark's Lutheran Church on Capitol Hill, and the Marist College at Second and Savannah Streets.

In 1913, William Franklin Wagner added an adjoining one-story church.¹⁹ Wagner (1870-1951) was a longtime resident of Rockville who worked for the federal government before establishing a private practice that produced designs for numerous schools, homes, and churches in the Baltimore and Washington areas. In 1939, the church was incorporated in a larger Italianate building designed by Frederick Murphy, dean of the school of architecture at Catholic university and a giant among Catholic ecclesiastical architects.²⁰

The Rhode Island Methodist Presbyterian Church at First Street and Rhode Island Avenue NW was dedicated just a few months after St. Martin's original buildings.²¹ Its congregation was unique in Bloomingdale because it had moved to the developing subdivision after almost six decades at downtown locations. This impressive red brick Victorian Gothic style church, the largest in Bloomingdale, was described as one of the city's finest in newspaper articles.²² Its designer was J.F. Denson (1865-1927), stepson of nineteenth century Washington architect Thomas R. Powell. Born in Richmond, Denson grew up in Washington and, after serving as an assistant to the Supervising Architect of the Treasury, joined the firm of A.B. Mullett & Company.²³ After being made a partner at Mullett, he began an independent practice, and in middle age left Washington for Saint Paul, MN before moving to Chicago, where he worked for the last ten years of his life.²⁴ A specialist in concrete technology who supervised the construction of many major projects, Denson designed notable buildings in each city in which he practiced. His Finch Dry Goods Building in Saint Paul and St. Peter's Armory in nearby Nicollet County are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Park Gables, a Tudor Revival apartment complex, is described by the *AIA Guide to Chicago* as the "crown" of "a magnificent ensemble" to which he contributed several other buildings.²⁵ Denson also designed Washington's National Register-listed Proctor Livery Stables at 1211-1219 Thirteenth Street NW and made notable contributions to local Mullett designed buildings. In 1906, the firm of Harding & Upman, which contributed many row houses to Eckington, designed a Sunday school addition to the church.

Like the United Brethren Memorial Church, the Rhode Island Avenue Methodist Church is an imposing structure on an arterial street that looms somewhat larger than the surrounding neighborhood. As its denomination's first church in Washington, the United Brethren Church drew its congregation from the entire city. Its location at North Capitol and R Streets just north

¹⁹ "W.F. Wagner Succumbs to Heart Ailment," *Washington Post*; Dec 15, 1951; B2

²⁰ Bloomingdale Historic District Nomination, Section 7, pages 16-17.

²¹ "Corner-Stone Laid: Ceremonies Held at Site of New Rhode Island Avenue Methodist Church," *Washington Post*; Jun 16, 1902; 9 and "House Solely for Worship: Thought Emphasized at Methodist Protestant," *Washington Post*; Dec 1, 1902; 9.

²² *Bloomingdale Historic District Nomination*, Section 8, page 51.

²³ Tracerics, Inc. *National Register Nomination: The Sun Building* (Washington, DC), (1983), Section 8, Page 4.

²⁴ "J.F. Denson, Veteran Architect, Dies," *Chicago Daily Tribune*; Jun 21, 1927; 16.

²⁵ Alice Sinkevich and Laurie Petersen, editors. *AIA Guide to Chicago*. (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2014), 257

St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church South

District of Columbia

Name of Property

County and State

of Boundary Street was an important crossroads; R Street was at that time a major artery as a rare paved road that traversed Eckington and crossed the B&O's Metropolitan Branch line at grade before connecting with Brentwood Road to the far east. The vista of the Capitol dome along the axis of North Capitol Street contributed to the presentation of the building as a "national church" for the denomination.²⁶ Built by a well-established congregation, the Rhode Island Avenue Methodist church is a large and architecturally-complex building whose design elicited favorable comment from the time of its construction. Although Rhode Island Avenue was still being paved and improved, it was plainly on the verge of becoming a major city artery, and the church was erected just a block from what would become a major intersection at North Capitol Street.

The remaining two early churches erected in Bloomingdale differed in scale and location. St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church South at 150 S Street and the Episcopal Chapel of St. Agnes at 46 Q Street are smaller, plainer brick buildings more representative of the "neighborhood church" than the larger houses of worship. The Chapel of St. Agnes was erected in 1912, about five years after the dedication of St. Paul's.²⁷ Its architect, Frederick A. Fletcher (1883-1971), practiced in Washington for perhaps a decade before opening what became a very active office in Baltimore. Extremely active in professional organizations, he is most noted for the design of several high-rise apartment houses near the Johns Hopkins University campus.²⁸ The Chapel, now the home of the Ebenezer Baptist Church, is built of brick, although it is now clad in Formstone.

St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church South

As new residential neighborhoods like Bloomingdale rapidly developed in the early 20th century, many religious denominations began to strategize about ways to expand and serve the new communities. The Methodist Episcopal Church South was one such denomination. One of two main branches of American Methodism at the time, the M.E. Church South had only four congregations in the District at the turn of the century: Mount Vernon Place, Epworth (Capitol Hill), Marvin (Southwest), and West Washington (Georgetown). The church was determined to grow as the city expanded, and St. Paul's became a key rallying point for its push into Washington's rapidly developing new suburbs.

In March 1904, a conference of representatives from the four M.E. Church South congregations met and approved plans to create a new North Washington church. The conference designated Rev. P. W. Jeffries of Baltimore to be its pastor. Having established its objective, in June, the group organized the Washington City Church Extension Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church South to acquire property in Bloomingdale to build the planned new church. The creation of church extension societies was a common tactic for circumventing church laws restricting the ability of new congregations to take out mortgages to finance real estate acquisitions. The extension society would secure financing to purchase property for a new church and then turn the deed over to the congregation. While the Washington City Extension Society was organized

²⁶ *Bloomingdale Historic District Nomination*, Section 8, page 50.

²⁷ "Ground Broken for Church: St. Agnes", In Q, Near North Capitol," *Post*; Apr 2, 1912; 3.

²⁸ "Frederick A. Fletcher," at *American Architects and Buildings* (website)

https://www.americanbuildings.org/pab/app/ar_display.cfm/811058, accessed November 25, 2017.

St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church South

District of Columbia

Name of Property

County and State

primarily to acquire a site for the Bloomingdale church, organizers gave it a broad charter to raise funds for additional future congregations as well.²⁹

The society lost no time in acquiring three undeveloped lots on the southeast corner of 2nd and S Streets NW. The lots, previously owned by Francis M. Moore, Margaret A. Moran, W. Herman Moran, and Mary Davidson, spanned 60 feet on 2nd Street and 100 feet on S Street. They were transferred to the extension society on June 27, 1904. According to *The Evening Star*, the society “proposes to erect a handsome edifice for church purposes” on the lots.³⁰

Construction was held up for much of the rest of 1904 due to unpaid taxes on the newly acquired property. The District surveyor refused to survey the property until the taxes were paid. The extension society countered that since the property was going to be used as a house of worship, the taxes should be waived. The church was overruled because the property was not yet being used for a church.³¹ Once the back taxes were finally paid, work could proceed.

By the time of the new church’s groundbreaking on November 28, 1904, the congregation had adopted St. Paul’s as its name rather than North Washington, as envisioned by the earlier church conference. “Despite the cold a large number of members and friends of the enterprise gathered to participate in the brief exercises” held at 2nd and S Streets for the groundbreaking.³² The new congregation had been formally established the previous September and was meeting temporarily on Thursday evenings at the house of one the members, L.S. Cannon, who lived at 65 Rhode Island Avenue NW. The *Star* noted that the membership in the new congregation was rapidly growing and numbered 80 at that time.³³ The extension society transferred the deed of ownership to the new congregation on the day of the groundbreaking.

The new red brick church, designed by Speiden & Speiden was moderately sized and was not originally intended to be the permanent church building. It was positioned on the eastern end of the property, where it was intended to eventually become the church’s Sunday school, leaving space at the corner for future construction of a larger and more elaborate main sanctuary. The *Star* noted that “It is claimed the new house of worship will be one of the most complete church edifices in the city, and will be arranged in such a manner as to be thrown into the main building that someday will be erected on the corner of the property.”³⁴ *The Washington Times* later observed: “It is the intention of the parish to build a stately and imposing church on the ground adjoining the school building, and plans will soon be drawn.”³⁵ The *Times* was overly optimistic about the new addition, however, as the congregation apparently did not have the financial wherewithal to undertake the larger project. While an addition on the corner site was constructed almost half a century later in 1953, the planned “stately and imposing church” was never built.

²⁹ “Plans to Erect Churches,” *Post*, Jun. 14, 1904; “Society Incorporated,” *Star*, Jun. 14, 1904.

³⁰ “A New Church in Prospect,” *Star*, Jun. 28, 1904.

³¹ “Tax Exemption Refused,” *Post*, Nov. 17, 1904; “Recommendation Approved,” *Star*, Nov. 17, 1904.

³² “Site of New Edifice,” *Star*, Nov. 29, 1904.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ “New Methodist Church Will Be Open Tomorrow,” *Washington Times*, May 13, 1905.

St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church South

District of Columbia

Name of Property

County and State

George W. Barkman & Son began work on the building in mid-December, after a separate cornerstone-laying ceremony was held. Rev. Jeffries again officiated, depositing a copper box containing newspapers, church papers, a Bible, and a hymnal in the cornerstone. At the start of construction, the structure was estimated to cost \$18,000.³⁶

Construction progressed rapidly, and the new church was ready for occupancy in May 1905. The *Star* noted that it was “up-to-date in every particular and very pleasingly designed.”³⁷ It featured three stained-glass windows on its S Street façade that had been donated by the Sunday Schools of the Mount Vernon Place, Epworth, and Marvin churches and were inscribed, “A Token of Love in a Bond of Unity.”³⁸ The new church was already prospering, its congregation having increased from 80 to 121 during construction. Congregants completely filled the new church for the lavish opening ceremony on Sunday, May 14. The celebration was held for the church’s opening, including lavish floral displays, visits and speeches from ministers of the other four M.E. Church South congregations, and musical recitals that spanned five days.³⁹

After such a concerted effort to establish an ME South church in “North Washington,” it is somewhat ironic that, by the 1920s, the congregation decided to move again. The increasing settlement of African Americans in the neighborhood was likely a factor. Since the turn of the century the African American community that had developed around Howard Town during the Civil War had expanded to the east, through Le Droit Park and into the western part of Bloomingdale. By the 1920s, covenants and petitions were established that effectively prohibited African Americans from buying houses east of 1st Street NW. St. Paul’s, however, was a block to the west, at 2nd Street. In 1927, the all-white St. Paul’s congregation decided to sell their property at 2nd and S Streets and move to a new site at 4700 Thirteenth Street NW. The church they built at their new location, completed in 1931, turned out to be strikingly similar in size and appearance to their old building on S Street.⁴⁰

Tabor Presbyterian Church

The purchaser of the old St. Paul’s building was the Tabor Presbyterian Church, an African American congregation that had been in existence for less than three years. In October 1924, the Washington Presbytery organized this new congregation to serve blacks from the LeDroit Park and western Bloomingdale neighborhoods.⁴¹ Before they acquired their own church building, the fledgling congregation met for three years in the historic Twelfth Street YMCA, at 1816 Twelfth Street NW, which had been organized by free African Americans in 1853 as the first African American YMCA. Like the Methodists, the Presbyterians used a church extension society to purchase the St. Paul’s building, completing the transaction in August 1927 for \$40,000.⁴² Since

³⁶ “Church Building Started,” *Star*, Dec. 15, 1904; “Pastor Lays Corner-Stone,” *Post*, Dec. 15, 1904.

³⁷ “Opening Tomorrow,” *Star*, May 13, 1905.

³⁸ “New Methodist Church Will Be Open Tomorrow,” op. cit.

³⁹ “Ready For Worship,” *Post*, May 13, 1905; “In New Church Home,” *Post*, May 15, 1905; “New House of Worship,” *Star*, May 15, 1905.

⁴⁰ “New Church to Open Easter,” *Post*, Mar. 28, 1931.

⁴¹ “Establish New Church,” *Star*, Oct. 20, 1924.

⁴² “St. Paul Edifice Bought for Tabor Congregation,” *Star*, Aug. 13, 1927.

St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church South

District of Columbia

Name of Property

County and State

1905, Washington had segregated presbyteries (ruling bodies consisting of the ministers and representative elders from local congregations).⁴³ Washington's African American presbytery, called the Presbytery of Washington City, sponsored the new church.

The commitment of the Washington City Presbytery and other African American institutions was instrumental to the success of Tabor Presbyterian. As reported by the *Baltimore Afro-American*, Tabor was affectionately known as the "baby church" of the Washington presbytery, nurtured and supported as it was by other institutions.⁴⁴ Col. Campbell C. Johnson (1895-1968), executive secretary of the YMCA, ensured that the church had priority to hold services at the Y and that those services were well-publicized, aiding in the early growth of the congregation. The Rev. John R. Duffield of the presbytery's church extension society was instrumental in locating and acquiring the former St. Paul's property for the new congregation. The Rev. Halley B. Taylor of the 15th Street Presbyterian Church pledged his church's property as collateral to finance the acquisition of the building, which the congregation could not otherwise have afforded. Other Presbyterian organizations also lent funds to the new venture.⁴⁵

A newly-ordained minister, Rev. Richmond Alvin Fairley (1899-1965), was chosen to lead the Tabor church. Born in Fayetteville, North Carolina, to a local Presbyterian minister, Fairley had graduated from Johnson C. Smith University in Charlotte and subsequently earned a degree in theology from Lincoln University in Oxford, Pennsylvania, the first degree-granting historically black university in the country). The *Baltimore Afro-American* characterized Rev. Fairley as "a tall man with a deep, resonant voice."⁴⁶ Fairley would serve as pastor of Tabor Presbyterian for 17 years, leaving in 1950 to help organize another new African American church, the Bethany Presbyterian Church at 916 F Street NE.⁴⁷

Rev Fairley's commitment to progressive social issues was evident in June 1930, when Tabor Presbyterian hosted the ordination of Mrs. Florence M. Granton, a member of the Tabor congregation, who was reportedly the first female elder admitted into the Presbyterian Church in the United States.⁴⁸ Rev. Fairley presided over Mrs. Granton's ordination, along with Rev. Duffield of the Washington City Presbytery and Rev. Taylor of the 15th Street Presbyterian Church. Mrs. Granton joined Rev. Fairley and two other elders to form the church's sessions committee.

When it moved into its new quarters on S Street, Tabor was the first African American congregation in the Bloomingdale area.⁴⁹ The church immediately began working for the betterment of Bloomingdale's growing African American community, an effort that would continue for the more than four decades that it remained in this location. The church soon

⁴³ "Clash in Presbytery," *Post*, Apr. 12, 1905.

⁴⁴ "Tabor Presbyterian Church Called Baby of Presbytery," *Baltimore Afro-American*, Aug. 12, 1933.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ "What Kind of Man Is Your Minister?," *Baltimore Afro-American*, Jan. 7, 1939.

⁴⁷ "The Rev. R.A. Fairley, Presbyterian Leader," *Post*, Mar. 28, 1965; "Rev. R.A. Fairley Dies; Founded Two Churches," *Star*, Mar. 28, 1965.

⁴⁸ "First Presbyterian Woman Elder Installed," *Baltimore Afro-American*, Jun. 14, 1930.

⁴⁹ "What Kind of Man Is Your Minister?," *op. cit.*

St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church South

District of Columbia

Name of Property

County and State

established Sunday school and summer school sessions to further the development of the congregation's young people, as well as a Young People's Society, Girl Reserves, Boy Scouts, and church choir activities. In 1938, the church sponsored a history contest to challenge and recognize the efforts of its students.⁵⁰ Reflecting a broader role in the African American community, in 1935, the church hosted a national meeting of the Afro-American Presbyterian Council, a group of national church leaders.⁵¹

In 1953, under the leadership of Rev. Robert Lee Jeans (1903-1994), who succeeded Rev. Fairley, Tabor finally built an addition on the corner lots that the former St. Paul's congregation had originally intended for a future church building. Instead of constructing a new main sanctuary, the church built an educational annex containing 20 classrooms that was used for Board meetings, social events, and Sunday School classes. The simple red-brick addition reportedly cost \$65,000.⁵² The congregation also acquired the row house adjoining the church on the east side for use by servicemen visiting the city on weekends.

The church's longstanding commitment to education paid off. Through the years, Tabor would count high school principals, deans, lawyers, and judges among its members and school alumni. D.C. Superior Court Judge John D. Fauntleroy (1920-1989), who served as a special assistant to Mayor Marion Barry, was a member, as was Chief Judge H. Carl Moultrie (1915-1986), a widely-respected civil rights leader for whom the main D.C. Superior Courthouse is named.⁵³

Tabor Presbyterian officially became Tabor United Presbyterian Church in 1958 when the United Presbyterian Church of North America and the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. merged.⁵⁴

In 1970, the Washington City Presbytery established a committee to review the status and viability of all of its churches in the D.C. metropolitan area. One of the recommendations of its final 1972 report was that the Tabor Church merge with the Sherwood Presbyterian Church, located at 22nd and Varnum Streets NE, near the Maryland border in North Michigan Park. Subsequently a second committee, made up of representatives from each of the two churches, worked to examine in detail the advantages and disadvantages of a merger.⁵⁵

Key points in favor of a merger were the fact that Sherwood had a relatively large and new building with only a modest mortgage, while Tabor's aging structure was showing its age and required expensive upkeep. Further, Sherwood's small congregation was hard pressed to maintain its large facility. Another factor for Tabor was that many of its 565 members had moved out of the Bloomingdale neighborhood by the early 1970s. Tabor elder Jesse Johnson told *The Washington Post* that, "We have some money that could help pay off their mortgage, and

⁵⁰ "They Know History," *Baltimore Afro-American*, Apr. 9, 1938.

⁵¹ "Afro-American Presbyterian Council Meets in D.C.," *Baltimore Afro-American*, Oct. 19, 1935.

⁵² "Tabor Church to Get \$65,000 Addition for Education Use," *Star*, Jun. 17, 1953.

⁵³ Megan Rosenfeld, "Church's 50th Anniversary Filled with Talk of Merger," *Post*, Oct. 7, 1974.

⁵⁴ *A History of Northeastern Presbyterian Church: The First 20 Years 1975-1995*, (Washington, DC: Presbyterian Church USA, 1995), 1-4.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church South

District of Columbia

Name of Property

County and State

they have thing like parking facilities that we need desperately. Anyway, most of our members have moved out now, and few of them live around the church anymore.”⁵⁶

While many longtime church members were opposed to moving out of their historic home, the church voted in 1973 to go ahead with the merger, as did Sherwood. The Tabor congregation voted 292 to 110 in favor, while Sherwood voted 76 to 18 in favor. The new combined church, called the Northeastern Presbyterian Church, came into existence on January 5, 1975.⁵⁷

A succession of other religious organizations have occupied the S Street building since the Tabor Church left in 1975. The Greater Little Ark Baptist Church moved in next and occupied the building for almost 20 years. That church made news in the spring of 1995 when it was evicted after failing to make its mortgage payments.⁵⁸ The next tenant, the Free Gospel Church of the Apostle's Doctrine also apparently defaulted to the same lender within a few years.⁵⁹ The Lively Stone Church of God subsequently occupied the building until 2004, when it was sold to the Medhane Alem Eritrean Orthodox Church, which worshipped in the building until 2016, when it moved to Brentwood, Maryland. The S Street building was sold again in 2017 and now stands vacant.⁶⁰

Bloomingdale Civic Association

The Tabor Presbyterian Church is eligible for listing in the *National Register of Historic Places* at the local level of significance under Criterion A due to the church's active participation and supporting role in the development of the Bloomingdale Civic Association and the Bloomingdale neighborhood's African American identity.

The whites-only Bloomingdale, Le Droit Park and Reservoir Heights Citizens Association had been formed in the late 1890s to further the interests of the white homeowners that were settling in the new suburb of Bloomingdale. The association focused on infrastructure issues, such as street paving and lighting, sewers, and streetcar service. It also pushed for the construction of a fire house on North Capitol Street (completed in 1897) and a public school (the Nathaniel Parker Gage School, completed in 1904) for white students.⁶¹ Renaming itself the North Washington Citizens Association after 1905, the group increasingly advocated for restrictions on the African Americans that were moving into the western part of Bloomingdale. By 1912, the group began organizing petitions to establish restrictive covenants on blocks of houses east of 1st Street that would ban African Americans from living there.

⁵⁶ Rosenfeld, op. cit.

⁵⁷ “Presbyterian Churches Unite As Single Unit,” *Star-News*, Jan. 4, 1975.

⁵⁸ Paul Duggan, “A House of God Is Without a Home,” *Post*, Mar. 30, 1995; Ruben Castaneda, “Little Ark Finds a Safe Harbor,” *Post*, Apr. 3, 1995; “Faithful Move Swiftly to Aid Little Ark,” *Post*, Apr. 6, 1995.

⁵⁹ “After One Church's Eviction, a Second Faces a Worse Fate,” *Post*, May 5, 1996.

⁶⁰ “A Bloomingdale Church Sells and Residences May Take Its Place,” *UrbanTurf* Blog, Aug. 17, 2017. Available at: https://dc.urbanturf.com/articles/blog/a_bloomingdale_church_sells_and_residential_is_planned/12921 (accessed Nov. 2017).

⁶¹ Cherkasky and Shoenfeld, 46.

St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church South

District of Columbia

Name of Property

County and State

By the early 1920s, when the Tabor Church was organized, African Americans were increasingly settling in the blocks west of 1st Street, and they soon sought to organize themselves for their own betterment and to counter the hostile actions of the North Washington Citizens Association. A group of African American residents of the unit block of Quincy Place, NW—two blocks to the southeast of Tabor Church—formed the Quincy Place Association in April 1928 at the home of Alphon R. Ore, who lived at 27 Quincy Place.⁶² Tabor's first pastor, Rev. Richmond Fairley, was also a Quincy Place resident (39 Quincy Place NW), and he became an active member of the new group. When it changed its name to the Bloomingdale Civic Association in 1929, Fairley began hosting its meetings at the Tabor Church.⁶³ Tabor would remain the meeting place for the Bloomingdale Civic Association for many decades to come. As the nucleus of the African American community in Bloomingdale, the civic association and its Tabor Church home would serve as the base for a sustained effort to better the lives of African American residents of Bloomingdale and the city at large through most of the 20th century.⁶⁴

Like the whites-only citizens association, the Bloomingdale Civic Association promoted improvements in street lighting, parking restrictions, police protection, and traffic regulation. However, it also attempted to address racial inequality. One of its first actions while meeting at Tabor Church was to request in 1929 that the whites-only Gage School be transferred to the DC Public Schools' colored division. Local African American children had been required to travel to the overcrowded Mott School, located to the north of the neighborhood at 4th and W Streets NW.⁶⁵ The neighborhood's changing racial demographics were in the association's favor, but Gage remained an exclusively white school until 1954.⁶⁶

The Bloomingdale association held numerous activities at the Tabor Church that served as leadership and inspiration for the community. In 1930, for example, the association endorsed voting rights for the District of Columbia in Congress.⁶⁷ That same year the association hosted a speech by U.S. Attorney Leo A. Rover, a Brookland resident, who strongly condemned racial and religious intolerance. The country had not discriminated based on race or religion during wartime, Rover argued, and should avoid changing its policy during peacetime. The speech as before a meeting of the Federation of Civic Associations representing African American neighborhood groups from across the city.⁶⁸

Local activist Walter A. Pinchback (1871-1938), son of Louisiana governor P.B.S. Pinchback, lived across the street from the Tabor Church and was president of the Bloomingdale Civic Association in the late 1930s. The association took steps to help African Americans advance in local government, including ensuring that black citizens were seated in juries and considered for promotion within the police force. A 1938 article in the *Baltimore Afro-American* noted that the

⁶² "With Civic Associations: No. 5 The Bloomingdale Civic Association," *Baltimore Afro-American*, Mar. 5, 1938.

⁶³ "Bloomingdale Civic Group Is Admitted," *Post*, Feb. 23, 1929.

⁶⁴ Correspondence of Paul J. Cerruti, Nov. 20, 2017.

⁶⁵ "Civic Group Seeks Gage School for Colored Use," *Post*, Apr. 12, 1929.

⁶⁶ Cherkasky and Shoenfeld, op. cit.

⁶⁷ "Citizens Indorse Vote For District," *Star*, Mar. 12, 1930.

⁶⁸ "Plea For Tolerance Mae By Prosecutor," *Star*, Nov. 12, 1930.

St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church South

District of Columbia

Name of Property

County and State

association had also made budgetary recommendations to the D.C. commissioners and promoted playground improvements, anti-crime measures, and unemployment assistance.⁶⁹

The Bloomingdale Civic Association was reported to be one of the most aggressive and progressive civic associations in the District of Columbia in an August 4, 1951, article in the *Washington Afro-American*.⁷⁰ The association sponsored a discussion of problems and possible solutions for integrating D.C. public schools in February 1953, a year before the Supreme Court ruled that segregated schools were unconstitutional.⁷¹ The church completed its own school addition later that year.

In 1959, the association was awarded the Evening Star Cup by the D.C. Federation of Civic Associations as the outstanding civic group of the year. The group had spearheaded a door-to-door membership drive in 1957 that re-energized it and undertook a successful neighborhood clean-up campaign in 1959. The award was accepted by the association's president at the time, Mrs. Anna J. Steen, who was praised as "a doer in a city of talkers."⁷² The association again won the Evening Star Cup in 1960.⁷³

The group continued to focus on fighting crime, traffic problems, and neighborhood cleanup throughout the 1960s and into the 1970s, holding its meetings at the Tabor Church until Tabor moved out in 1975. The association continues to advocate for civic improvements in Bloomingdale to this day.

The Architects: Speiden & Speiden

St. Paul's Church was designed by the highly successful and prolific architectural firm of Speiden & Speiden, which was responsible for many public and private buildings throughout the Washington area in the early 20th century. The firm was a collaboration between two brothers, William (1864-1914) and Albert (1868-1933). They were among the seven children of native Washingtonian Edgar Speiden and his wife Lucy Leadbeater Speiden. Both were born in Alexandria, Virginia, and attended public schools in Washington, D.C. Subsequently, Albert earned a law degree from Columbian College (now George Washington University) and was admitted to the District bar, although he never practiced law.⁷⁴ Both William and Albert also studied architecture and drafting. They worked as draftsmen for the U.S. Patent Office in the early 1890s before establishing their own architectural practice at 705 G Street NW in 1896.⁷⁵

Speiden & Speiden became a very prolific firm, designing many Washington residential structures and small apartment buildings in their early days. Examples of their apartment

⁶⁹ "With Civic Associations," op. cit.

⁷⁰ Quoted in "History of the Bloomingdale Civic Association," web page of the Bloomingdale Civic Association, available at: <http://www.bloomingdalecivicassociation.org/about/bcahistory/> (accessed Nov. 2017).

⁷¹ "Bloomingdale Group to Discuss Integration," *Star*, Feb. 15, 1953.

⁷² "Awards Given Groups for Civic Leadership," *Star*, Oct. 18, 1959.

⁷³ "Bloomingdale Group to Get Star Award," *Star*, Sep. 24, 1960.

⁷⁴ "Paralysis Fatal to Albert Speiden," *Star*, Mar. 23, 1933.

⁷⁵ D.C. Architects Directory, "Albert Speiden." (DC Historic Preservation Office, 2010).

St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church South

District of Columbia

Name of Property

County and State

buildings include 1603 19th Street NW, and 1731 20th Street NW (known as The Johnson), both completed in 1899 and both located within the Dupont Circle Historic District.⁷⁶ The firm also designed many houses, both row houses and detached dwellings, for numerous owners and builders, including 2112 19th Street NW (1910), located in the Washington Heights Historic District. As their reputation grew, they continued to design houses and elegant, moderately-sized apartment buildings as well as an increasing diversity of other building types, including many commercial buildings and several government projects. The firm was involved in design work associated with rehabilitation of the Smithsonian Castle building in 1907. Perhaps the firm's most exotic project was a stone hut weather observatory on the summit of Mt. Whitney in California. One of its grandest projects was the design for the Penn Gardens amusement park on Pennsylvania Avenue—a large, richly decorated structure containing a dance hall, movie theater, and open-air theater.⁷⁷ All in all, the firm designed over 2,000 structures, primarily in Washington, D.C., and Virginia.⁷⁸

The firm worked in a remarkable variety of styles, including the Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, Craftsman, and Gothic Revival styles. Among the firm's commissions were a number of moderately-sized churches in various residential sections of Washington. In addition to St. Paul's Church, for example, the firm also designed the following:

- **Baltimore Yearly Friends Meeting House** at 3100 13th Street, NW, now the 13th Street Church of Christ (1905);
- **Petworth Primitive Baptist Church** at 841 Shepherd Street, NW, now the Zion Hill Baptist Church (1911);
- **Petworth Baptist Church** at 557 Randolph Street, NW, now the Israel Metropolitan CME Church (1913, with a 1922 addition by a different architect);
- **Park Road Methodist Episcopal Church** at 1019 Park Road, NW (1914, demolished);
- **Centennial Baptist Church**, 700 I Street, NE (1914, demolished); and
- **Mount Pleasant Methodist Episcopal Church, South** at 3146 16th Street, NW (1916, demolished).⁷⁹

Much of the firm's work was undertaken prior to William L. Speiden's death in February 1914,⁸⁰ including over half of the 400 projects that have D.C. building permits listing Speiden & Speiden as architects. Nevertheless, Albert continued to practice alone for almost another 20 years, retaining the Speiden & Speiden name for his firm.

In addition to work within the District of Columbia, Speiden & Speiden devoted much of their energy to the many new suburban developments that were being built in northern Virginia.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ "Plans Being Prepared for Amusement Park," *Star*, Jan. 3, 1914.

⁷⁸ "Speiden & Speiden Architects Sign," The Manassas Museum, Manassas, Virginia. Available at: <http://www.manassascity.org/DocumentCenter/Home/View/3372> (accessed Nov. 2017).

⁷⁹ "Architectural History of the Meridian Hill Baptist Church Building, *Park View, D.C. Blog*, Dec. 29, 2014. Available at <https://parkviewdc.com/2014/12/29/architectural-history-of-the-meridian-hill-baptist-church-building/> (accessed Nov. 2017).

⁸⁰ "Final Rites for William L. Speiden," *Star*, Feb. 23, 1914.

St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church South
Name of Property

District of Columbia
County and State

Albert married Effie Nelson, daughter of the Clerk of the Court for Prince William County, Virginia, in 1901 and subsequently settled in Manassas, Virginia. After a disastrous fire in 1905 destroyed many of the town's buildings, Speiden designed and built a new house for his family in an eclectic mix of Victorian, Colonial Revival, and Arts and Crafts design elements. (The house is now part of the Manassas Museum System.) Commuting to work in D.C. daily via the Southern Railway, Speiden also became actively involved in local government in Manassas, serving on the Town Council from 1909 to 1919 and becoming chief of the volunteer fire department in 1916.⁸¹ He is noted as the architect of many of the town's prominent historic buildings, including the Town Hall (1915), the Manassas Institute (1896, a private school), the Hopkins Candy Factory (1909), Trinity Episcopal Church (1922), Grace Methodist Church (1926), and many private residences.⁸² After he suffered a stroke and died at his home, at age 64, in March, 1933, his obituaries noted that as an architect he had "specialized in the development of suburban residential projects."⁸³ While this may be true, it tells only a part of Albert Speiden's architectural story. His work was, in fact, very wide-ranging, and included many fine ecclesiastical projects, including the 1905 St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church South.

⁸¹ Manassas Museum, op. cit.

⁸² "Manassas Historic District," National Register of Historic Places registration form (1988).

⁸³ "Paralysis Fatal to Albert Speiden," op. cit.; "Albert Speiden, 65, Architect, Expires," *Post*, Mar. 23, 1933; "Albert Speiden's Final Rites Today," *Post*, Mar. 24, 1933.

St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church South
Name of Property

District of Columbia
County and State

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St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church South

Name of Property

District of Columbia

County and State

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St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church South
Name of Property

District of Columbia
County and State

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St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church South
Name of Property

District of Columbia
County and State

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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property 0.17 acre _____

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 38.913895 Longitude: -77.013806
2. Latitude: Longitude:
3. Latitude: Longitude:
4. Latitude: Longitude:

Or

St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church South
Name of Property

District of Columbia
County and State

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Lot 820, the registered lot on which the property sits, in Square 3104.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: John DeFerrari, Jacqueline Drayer, D. P. Sefton
organization: D.C. Preservation League
street & number: 1221 Connecticut Ave., NW, Suite 5
city or town: Washington state: D.C. zip code: 20036
e-mail: info@dcpreservation.org
telephone: (202) 783-5144
date: November 29, 2017

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

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

St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church South
Name of Property

District of Columbia
County and State

- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church South

City or Vicinity: Washington

County: State: DC

Photographer: Unknown

Date Photographed: 1905

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1. St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church South, view of front façade, looking south

Name of Property: St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church South

City or Vicinity: Washington

County: State: DC

Photographer: Jacqueline Drayer

Date Photographed: 11/30/2017

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church South

District of Columbia

Name of Property

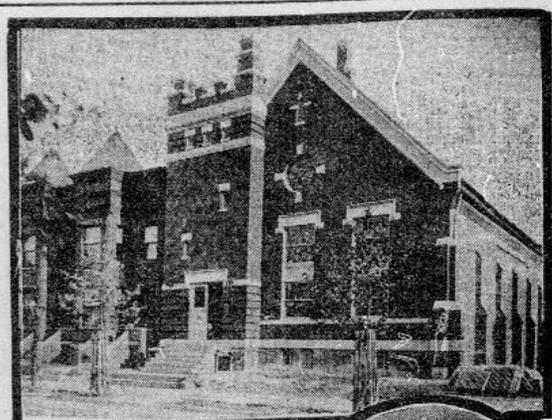
County and State

Photo # and View

2. St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church South, view of front façade, looking south
3. View of tower and front façade at northeast corner of building
4. View of addition at northwest corner of building
5. Main entry way on front façade, looking south
6. Tower and window details on front façade, looking south
7. Window details on front façade, looking south
8. East wall of building

THE WASHINGTON TIMES, SATURDAY, MAY 13, 1905.

NEW METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH
WILL BE FORMALLY OPENED TOMORROW



ST. PAUL'S M.E. CHURCH

*New Methodist Church
Will Be Open Tomorrow*

St. Paul's to Hold Morning and Evening Services in New Sunday School Edifice—Imposing House of Worship to Be Built.

The evening exercises of St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church, South, will be held tomorrow at 11 a. m., in the new school building, Second and S streets northwest.

The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, as organized by the Washington City Church Extension Society, March 20, 1904. The Rev. P. W. Jeffries was appointed pastor of the proposed new church April 5, 1904. It has been through his untiring energy that the church organization was made possible.

Ground for the new school building, which will serve temporarily as a church for the new parish, was broken November 23, 1904, by the Rev. F. A. Stein, resident of the Washington City Church Extension Society, and the cornerstone laid on December 14, 1904.

Cost of \$12,500.

The school building which is just completed is erected at a cost of \$12,500, and is complete in every respect.

The stained glass windows in the new building, thirteen in all, were all contributed by the three facing on S street being dated by the Mt. Vernon Place Sunday school, the Epworth Sunday school, and the Marvin Sunday school, and inscribed, "A Token of Love in a Bond of Unity."

The services tomorrow will be presided over by the pastor, the Rev. P. W. Jeffries, the sermon to be preached by Bishop A. W. Wilson, of Baltimore, Md. The evening services at 8 o'clock will consist of a short prayer by the pastor, and a sermon by Bishop Wilson, and on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday evenings there will be addresses and sermons by prominent clergymen of this and other cities.

To Build Imposing Church.

It is the intention of the parish to build a stately and imposing church on the ground adjoining the school building, and plans will soon be drawn.

The first prayer meeting of the congregation was held at the home of L. S. Cannon, 65 Rhode Island avenue, which has since been the place of the regular weekly meetings.

At the time of the organization the membership numbered seventy, but at present that membership has been increased to 121.

The committee in charge of the building consisted of A. S. Dietrich, chairman; R. S. Whaley, secretary; A. S. Jones, treasurer; L. S. Cannon and J. M. Hodge. The architects were Spelden & Spelden, of this city, and the contractors G. W. Barkman & Sons.



Photo 1

St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church South
Name of Property

District of Columbia
County and State



Photo 2

St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church South
Name of Property

District of Columbia
County and State



Photo 3

St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church South
Name of Property

District of Columbia
County and State



Photo 4

St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church South
Name of Property

District of Columbia
County and State



Photo 5

St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church South
Name of Property

District of Columbia
County and State



Photo 6

St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church South
Name of Property

District of Columbia
County and State



Photo 7

St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church South
Name of Property

District of Columbia
County and State



Photo 8

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 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.