

Site: M:26/10/72

Rockville Presbyterian Church

Built: 1930

215 West Montgomery Avenue

Architect: Howard W. Cutler

Builder: A. Warthen

Private

The design of this 1-1/2 story cruciform stone church was influenced by its predecessor and by the English Gothic Parish Church model. The Presbyterians moved from their 1873 building to this site when the 1931 Montgomery County Courthouse was constructed. Church furniture and artifacts from two prior Meeting Houses were reused in the new building. The Rose Window in the front facade was not part of the architect's original design, but was incorporated, along with the pews and church bell, as part of the church's legacy. Growth of the congregation necessitated an addition to the church building and an educational building in the 1950s.

# Maryland Historical Trust

## State Historic Sites Inventory Form

### 1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Rockville Presbyterian Church

and/or common

### 2. Location

street & number 215 West Montgomery Avenue  not for publication

city, town Rockville  vicinity of congressional district 8

state Maryland county Montgomery (RV Planning Area 4)

### 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

### 4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Trustees of the Rockville Presbyterian Church

street & number 215 West Montgomery Avenue telephone no.: 762-3363

city, town Rockville state and zip code Maryland 20850

### 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Montgomery Co. Land Records 399  
liber 1235

street & number Montgomery Co. Courthouse 374  
folio 238

city, town Rockville state Maryland

### 6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title National Register of Historic Places (1974)

ite City of Rockville Historic District (1974)  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records City of Rockville

city, town Rockville state Maryland

# 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved    date of move _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

The Rockville Presbyterian Church faces south on West Montgomery Avenue, an irregular "T" shaped complex sited on three lots consisting of a 1930 church structure with attached 1950 office building and 1959 education building. The long axis of the T is parallel to West Montgomery. The Church building, as the short axis, is set well back from the street. The complex is well landscaped with azaleas, hydrangeas and evergreens, a generous expanse of lawn and two towering ancient oaks along the public sidewalk in front. Parking areas occupy the rear of the site and are accessed from Harrison Street.

The tower fronted 1-1/2 story "T"-shaped church is clad with irregularly coursed rough cut fieldstone trimmed with granite lintels and sills. The foundation is fieldstone, and the cross gable church roof and hipped roof within the crenelated tower are covered with slate. A tall fieldstone chimney is at south west arm of the T. A rectangular frame and stucco 2-1/2 story education building, end gabled with a composition shingled roof, was built onto the north end of the church in 1950. In 1959, a larger flat roofed two story assembly and education building was constructed and connected to the church by a covered arcade. The education building is frame and cinder block construction, stuccoed on the exterior with some stone facing and trim to match the church. A fenced-in children's play area is located in front of the addition.

Rockville ecclesiastical architecture was influenced by a number of movements, but the predominant and longest lasting model was the stone or brick open hall Anglican parish church executed in the English Romanesque influenced Gothic style.\* With the double influence of Rockville's early Episcopal Church tradition and the general popularization of the parish church style in the mid 1800's, the style was accepted in Rockville as appropriate to a substantial established church congregation, and was adopted by other non-Anglican/Episcopal sects by 1900.

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 \* Because of its modest size and use, the English parish church retained the heavy pier buttresses, massive walls, and horizontal focus typically connected with earlier Romanesque architecture. This ecclesiastical architecture was spread to America through the Anglican Church in Colonial Times, and to Rockville as the site the 1728 Chapel-of-Ease and later Rock Creek Chapels. The Cambridge Camden Society's publications in the 1840s promoted this style of church architecture in America and found an avid supporter in William Rollison Whittingham, Episcopal Bishop of Maryland from 1840 to 1879, whose intense interest in architecture led him to establish an architectural society in Maryland.

continued on attachment 7.1

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Rockville Presbyterian Church  
Attachment 7.1

The 1930 Rockville Presbyterian Church replaced an 1873 brick structure which was demolished to build the 1931 Courthouse. The later building was influenced by the earlier and reused some of the older building's windows and doors and pews as well as reproducing the basic three part symmetrical front. The 1873 church facade had brickwork suggestions of a tripartite arcade; two minor arches inset with Gothic windows on each side of a central large arch inset with door and rose window. The facade continued to a tall pointed belltower, emphasizing the vertical. Although this previous building appears to have been somewhat larger, as measured by the width of the Rose Window, it appears less weighty and massive than the present 1930 example.

The 1930 church is more faithful to the Parish Church model in its weight, material, structure, and overall horizontal appearance than its 1873 predecessor. It also has a high base, but with fully expressed stepped pier buttresses which project from the ends of the main walls, emphasizing their massive width. There are lesser buttresses on the wall surfaces. The window and door openings vary in treatment with the major tower having granite or cast stone surrounds. Other windows and doors have granite/cast stone sills, keystone, and two flanking granite blocks on the curve of the pointed arch. The flat 2-1/2 story crenelated front and flanking one-story side towers establish a weighty horizontal, rather than vertical focus. The exterior fieldstone, a less pliable material than brick, less capable of delicate detail and heavier in appearance, is better suited to the Romanesque-influenced English Gothic.

The south (front) facade has a granite-capped parapet extending into a projecting stepped buttress on each side. The facade is fronted by three flat crenelated towers: a 2-1/2 story entry tower with stepped corner buttresses incorporating pointed granite tops and steps and topped by a granite moulding surmounted by a crenellated parapet capped with granite. The rose window from the 1873 structure is centered in the tower with the pointed arch double wood doors below, accessed by four concrete steps with iron railings. Large pointed windows with Gothic tracery are on the east and west sides of the tower. Flanking one story side towers have crenelated parapet tops and moulding and one stained glass window on the south facade. The windows have granite sills only.

The east facade is composed of the main body of the T shaped church and the east arm of the T. It has four buttressed bays, each containing two pointed windows. An entry door appears in the fifth bay accessed by three concrete steps and a granite sill. The arm has two windows on the south, one window on the east, and connects to the the office building on the north.

continued on attachment 7.2

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Rockville Presbyterian Church  
Attachment 7.2

The west facade is similar to the east. It has four bays with two stained glass windows in each bay. The fourth bay is defined by a chimney rather than a buttress. The south side of the arm has diamond patterned leaded glass window. The west facade has one window and the north facade has two windows.

The 1950 frame 2-1/2 story office building has been stuccoed. The five-bay west facade has five 6/6 windows, common to the building, on the second story. One window is in each of the four north bays of the first story. An exterior door is in the south bay, leading to a covered, fieldstone-clad, three-bay arcade with cast stone arch surrounds which connects to the education wing.

The three-bay north facade of the 1950 addition has a triangular ventilator occupying the gable peak, and one window in the gable. One window is in each of the three second story bays, and in the east and west bays, first story. An exterior door, wood with one light, is in the center bay. The five-bay west facade has one window in each bay, both stories.

The three-story education wing is flat roofed, and the major portion of the exterior is stuccoed. The seven-bay south (front) has a window in each of the east four bays on all three stories. The facade is partially faced with fieldstone and includes a square crenelated tower portico in the fifth bay, first story. West of the portico, the stuccoed facade projects south with one window centered each story. Cast stone copings and sills duplicate the treatment of the small window on the Church's small flanking towers. The five-bay east facade has four window bays to the south on each story and a first story north bay with an exterior door connected to the arcade.

The education wing's nine-bay north facade is stuccoed. Each bay has a modern aluminum 1/1 windows with a cast stone sill. The second story has a three-part window occupying the eighth and ninth bays. Windows on the first story reach nearly to the ground level.

The wing's five bay west facade has one window in each of the four south bays on the first and second stories. The third story has three evenly-spaced windows over the first four bays. The north bay has one window located on the first and third stories in the first bay. A window is also located in the second bay on the second floor. All windows have coursed cast stone sills. Steel ventilation vents are located in the third bay on the second story and in the second bay on the third. Cement stairs with a steel balustrade lead down to a steel basement door.

The L-shaped rear parking lot is paved up to the building line. In the crook of the L is a privately-owned and maintained tennis court, which is separated from the church lot by a fence line and trees.

# 8. Significance

Survey No. M:26/10/72

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 type="checkbox"/> other (specify)			
	<input type="checkbox"/> invention						

Church - 1930

1930 -H.W.Cutler(B) A.C.Warthen(A)

**Specific dates** Education Bldg. 1959 **Builder/Architect** 1959 - John F. Stann(B)

check: Applicable Criteria:  A  B  C  D  
and/or

Applicable Exception:  A  B  C  D  E  F  G

Level of Significance:  national  state  local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

### Significance

This Gothic-influenced stone building was constructed in 1930 nearly a century after the erection of the first frame "Meeting House" by Rockville's Presbyterians. Members of this congregation have played important roles in the history of the City as well as providing dedicated service to this still-growing and vital religious and educational center.

### History and Support

The Presbyterian Church in Rockville entered a new era when the cornerstone of this Gothic-style stone building was laid on March 20, 1930. 1/ The history and traditions of the century-old congregation were celebrated in the artifacts encased in the stone and in the reuse of traditional church furniture and other items associated with its past. One of the memorial objects brought from the old Church was a marble slab inscribed to the memory of Reverend John Mines. This tablet occupies a prominent place in the entry vestibule and is a reminder of the Church's beginnings.

In the early 19th century, the Presbyterian Meeting House was called Bethesda. It was the successor to the 18th century meeting house at "Captain John". The Rev. John Mines (1771-1849) became the pastor for the Bethesda Church, but also served the Rockville/Captain John congregations. 2/ In 1822 he married the widowed Eliza Beall of "Rose Hill" near Rockville. This estate was located on Falls Road (sometimes called "The Road to Captain John" in early deeds). In the same year Rev. Mines accepted the position as Principal of the Rockville Academy, where he taught for 15 years. 3/ Rev. Mines was also involved in the formation of the local Bible Society in 1828 but is chiefly remembered for his 30 years of dedicated service to the Presbyterian Church.

continued on attachment 8.1

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Rockville Presbyterian Church  
Attachment 8.1

By 1832 the Rockville Presbyterians numbered enough to establish their own meeting house. Lot 52, at the northwest corner of Jefferson and Adams Streets was purchased; the frame building constructed there would be used until 1858. 4/ This small building then served as the house of worship for the Disciples of Christ until the construction of the present Bell Tower building in 1893.

The second site of the Rockville Presbyterian Church was opposite the Courthouse on Court Street. The congregation occupied this site from 1859 to 1929, although the building was destroyed by fire in March, 1873. This loss was the catalyst for the earliest organized fire fighting efforts when the Town Commissioners voted "To cause six ladders to be built and stored at convenient points around town". 5/ The Commissioners also voted \$1-\$2 payments to the several "colored men and women" who helped battle the blaze or provided "special services at the direction of the Commissioners."

The Presbyterians soon raised the funds to rebuild on the same site; the 1874 brick Church is pictured in the attached photograph. As the population of the newly developing suburbs around Bethesda and Rockville expanded with the coming of the railroad, the Presbytery of Maryland ordered that the congregations be split. In 1890 Rockville received its own pastor, and a parsonage was constructed on the Forest Avenue lot donated to the Church by the Edwin Smith family. 6/ The Smiths played an important role in the Church for two generations, serving as organists, trustees, officers and elders.

Miss Lucy Neville Smith was a member of the congregation for 80 years. Her recollections of both the "old Church" and turn-of-the-century Rockville are invaluable sources for social/cultural history of the town. The Church has honored her memory with a memorial garden.

In 1929 Montgomery County planned a new Courthouse but stores, residences and the Presbyterian Church lay in the path of expansion. "The Minutes of the Sessions" of the Church for April 26, 1929 record the proposals from the County Commissioners to purchase the Church site. Discussions by the Trustees included suggestions for purchase of a new site on Washington Street, but by November, 1929, final approval was given for the purchase of the Dawson property on "Main Street". The Church received \$35,000 for the Court Street property and paid \$7,350 for the Dawson residence and lot on (now) West Montgomery Avenue. 7/ The Dawson residence was resold to Walter S. Nicewarner, who moved it to a prepared lot one block north; it is now 215 Harrison Street. (Survey Site M:26/10/60)

continued on attachment 8.2

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Rockville Presbyterian Church  
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Howard W. Cutler, a Washington D.C. architect, was hired to design a new building of comparable size for the 70 member congregation. Mr. Cutler based his design on the 12th century Gothic architectural vocabulary, using stepped buttresses flanking the crenellated entry tower, mullioned lancet windows, and native variegated stone with granite trim. However, the building committee insisted on a modification of his original plans to incorporate the Rose Window removed from the old Church. Mr. Cutler's arguments for architectural purity were no match for the tradition-minded congregation, and this stained glass window now decorates the facade of the entry tower. 8/  
The original pews and church bell were also removed from the old building to the present church.

While the new building was under construction, services were held at the clubhouse of the Montgomery Country Club on Williams Street. In 1950 an addition was made at the north end, when education/office space was added, but the population of the Rockville area (and the Church membership) continued to increase at an explosive rate. In 1955, 117 new members were added to the church rolls and the trustees noted that "we have no more partitions to move to advantage"; and that additional space was needed. 9/

The adjoining property on the west of the Church lot, once the home of the Talbott-Welsh families, was purchased for the Church in 1955. John F. Stann designed the three story Education building to echo materials and details of the original Church building. 10/ It combines cast and natural stone over cinder block construction. An arcade links the two buildings. The residence on this lot was used as an annex until its demolition in 1980. The addition of a new choir loft/balcony took place in 1968.

Today the Rockville Presbyterian Church congregation numbers over 500. A roster of its dedicated members includes many whose family names would have been familiar to Rev. Mines in the early days of the Church. A long line of distinguished pastors has led this Church and watched it flourish and grow, an integral part of the history of Rockville.

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Footnotes:

1. The Washington Post, March 31, 1930 and April 29, 1939
2. "Bethesda Presbyterian Church - A 250 Year Heritage" Church Publication, Oct. 1973.
3. Rockville True America, April 24, 1822 noted "The Rev. J. Mines as Principal of the Rockville Academy took charge on Monday last..."

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Rockville Presbyterian  
Attachment 8.3

4. Montgomery County Land Records BS 11/314 (1832).
5. Records of the Rockville Town Commissioners, Minutes of March 4, 1873.
6. The history of the Presbyterian Manse is documented on Maryland Historic Trust Survey M:26/10/58. See also Survey Form M:26/10/57 for Edwin Smith House.
7. Montgomery County Sentinel, September 20, 1929 and December 6, 1929.
8. This window had been donated by Miss Henrietta Dunlop, sister of Rev. Mines' third wife Mary Dunlop. Rev. Mines married her when he was age 71. After Mary Mine's death, "Rose Hill" passed to Henrietta Dunlop. Also of interest is the fact that memorial windows were also presented by the Wilson family, one of whose members, Ann Wilson Bullard has owned and resided at "Rose Hill" for nearly 50 years.
9. Rockville Presbyterian Church Brochure (1955). The appeal for funds for the building program included the floorplans ( Attachment 8.4).
10. Church newsletters, photos, architect's drawings and other material from the church archives. Interviews with Mrs. B. Wagner and Mrs. Frank Williams.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. M:26/10/72

Rockville Presbyterian Church Archives; Church Histories of Rockville and Bethesda Churches; The Spirit of Captain John, Carlton Press, Inc. (1970); Newspaper abstracts 1822-1955; Family and property histories for Minés, Smith, Brewer, Wilson, Reading, Welsh. Records of the Rockville Town Commissioners; Historic District Commission files.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle name \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle scale \_\_\_\_\_

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

B	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

C	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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D	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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E	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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F	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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G	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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H	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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## Verbal boundary description and justification

Lots 5,6,&7 of Beall's Subdivision as per 1875 Survey.

## List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code

state	code	county	code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Anne Cissel	Judy Christensen, Arch. Description
organization	Peerless Rockville	date May 1986
street & number	P.O. Box 4262	telephone 762-0096
city or town	Rockville	state Maryland 20850

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust  
Shaw House  
21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 269-2438

M: 26/10/72

Rockville Presbyterian Church

Attachment 8.6

Architect's

Concept of completed Presbyterian Church Complex  
after planned Education Addition.



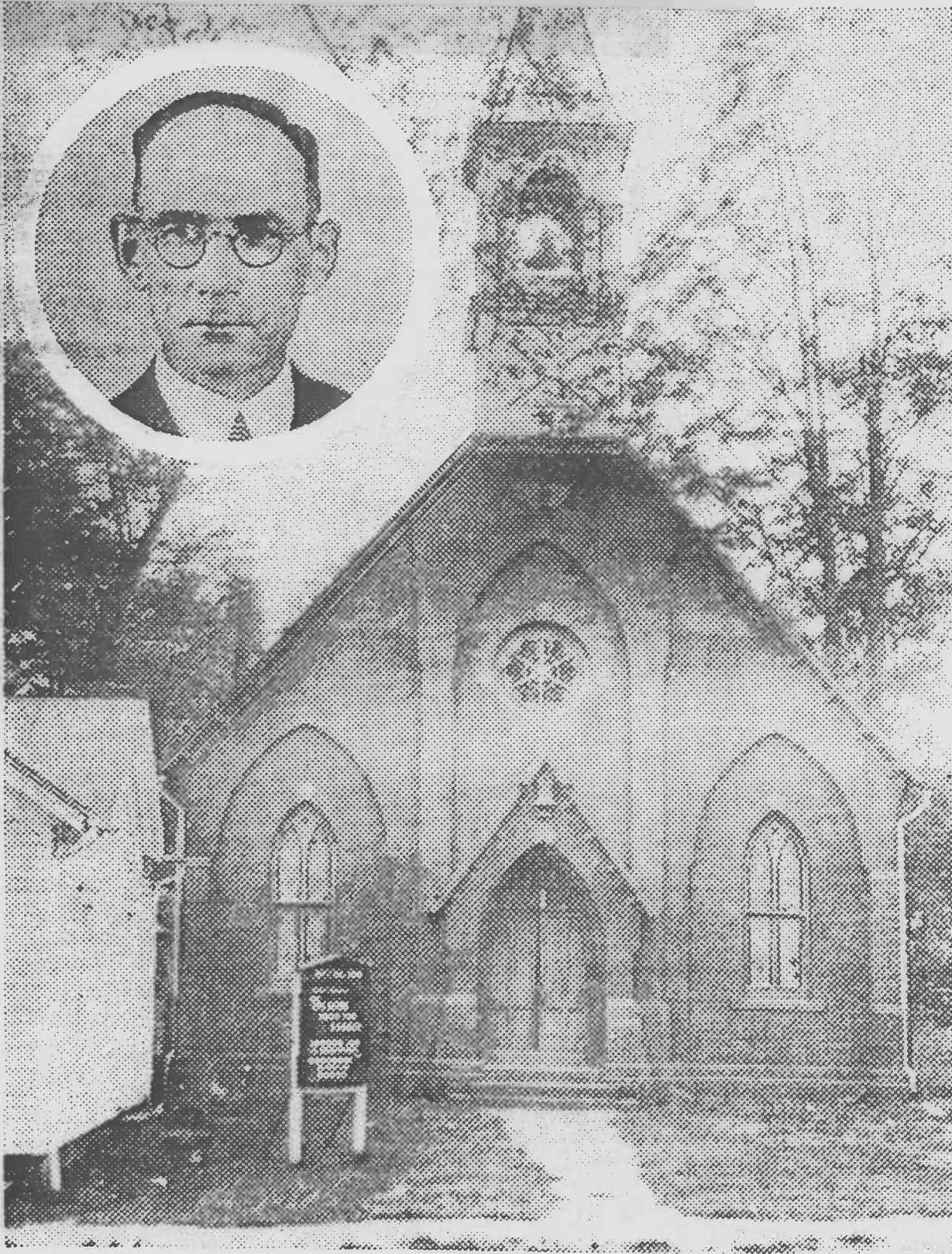
PROPOSED PLANS -- (NEVER COMPLETED)

M: 26/10/72

Rockville Presbyterian Church

Attachment 8.7

Photograph of 1874 Rockville Presbyterian Church  
Courtesy Montgomery County Historical Society

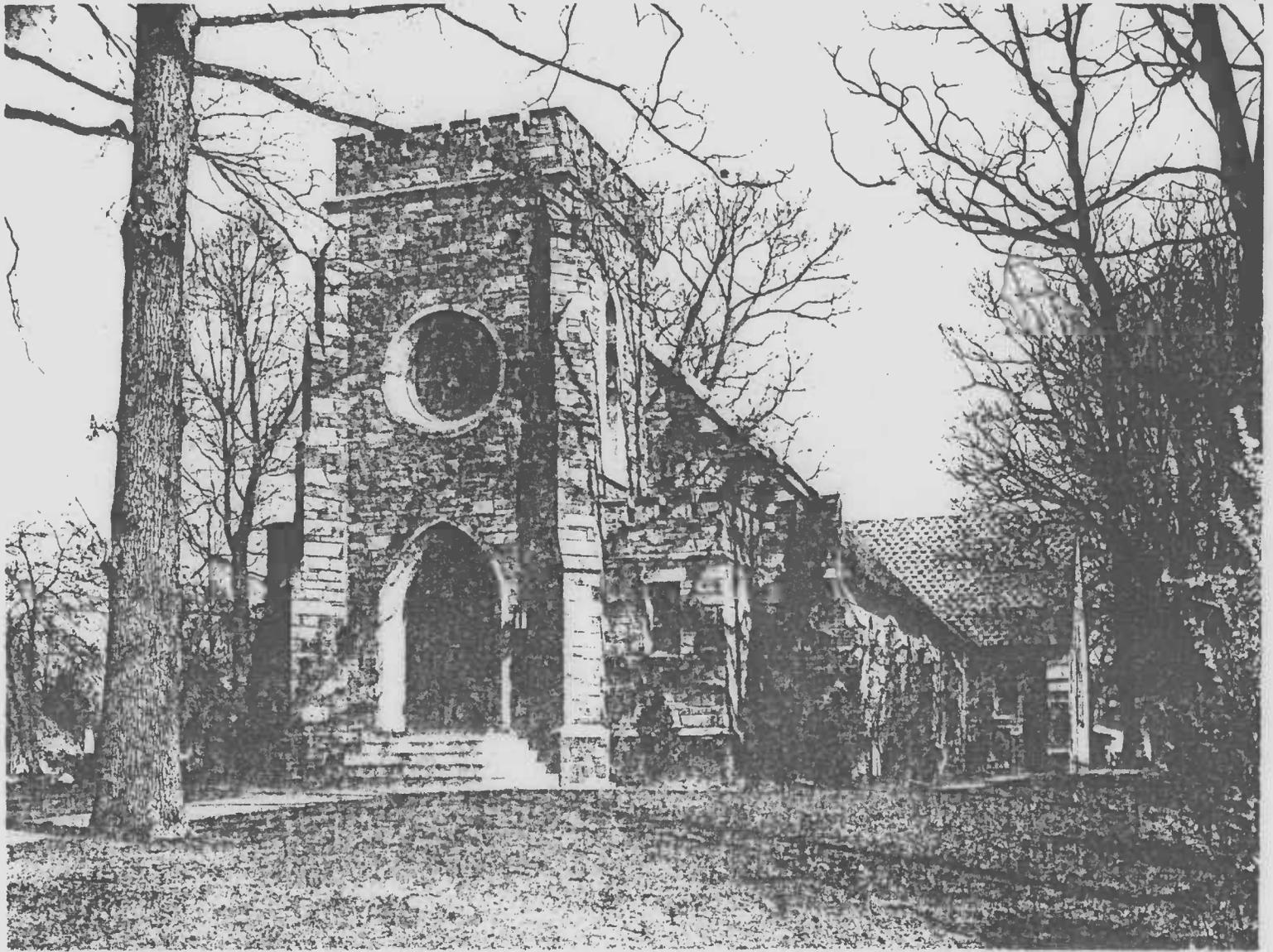


THE OLD  
ROCKVILLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
HENRY K. PASMA, MINISTER  
Montgomery County Historical Society - Photograph of 1874 Church Building

M: 26/10/72

Rockville Presbyterian Church  
Attachment 8.8

Photograph of Rockville Presbyterian Church ca. 1930



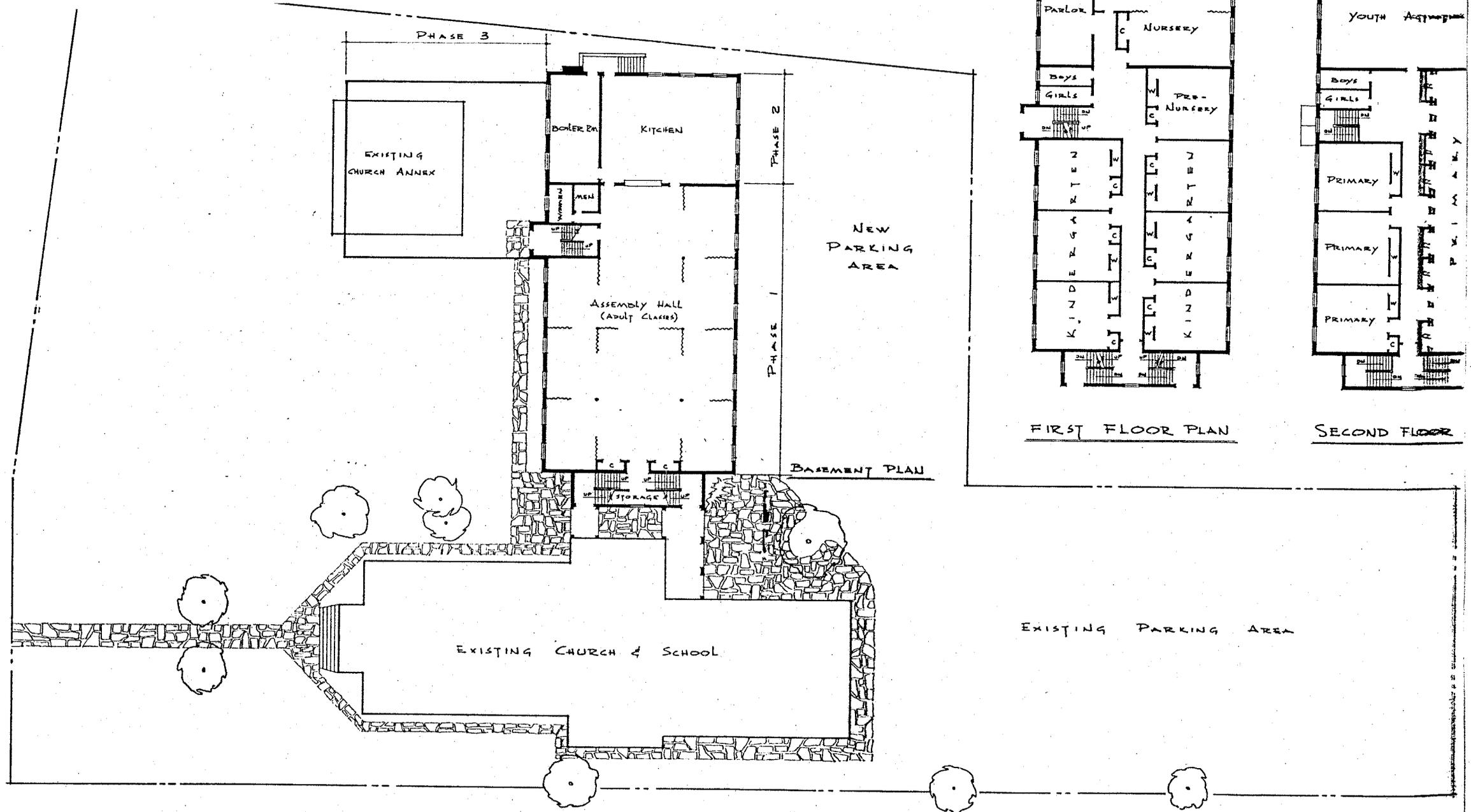
Courtesy of Rockville Presbyterian Church ca. 1930

M: 26/10/72  
Rockville Presbyterian Church  
Attachment 8.4

Proposed Plans for Rockville Presbyterian Church Education Building,  
Courtesy Rockville Presbyterian Church.

1955 Brochure - Rockville Presbyterian Church Building Fund Appeal  
Proposed Plans for Education Building

W. MONTGOMERY AVE.

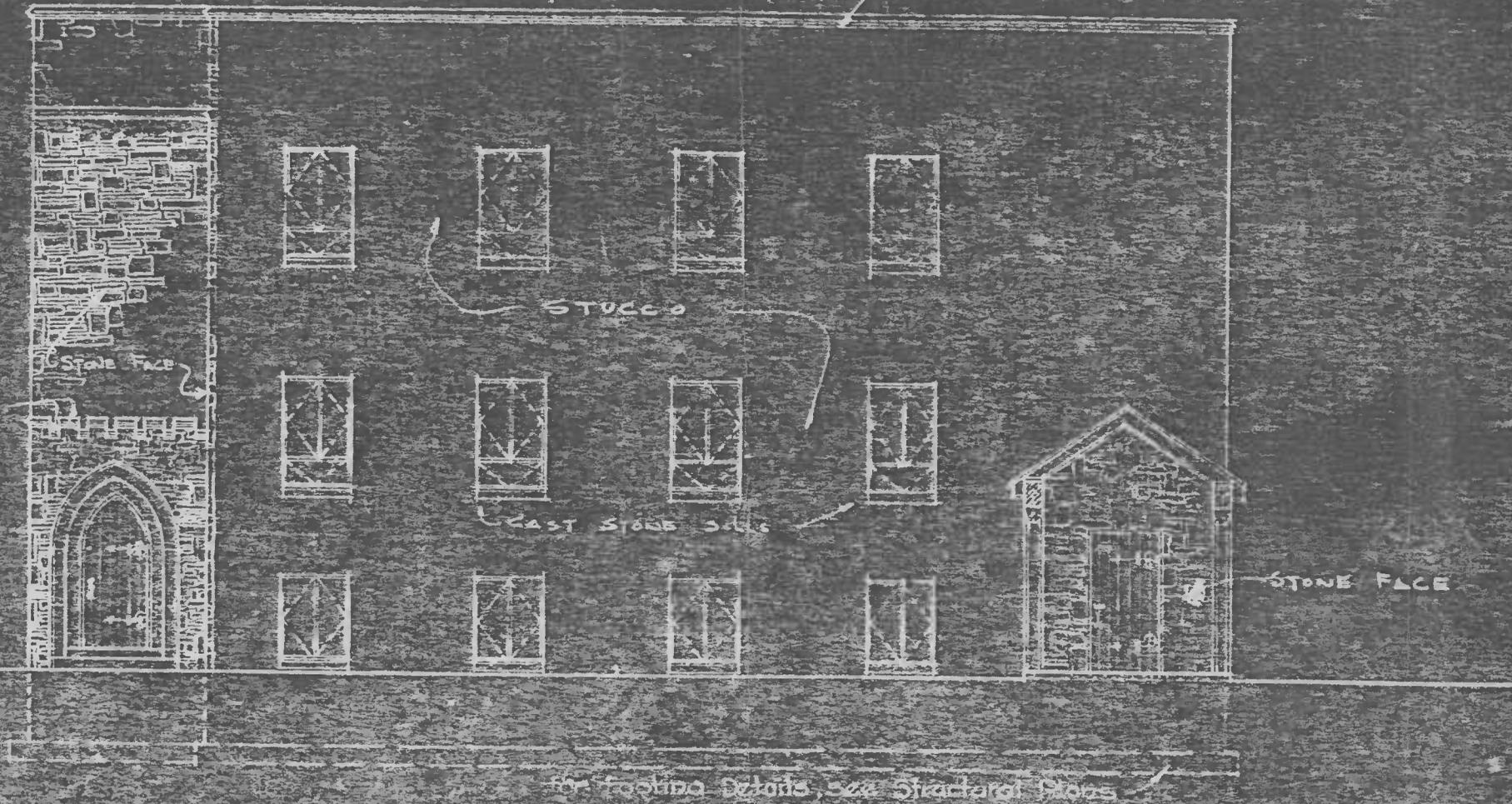


M: 26/10/72

Rockville Presbyterian Church  
Attachment 8.5

Architect's Drawing for Side elevation  
1959 Rockville Presbyterian Church Education Building.

CAST STONE COPING



SIDE ELEVATION

SCALE 1/8" = 1'-0"

12"  
4"

1959

ARCHITECT'S DRAWINGS - EDUCATION BUILDING

# City of Rockville

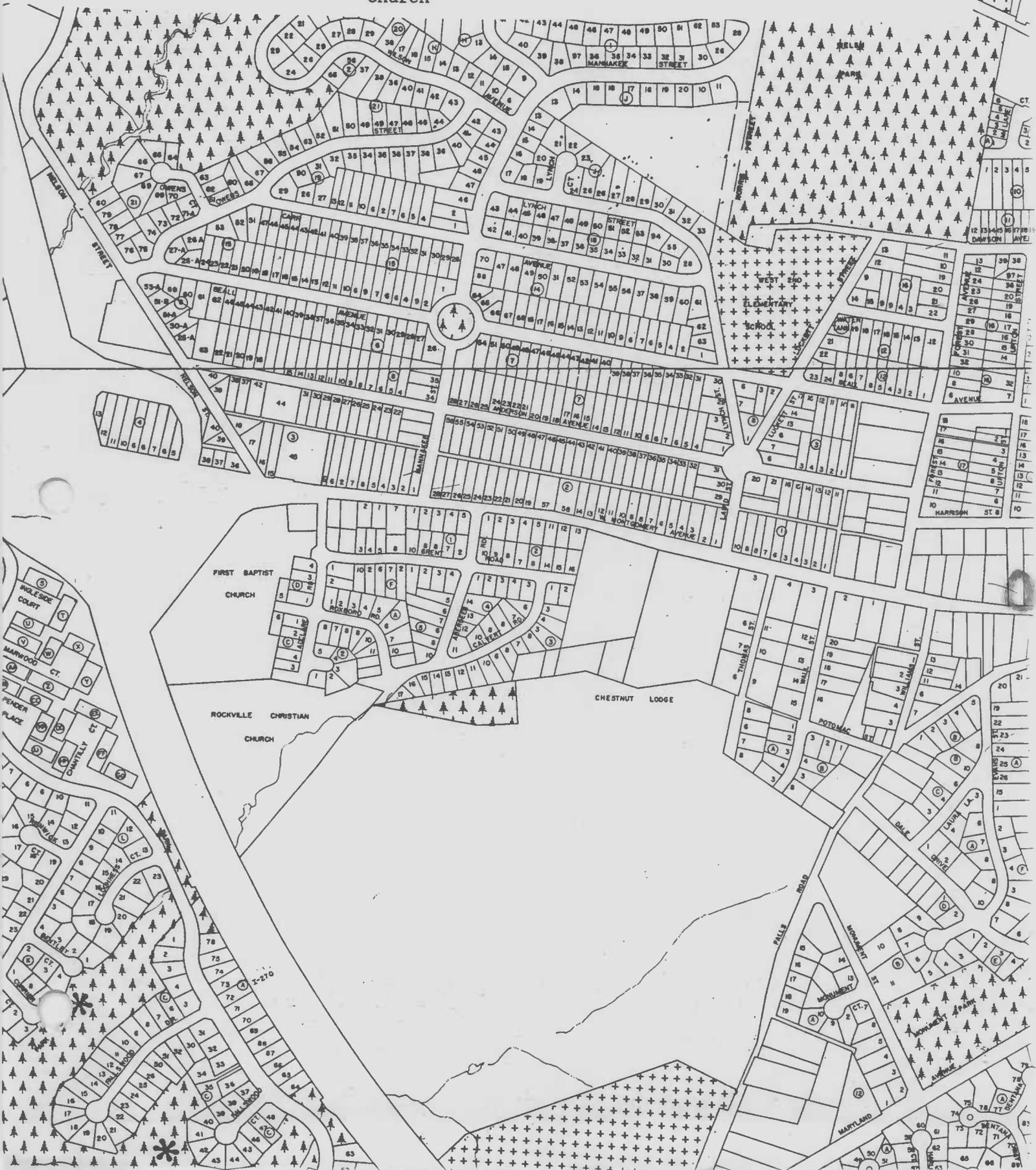
scale: 1" = 600'

1982

M:26/10/72

4

Rockville Presbyterian Church  
215 W. Montgomery Ave.





**RICHARD H. ANDREWS**  
424-8282  
1608 FARRAGUT AVE.  
ROCKVILLE, MD 20851

04861413

M: 26/10/72  
Rockville Presby. Church  
215 W. Montgomery Ave.  
Rockville  
5-86