1. NAME
   HISTORIC William Penn High School (High Point Normal and Industrial Institute)
   AND/OR COMMON

2. LOCATION
   STREET & NUMBER Washington Drive
   CITY, TOWN High Point
   STATE North Carolina
   CODE 37
   VICINITY OF
   CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 6th

3. CLASSIFICATION

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<th>STATUS</th>
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<td>BEING CONSIDERED</td>
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<td>RELIGIOUS</td>
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4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

   NAME High Point Public Schools, c/o Dr. Edwin West, Superintendent
   STREET & NUMBER P. O. Box 789
   CITY, TOWN High Point
   STATE North Carolina
   VICINITY OF

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

   COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Guilford County Courthouse
   STREET & NUMBER
   CITY, TOWN Greensboro
   STATE North Carolina

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

   TITLE
   DATE
   DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS
   CITY, TOWN
   STATE
The William Penn High School (High Point Normal and Industrial Institute site) occupies a tree-shaded grassy plot on Washington Drive, a thoroughfare that for decades served as the black community's "main street." The three buildings that remain, symbols of Quaker philanthropy and black achievement and pride, are among the oldest tangible reminders of education for black people in the region.

The oldest surviving structures on the campus are large but simple industrial type, one-story buildings—perhaps intended as model factories—constructed in the early twentieth century for students in the manual arts curricula, a plan of study doubtlessly inaugurated to meet the growing demand for skilled factory workers in High Point. One of these is a gable end frame structure sheathed in corrugated metal and lit by double hung sash windows and a distinctive monitor roof.

The other major building is of brick with a low pitched roof and large windows separated by piers, typical of the architecture of textile mills and furniture factories in High Point and the region. The double-hung sash rest in heavy frames with fixed upper lights above. At the end walls, the windows contain segmental arched openings rather than post and lintel type. Molded trim finished the widely overhanging eaves. Inside the single space—now used for storage—is supported by plain beams and chamfered posts.

The largest and best detailed building on the grounds is the main William Penn High School Building, constructed after the Institute was absorbed by the public school system as a high school. At that time, of course, public educational facilities were strictly segregated and the school, though under public ownership and management, continued as the high school for the city's black people.

The two-story Colonial Revival style building is of brick laid in common bond. The main section of the building which contains the auditorium and some classroom space is a pedimented gable end structure to which appendages were added in the rear suggestive of a cruciform plan. On the Washington Drive side (front) a pedimented gable end projection with flanking flatroofed sections extends from the main body of the building forming an entrance space. In the rear is a relatively recent classroom addition.

The projecting three-bay entrance pavilion features a central door with pedimented frontispiece and flanking windows under a belt course. The second floor of this pavilion contains three larger double hung windows in molded frames with keystones and tablets above. The central window is recessed in a blind arch. A central oculus accents the pediment above. This entrance structure is united with the main block of the building by the continuation of a molded cornice and plain frieze. Large windows with fanlights pierce the brick walls of the side elevations at the second level. The arches, defined by two courses of headers, have keystones and terminate in end blocks. At the ground floor are large paired windows lighting to the classrooms on the lower floor.

The ground floor of the building is devoted to classrooms arranged on corridors. A pair of staircases rise to the second floor from the entry hall. The auditorium and stage occupy most of the space of the upper floor. The floor of the auditorium slopes down to a wide stage framed by a post and lintel presceniun which picks up the classical features
Paneled pilasters with stylized capitals rise on either side of the stage opening and support a plain frieze that runs around the room. Classical details also appear over exits and entrances where friezes and molded cornices cap transoms and surrounds. The wooden chairs with their curved backs and fold-up seats are presumably original. The chairs at the end of the row have decorative side panels with stylized paneled and fluted trim.

Secondary spaces on the second floor are primarily utilitarian.
**PERIOD** | **AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW**
--- | ---
PREHISTORIC | ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC
1400-1499 | COMMUNITY PLANNING
1500-1599 | CONSERVATION
1600-1699 | LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
~1700-1799 | RELIGION
1800-1899 | SCIENCE
X_1900- | SCULPTURE

**SPECIFIC DATES**

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The William Penn High School/High Point Normal and Industrial Institute grounds contain three buildings, dating from about 1910 to 1930, which are major community landmarks significant to the history of black people in High Point. The Institute, founded by Quaker philanthropy, moved from Asheboro, North Carolina to High Point in 1891 and served the black community of the region for thirty-three years. After 1924, when the school became part of the city public school system, the name was changed to William Penn reflecting the importance of the Quakers in its early history. As William Penn it continued as an all black school until 1968 when it was closed. Many of the city's community, business, and intellectual leaders taught or were educated here. Two of the buildings are industrial type structures erected to house activities related to a manual training curriculum which was offered in addition to academic training. A large, Colonial Revival style structure remodelled and enlarged to its present appearance in 1930 is the campus focal point.

Because the school's buildings are important reminders of the black presence in High Point and are associated with people and events significant in the broad patterns of High Point history, black education, and Quaker philanthropists they meet criteria A for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

William Penn High School began life as High Point Normal and Industrial Institute in 1891 when the New York Yearly Meeting of the Society of Friends transferred operation of their Negro school in Asheboro to the city of High Point. The first classes were held in a two-room, frame structure erected in 1867 by Solomon Blair as a school and church for the freedmen. One room was designated for the elementary grades with sixty to seventy pupils and the other was equally as crowded. The 20'x20' rooms were wholly inadequate, so in 1894 a new building was erected on a tract purchased a year earlier by the New York Society of Friends. The cost of the new frame structure was $2,900 paid for jointly by the New York Yearly Meeting and both black and white citizens of High Point.

Until 1897 teachers at High Point Normal and Industrial School had been supplied by the Quaker sponsors of the institution. In June of that year Alfred J. Griffin, a graduate of St. Augustine College, accepted the position of principal, and the school began a long and steady growth period. Within five years Griffin had assembled a faculty of nine trained teachers and enrollment had grown to 287, of whom eighty-two were boarding students. A large farm was maintained by the students to provide food which was prepared by girls in the cooking department. Production in 1901 consisted of 508 bushels of wheat, 150 bushels of corn, 600 lbs. of pork, and ample peas and other vegetables. High Point Normal and Industrial Institute was virtually a self-sustained...
unit but a steadily growing student body demanded enlarged facilities. By 1900 the six-year old frame structure and teachers' cottage (added in 1897) were no longer adequate.

In 1900 the students in the brickmaking, masonry, and carpentry departments undertook construction of a new building financed by Ellen L. Congdon, a New York Quaker. The building, named for its benefactor, was 41x80 feet three stories high with a basement, and built of brick made and fired on the campus. Students did the complete work, from digging the basement to installing the roof to completing the interior. Congdon Hall was ready for occupancy in 1901. Furniture for the school was often made by the skilled students, including fifteen tables with drawers, dining tables, a bookcase for the library, china closets, and a wardrobe.

Skills learned in the institute were put to work in the community also. A shoe repair shop served citizens of High Point as well as students; the carpentry class repaired houses in town and built at least one eight room residence; a blacksmith shop was established; and the masonry students built chimneys and foundations for several houses in High Point. Some became so proficient in their trade that they were able to earn $1.25 to $2.00 an hour during the summer of 1901. Girls in the institute were taught sewing, cooking, basketmaking, and dressmaking. Many girls also used their skills to make extra money for their education.

Despite the emphasis on vocational training, High Point Normal and Industrial Institute offered a basic academic education and spiritual training. Each morning classes were opened with twenty minutes of devotional exercises and several religious organizations were formed by the students. Regular examinations tested the academic progress of the pupils from the grammar grades through high school. Some of these completing the academic courses became teachers to train others of their race in the essential elements of education.

The single largest construction period on the campus came in 1910 following the fiery destruction of the frame structure of 1894. Four new substantial brick buildings, two frame structures, and a barn were erected. The oldest building now standing on the old campus of William Penn High School was constructed about that time. In the process of operating the school, the New York Yearly Meeting overextended their financial resources. It became necessary to dismiss several teachers in preference to closing the school. As the enrollment continued to grow, the overworked faculty could not maintain the earlier quality of education. The Society of Friends sold the campus and buildings to the city of High Point in 1923 for use as an accredited high school for blacks.

Upon transfer to the public school system, Alfred J. Griffin resigned as principal and accepted a position as head of the history department. A colleague, Edward Ewsebia Curtwright, a professor of English from Atlanta University who had come to the
institute in 1902, was appointed principal and held the position until his death in 1933. Under his leadership the quality of education improved, rising to an A rating in the listing of the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. When Curtwright became principal the school had six teachers, 115 students, a library of 660 volumes (more than half were fiction), and a classroom building, constructed in 1910-1911, with poor ventilation, less than adequate lighting, and insufficient blackboard space. By the time he died in 1933, Curtwright had expanded the school to 300 students, ten teachers, and a library of 1,534 volumes with reference books being the most numerous. A full athletic program was underway and extra curricula activities such as glee clubs, literary society, and a school paper were flourishing. More importantly, more classroom space was made available for the growing student body.

The records are unclear as to whether an entirely new building was constructed in the academic year 1929-1930, or whether major renovations were made to the 1910-1911 structure. Available evidence seems to support the latter. The description of the earlier building named a two-story brick structure with five classrooms, auditorium, a 20'x40' library room, and an office for the principal. A description of the 1929-1930 structure mentions a two-story brick building, twelve classrooms, auditorium, an 85'x26' library room, and an office for the principal. A gymnasium was also added in one wing of the new (or renovated) structure. Since the old building was valued at $60,000 in 1929, and since $8,500 was spent for improvements during the ensuing academic year, it does not seem logical to build a new $100,000 building only sixteen months later, especially in the midst of the Great Depression. S. E. Burford, principal of William Penn High School for thirty-five years, stated that two wings were added to the old structure about 1930 (possibly to house the new classrooms, library, and gym), which tends to support the idea of massive renovation. A detailed architectural analysis would probably resolve the question of new construction or renovation.

It was during Curtwright's tenure that the name was changed to William Penn High School in honor of the famous Quaker founder of Pennsylvania. The first documented use of the name appeared in the academic year 1929-1930, but it could have been used earlier. There are no principals' reports for the years 1926 to 1929, but as late as May, 1926, the institution was known as High Point Normal School. While Curtwright was principal, 490 students were graduated, 386 in secondary education and 104 in religious education. The emphasis under Curtwright was placed on college preparation. S. E. Burford replaced the deceased Curtwright in 1933 and held the position until the school closed in 1968. The curriculum was again expanded to include vocational training as well as college preparation. Mr. Burford disagrees, however, with a recent newspaper article claiming that the Adam-Millis Corporation established a lab on campus to train students for work in the textile mill. Burford stated that the mill was next to the school grounds and hired a number of the female students as part-time employees, but there was no official connection. The women worked there primarily to earn extra money for their education.
Burford's statement was echoed by Mary Hardy of Raleigh, a 1934 graduate of William Penn High School.

Integration was the death knell for the school. Before the federal government ordered mass integration in the mid 1960s, Penn officials had planned to remodel and enlarge their facilities. An architect had been hired to draw the plans, but then came the orders for integration. Penn alumni and the P.T.A. opposed the concept, preferring to keep the school a part of their black community. Plans for Penn School were scrapped when the official decision of the school board called for the construction of a new, modern facility, T. Wingate Andrews High School. The doors to Penn closed forever.

Vandalism has damaged the buildings over the past nine years and now the remaining structures are threatened with destruction, a possibility lamented by alumni and friends of the institution. Their sentiments are best expressed in the words of Mary Hardy:

Penn was my school. But Penn is not there any more. There is no William Penn. . . . It's sad.

In the past year considerable community interest has been expressed in preserving these important landmarks to the black experience in the High Point area, and staff members of the State Historic Preservation Office, staff of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and a sympathetic school board are actively seeking suitable alternatives to demolition.

FOOTNOTES

1. The High Point Enterprise, Section D, September 4, 1977, hereinafter cited as The High Point Enterprise; and "The History of Education for Negroes in High Point, N. C." (no author, no date, three page typescript), 1, hereinafter cited as "History of Negro Education."


See James Day to Robert M. Ferris and Robert I. Murray. Guilford County Deed Books, Office of Register of Deeds, Guilford County Courthouse, Greensboro, Deed Book 91, p. 267. See also Deed Book 113, p. 256, and Deed Book 196, p. 263; "History of Negro Education," 1; and also Builders of a City, 326.

"History of Negro Education," 1.

History of the High Point Negroes; Builders of a City, 325; "History of Negro Education," 1; and The High Point Enterprise.

Society of Friends, Minutes of the New York Yearly Meeting. Quaker Collection, Guilford College, Guilford College, North Carolina, Minutes of 1900, p. 30; Minutes of 1901, pp. 36, 38; and Minutes of 1902, pp. 17-18, hereinafter cited as Society of Friends, Minutes, with appropriate date and page.

Society of Friends, Minutes, 1900, p. 30; and History of the High Point Negroes.

Society of Friends, Minutes, 1900, p. 30; and "History of Negro Education," 2.

Society of Friends, Minutes, 1900, p. 30; and Minutes, 1901, p. 37.

Society of Friends, Minutes, 1901, p. 37.

Society of Friends, Minutes, 1900, p. 30; and Minutes, 1901, pp. 37-38.

Society of Friends, Minutes, 1901, p. 38.

Society of Friends, Minutes, 1901, p. 38; Minutes, 1902, p. 18; and Minutes, 1903, p. 40.

Organizations included Christian Endeavor Society and Young Men's Christian Association. Society of Friends, Minutes, 1901, p. 37; Minutes, 1900, p. 31; and "History of Negro Education," 2.

Society of Friends, Minutes, 1901, p. 36; and Minutes, 1912, pp. 40-41. The grammar grades began to phase out with the erection of Fairview Street Elementary School in 1902. History of the High Point Negroes.

History of the High Point Negroes; and Society of Friends, Minutes, 1902, p. 18; and Minutes, 1916, p. 43.

Builders of a City, 326; "History of Negro Education," 2; and History of the High Point Negroes.
19 See Builders of a City, 326.

20 Society of Friends, Minutes, 1903, p. 40; Minutes, 1912, p. 42; and Minutes, 1916, pp. 90-91.

21 See Society of Friends, Minutes, 1916, pp. 43, 90-91; Minutes, 1929, p. 32; "History of Negro Education," 3; Builders of a City, 326; and History of the High Point Negroes.

22 Builders of a City, 326; "History of Negro Education," 3; and History of the High Point Negroes.


24 Some sort of major construction took place in 1930 since the report for 1931-1932 lists 1930 as the date of the school's main building. Principal's Annual Report, 1931-1932.


26 Principal's Annual Report, 1931-1932.


28 Principal's Annual Report, 1929-1930; and Annual Report, 1931-1932. School terms ran from September to May.

29 Burford interview.

30 History of the High Point Negroes; "History of Negro Education," 3; and Builders of a City, 326.

31 Principal's Annual Report, 1929-1930. See Annual Reports, 1924-1926.

32 Builders of a City, 326; and "History of Negro Education," 3.

33 The High Point Enterprise; and Burford interview.
Burford interview; "History of Negro Education," 3; and The High Point Enterprise.

35 Burford interview.

36 Researcher's interview with Mary Hardy, November 8, 1977.

37 Integration . . . forever. Burford interview.

38 Quoted in The High Point Enterprise.
ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 6.5 acres

UTM REFERENCES

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

A map of the grounds of the William Penn-Alfred J. Griffin School is enclosed as part of this nomination. The boundaries of the nominated property are shown in a heavy line on this map. They include the front lawn of the Penn School, a portion of the driveway and parking area, a portion of the main building marked 1930 and 1949 and described as "William Penn High," and two additional buildings and support structures shown by dotted lines.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

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FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE: Description prepared by H. McKelden Smith, Survey Specialist
Significance prepared by Jerry L. Cross, Researcher

ORGANIZATION: Division of Archives and History

STREET & NUMBER: 109 East Jones Street

CITY OR TOWN: Raleigh
STATE: North Carolina
TELEPHONE: (919) 733-4763

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL ___ STATE ___ LOCAL X

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE: State Historic Preservation Officer
DATE: January 12, 1978

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

"The History of Education for Negroes in High Point, N.C." No author, no date. Three-page typescript in Survey and Planning Branch, Archeology and Historic Preservation Section, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, N.C.


Superintendent of Public Instruction Records. Division of Negro Education. Principals' Annual Reports. 1924-1933. Raleigh: Division of Archives and History.
The William Penn High School nomination should be amended as follows:

Verbal Boundary Description

A map of the grounds of the William Penn-Alfred J. Griffin School is enclosed as part of this nomination. The boundaries of the nominated property are shown in a heavy line on this map. They include the front lawn of the Penn School, a portion of the driveway and parking area, and the main building marked 1930, 1949, and 1955 and described as "William Penn High," and two additional buildings and support structures shown by dotted lines.

The State Professional Review Committee is not required to review amendments to boundaries of nominated properties.
William Penn High School
Washington Drive
High Point, N.C., Guilford County

UTM References
A--17/590580/3980100
B--17/590580/3979900
C--17/590240/3980100
D--17/590240/3979900