

VLR: 12-11-91
NRHP: 8-24-92

(SEE ALSO →

127-845
- RICHMOND
PUBLIC SCHOOLS
MPD

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 of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name SPRINGFIELD SCHOOL
other names/site number DHR File No. 127-832
Bowler School

2. Location

street & number 608 North 26th Street N/A not for publication
city, town Richmond N/A vicinity
state Virginia code VA county City of Richmond code 760 zip code 23223

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

- private
 public-local
 public-State
 public-Federal

Category of Property

- building(s)
 district
 site
 structure
 object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
Public Schools of Richmond, Virginia, 1869-1930

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. See continuation sheet.

[Signature]
Signature of certifying official
Director, Virginia Department of Historic Resources

6 July 1992
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
 determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
 determined not eligible for the National Register.
 removed from the National Register.
 other, (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION: School

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS:

Late Gothic Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls STONE: Granite

roof ASPHALT

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1914-1930

Significant Dates

1914

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Robinson, Charles M.; Supervising Architect
Carneal and Johnston; Architects
Wise Granite Company; Builder

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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 # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

Virginia Department of Historic Resources
221 Governor St., Richmond, VA 23219

10. Geographical Data

Acres of property 1.2 acres

UTM References

A	1 8	2 8 6 5 7 0	4 1 5 6 6 8 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing
C			

B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
D			

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	<u>Paul L. Weaver, Senior Consultant</u>	date	<u>October 31, 1991</u>
organization	<u>Historic Property Associates</u>	telephone	<u>904 824 5178</u>
street & number	<u>P. O. Box 1002</u>	state	<u>Florida</u>
city or town	<u>St. Augustine</u>	zip code	<u>32085</u>

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1 Springfield School, Richmond, Virginia

SUMMARY PARAGRAPH

The Springfield School is a two-and-one-half story, granite-faced educational facility, with a raised basement and a small penthouse. It is located at 608 N. 26th Street between Leigh and M streets in the proposed Upper Church Hill Historic District. Constructed in 1913, it is a good example of the Gothic Revival style.

PRESENT AND ORIGINAL PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Springfield School is located on the east half of a rectangular block, some 1.2 acres, bordered by 25th and 26th streets and M and Leigh streets. The remainder of the site is covered by an asphalt parking lot and playground. Most of the surrounding area is residential and was developed between 1800 and 1939.

The school has an H-shaped ground plan and rests on a poured-concrete slab foundation. Its structural system is load-bearing brick. Perhaps its most unusual and significant feature is its granite exterior finish. The roof is a built-up type with a crenelated parapet. On the west side of the roof is a one-story penthouse. The fenestration of the building is regular. It is composed primarily of double-hung sash windows with 4/4 lights. Windows are arranged in groups of five in the classroom areas.

The main entrance fronts on 26th Street and is part of a projecting central pavilion. The main entrance contains most of the ornamentation and stylistic features of the building. The exterior entrance is defined by a tudor arch with a labeled hood mold and two wrought iron, swinging gates with S-shaped shields (symbolizing Springfield School). On each side of the arch are apertures, a further feature of the Gothic style. A name plate above the entrance bears the subsequent name of Bowler School. The upper portion of the pavilion is completed by a crenelated and shaped parapet. A stylized date plate is centered in the shaped portion of the parapet.

The Springfield School was constructed in 1913, replacing an earlier school constructed in 1880 on the same site. The Springfield School is a good example of the versatility of standard school building design. The Gothic styling of the building was common for this property type, but the use of granite on an institutional building is rare. However, other features of the building--the basic classroom size, expansive windows, high ceilings, and an open setting with adjacent playgrounds--were shared by schools ranging from one-room rural types to large urban schools.

The Springfield School is currently vacant and in fair condition. Its interior has undergone some minor alterations, but its plan is intact, and many of its original features, including fine stairways, remain in place.

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Springfield School appears eligible for listing in the National Register under Criteria A and C. It is eligible under Criterion A for its association with an important period of development in the history of the Richmond Public School system. It is further eligible under Criterion C for its association with a locally significant architect, its architectural style, the construction material used on its exterior, and the type of property it embodies.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

As early as 1869 a two-room school was operating on this site in a building known as Springfield Hall. By 1871 the building was referred to as Springfield School. In 1880 a new brick school, also named Springfield, was constructed on the site. Seven years later a second story was added. In 1913 the school was demolished and the present building constructed in its place. In 1948, the Springfield School was renamed for J. Andrew Bowler, a highly respected civic leader and teacher, when it became the first former white school on Church Hill to receive black students.

The Springfield School is associated with an important period in the history of public education in Richmond. Between 1870, when the Board of Public Instruction launched its initial acquisition and development program, and 1909, capital outlay for school construction was modest. In 1909, Dr. J.A.C. Chandler was named Superintendent of Richmond Public Schools. Dr. Chandler soon initiated an ambitious construction program which was overseen by Public School Architect Charles M. Robinson. Over the next twenty years most of the extant historic school buildings in Richmond were constructed. The Springfield School is one of the best examples of the schools constructed during this period. The Depression of the 1930s and World War II effectively ended this phase of school construction in Richmond. Not until after the war were schools constructed on a scale comparable to the 1909-1929 period.

The Springfield School was designed by Carneal and Johnston, Architects and Engineers, of Richmond, a locally significant architectural firm. William Leigh Carneal, a native of Richmond, designed numerous buildings in the city. In addition to the Springfield School, he designed the Nathaniel Bacon School and the Virginia State Library on Capitol Square. He was also associated with the design of several buildings at Virginia Military Institute, Lexington and Virginia Polytechnic Institute, Blacksburg.

The Springfield School was constructed of locally quarried stone by the Wise Granite Company of Richmond. It is a relatively rare example of the use of granite within the city of Richmond, where brick has been the most common masonry material. It is one of only two extant public schools in Richmond extensively faced with granite. The use of granite was particularly appropriate to the Springfield School because of its Gothic styling. The granite lends greater authenticity to the Gothic styling whose origins date to the medieval period and are closely associated with the architecture of churches and fortifications.

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Another aspect of the architectural significance of the Springfield School is its Gothic Revival styling. During the 1830s the Gothic Revival style was championed in the works of Alexander Jackson Davis, the country's most prolific practitioner of the style. Davis's plans for houses and cottages were widely distributed in the popular books of Andrew Jackson Downing. Downing produced several pattern books which illustrated the suitability of the style to modest domestic architecture. Downing's publications made the Gothic one of the predominant building styles of the period. The Gothic Revival style was most popular in the United States between 1840 and 1870, although it remained a popular building style for religious and educational buildings well into the 20th century. The Gothic Revival was particularly important in Virginia, where Alexander Jackson Davis designed a number of buildings, including the "Barracks" at Virginia Military Institute. The Springfield School is a high-style example of the adaptation of the Gothic style to educational architecture.

Beyond its Gothic styling, the Springfield School shares certain traits common to hundreds of other schools throughout the country. While historic school buildings varied greatly in terms of their size, style, and materials, their designs did adhere to certain standards. The earliest published standards for school buildings date to 1832 when William A. Alcott prepared a brief treatise on school design. Alcott stressed that fresh air, space, and light were necessary in promoting a healthy learning environment. He suggested the liberal use of large windows, classrooms providing a separate desk for each pupil, and open surroundings for recreation. For more than a century afterwards, school architects followed similar standards. These schools featured a basic classroom size of about 25 by 35 feet, expansive windows, high ceilings, and an open setting usually with adjacent playgrounds and athletic fields. These characteristics were shared by schools ranging from one-room rural types to large urban schools. The Springfield School shares many of these traits and is a good example of the adaptation of the Gothic style to traditional school design.

The Springfield School appears eligible for listing in the National Register under Criteria A and C. It is associated with a significant period of educational development as well as a locally prominent architectural firm. It embodies an important architectural style and building type, and is a rare example in Richmond of the use of granite as a construction material.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

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- Historic Richmond Foundation. "Survey of Neighborhoods and Structures Church Hill Area." Richmond, Virginia: Historic Richmond Foundation, 1980.
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Miscellaneous Sources

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City of Richmond. Board of Public Instruction, Real Estate Division. Original Plans of Richmond Schools.

Wells, John. Architectural Historian, Department of Historic Resources. Manuscripts and primary source material relating to Charles M. Robinson and William Leigh Carneal.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

BEGINNING at the point of intersection of the west right-of-way line of 26th Street and the south right-of-way line of "M" Street 331.32 feet, more or less, to the point of intersection of the west right-of-way line of 26th Street and the north right-of-way line of Leigh Street; thence in a northwesterly direction along Leigh Street 125.62 feet, more or less, to an alley 12 feet in width; thence in a northeasterly direction along said alley 131.00 feet, more or less, to a point; thence in an easterly direction along said alley 39.22 feet, more or less, to a point; thence in a northeasterly direction along said alley 18.00 feet, more or less, to a point; thence in a northwesterly direction along a property line 95.00 feet, more or less, to a point; thence in a northeasterly direction 151.00 feet, more or less, to a point on the south right-of-way line of "M" Street; thence in a southeasterly direction along the south right-of-way line of "M" Street 198.04 feet, more or less, to the point of BEGINNING, and as shown shaded on Department of Public Works Drawing No. N-21966, dated May 18, 1989, on file in the Bureau of Engineering, Department of Public Works, of the City of Richmond and a copy of which is attached to the draft of Ordinance No. 89-158-143 on file in the office of the City Clerk. Said property is more particularly described on that certain plat of survey by Fred A. Gibson & Associate, dated October 30, 1990, revised March 16, 1991, reference to which plat is hereby made.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary is justified under the National Register Criteria in that it contains all the significant resources historically associated with the property.