

Ph0365653

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DATA SHEET

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	MAR 23 1977
DATE ENTERED	APR 1 1977

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC Bethesda Meeting House

AND/OR COMMON Temple Hill Baptist Church

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER 9400 Wisconsin Avenue (Rockville Pike)

CITY, TOWN

Bethesda

\_\_\_ VICINITY OF

\_\_\_ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Eighth

STATE

Maryland

CODE

24

COUNTY

Montgomery

CODE

031

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME Church & Parsonage: Temple Hill Baptist Church/Cemetery: Cemetery Association

STREET & NUMBER 9400 Wisconsin Avenue (Rockville Pike)

CITY, TOWN

Bethesda

\_\_\_ VICINITY OF

STATE

Maryland 20014

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, MONTGOMERY COUNTY COURTHOUSE  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Rockville

STATE

Maryland

21250

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

DATE

\_\_\_ FEDERAL \_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_ COUNTY \_\_\_ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

This property occupies a prominent knoll overlooking Rockville Pike (Route 355) just south of the Capital Beltway. It consists of a cemetery, parsonage and the church itself.

The church is a large, frame structure built in the Greek Revival "temple" form. It is one of very few Montgomery County examples of this elsewhere popular style, and even this building features prominent Gothic-style windows throughout.

The gabled main facade faces east and contains three bays. The central entrance is flanked by two large pointed-arch windows identical to the Gothic-style windows along the sides of the building. The bays are separated by wooden pilasters which also emphasize the corners of the building. The pilasters support a wide frieze that wraps around the structure beneath the eaves. The gable end here is of shiplap siding, and a recessed carved panel reads "Bethesda Church, Rebuilt 1850." The rest of the siding on the church is of clapboards.

Each of the double doors has two raised vertical panels. There is a large, pointed-arch overlight above the doors that features delicate, "foliated" muntins and stained glass panes. The open, two-story pedimented portico that spans the entire front is an early 20th century addition. An old photograph of the church shows a much smaller hood-type portico, decorated with shingles (probably a Victorian addition itself.)<sup>1</sup> A bell (reportedly once owned by Paul Revere) now rests on a wooden frame that is suspended near the ceiling of the portico. True to the Greek form, the church never included a bell tower.

With the exception of the windows, the sides and rear of the church repeat the Greek Revival style of the front, i.e., boxed cornice, frieze and pilasters. The sides are three bays deep and the windows, like those on the front, feature triple sash with a fixed-arch section of foliated muntin atop double-hung, fifteen-over-twenty sections.

The grade slopes downward towards the rear of the church, so that a partial basement is exposed. It is made of stone taken from the ruins of the previous church. The northeast cornerstone of this 1850 church is also from the earlier building. It reads "BMH 1820." At the rear of the church, a small, three-sided apse is cantilevered out over the basement wall. It features two small Gothic windows. The present roof of the entire building is asphalt shingle.

Inside, the church also exhibits few modern changes. An entrance vestibule is formed underneath the former slave gallery. The

See continuation sheet #1

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> _PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> _ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> _COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> _LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> _RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> _1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> _ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> _CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> _LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> _SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> _1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> _AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> _ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> _LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> _SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> _1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> _ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> _EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> _MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> _SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> _1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> _ART	<input type="checkbox"/> _ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> _MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> _THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> _1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> _COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> _EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> _PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> _TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> _1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> _COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> _INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> _POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> _OTHER (SPECIFY) Local History
		<input type="checkbox"/> _INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Architecturally, the Bethesda Meeting House and parsonage represent sophisticated styles that, for one reason or another, never flourished in Montgomery County.

The background of the church and its various congregations is inextricably linked with the history of Montgomery County, from its earliest inception up to present times. In fact, the name of the modern community of Bethesda is taken from this landmark church. The word refers to a place of healing mentioned in the Bible. It is especially significant that present day Bethesda, Maryland, is known world wide as a center of healing, due to the Bethesda Naval Hospital, the National Institute of Health, and the National Library of Medicine located there.

The church is the subject of a recently written, full length book that documents its history fully. A brief summary of that history appears below:

The structure now known as the Temple Hill Baptist Church was originally the Bethesda Presbyterian Church, erected in 1850. The Bethesda Presbyterian congregation had its origins in the group founded by the Reverends Hugh Conn and John Orme, before the Revolutionary War. The group's original meeting house was built on an acre of land deeded to the Presbyterians by Edward Offutt in 1746. The land was in the Captain John Creek area, and the worship center subsequently became known as the "Cabin John" Meeting House.

[The exact derivation of the term Cabin John is unknown. Some assert that the name came from Captain John Smith, the first white settler in the area. Other sources suggest that a stranger who built a log house in the area became known as John of the Cabin. (Clark, The Spirit of Captain John.)]

The records indicate that in its early days the congregations of Cabin John and Bladensburg were united and shared the services of the same minister. One of the outstanding early pastors was James Hunt, who graduated from Princeton in 1759 and was ordained by the Presbytery of New Brunswick, N.J., the following year. Hunt led the United

See continuation sheet #3

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Land Records of Montgomery County, Md.  
 Clark, Eugene & Edythe. The Spirit of Captain John. New York:  
 Carlton Press, Inc., 1970.  
A 250 Year Heritage. 1973 booklet by the Bethesda Presbyterian  
 Church, Bethesda, Md.  
 Historical Discourse...delivered by Rev. Parke P. Flournoy, 1880.  
 Numerous newspaper articles.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 3 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	1 8	3 1 8	3 1 0	4 3 1 9	7 4 0	B					
	ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING			ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING	
C						D					

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

bjn

NAME / TITLE Reverend & Mrs. William B. Adams & Congregation/Michael Dwyer

ORGANIZATION Temple Hill Baptist Church/M-NCPPC DATE 8/26/76

STREET & NUMBER 9400 Wisconsin Avenue/5107 Muncaster Mill Road TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN Bethesda/Rockville Maryland STATE 20014 /20853

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL  STATE  LOCAL

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 *John N. Pearce* DATE 3/18/77  
 TITLE SHPO

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER	
CHIEF <i>[Signature]</i>	DATE 4/18/77
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION	
ATTEST: <i>[Signature]</i>	DATE 4/18/77
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER	

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Bethesda Meeting House  
Bethesda,  
Maryland

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DESCRIPTION (continued)

center aisle is flanked by rows of wooden pews. The original pews (removed to Bethesda, and subsequently taken to a mission in North Carolina) have been replaced by Gothic-style pews from the old First Baptist Church of Washington. To the right of these, the side-window glass is clear, to allow light, while the rest of the glass in the church is rare stained glass, reportedly from Sandwich, Massachusetts. Behind the small, elevated pulpit in the chancel, the light from the apse gives illumination. Present ceiling chandeliers are electric, but marks of the previous gas and oil lamps can be seen on the ceiling which is a high, flat surface.

Attention is drawn to the front of the church by an arched, vault-type opening over the apse. It is trimmed with the same Greek-style pilaster molding seen throughout the building. On both sides of this are slim brick chimney stacks that have been plastered over. They once were used as flues for the heating stove and carried an elevated pipe toward the rear of the structure. The present heating system, like most of the few modernizations here, has been well screened; it rises through grates in the old oak floor between the pews.

To the south of the church is the parsonage. This is a two-story, frame Victorian structure of a modified cruciform plan. Church records show that a "manse" was built here for the preacher in 1851.<sup>2</sup> Subsequent church records were fairly well kept and these make no mention of a later parsonage. If the present building was indeed built in 1851 or so, it was 30 or 40 years before the style became generally accepted in Montgomery County. Although it exhibits traits of the later "Queen Anne" style (shingled gables, one-over-one sash, German siding, etc.), it also possesses a number of "Cottage Gothic" motifs made popular by Andrew Jackson Downing between 1840 and 1870. The house is festooned with hood-type gables, verandahs, scrolled brackets, bay windows, etc., all of these basic to a Downing-influenced house. Although not a strictly Gothic-appearing structure, the design may have been based on a pattern shown in Cottage Residences (1842) or The Architecture of Country Houses (1850).<sup>3</sup>

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PAGE 2

DESCRIPTION (continued)

At any rate, the present building is a particularly noteworthy piece of architecture, and appears to have been standing for a number of years when a photograph of it was taken in 1918.<sup>4</sup> Downing and his protege, Calvert Vaux, had designed the Dodge houses in Washington in the 1850's. Rev. Smith, rector at Bethesda Church at that period, was a native of New England and a former Baltimore merchant, who was certainly aware of developments in architecture outside of Montgomery County.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Photograph appears in the Washington Star, "Rambler" article, May 18, 1919.

<sup>2</sup>Eugene & Edythe Clark, The Spirit of Captain John (New York, 1970), p. 131.

<sup>3</sup>Carolyn Flaherty, "The Domestic Architecture of Downing," Old House Journal (New York, October 1974).

<sup>4</sup>Unpublished glass-plate negative in the "Rambler" collection, Columbia Historical Society, Washington, D.C.

<sup>5</sup>Georgetown Architecture, Historic American Buildings Survey Selections, #10, 1970, by the Commission of Fine Arts and H.A.B.S., pp. 17-36.

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (continued)

congregations during the time of colonial unrest and was an ardent advocate of an independent America. In 1779 Hunt acquired 365 acres in Montgomery County; the land was about six miles south of Rockville and bounded on the east and west by present day Old Georgetown and Seven Locks Roads. It was at this farm, named Tusculum after a mountain outside of Rome, that he founded the first private secondary school for boys. Many of the students boarded at the nearby home of Samuel Wade Magruder. Perhaps Reverend Hunt's most famous pupil was William Wirt, who served as U.S. Attorney General from 1817 to 1829, and was a presidential candidate in 1832 on the Anti-Masonic ticket. After Reverend Hunt's death in 1793 the Cabin John congregation became affiliated with those at Seneca and Difficult, abandoning its connection with Bladensburg.

In 1820 the Presbytery of Baltimore directed that a church be organized on the Rockville Pike for Presbyterians in the southern reaches of the Cabin John congregation. The Elders purchased a parcel of land on the Pike, which was part of the tract Leeke Forest, and either built or converted a structure already there to serve as the Bethesda Meeting House. John Mines was pastor of the Bethesda and Rockville congregations from 1823 to 1849. He also served as the principal of the Rockville Academy.

The first Bethesda Meeting House was destroyed by fire on November 23, 1849. The pastor, Randolph Smith, immediately set out to build a new church. He not only solicited subscriptions, but also participated in the actual construction. The stones of the original structure were used as the foundation of the new wooden church. This new building, on a hill overlooking the Rockville Pike, served as the Bethesda Presbyterian Church from 1850 until 1925 when the congregation decided to erect a new church farther south in Bethesda. The records of the church contain references to the baptisms, marriages and funerals of many of the area's prominent families. Among them were the names Magruder, Stone, Willson, Perry, Veirs and Muncaster.

When the church moved to its new location, the trustees sold the building and seven acres of land to May Fitch Kelley in 1925. The Presbyterian congregation, however, retained ownership of the cemetery and the graveyard. Mrs. Kelley, who held the property for twenty years,

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (continued)

sold it to a Catholic missionary group, the White Fathers (a Canadian group). After several changes of ownership, the property was purchased by the trustees of the Temple Hill Baptist Church in the 1950's. Reverend William B. Adams, the pastor since then, has turned down several lucrative offers to sell the property, and he and his congregation have recently embarked on a program to restore the old church.