

**THE MARY F. BALLENTINE HOME FOR THE AGED; THE  
PHYLLIS WHEATLEY YWCA BUILDING (1896 – 1974)**

**Eligibility Evaluation & Architectural Description**



July 31, 2023

Prepared by



## **The Mary F. Ballentine Home for the Aged; The Phyllis Wheatley YWCA Building (1896-1974)**

### *National Register Eligibility Summary*

The Phyllis Wheatley YWCA Building (formerly the Mary F. Ballentine Home for the Aged) is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C at the local level of significance. The property is locally significant under **Criterion A** in the area of **Ethnic Heritage: African American**, as a representative example of the history of segregation within the YWCA and the African American-driven solution demonstrated through the Phyllis Wheatley branches of that organization. African American women created the Phyllis Wheatley Clubs as YWCA linked facilities which offered them the full benefits of YWCA membership within their own building and community. This building was particularly notable for the African American community because it also represented a significant expansion in space and services as compared to the earlier Phyllis Wheatley locations in Norfolk, Virginia. The Phyllis Wheatley/Ballentine Home is also locally significant under **Criterion A** in the area of **Social History: Women's History** in two areas. First, the Mary F. Ballentine Home for the Aged was an excellent example of a Progressive Era retirement facility serving women in the Norfolk, Virginia area. Additionally, unlike many women's retirement homes which were funded through religious institutions or local governments, The Mary Ballentine Home was built using the private funding of a single citizen. Second, the Phyllis Wheatley Branch of the YWCA represented a rare opportunity for many young African American women to have affordable housing so that they could attend nearby Virginia State College. In the 1950s it was still much less common for African American women to have the opportunity to attend college. The Phyllis Wheatley YWCA provided the support these young women (many from outside the region) needed to have the funds, time, and community they needed to make success in college much more likely. Finally, this property is locally significant under **Criterion C** in the area of **Architecture** as a representative work of the nationally known New York City based architect, Bradford Lee Gilbert. Gilbert completed dozens of institutional commissions across the country over multiple decades and is famous for the Tower Building, claimed as the first skyscraper in New York City, and maybe the United States. The Mary Ballentine Home/Phyllis Wheatley YWCA is also Gilbert's only extant commission in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Additionally, while much of the interior reflects multiple renovations, the exterior of this notable Richardsonian Romanesque building has a high degree of integrity and is arguably the finest example of this style in the region. The Mary F. Ballentine Home for the Aged/Phyllis Wheatley YWCA has a period of significance spanning from its construction in 1896 to the closing of the Phyllis Wheatley Branch of the YWCA in 1974.



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### *The Mary F. Ballentine Home for the Aged*

Thomas Ballentine was born in Currituck County, NC on December 15, 1820, and married Mary F. Hughes, also of Currituck Co. They moved to Norfolk County, Virginia in 1849. Thomas Ballentine served in the Civil War and afterward, established himself as a successful truck farmer in the Norfolk area. May F. Ballentine died on January 13, 1884. Before dying she requested that Thomas Ballentine build a home for aged women in Norfolk.<sup>1</sup>

The four-and-a-half story Mary F. Ballentine Home for the Aged opened in 1896 at a cost of \$60,000 at 927 Park Avenue, between Corprew Avenue and Bond Street. It was located on the Ballentine Farm abutting what was then the new Brambleton suburb in an area recently annexed by the City of Norfolk. The large 50'x100' building featured thirty-six rooms designed to house at least fifty residents. Additionally, there was a large kitchen, as well as several assembly and amusement rooms, a laundry room, a boiler room that provided hot running water, and an elaborate dining room. The setting of the Ballentine Home in its early years was almost rural, outside the established areas of development.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Robert B. Hitchings, *The Life of Thomas Ballentine & The Ballentine Home for the Aged: The First 35 Years* (Norfolk, VA: Robert Burgess Hitchings, 2004), 1-4.

<sup>2</sup> Burgess, *The Life of Thomas Ballentine & The Ballentine Home for the Aged*, 17-26.

In 1953 the Mary F. Ballentine Home for the Aged moved to a new location 7211 Granby Street, far north of its original location. This new residence began as a two-story brick Georgian Revival-style building with fifty-two rooms and numerous indoor and outdoor social spaces. At its new location “The Ballentine” has been expanded several times and since 1985 has welcomed men as well as women.<sup>3</sup>

The Mary F. Ballentine Home for the Aged was created as part of the national Progressive Movement beginning in the late nineteenth-century towards privately funded homes for the elderly. However, the Ballentine Home differed in that most of these homes were funded by religious organizations (Protestant, Catholic, or Jewish) to lift the “deserving” elderly up from the poor houses. The residents of these homes were generally homogeneous, usually white residents and more often women than men (except for veterans’ homes). These homes usually also had a strict set of rules and requirements for potential residents, and this was true for the Ballentine Home as well. For more than half a century the Mary F. Ballentine Home for the Aged provided lodging, meals, caregiving, and a supportive community for a select group of residents of the City of Norfolk, Virginia.<sup>4</sup>

#### *The Norfolk YWCA and Phyllis Wheatley Branch*

The YWCA was first established in London, England in 1855 and the first branch was opened in the United States in 1866 with the goal of providing shelter for young working women. Separately, “The Girls Home of the City of Norfolk” was opened at 210 Brewer Street in 1893 for any “young woman who was leaving the protection of her home to find employment in the city.” Unfortunately, mirroring segregated society at that time, this entity, which provided food and shelter, was only available for “deserving white girls...to teach them habits of industry, sobriety and economy.” The local branch of the YWCA was formed in Norfolk in 1911 and absorbed the former Girls Home of Norfolk. As part of the YWCA, these young women were expected to “build personality and character...and a sense of responsibility for the common good.”<sup>5</sup>

The Phyllis (sometimes spelled Phillis) Wheatley Branch of the YWCA in Norfolk, Virginia was created “to serve the Negro girls and young women of their community” and was part of a national movement of Phyllis Wheatley branches opening in the early twentieth century. The origins of the Norfolk Phyllis Wheatley Branch are found in the Ladies’ Auxiliary of the YMCA founded in 1899, with the founding of the Phyllis Wheatley branch occurring in 1908 as the Phyllis Wheatley Association of the YWCA. The first location of the organization was located at 416 Cumberland Street, and later moved to 719 Washington Street. Laura E. Titus and Ida W.

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<sup>3</sup> *The Virginian-Pilot*, various.

<sup>4</sup> N. Sue Weiler, “Religion, Ethnicity and the Development of Private Homes for the Aged,” *Journal of American Ethnic History*, (Fall, 1992, vol.12, no.1), 64-90. This essay offers a substantial analysis of the emergence of private homes for the elderly in the nineteenth century.

<sup>5</sup> Marion O. Perkins (General Secretary Norfolk Y.W.C.A.), “Local YWCA, In Service Work, Has ‘Home Away from Home,’” *Virginian-Pilot*, June 26, 1940; *Young Women’s Christian Association, 1911-1961* (Norfolk, Virginia: YWCA, 1961).

Bagnall, members of the Ladies' Auxiliary, led the effort to create the local Phyllis Wheatley branch, which became officially affiliated with the Central YWCA in Norfolk in 1920.<sup>6</sup>

Phyllis Wheatley Women's Clubs were named after Phyllis Wheatley (1753-1784) an enslaved woman poet, and believed to be the first African American author of a published book of poetry. The first Phyllis Wheatley Club opened in Nashville, Tennessee in 1895. Similarly to the YWCA for white women, the Phyllis Wheatley branches strived to "improve the status of African American women." These clubs provided lodging, as well as recreational and educational programs. The Phyllis Wheatley Clubs were either independent organizations or, like the Norfolk branch, were affiliated with the YWCA. The YWCA began desegregating its facilities in 1946, but kept the Phyllis Wheatley name for those branches.<sup>7</sup> YWCAs in the south were much slower to desegregate, as demonstrated by the reality that when the new Phyllis Wheatley Branch location at 927 Park Avenue opened in 1954, it was only for the use of young African American women.

The Phyllis Wheatley Branch and the local YWCA maintained similar organizational structures, services, and activities. During the Great Depression, the organizations faced budgetary challenges but still provided food and lodging. Additionally, they provided professional training. Phyllis Wheatley offered special courses in "Household Management" seminars for unemployed girls led by instructors from the Hampton Institute. Between 1940 and 1961 the Phyllis Wheatley Branch expanded with members participating in state, regional, and national conventions as well as featuring a young adult club called the Nacirema. This continued success and growth eventually led the organization to move to its final location at 927 Park Avenue.<sup>8</sup>

The former Mary F. Ballentine Home for the Aged was purchased for \$75,000 in November 1952 as the future site of the Norfolk Phyllis Wheatley Branch of the YWCA. It was announced that the new location would provide food and housing, as well as recreational activities such as dramatics, music, art, and dancing. It was to be "a home away from home for young working women." The new facility would feature an auditorium, and a "clean, modern cafeteria." An article in the Norfolk edition of the historic African American newspaper, *The New Journal and Guide*, spelled out the reality of this new location for the Phyllis Wheatley Branch: "You'll have cozy dining rooms where you may take your friends to dinner—and you won't have curtains drawn around you just because you were born with dark skin"<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Marion O. Perkins (General Secretary Norfolk Y.W.C.A), "Local YWCA, In Service Work, Has 'Home Away from Home,'" *Virginian-Pilot*, June 26, 1940; *Young Women's Christian Association, 1911-1961*.

<sup>7</sup> Perkins, "Local YWCA"; *Young Women's Christian Association, 1911-1961*; <https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/phyllis-wheatley-womens-clubs-1895/>.

<sup>8</sup> *Young Women's Christian Association, 1911-1961*.

<sup>9</sup> "Dream Comes True IN Securing New YWCA Site," *New Journal and Guide*, November 8, 1952, C1; Evelyn Mansfield Swann, "Social Whirl In Norfolk," *New Journal and Guide*, March 14, 1953, 10;



*Home for a Student*  
Y.W.C.A. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~  
PHYLLIS WHEATLEY



Virginian-Pilot Photo by Borjes

Miss Ann Askew, 18-year-old mathematics major at Virginia State College, works in her room in the new Phyllis Wheatley YWCA quarters located in the old Ballentine Home on Park Avenue. The recent move of the Negro YWCA made it possible for students and single working women to get inexpensive lodgings close to the college.

Virginian-Pilot

OCT 10 1954

***New Quarters for 'Y' Agency  
Bring New Hope for Students***

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The purchase of the new home for the Norfolk branch of the Phyllis Wheatley YWCA was entirely funded by the local charity organization, the Norfolk Community Chest. The newly renovated facility was dedicated on November 14, 1954 and featured forty rooms which housed space for programs, administration, and rooms to house up to fifty-one girls.<sup>10</sup> This new “Negro YWCA” location provided an additional service of housing for young college students, particularly those attending Virginia State College. Ann Askew, a first-year mathematics major, described struggling to keep up with her rent and working as a maid in Virginia Beach to help

<sup>10</sup> “New Wheatley YWCA Branch Is Dedicated,” *Virginian-Pilot*, November 15, 1954; *Young Women’s Christian Association, 1911-1961*.

pay for school was one of the first to move in for fall 1954 classes. This service was particularly important to the multiple young college students from out of town with no local family to support them. Separately, the Phyllis Wheatley Branch served more traditional YWCA functions such as activities for teenagers and young adults. To support this new facility, a full-time janitor, cook, and residence director were hired.<sup>11</sup> An article from October 1956 states that there were thirty-five residents, with twenty-five of them attending the Norfolk division of Virginia State College, while the other ten were employed. The residents paid rent, but at a much lower rate than in a private apartment, while also offering all of them a community and staff to support them. As well as lodging, all residents received three meals a day and a wide program of activities. And the YWCA continued to provide programs for local elementary and high schools, as well as young adult programs such as YW Wives. Finally, the Phyllis Wheatley Branch of the YWCA offered a wide variety of classes including sewing, millinery, ceramics, sculpture, salesmanship, interior decorating, rhythm and tap dancing, ballet, art (supported by the Norfolk Museum of Arts and Sciences), and a class for expectant mothers.<sup>12</sup>



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<sup>11</sup> Robert C. Smith, "New Quarters for 'Y' Agency Bring New Hope for Students," *Virginian-Pilot*, October 10, 1954.

<sup>12</sup> Jacqueline Goodman, "Young Women Like to Live At Phyllis Wheatley Branch," *Virginian-Pilot*, October 16, 1956.



Throughout its history, the Phyllis Wheatley Branch of the YWCA also maintained its link to Christianity with a focus on young women “devoted to the task of realizing...those ideals of personal and social living” as Christians. The Phyllis Wheatley Branch maintained a small chapel in the building for use by the residents.<sup>13</sup> Over time the outlook of the YWCA, and the Phyllis Wheatley Branch became less directly Christian in its approach, and more focused on an overall identity as a service organization with a religious emphasis. “Three Y-Teen goals in 1968 were “to grow as a person, to grow in friendship with persons of different races, creeds and religions, and to grow in the knowledge and love of God.”<sup>14</sup> By the end of the 1960s, the Phyllis Wheatley Branch was emphasizing that, while still focused on “young Negro women,” the doors were open to anybody. By 1969 there were forty-eight residents, of whom forty-two were students. At the same time, Phyllis Wheatley was offering summer camps for disadvantaged local children.<sup>15</sup>



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<sup>13</sup> Ed Frede, “YWCA: Both Club and Home,” *Virginian-Pilot*, October 15, 1963.

<sup>14</sup> Joseph V. Phillips, “The Y Teens,” *Virginian-Pilot*, May 4, 1968.

<sup>15</sup> Beth Polson, “Helping Hands All Colors,” *Ledger-Star*, October 16, 1969.



Sara D. Herring, local head of the YWCA, declared in an October 1968 article that “we’ve had girls come here with no money, no job, and no place to go. We have given them rooms until they could find work and pay us back. It can mean the difference between graduating or not graduating.” During this time the Phyllis Wheatley Branch also hosted speakers for the residents, covering topics from political responsibility to world affairs. Separately Phyllis Wheatley offered space for a neighborhood center, the Neighborhood Youth Corps, the Concentrated Employment Program, and the Brambleton office of the Model Cities program.<sup>16</sup> As the Phyllis Wheatley Branch evolved it continued to serve the community, particularly disadvantaged young people, in a wide variety of ways.

The Phyllis Wheatley Branch of the YWCA at 927 Park Avenue closed on May 19, 1974. The reasons for the closure given by the YWCA at the time were the high maintenance costs of the building and the belief that the interior was “unsuitable for modern programs.” The building would have closed earlier, but was held open for Norfolk State College students for whom it served as a dormitory, demonstrating its use to the community until its last day. The closure of the Phyllis Wheatley Branch residence was part of a national trend linked to the relaxing of societal expectations and restrictions for young women. Across the United States during this period most of the YWCA residence halls ceased operations as the demand for supervised housing in cities faded away. The other factor that led to its closure was the increasing difficulty of running residence halls at a price that was both affordable for students as well as not exceeding budgetary constraints. One factor which exacerbated this problem was that the YWCA United Fund offered financial support to YWCAs for operating costs, but the funds could not be used for building maintenance. As many of these YWCA residence buildings had existed for several generations the maintenance costs often built up to an unsustainable level. The short-term result nationally was that many lower-income students were forced out of the YWCA residence halls and into substandard housing.<sup>17</sup>

In 1978 Norfolk State College (now Norfolk State University) began the process of raising funds to purchase the former Phyllis Wheatley YWCA building to use as a dormitory. This was the first ever capital fundraising campaign since becoming a university. By 1983 then Norfolk State University had completed the purchase and complete renovation of the former Phyllis Wheatley building to serve as a dormitory at a cost of \$1.8 million. Approximately one hundred Norfolk State students moved into the renovated dorm building in August of 1983, in time for the fall semester.<sup>18</sup>

*Bradford Lee Gilbert, Architect*<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Donna Weatherly, “Old Building Aids Youth,” *Virginian-Pilot*, October 30, 1968.

<sup>17</sup> “YWCA Branch To Close,” *Virginian-Pilot*, May 5, 1974; S. Fitzgerald and J. Crumber, “YWCA Residence Closes, Ending an Era,” *New Journal and Guide*, May 25, 1974.

<sup>18</sup> “Dorm From Y Planned,” *Virginian-Pilot*, February 21, 1978; “Youth moves in,” *Virginian-Pilot*, August 12, 1983.

<sup>19</sup> John E. Wells and Robert E. Dalton, *The Virginia Architects, 1835-1955: A Biographical Dictionary* (Richmond, Virginia: New South Architectural Press, 1997), 167; Bradford Lee Gilbert, *Sketch Portfolio of Railroad Stations and Kindred Structures* (New York City, NY: The Railroad Gazette, 1895); Christopher Gray, “The Architect Who Turned a Railroad Bridge on Its Head,” *The New York Times*, July 1, 2007.



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The Mary F. Ballentine Home for the Aged was designed by Bradford Lee Gilbert. Gilbert (1853-1911) was born in Waterton, New York and studied under Josiah Cleveland Cady in New York City. Gilbert's first job was as the architect for the New York, Lake Erie and Western Railroad in 1876 and he opened his own office in New York City ca 1882 from which he worked for the remainder of his career.

Bradford Lee Gilbert was a nationally known architect, perhaps most recognized for his work designing railroad-related buildings and structures, including office buildings, depots, terminals, and stations. Additionally, Gilbert designed many hotels, substantial dwellings, and notable institutional buildings. A Sketch Portfolio of many of his works, republished as part of the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago, claimed that Gilbert "has designed more large (railroad) stations than any other member of his profession." At the Columbian Exposition Gilbert was a "medal first premium award" as an architect in the area of Railroad Architecture.

Perhaps his best-known commission was the Tower Building (1887-1889) in New York City, one of the earliest skyscrapers in the United States. This building was designed and constructed to fill an incredibly narrow lot with only twenty-one feet and six inches of frontage. It is claimed that this was the first example in the world "to construct a building in which the weight of the walls,

as well as the floors, is transmitted through girders and columns to the footings...skeleton construction.” His idea was to stand a railroad bridge on its end, which was called “a skillful solution of an exceedingly difficult problem...” This was the beginning of the ubiquitous steel-frame, curtain-walled skyscraper in the urban landscapes of the world and set a precedent for urban America’s built environment that persists today.

Additionally, Gilbert was the architect for the Cotton States & International Exposition in Atlanta, Georgia (1894-1895). Gilbert had multiple commissions in Atlanta during the late nineteenth century including the Southern Railway Passenger Depot (1895), the Mutual Building Co. Office Building (1896) and the English-American Loan & Trust Company Office Building (1897). Reprising his role in Atlanta, Gilbert served as the chief architect for the South Carolina Interstate and West Indian Exposition in Charleston, SC (1901-1902). Gilbert also designed the Illinois Central Terminal in Chicago, was responsible for the 1898 remodel of the Grand Central Terminal in New York, and designed a railroad building for the World’s Columbian Exhibition in Chicago.

In Virginia, the only two known buildings credited to Gilbert are the Princess Anne Hotel and the Ballentine Home. The Princess Anne (built for the Norfolk & Virginia Beach Railroad Co in 1888) burned to the ground in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, leaving the Ballentine Home as the only extant Gilbert commission in Virginia.



The Mary F. Ballentine Home for the Aged, Norfolk, Va.  
Construction: Brick and Terra Cotta. Size: 50 ft. x 100 ft.  
Erected during 1894-95.



## **Architectural Description**

### **Summary**

Phyllis Wheatley Hall is a four-story, seven-bay, redbrick, Richardson Romanesque, late Victorian period building set in a large lot on Park Avenue. It is well ornamented with ochre brick accenting the windows and terra-cotta medallions set in between the first and second floors of the tower. Its partial entry porch is covered by a large portico with a hipped roof and supported by squat columns. It has a cross-hipped roof and a pair of large central chimneys and dormers on the south side. It also has a large octagonal tower topped with a conical roof accented with copper. The roof of the entry porch is hipped with the seam of the hip terminating in the corner where the projecting bay meets the rest of the building. The windows are mainly metal one-over-one double-hung sash. The roof is covered by asphalt shingles and has copper along the seams of the hipped roof. To the north of the large tower is an asymmetrically placed hipped dormer with three rectangular fixed, single-pane windows. On the southwest corner of the building, there is a large octagonal tower that has a hipped conical roof and similar copper accents. The roof of this tower is slightly higher than the roof of the rest of the house but it continues the modillions that can be found around the rest of the structure.

### **Façade**

The façade's basement level, on the south side, of the projecting bay, has two sets of small, deep-set windows with Syrian arched tops and concrete sills. The next set of windows is slightly taller but retains the same Syrian arched openings. The projecting bay then recedes to the rest of the building but the partial entrance porch lies in the ell formed by the projecting bay (Photo 1). On this level, a set of concrete stairs is flanked by two iron railings and brick that is simply ornamented with thin recessed ovals (Photo 9). Directly adjacent to the entry porch is a one-over-one double-hung sash window with an ochre brick surround. This window's ornamentation consists of a large rectangle of ochre brick with staggered extensions and a flat, stone, lintel with a small stone course that extends slightly from the building. One bay further north, there is a set of three separate canted bay windows. This window bay stretches the full façade. This set of windows consists of two skinny vinyl one-over-one double-hung sash windows flanking a central wider vinyl one-over-one double-hung sash window. To conclude the basement floor, there is a set of two one-over-one double-hung sash windows with the same ochre brick ornamentation as the single window next to the entry porch.

Between the basement and first floors, on the projecting bay, there is a thin, stone, belt course that runs from the edge of the building on the south side and terminates after surrounding the entry porch. The first-floor windows on the tower are framed by orange stone (Photo 7). In between the bays on the tower, there is a thin, two-story recessed brick arch. The window surround includes the first and second-floor windows and has a large decorative, terra cotta, medallion between the two floors (Photo 8). The two bays on the square projecting bay, have

paired rectangular one-over-one double-hung sash windows with an ochre brick frame and stone lintels. In between each window, there is a stretch of ochre brick that continues the two-storied arched window surround with a keystone above each second-story window. The entryway is raised off of the ground and consists mostly of red brick and at the end of the brick masonry, there is the orange, stone, belt course. Above this, there are 7 short Tuscan columns supporting a modillion cornice with a hipped roof. Within the entry porch, there are two simply ornamented single-pane windows. The wooden door surround consists of four pilasters and two side lights. The two pilasters on the farthest edges of the surround are half of the height of the door and protrude farther out from the wall. In between the short pilasters and door, there are rectangular side lights with beaded ornamentation framing them. These lights are slightly recessed from the surround. Below the lights, there is a sill that sits above two ornamental rectangles formed by carving out their edges. The trim surrounding the door is beaded in the same way that the trim surrounding the windows is and the immediate surround of the door is metal. The baseboard at the foot of the surround is tall and lightly ornamented to match the feet of the pilasters. The door itself is made of metal and has a large rectangular window through its center (Photo 10).

On the north wall, above the porch, there is an arched window framed in ochre brick and with a stone keystone. The first set of windows on the recessed bay consists of seven single-pane windows. These windows are grouped in pairs and framed by the same ochre brick that frames the rest of the windows. However, the lowest square does not have an adjacent window as that space is covered by the roof of the entry porch (Photo 9). In the outside corners of each set of square windows, there is a square of red brick. These windows continue in this manner for the full façade of the building. Above the basement windows on the first level is a slightly protruding belt course. Above this, there is a one-over-one rectangular window with a stone lintel. The frame around this window, like all of the other arched windows, extends to the second-story arched window and is constructed of ochre brick. The bay windows continue with a set on each floor. In between the sets, there are coffered rectangles of ornamentation. On the final bay of the façade, the ochre brick ornamentation continues and there is a set of one-over-one double-hung sash windows on each floor. The uppermost windows are arched and have a keystone.

The third-story has a round, orange, stone belt course that wraps around the entirety of the building. On the front façade's southern side is a set of three arched one-over-one double-hung sash ribbon windows surrounded by ochre brick with keystones. One bay north of the tower, there is a set of three one-over-one double-hung sash bay windows bracketed on either side by ochre brick and the top of the window connects directly to the entablature of the roof. There is another identical set of these windows one bay to the north. In the corner of the ell, on the north side, there is a rectangular one-over-one double-hung sash window bracketed by ochre brick sitting directly on top of the belt course and connecting to the eave. The first bay on the rest of the building has four square single-pane fixed windows arranged in a square with ochre brick between each window and red brick in the corners of the ochre ornamentation. The next bay consists of another one-over-one double-hung sash window bracketed by ochre brick and connected to both the belt course and the eaves. Just like the three sets below it, the bay windows are one-over-one double-hung sash windows. The northernmost bay has a pair of one-over-one

double-hung sash windows with ochre brick between them and that same brick framing the edges of the windows.

### **South Elevation**

The basement floor of the south elevation has two recessed arched casement windows on the tower, but the ground slopes up to eliminate the remainder of the basement floor from view (Photo 8/15). In between the basement and first floors, there is a belt course of orange stone. The first-floor windows on the tower are framed by orange stone. In between the bays on the tower, there is a thin, two-story recessed brick arch (Photo 7). The window surround includes the first and second-floor windows and has a large decorative, terra cotta, medallion between the two floors (Photo 8). On the bay adjacent to the tower, there is a set of three one-over-one double-hung sash windows. There is an identical set slightly to the west of these three windows, between the floors there is a red fabricated metal sheet covering two three-over-three windows (Photo 15). Above the sets of three windows, there is a large set of three arched windows. The bottom section of these three windows consists of single-pane, casement windows with the middle and top sections being single-pane fixed windows. There is another identical set slightly to the west. Above each set of the top three windows, there is a large hood mold made from orange stone. These hood molds have ornate feet.

The third-story has an orange, stone belt course that wraps around the entirety of the building. On the tower, there is a set of three arched one-over-one double-hung sash ribbon windows surrounded by ochre brick with keystones. Above this, there is a rectangle of plywood. The two bays adjacent to the tower are different from the rest of the ornamentation on the building. Above the belt course, there are two sets of three one-over-one double-hung sash windows. Bracketing each set of windows there are painted wooden engaged columns, and in between the two sets of windows, there is a space of painted wood (Photo 16).

### **Rear Elevation**

The rear elevation is four stories and is ornamented with ochre brick, red stone, and white wood. On the north side, there is a set of two one-over-one double-hung sash windows with ochre brick ornamentation on the outer edges and between the windows. The lintel and sill are constructed of orange stone with the sill being part of an orange stone belt course that stretches around this elevation. To the north of this set of windows, there is one one-over-one double-hung sash window surrounded by red stone (Photo 12). This red stone section runs the full height of the façade. To the north of the red stone, there is a one-over-one double-hung sash window ornamented with ochre brick on either side with an orange stone lintel and a matching sill that is part of the previously mentioned belt course. The next set of windows consists of three single-pane casement windows set into a squat recessed arch with an orange stone sill and a red brick arch. In between this window and the next, the belt course raises a few feet up the wall and then continues straight. When the belt course levels out, there are three evenly spaced one-over-one double-hung sash windows that use the belt course as a sill and each has a distinct orange stone lintel. The spaces in between these windows are red brick. In between these three windows and the next bay, there is a metal door that connects to a large, red, steel fire escape. Next to the fire



escape, there is a continuous set of three one-over-one double-hung sash windows with the belt course serving as their sill and the space between the first and second floors is covered with a red sheet of metal that appears to be coving more windows (Photo 14).

The second floor starts with a belt course that is interrupted by the full-height red, stone section of this elevation. The first set of windows on the second floor consists of two one-over-one double-hung sash windows ornamented with ochre brick. The lintels and sills are each of orange stone with the sill being part of the belt course that runs the length of the elevation. These two windows are the bottom half of two connected arches that, at the top, have two one-over-one arched double-hung sash windows and ochre brick arches with keystones (Photo 13). The sills of these third-floor windows are made of orange stone and in between the second and third floors, there is a rectangle of red brick with a raised rectangle inside of the larger red brick space. The red stone section to the south of this group consists of one-over-one double-hung sash windows on each floor. The next bay, on the second and third floors, is the singular version of the pair of windows on the north corner. The bottom window is a one-over-one double-hung sash window with ochre brick ornamentation on the edges and orange stone acting as both the lintel and sill. Between the two windows, there is a rectangle of red brick that has a smaller raised red brick rectangle on its interior (Photo 6). On the third story, there is a one-over-one double-hung arched window with an ochre brick keystone. The next second and third-story windows are sets of three single-pane casement windows inside of a squat recessed arch with an orange stone sill and a red brick arch. The next two windows are set in between the second and third stories and are arched one-over-one double-hung sash windows with orange stone sills and red brick arched lintels. In between these two windows and the last bay on the façade, the large steel staircase continues. The bay on the southernmost corner of the rear façade consists of three windows tall casement windows with an orange stone hood mold with ornamented feet.

The fourth story begins with an orange stone belt course that is interrupted by the red stone section of this elevation. The northernmost bay has a pair of one-over-one double-hung sash windows. The pair is bracketed by ochre brick ornamentation and in between the windows there is also a section of orange brick. The sill is made of orange stone and it is a part of the belt course. The top of the window is part of the entablature of the roof. The next bay is part of the red stone section and it is a one-over-one double-hung sash window with the entablature of the roof serving as its lintel. One bay over, there is a single one-over-one double-hung sash window with ochre brick ornamentation and an orange stone sill that is part of the belt course. Its lintel is the entablature of the roof. Adjacent to this window, there is a group of three recessed casement windows that share an orange stone sill and lintel with the roof. The next bay has two one-over-one double-hung sash windows ornamented on the outsides with ochre brick. The interior edges are framed with painted wood and the space between the windows is red stone. Farther south, the next bay is a metal door that leads out onto the large red, steel fire escape. Adjacent to this door is a group of three one-over-one double-hung sash windows that are flanked by painted wooden engaged columns.

There is a large chimney rising from the center of this roof section. Between the chimney and the southern side of the roof, there is a hipped dormer that has two squat one-over-one double-hung sash windows adjacent to a metal door that leads out to the steel fire escape.

### **North Elevation**

The north elevation has no windows and is minimally ornamented with two orange stone belt courses that are interrupted by a red stone section that contains the five doors to the large, red, steel fire escape. On the roof of this elevation, there is a small hipped dormer that has a red, metal door that leads out to the fire escape (Photo 3).

### **Interior**

The interior of this building has been extensively modified from its original form as a result of two renovations. The flooring mainly consists of vinyl tiles with carpet covering some common rooms. Much of the ceiling has been changed to a drop ceiling with mineral fiber and waste paper tiles. In other places, the walls and ceiling are made of painted drywall. The baseboard is a low rubber adhesive piece that is common in dormitories. The interior stairs are covered with textured rubber. There are some limited areas that feature historic wood trim. The historic fireplace locations remain intact and have not been moved since the building's original construction.

Location Map  
Phyllis Wheatley Hall  
927 Park Ave, Norfolk,  
VA 23504  
122-0101



36°51'00"N  
76°16'04"W



Phyllis Wheatley Hall,  
927 Park Ave,  
Norfolk,  
VA 23504  
122-0101

Photo 6

Photo 3

Photo 13

Photo 12

Photo 11

Photo 1

Photo 10

Photo 9

Photo 14

Photo 16

Photo 15

Photo 8

Photo 7

Photo 2

Photo 5

Photo 4



















































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