

NORTH CAROLINA STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
Office of Archives and History
Department of Cultural Resources

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Siloam School

Charlotte, Mecklenburg County, MK2441, Listed 9/28/2007
Nomination by Beth Keane
Photographs by Beth Keane, June 2005



Façade and side view



Rear and side view

**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 How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of property

historic name Siloam School

other names/site number _____

2. Location

West side of Mallard Highlands Drive, approximately 0.25 mile south from intersection of John
street & number Adams Road not for publication N/A
city or town Charlotte vicinity N/A
state North Carolina code NC county Mecklenburg code 119 zip code 28262

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination _____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets _____ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant _____ nationally _____ statewide X locally. (_____ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official Date

North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register criteria. (_____ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
_____ 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): _____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Siloam School
Name of Property

Mecklenburg County, NC
County and State

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

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

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

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

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)
Cat: EDUCATION Sub: school

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)
Cat VACANT/NOT IN USE Sub: _____

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)
Other: Rosenwald Fund School

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick
roof Metal
walls Weatherboard

other Brick

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Siloam School
Name of Property

Mecklenburg County, NC
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 a grave.

D a cemetery.

E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

F a commemorative property.

G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture
Education
Ethnic Heritage – Black

Period of Significance

ca. 1920-ca. 1947

Significant Dates

ca. 1920

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.

previously listed in the National Register

previously determined eligible by the National Register

designated a National Historic Landmark

recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other

Name of repository: _____

Siloam School
Name of Property

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10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 1.12 acres

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

Zone Easting Northing
1 17 523720 3910140
2

Zone Easting Northing
3
4
See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Beth Keane

organization Retrospective date March, 2007

street & number 6073 Gold Creek Estates Drive telephone 828-328-8147

city or town Hickory state NC zip code 28601

12. Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Young Properties of Charlotte, LLC

street & number 1510-A Third Street telephone 910-251-5030

city or town Wilmington state NC zip code 28402

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. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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**Siloam School
Mecklenburg County, NC**

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

The ca. 1920 Siloam School is located in northeast Mecklenburg County within the city limits of Charlotte, the county seat, approximately nine miles from the city center. The north-facing school building sits approximately 150 feet from John Adams Road at the top of a slight hill and hidden behind a cluster of trees. The school is situated on a 1.12-acre L-shaped lot. The school lot has been combined with a larger adjacent tract south of the building that is being developed with a number of apartment buildings. A recently paved private road, named Mallard Highlands Drive, runs through the property east of the school, connecting John Adams Road to the new apartment complex. A five-foot wide sidewalk has also recently been installed providing a walkway from the newly constructed Mallard Creek Apartment complex to John Adams Road. The sidewalk is situated on the west side of Mallard Highlands Drive between the road and the school and stops at the road near the north end of the school lot. The walkway continues on the east side of the road and ends at John Adams Road. Several new streetlights are positioned between the school and the sidewalk. In addition, a small parking area has been added east of the school building. The setting of the school is undergoing drastic change as development in this area of the county is rapidly expanding.

The plan for the Siloam School was obtained from the schoolhouse plans devised for the Julius Rosenwald Fund and is referred to as a "one teacher school to face north or south" or the Community School Plan No. 1-A. The school designs were initially issued in four-page pamphlets made available upon request to both white and African American schools. Demand for the designs was so great that in 1924 the pamphlets were reissued as a booklet entitled *Community School Plans* (Hanchett, p. 6).

The one-story frame school sits on twenty brick piers that rest on concrete pads. The simple, single-classroom, gable-front building measures approximately twenty-two by forty-three feet and is clad with unpainted German siding. Overhanging eaves with exposed rafter tails and plain corner boards distinguish the exterior. The three-bay façade features a central recessed entrance with a wood door with five horizontal panels. The entrance is sheltered by a wood shed roof supported by triangular brackets and covered with green roof shingles. Six-over-six double-hung sash windows, with most of the glazing missing, flank the central entrance. A rectangular louvered vent is centered in the gable over the entrance. A four-riser set of wood stairs, currently in very poor condition, ascends to the central entrance. The building has been secured with boards covering the window and door openings.

Originally, the east elevation of the building contained eight tall nine-over-nine double-hung sash windows. Six of the windows, positioned close together, illuminated the classroom. The remaining two windows, also positioned close together, were located near the southern end of the wall and provided light for the industrial room. Of the original eight windows, only five

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window frames remain, namely the two windows positioned near the southern end of the wall and the three northernmost windows. Four of the window frames remain evident on the exterior, while five frames are intact on the interior. Only the middle window in the cluster of three retains the nine lights in the bottom sash; the remaining windows have been boarded up. The center of the wall has a large opening that at one time contained a large wooden garage-type door, installed during the 1970s, to accommodate an automotive business. Two of the windows on the east elevation were removed when the door was installed. Currently the door is missing, and the opening has been boarded up with plywood. An exterior brick chimney, added in ca. 1951, flanks the north side of the opening.

The west elevation of the building displays more random fenestration, with two levels of irregularly-placed windows. An entrance (not original to the school), located to the right of the center of the wall, is flanked on the south side by a tall nine-over-nine sash window. A metal shed roof (also not original) once sheltered the entrance, but is now in a state of disrepair. Two smaller windows, one with twelve lights, the other boarded up (not original to the school), are positioned north of the door. Just below the eave line are three small transom windows, each with six lights. A brick chimney, original to the school, rises through the west slope of the five v-crimp metal roof, south of the entrance.

The south wall (rear elevation) contains a single wood door with five horizontal panels at the southeast corner. A small porch supported by slender wood posts and covered with a corrugated metal roof is currently in a deteriorated condition. A rectangular louvered vent is centered in the gable.

The interior of the school, originally comprised of a large classroom with a rear room divided by a moveable partition and two small cloak rooms, remains remarkably intact. The cloak rooms, each measuring approximately five feet by seven feet, six inches, flank the front vestibule. The cloak rooms, missing the doors, open into the central classroom.

The large classroom measures approximately twenty-two feet wide by thirty feet in length. In the 1950s, the room was divided into living and sleeping quarters. When the building was converted into an automotive garage in the 1970s, the dividing walls were removed. In the southwest corner of the room is a chimney that vented a coal-burning stove. At the rear of the building is an approximate twenty-two-foot wide by eight-foot deep room, originally referred to as an industrial room. The partitioning wall that forms this room was modified with openings in 1951 when the room was converted to a kitchen.

The pine tongue-and-groove floor boards are original. Although a small section near the wide opening on the east wall has experienced some rot and buckling, the majority of the floor is in good condition. The floor joists are unplaned two- by eight-inch boards on sixteen-inch

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centers. Diagonal flush pine sheathing was used between the two- by four-inch unplanned wall studs and the interior sheathing. The lower portion of the interior wall is sheathed with vertical pine tongue-and-groove, three-foot-high wainscoting. The wainscoting in the cloakrooms is approximately six-foot high. A chair rail divides the wainscoting from the horizontal pine tongue-and-groove boards above it. The ceilings are approximately twelve feet high and are also covered with pine tongue-and-groove boards. A square opening in the ceiling of the industrial room reveals two- by six-inch ceiling joists and two- by six-inch roof rafters on twenty-inch centers. One- by four-inch furring strips are nailed on the rafters under the metal roof.

The school has never had interior plumbing. When it was converted to a residence and then a garage, a rudimentary electrical system was added in the form of electrical wires stapled to the walls and several metal electrical outlet boxes mounted on the walls. In addition, the interior paint appears to be original with buff walls and ceiling and walnut-stained wainscoting.

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The ca. 1920 Siloam School meets Criterion A for listing in the National Register, significant for its association with African American education in Mecklenburg County from ca. 1920 through ca. 1947. The school was constructed with the financial assistance of the Rosenwald Fund of Chicago and serves as a rare landmark in the history of black education in Mecklenburg County. It illustrates the period when African American schools in rural locales were constructed through philanthropic rather than public funding. The school also serves as a reminder of the Julius Rosenwald Fund's commitment to the improvement of black education and racial cooperation in the South in the early twentieth century. The period of significance begins in ca. 1920 when the school opened and extends to ca. 1947 when it appears the building ceased to operate as a school.

The school also meets Criterion C for listing in the National Register, significant for its architecture. The Siloam School is an important local example of one of America's largest non-residential experiments in standardized architecture in the early twentieth century. The school was constructed following a state-of-the-art design provided by the Rosenwald Fund and serves as an excellent example of the one-teacher school. Although the school has undergone some alterations, it retains its basic form of a one-story, front-gabled, frame building designed to face north to maximize the available natural light. The interior is remarkably intact retaining the original floors and tongue-and-groove walls and ceilings. The original floor plan, consisting of a central recessed vestibule flanked by cloak rooms, a large classroom, and a rear industrial room, also remains intact. The structural members are in excellent condition. Out of twenty-six Rosenwald schools built in the 1920s in Mecklenburg County, only five were one-teacher schools and Siloam School is the sole survivor of this type.

Historic Background, Ethnic Heritage and Education Contexts

Public schools for black children were non-existent in North Carolina prior to the Civil War. Although some public schools for white children remained open during the War, they all closed at the beginning of Reconstruction in 1865. For the next seven years, 1865 to 1872, there were no state-sponsored schools in North Carolina. The Freedman's Bureau, however, set up some schools for the newly emancipated black population in the decade following the war. Throughout this time period, the North Carolina public school system suffered from both the state's transportation difficulties and pervasive poverty. By 1880, only about one-third of the state's school age children attended school for an average term of only nine weeks (Huneycutt, p. 236).

A shortage of educated workers for Charlotte's expanding economy led to some concern among the city's civic leaders over the lack of available schools in the town. *Charlotte Observer*

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Editor Charles R. Jones submitted a petition in March, 1880, to the Charlotte Board of Alderman demanding the establishment of a public school in accordance with the North Carolina State School Law (1874). In addition, he called on the Board to find funding for schools and to proceed with the election of an eight-member school board. It wasn't until 1882 that Charlotte established its first "graded schools" with separate facilities for African American and white students (*City of Charlotte Board of Alderman Minutes*, March 23, 1880).

Mecklenburg County began to increase its support for education during the 1880s and early 1890s. During this time period the county purchased a number of sites for both black and white schools. The school buildings were locally funded, with the county school board paying for teacher salaries and construction supplies, such as lumber, out of local tax revenues, leading to disparities between the quality of education in wealthier communities and poorer rural ones (Murphy, p. 6).

By 1890, there were forty-three public school buildings in the county for the education of African American children. Many of them were originally built and financed by black churches in response to a desire among the black citizens to be educated. Most of the buildings were one room schools and many were built of logs. There were no school buses and the students often had to walk many miles to school. The school terms remained short and fragmented in order that children could assist their families, most of whom were tenant farmers, with planting and harvesting. Schooling rarely extended beyond the elementary grades for the white children and never for the black students. Teachers tended to be young and for the most part were poorly trained, while the curriculum offered the bare basics of reading and writing. Although the census for 1890 reveals there were 6,617 black children between the ages of six and twenty-one in Mecklenburg County, only about one-half of them were enrolled in school. White children also suffered from a low enrollment (Murphy, p. 4).

During the last decades of the nineteenth century, most African Americans in Mecklenburg County lived in distinct settlements on the outskirts of Charlotte. Living conditions were harsh but over time solid communities with homes, churches, and eventually schools were established. In 1890, a committee of "Colored Citizens" from Mallard Creek (located in northeast Mecklenburg County) brought a petition before the Mecklenburg County Board of Education requesting that the Board appoint a committee of colored men to look after the interests of the colored school in their district. It seems that the African American citizens were attempting to seek control over their institutions, believing that the committees made up of white men failed to take sufficient interest in the welfare of their schools (Murphy, p. 4).

On September 11, 1903, the County Board of Education purchased one acre of land from F. E. Query for \$10.00 for the purpose of building a school house for the black children in the area (Deed Book 202, p. 138). The lot, located on John Adams Road, at the time a dirt road off

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Mallard Creek Church Road, became the site for the Siloam School. It is thought that the first school built on the lot was a log building. It was named after the Siloam Presbyterian Church, located approximately one-and-one-half miles north of the school (Murphy, p. 4). There is no mention of the school in the Mecklenburg County Board of Education Minutes for that time period. It is probable that the first school was built with the assistance of the church, which at one time educated newly freed blacks at a school building on the church property. There are no official records on this early school.

Philanthropic organizations began to take an interest in the state of education for the African American population in the South during the early years of the twentieth century. The Rockefeller-funded General Education Board, begun in 1902, gave southern public schools grants for all types of projects without distinction of “sex, race, or creed.” It began matching funding of State Agents for Negro Rural Schools, which ensured that each state’s education department would have a full-time specialist directing efforts. The Anna T. Jeanes Fund, created by a Pennsylvania Quaker woman in 1908, provided supervisors for hundreds of black school districts who worked to improve community standards of health care, child rearing, and home economics, while also guiding less-experienced teachers. The John F. Slater Fund began funding public high schools, colleges, and industrial training programs in 1911. The Phelps-Stokes Fund undertook a massive survey of Negro education and published the results in two volumes by the United States Bureau of Education in 1916 (Hanchett, p. 3).

All of the agencies hoped that their philanthropic support of black education would promote equality and that supplementary funding would encourage states and localities to increase money spent on schools. The Julius Rosenwald Fund, however, probably did more than all the others combined to help elevate the standard of African American schools throughout the South. Julius Rosenwald, born August 12, 1862 in Springfield, Illinois, the son of German-Jewish immigrants, became president of Sears, Roebuck and Company in 1909. Although he took an interest in a wide range of causes including hospitals and health care, colleges and museums, and Jewish charities, his chief concern was the dismal state of education for blacks in the South. In 1911, he teamed up with Booker T. Washington, the country’s preeminent African American educator, who suggested that Rosenwald establish a fund for the construction of elementary schools throughout the South. By 1915, he had personally given matching funds for approximately eighty black schools in a three-state area. Two years later, Rosenwald set up his foundation to continue expansion of the school building program (Hanchett, p. 4).

The Julius Rosenwald Fund was incorporated on October 30, 1917 for the purpose of administering its founder’s charitable activities. Rosenwald directed the fund to attack the most visible problem – substandard rural elementary school buildings. In 1917, a Rosenwald Fund official wrote “the typical black school in the South was a one- or two-room hand-me-down – an old white school, a rotting log cabin, or even a corncrib.” For its initial decade, rural school

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construction was the major focus of the Rosenwald Fund accounting for all but \$600,000 of the \$4,000,000 spent (Hanchett, p. 5).

Certain conditions needed to be met before the Rosenwald Fund would consider making a contribution. It was stipulated that both state and county authorities and local colored and white citizens be involved in the construction of a new school house. White citizens had to contribute part of the money, since it was felt that white leadership was essential to the success of the program in the South. In addition, the Negroes themselves had to show their desire for education by making gifts of money or labor, usually both. The program was envisioned as a community enterprise in cooperation between citizens and officials, white and colored (Hanchett, p. 5).

Mecklenburg County erected at least twenty-six Rosenwald buildings by July 1, 1930. Charlotte's school board was completely separate from the county's and did not participate in the Rosenwald program. Mecklenburg remained a predominantly rural county in the 1920s. In both 1920 and 1930, rural blacks numbered just over 12,000 in population and many worked as tenant farmers. The first Rosenwald projects in Mecklenburg County began in 1918-1919 when Mecklenburg County citizens raised matching money for a pair of one-teacher schools in Piney Grove and Zoar. Another one-teacher school was built in 1919-20 at Jonesville, and in 1920-21 four schools were funded, ranging from a one-teacher building at Ebenezer to a four-teacher facility at Rockwell (Hanchett, p. 15).

It has not been determined exactly what year the one-teacher Siloam School replaced the log school, but the Mecklenburg County School Board minutes dated August 2, 1920 report that "W. T. Alexander was before the board in the interest of building a proposed school in Mallard Creek." The school board authorized the building committee to accept the location and to proceed with building on the site. Although the school was never identified by name, the Siloam School is located in the Mallard Creek district. In addition, the Siloam School is mentioned in the 1920-21 Mecklenburg County school budget for colored schools.

Many of Mecklenburg County's Rosenwald Schools often stood near a church. Several of these were Presbyterian, but Baptist, African Methodist Episcopal Zion, and Methodist congregations also built schools. In addition, all the schools were centers of small rural black settlements. Dr. George E. Davis, who raised local money for black schools throughout North Carolina in his job as the state's Rosenwald Building Agent, stated that "building a good Rosenwald school has helped to stabilize industrial and social conditions by encouraging colored people to own and build their own homes near such schools" (Hanchett, p. 16).

A typical day in a Rosenwald school began with devotions which included songs, the Lord's Prayer, and the reading of the twenty-third Psalm. The schools were outfitted with wooden benches and desks facing a large blackboard in each classroom. In a one-teacher school,

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the teacher had to divide her time amongst six or seven grades. One student recalled that there was a cloakroom where the children were disciplined, usually with a hickory stick. The schools were heated by a coal burning potbelly stove and water had to be carried from a nearby spring. Each school had outdoor privies. Recess and lunch provided opportunities for a break from the classroom (Hanchett, p. 17).

Mecklenburg County's black schools often had summer sessions in order to have a fall break for harvesting. Often the children would attend school for half a day so they could go home and pick cotton in the afternoon. The black schools closed completely from late August to early October, although the white schools did not. The students were required to buy their textbooks until the late 1940s when the School Board began to provide them used books (Hanchett, p. 18).

Attendance and budget records exist for Siloam School for the 1920-21, 1921-22, 1922-23, 1923-24, and 1924-25 school years. By this time, the children attended school for a six-month term. Siloam was one of five schools for the education of African American children in the Mallard Creek district. The other schools were New Hope, Youngville, Rockwell, and Jonesville. The 1921 budget for the teacher's salary at Siloam School (#5) was reported as \$50.00 and there were sixty-six registered pupils. By 1923-24, the teacher's salary remained at \$50.00 but there were only thirty-eight registered pupils with an average daily attendance of sixteen. (*Revised and Final Budget of Mecklenburg County Schools, Colored, 1920-21, 1921-22, 1922-23, 1923-24*). The following year, while seventy-two African American school age children lived in the school's zone, sixty-three children were registered, and the average daily attendance was thirty-nine (Murphy, p. 6).

Though it housed grades one through seven, Siloam School employed a single teacher. During the 1922-23 school year, Margaret Gilliard taught at the school. The following two years, Mattie Osborne was the teacher (*Revised and Final Budget of Mecklenburg County Schools, Colored, 1922-23 and 1924-25*). The 1930 Charlotte City Directory lists both women as residents of the City of Charlotte. The teachers would take a bus approximately fifteen miles from the city and have to walk approximately three miles from the bus stop to the school (Murphy, p. 5).

By the mid 1930s, the state of North Carolina began phasing out the small frame schools and attempted to consolidate students into larger facilities. Union schools were constructed that housed grades one through eleven. It was generally felt that the little one-, two-, and three-teacher elementary schools were sorely lacking in the way of instruction, comfort, and sanitation, and were too costly to operate. Mecklenburg County built four black union schools by 1937, one for each quarter of the county. However, consolidation efforts for both whites and blacks were

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not completed until the early 1950s. All of the one-teacher Rosenwald facilities in Mecklenburg County had closed by 1952 (Hanchett, pp. 20-21).

Although it is not clear which year Siloam School ceased to operate, beginning in 1947 the County School Board sought an owner for the Siloam School property. On February 23, 1951, the Board of Education of Mecklenburg County sold the one-acre Siloam School property to Nelson Young and his wife, Cora, and Nelson Samuel Young, Gertrude Young, and Ada Young for \$500.00 (Deed Book 1648, p. 109).

The Young family had an extensive historical attachment to the school. Nelson Young worked as the school's janitor, maintaining the property, starting the fire in the coal stove, and obtaining water from a spring located about one-quarter mile away. After purchasing the building, the Young family used the school as a residence. Nelson and his wife, Cora, moved into the old school with their three youngest children, nine others had left home by this time. The rear industrial room was converted to a kitchen and several walls were added to divide the classroom area into separate rooms. By 1973 Nelson and Cora Young moved into the city of Charlotte. They gave the property to their son, Reverend James Young and his wife Vera (Murphy, p. 6).

James Young had attended the school as a child. At the time, the family lived five miles from the school and he often walked that distance each way to attend school. After acquiring the property, Young converted the school (now a residence) to an auto repair shop. The internal walls, erected by his father, were removed, and he built a large garage door on the east elevation of the school. He closed his shop in the 1980s and the property began to serve primarily as a dumping ground (Murphy, p. 6).

On December 14, 1999, the Youngs acquired an additional .12 acre adjacent to the one-acre school property (Deed Book 10965, p. 737). On July 29, 2005, the 1.12-acre lot was sold to Young Properties of Charlotte, LLC, a development company based in Wilmington, for \$65,000.00 (Deed Book 19115, p. 559). The company plans to develop the surrounding property with new apartments but intends on incorporating the old school as a community center into their overall plan.

Architecture Context

The earliest plans designed for the Rosenwald schools were prepared by the Tuskegee Institute in 1915. They were published in a pamphlet titled *The Negro Rural School and its Relation to the Community*. By 1920, control had shifted to the new Rosenwald Foundation office in Nashville. The updated plans were designed by the director, Samuel L. Smith, and first appeared in book form in 1924 as *Community School Plans*. The book was eventually distributed

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by the Interstate School Building Service and reached thousands of communities throughout the South and beyond. The plans were designed to optimize use of natural light and separate designs were provided for buildings that faced east-west and buildings that faced north-south. The schools came in a variety of sizes ranging from little one-teacher units up to seven-teacher facilities that offered full instruction from first grade through high school. The schools built during the early 1920s tended to be wooden one-, two-, or three-teacher buildings. Additional plans were provided for privies, industrial buildings, and teacher's cottages (Granet, www.aliciapatterson.org/APF2004/Granat/Granat.html).

Site and construction details for Rosenwald schools were specified down to the smallest detail. It was recommended that the site include at least two acres to allow ample space for recreation, although the Siloam School was built on only one acre. It was also recommended that the site be as near the center of population as possible with an ample supply of accessible pure water (Hanchett, p. 6).

When selecting the size of the school, it was recommended that the number of pupils eligible to attend the school be taken into consideration. It was stated that a one-teacher community school would accommodate not more than forty-five pupils (Hanchett, p. 6). The budget for Mecklenburg County Schools (Colored) in 1920-21 reported sixty-six pupils registered at the Siloam Elementary School, but did not report the actual attendance. During 1923-24, only thirty-four pupils were registered and the average daily attendance was sixteen.

The contractors were responsible for every aspect of the construction and the quality of workmanship. Specifications were given for the excavation depth, the foundation, the framing timber, the sheathing of sidewalls, gables, and roof, the weatherboarding and exterior finish including cornice, outside baseboards, corner boards, the interior ceiling, wainscoting, plaster, flooring, roof, windows, and chimney flues. In addition, the Rosenwald Fund permitted only two interior paint schemes: either a cream ceiling, buff walls, and walnut-stained wainscoting or an ivory cream ceiling, light gray walls, and walnut-stained wainscoting (Hanchett, p. 9).

Another important provision was the inclusion of an "Industrial Room" in every design. This room, partitioned off from the classroom, was to provide space for shop and home arts. The moveable partition could be removed to provide additional space for a gathering room for the community (Hanchett, p. 9).

The ca. 1920 Siloam School is an exemplary example of a well-constructed one-room Rosenwald School built to required specifications. The school was built following plans developed by the Rosenwald Fund for a "one teacher school to face north or south" or Community School Plan No. 1-A. The building rests on the recommended brick piers set in concrete. The framing timbers including the sills, girders, joists, studs, plates, and rafters consist

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of No. 1 pine. The quality workmanship is evident in the superior condition of the framing timbers approximately eighty-six years after construction of the school. The major alteration of the building specifications was the selection of a metal roof instead of the recommended composition shingle roof. In addition, German siding was used for the exterior sheathing instead of plain weatherboards. Interior sheathing consists of the recommended No. 2 pine placed on the diagonal. In addition, the entire interior is finished with tongue-and-groove boards, placed vertically up to window height – somewhat higher in the vestibule and coat closets – and horizontally on the upper walls. The flooring consists of a sub floor of 7/8 inch No. 2 pine, laid diagonally across the floor joists and No. 1 well-seasoned pine for the finished floor. The windows on the east elevation were double hung sash with the standard cords, weights, and pulleys, while the transom windows on the west elevation were placed high on the wall.

The building measures twenty-two feet wide and forty-three feet in length. The plans called for a moveable partition near the south end behind the teacher's desk to partition off an industrial room measuring eight feet by twenty-two feet. Cloak closets were placed on either side of the central vestibule.

A 2001 survey of educational facilities in Mecklenburg County built prior to World War II identified nine extant Rosenwald schools out of the original twenty-six. The Siloam School, due to its location a distance from the road behind a large stand of trees, remained unidentified until it was discovered when the property exchanged hands in 2005. The identified extant schools include Billingsville, Caldwell, Huntersville, McClintock, Rockwell, Newell, Smithville (which has lost its integrity due to inappropriate alterations), and Henderson Grove and Lawing (both of which have been transformed into residences). The survey reports that the six identified schools that retain a degree of integrity represent types three and four schools (having three or four teachers) and were built between 1920 and 1929. With the exception of the brick Billingsville School, the buildings are frame and typically have side-gable roofs and banks of four or more nine-over-nine double-hung sash windows with entries typically centered on the long façade. The buildings were originally sheathed with weatherboards, although some of the extant schools have been covered in synthetic siding (Woodard, p. 25).

Of the twenty-six Rosenwald schools built in Mecklenburg County, only four others were the one-teacher plan. They were the Piney Grove School, the Zoar School (both built in 1918-1919), the Jonesville School (built in 1919-1920), and the Ebenezer School (built in 1920-21) (Hanchett, p. 16). The Siloam School is the only remaining one-teacher plan Rosenwald school in Mecklenburg County.

Several Rosenwald schools in Mecklenburg County have recently been approved as local historic landmarks, including the Siloam School. The other designated schools are the 1922

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three-teacher McClintock School, the 1927 four-teacher Billingsville School, and the 1928 three-teacher Newell School. The Billingsville School was also added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1999. The Newell School and the 1920-21 four-teacher Rockwell School were placed on the state's study list in 2001.

The 1922 three-teacher McClintock School, located on Erwin Road, west of Highway 49 in Steele Creek, is one of the best preserved in Mecklenburg County. It was built beside the McClintock Presbyterian Church, the oldest black Presbyterian church in the county. The school's design was adapted from Floor Plan No. 3: Three Teacher Community School. The four-room school accommodated grades one through seven and was comprised of three classrooms, an industrial room, and two cloak rooms – all opening off a short corridor. The simple frame building rests on brick piers, has a high hip metal roof and four nine-over-nine double-hung sash windows flanking the entrance. The interior is finished with wood floors, and tongue-and-groove wainscoting. Unlike the Siloam School, the upper walls and ceilings are plastered, a more common method of finishing the interior. (Hanchett, McClintock Rosenwald School Survey and Research Report, 1987).

The 1927 Billingsville School, located at 3100 Leroy Street in the former community of Billingsville (now Grier Heights subdivision), is one of the most intact Rosenwald schools remaining in Mecklenburg County. The four-teacher school is also the only brick-veneered Rosenwald school in the county. It incorporates the typical design elements of a Rosenwald school, however, including nine-over-nine double-hung sash windows, hardwood floors, tongue-and-groove vertical wainscoting, plastered walls and ceiling, and five-panel doors. The four-room T-shaped plan is comprised of three classrooms and an office (Alexander, Billingsville Rosenwald School Survey and Research Report, 1994).

The 1928-29 Newell School, located on Torrence Grove Church Road in the Newell community of Mecklenburg County, was built to include three classrooms and an industrial room. It was specified as Floor Plan No. 3: Three Teacher Community School. The one-story gabled building faces east-west with the entrance on the long east-side elevation. Identifiable Rosenwald features include five nine-over-nine double-hung sash windows flanking each side of the entrance, tongue-and-groove wainscoting and ceilings, plaster walls, fourteen-foot ceilings, and exposed rafter ends. The building sits on a continuous red brick foundation rather than brick piers (Hanchett, Newell Rosenwald School Survey and Research Report, 1987).

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Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated parcel consists of tax parcel number 029-651-05 according to the Mecklenburg County Tax Records.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the one-acre parcel historically associated with the Siloam School in addition to the .12-acre parcel added to the property in 1999.

Photographs

Siloam School
Charlotte, Mecklenburg County
North Carolina

Photographer: Beth Keane

Location of original digital photos: North Carolina Historic Preservation Office, Raleigh, NC

Exterior views taken March, 2007

Interior views taken July 2006

Views:

1. Façade, looking south
2. East elevation, looking west
3. West elevation, looking east
4. Classroom, looking northwest
5. Classroom, looking south
6. Industrial room, looking west