

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

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Berry O' Kelly Historic District

Raleigh, Wake County, WA6529, Listed 5/1/2017

Nomination by Mary Ruffin Hanbury with Jeffrey Harris

Photographs by Mary Ruffin Hanbury, December 2015, March, April, and December 2016



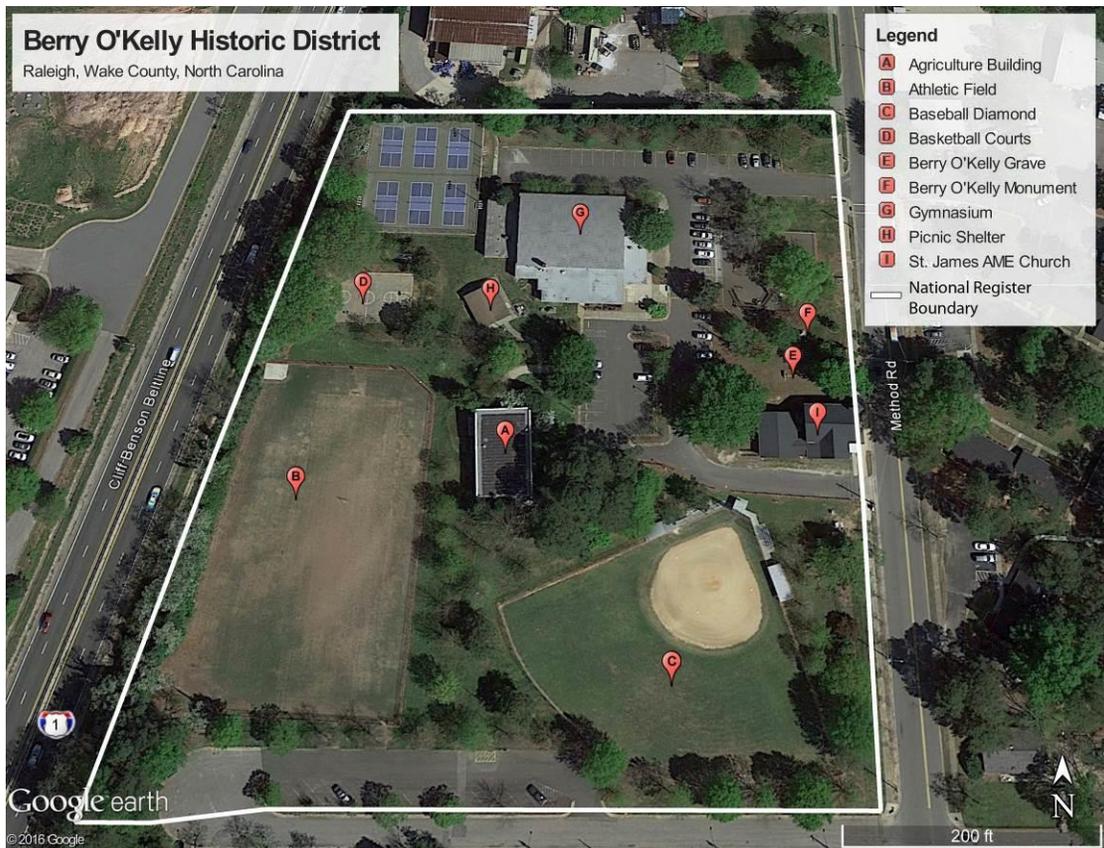
Agriculture Building



Gymnasium



St. James African Methodist Episcopal Church



Boundary Map

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. 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.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Berry O'Kelly Historic District

Other names/site number: _____

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A

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

2. Location

Street & number: 512, 514, 520 Method Road

City or town: Raleigh State: NC County: Wake

Not For Publication: N/A Vicinity: N/A

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this 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 meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national statewide local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A B C D

<p>_____ Signature of certifying official/Title: <u>North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources</u> State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>	<p>_____ Date</p>
--	-------------------------------

<p>In my opinion, the property <input type="checkbox"/> meets <input type="checkbox"/> does not meet the National Register criteria.</p>	
<p>_____ Signature of commenting official: _____ Title :</p>	<p>_____ Date State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	structures
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	objects
<u>6</u>	<u>3</u>	Total

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

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

- EDUCATION: school
- EDUCATION: education-related
- RELIGION: religious facility
- FUNERARY: grave
- RECREATION AND CULTURE: monument/marker
- RECREATION AND CULTURE: sports facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

- RELIGION: religious facility
- FUNERARY: grave
- RECREATION AND CULTURE: monument/marker
- RECREATION AND CULTURE: sports facility
- LANDSCAPE: parking lot

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

- LATE 19TH CENTURY AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS: Late Gothic Revival
- LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS
- MODERN MOVEMENT

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Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)
Principal exterior materials of the property:

foundation brick
walls brick
roof synthetics
other stone

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Berry O'Kelly Historic District is an 8.4 acre district in the Method area of Raleigh, a community established in the 1870s by freed African Americans approximately 3 1/4 miles west of the downtown district. The small area of predominantly single family houses is surrounded by a highway, modern commercial and industrial buildings, and the North Carolina State University campus. The district contains a church property which contains a single grave; and a community center and park containing the last resources associated with a historic school. They represent the last historic institutional resources associated with Method that have sufficient integrity to be listed on the National Register.

Narrative Description

The Berry O'Kelly Historic District is an 8.4 acre district in the Method community of Raleigh, approximately 3 1/4 miles northwest of the downtown core. Annexed into the city of Raleigh in 1960, Method was a community of freed African Americans established in the 1870s. Though compromised by highway construction and multifamily residences, an area of modest, predominantly frame, single story, single family residences remains. The community is less than a quarter of a mile south of Meredith College and abuts the western end of the Central Campus of North Carolina State University to its south.

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The district is bounded by Method Road to the east, Woods Place to the south, Interstate 440 to the west and lots containing a warehouse and manufacturing to the north. The district is comprised of three parcels of varying sizes. One is owned by St. James African Methodist Episcopal church, and the other two, owned by the city of Raleigh, now constitute Method Park and Community Center. Immediately northeast of the district is a largely commercial and industrial area which abuts Beryl Road, toward Hillsborough Street, a major east-to-west thoroughfare, and a railroad which generally parallels Hillsborough Street to the north. The Method Post Office, which replaced the former post office in adjacent Woods Store, in the early 1960s, is northeast of the district. East and south of the district is largely residential in use with a garden apartment complex directly east and single family residences to the south and southeast. The district, with its religious, commemorative, funerary, recreational and educational resources, is the historic institutional core of the Method Community.

The district has a paved narrow parking area, ca. 1998, along most of its northern boundary with a single row of perpendicular parking spaces. West of this parking are six pickle ball courts converted in 2014 from tennis courts built in 1998. A semicircular drive from Method Road that services this lot, turns south to service a second, central parking lot and then turns east to intersect again with Method Road. This drive was the ca. 1928 bus loop for the school with the parking added ca. 1988. In 2010 a fenced play area with playground equipment was added within the curve of the drive. There is a third parking area ca. 1998 along part of the district's southern boundary accessed from Woods Place. Mature trees line the boundary of the district and are interspersed between the resources within it. The outdoor recreational areas are enclosed with chain link fencing.

The church, located near the center of the district's eastern boundary sits with the Berry O'Kelly grave and obelisk and the fenced play area within the semicircular drive. North and west of the drive are the gymnasium, picnic shelter, basketball and pickle ball courts. South and west of the drive are the agricultural building, playing field and baseball diamond. The playing field was at one time an agricultural field, and though itself level is at a lower grade than most of the site. Trees along the western boundary screen the district from interstate I-440.

Resource Inventory

Contributing resources date to the period of significance and have retained sufficient historic integrity. Noncontributing resources post-date the period of significance or have been altered to such an extent that they have not retained historic integrity and no longer resemble their historic appearance.

Resource Code

C= contributing **NC= noncontributing**
B = Building **St = Structure** **S = Site** **O = Object**

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St. James African Methodist Episcopal Church C B 1923, 1999, Gothic Revival Church with additions

Agriculture Building C B 1926, 1949-50 addition brick school agriculture building

Athletic/Agriculture Field C S ca 1928

Berry O'Kelly Grave (headstone, footstone) C O 1931

Gymnasium C B ca. 1959 brick gymnasium

Basketball Courts C S ca 1959

Baseball Diamond NC S, ca 1982

Berry O'Kelly monument NC O 1986 granite obelisk

Picnic Shelter NC St ca 2003

St. James African Methodist Episcopal Church, contributing building, 1923, 1999 addition

Set at the east lot line and encroaching on the right of way, St. James African Methodist Episcopal church is visually prominent along Method Road on approach to the district. It is between the semicircular drive entrances on Method Road, the church faces east next to the south entrance.

This running-bond, red brick, Gothic Revival style church was built in 1923 with a rear brick fellowship hall addition on the west elevation, which was completed and dedicated in 1999. The church features a large front gabled nave with a cross-gabled wing to the south and a bell tower/vestibule, square in plan, canted at the northeast corner.

Masonry openings in the original portion of the church have double rowlock arches above and canted rowlock sills for the windows, save for two rectangular windows in the sides of the entrance tower which have rowlock sills and steel lintels. A projecting soldier course watertable wraps the historic core of the church. The south corner of the elevation has a buttress and to the south and set back, is the east elevation of the cross-gabled wing with a stained glass window and single leaf entrance serviced by a later masonry stoop with concrete steps sheltered by an applied metal sloping roof which is supported by metal posts.

The east elevation has a large central stained glass window with intersecting wooden tracery covered with metal, flanked by buttresses with concrete caps and diamond-shaped concrete ornaments, and smaller stained glass lancet windows. Centered above the large stained glass

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window is a diamond shaped stained glass window. The gable end has denticulated and rowlock mouse-tooth courses above the lancet windows and rake molding along the cornice. There is a soldier mouse-tooth course higher in the gable, above the diamond shaped window. These decorative courses are repeated in the two other gable ends and they wrap the entrance tower as well.

At the north end of the east elevation is an entrance tower, square in plan and canted from the primary nave. It has a single leaf door with a triangular stained glass window above in a lancet shaped masonry opening. Above the opening is a cross shaped pattern of projecting bricks. It is flanked by brick pilasters on the corners of the tower that do not engage the building. The pilasters support an upper section of the tower that is slightly shorter than the section below. It has rectangular louvered vents and serves as a base for a flared pyramidal roof, topped by a cross.

The north elevation of the church has four lancet stained glass windows. There are buttresses between them and at the west corner of the sanctuary. The double rowlock brick arches above are obscured somewhat by a gutter and soffit at the eaves, likely installed with the most recent roof replacement.

The west elevation has three lancet windows with buttresses between and flanking them on the corners of the original core of the building. There is a smaller lancet window centered in the gable above. The south corner of this elevation is engaged by a later addition which is set west of the church and the space between the original church and the western addition is blocked by a chain link fence which provides some protection to HVAC equipment in that courtyard. Chain link enclosures are also found near two pieces of HVAC equipment at the north elevation.

The south elevation of the church has the original cross-gabled end with a shed-roofed addition to the west. The gable end of the church has two lancet windows with flanking buttresses. A diamond shaped window is centered between them in the gable above. The addition has two windows on the west elevation looking onto a porch. A small, set back hyphen connect this addition to a side gable roofed fellowship hall west of the church. The shed-roofed addition that extends to the west is set in stretcher bond with vinyl siding in the half gable above. It has two, two-over-two windows on its west elevation. The entrance in the hyphen is by a single leaf door accessed by wooden steps to a recessed porch.

The fellowship hall has a single leaf door centered on the west elevation which is accessed by a wooden ramp. Flanking the entrance are two two-light vinyl sliding windows with rowlock sills. The north and south gable ends have similar windows--three on the north and two on the south. There are no masonry openings on the east elevation.

The church's plan has a sanctuary at the west. The nave has two rows of pews with a central aisle. The south wing of the church has pews set perpendicular to those in the nave. A door in the west side of the wing leads to a narrow hall that services a pastor's study and leads into the fellowship hall addition that has restrooms and a kitchen to the south and an assembly area to the north.

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The exterior tower door of the church leads to a vestibule with a dropped acoustical tile ceiling with an opening for the bell cord. Double leaf wooden doors lead to the sanctuary. The doors have four panels and two lights. The church interior has wall-to-wall carpet and an arched dropped ceiling. Two rows of wooden pews are arranged with side and center aisles. The space in the south wing is accessed by a cased opening with a lintel supported by three square wooden posts and pews in the wing are set perpendicular to those in the central nave. The chancel is set off by a curved wooden balustrade. The western portion of the sanctuary is raised and has a small set of steps to the level with a lectern and seating set off by a low curved wall, presumably for the choir. A small altar sits on the lower level of the chancel, east of the lectern. South of the chancel, some interior space has been partitioned off to provide storage and to house HVAC equipment.

The cross gabled wing has an exterior door at the east and two doors at the west--one to storage and one to a hall in the addition that leads to the pastor's office, restrooms and the fellowship hall. Interiors in the addition are utilitarian with six panel doors, vinyl flooring, and narrow baseboard trim. In the gabled addition there are restrooms at the south and a small kitchen and a large volume of flexible open space at the north.

Berry O'Kelly Grave, contributing object, 1931

Berry O' Kelly's grave is on the same parcel as the church, to the north set back on the parcel, parallel to the street. A broad stone plinth with a rough face and dressed top expands slightly to the east to accommodate a planter with a small boxwood that partially obscures the dressed face of the stone. The dressed portion is divided into three parts--the larger central part is concave with BERRY O'KELLY carved in capital letters in a serified type face. The flanking sections, also concave, are dressed with a sinuous foliate motif carved at their tops. The footstone, with rough sides and a dressed top reads:

BERRY O'KELLY
DIED
MARCH 14, 1931

The rear of the plinth and headstone is undressed.

Berry O'Kelly Monument, noncontributing object, 1985

North of the grave, but not on the church's parcel, is a dressed polished granite obelisk on a two tiered square base. On its east side there is a bronze plaque affixed to the lower level of the base that reads:

ERECTED BY
BERRY O'KELLY SCHOOL
ALUMNI AND FRIENDS
DECEMBER 22, 1986

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Above it on the upper stone tier is carved a likeness of Berry O'Kelly and below his likeness the inscription:

BERRY O'KELLY
ABOUT 1864-1931
HUMANITARIAN
LEADER IN BUSINESS AND EDUCATION

On the north, south, and west sides of the upper tier of the base are carved the names of donors to the memorial.

Baseball Diamond non contributing site, ca 1982

On the southeast corner of the district is a baseball diamond. The infield area is to the north and outfield to the south. The area is fenced off with low fencing and higher chain link back stop. The dugout areas with metal benches are enclosed with fencing, as is an area behind the backstop. There are metal bleachers along the first and third baselines, outside of the fenced area. It is also the site where several buildings for the Berry O'Kelly School campus once stood.

Athletic/Agriculture Field contributing site, ca 1928

West of the baseball diamond, north of the south parking lot and along the district's west boundary with Interstate 440, is a level athletic field, measuring roughly 285 x 160 feet. It is said to have initially been used as an agricultural field for the school, later converted for athletic uses.¹

Agriculture Building contributing building, 1926, 1949-50 addition

North of the baseball diamond, east of the athletic field and west of the semicircular drive at St James African Methodist Episcopal church is the Agriculture Building also known as the Pioneers Building. It was built using the "two room shop" plans developed by the Rosenwald Fund.² This brick building with a later addition is rectangular in footprint and has a flat parapetted roof. The original portion is to the north with the addition to the south as evidenced by a slight change in height and brick bond pattern. The original section of the building is laid in five course American bond with a soldier and rowlock course at the roof line in the parapet which wraps along the east and west elevations. The facade has a central, nine-light, single leaf wooden door flanked by three-light sidelights with wooden panels below. It is accessed by

¹ Mary Beth Reed and Ellen Turco. *Historical Architectural Resources Report for I-440 Beltline Improvements from Walnut Street, Cary to Wade Avenue, Raleigh Wake County, North Carolina*. Report no. 2318 (Stone Mountain: New South Associates, 2013), 16.

² IBID p. 18.

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concrete steps with brick wing walls and metal rails. Carved wooden brackets support a pent roof above. The entrance is flanked on either side with six-over-six double hung sash windows with projecting rowlock sills. It is unclear as to whether these windows are original or replacements.

On the east elevation of the original portion of the building, six window openings have been bricked in. The west elevation also has had six masonry openings though only two are bricked and four house six-over-six double hung sash windows with rowlock sills. It is unclear as to whether these windows are original or replacements.

The rear addition with a stepped parapeted roof is laid in seven course American bond. It also has a soldier and rowlock course in the parapet but it is lower and not continuous with the coursing on the original portion of the building. The east and west elevations once had seven masonry openings on either side but eight total have been bricked in and the remaining six-over-six sash windows alternate with the bricked in openings.

The south elevation has a large masonry opening to the east, containing contemporary double leaf metal and glass doors within a glazed surround. A concrete walk leads from these doors to a picnic area in a grove of trees southeast of the building. West of the entrance are four masonry openings that have been bricked in, and an exterior brick flue.

The interior of the Agriculture Building has a central hall that lead from the main entrance to a large room at the south end of the building, in the addition. The original portion of the building is divided between a meeting room with displays about the Method Community and the Berry O'Kelly School along with a small kitchen to the west; and a storage room and restrooms to the east. The floors in the kitchen and assembly rooms are vinyl tile, in the hall is commercial grade carpet and the bathrooms have ceramic tile. The interior walls are generally painted masonry with some drywall interior partitions. The larger assembly room has exposed ceiling trusses. The building suffered a fire in the 1980s and it was rehabilitated in 1992. Windows may have been replaced at this time.

Picnic Shelter noncontributing structure ca 2003

A curving concrete walk from the entrance of the Agriculture Building leads to the central parking area and drive with a smaller path branching north to a contemporary picnic shelter. The shelter has a concrete slab with wooden posts supporting a gable roof. Adjacent to the picnic area at the north and enclosed by a chain link fence is mechanical equipment likely servicing the gymnasium.

Basketball Courts contributing site ca 1959

West of the picnic shelter, north of the athletic field and east of interstate 440 is a poured concrete basketball court.

Gymnasium contributing building ca. 1959

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The gymnasium is clad in a five course Flemish stretcher bond. The rectangular double height gymnasium, which houses the basketball courts, is tall with a curved roof. Lower one-story flat roof sections extend to the south, east, and west, generally rectangular in form. The main entrance is at the southeast corner of the building, on the south elevation where a glazed vestibule has been constructed to enclose a formerly exterior brick wall and double leaf metal doors. The vestibule abuts a brick planter to the east. Construction date of the vestibule is unknown.

West of the vestibule, the low one-story wing extends farther south and has three large bays of multi light, metal rectangular windows set in a grid pattern of three columns of six rectangular lights and double leaf exterior doors offset on the central bay with large two light transom above.. The windows are not original. The date of their installation is unknown. They are similar in style and pattern to the original and are set in the original masonry openings. The addition then retracts to the north and runs to the limit of the larger section. There are double leaf doors with a two light transom and a small bay of two three-light windows on the south elevation of this set back portion of the section. There are doors on the west elevation of the wing covered by a small porch with a metal post. Above this wing on the south elevation are six bays, five of which have banks of clerestory windows to provide light to the basketball court area inside. One bay is blind with a recessed brick panel bisected by an exterior brick flue that is engaged below within the one story section. As with the windows below, metal replacement windows are set into the original masonry opening and are similar in style and pattern to the original windows.

The east elevation wing has a two bay inset entry at its south end, with canopy supported by metal posts. A brick planter fills the south bay, and the north bay shelters replacement rectangular multi-light windows and single leaf exterior metal door with a large single-light transom above which leads into the lobby. The portion north of the entry has a masonry opening that formerly housed a long narrow ribbon of windows, which have been mostly infilled with brick and three one-over-one metal replacement windows. The one story addition does not extend the full width of the east elevation and has double leaf exterior doors on its north side with a two-light transom above, sheltered by a small canopy with metal support.

The north elevation of the gymnasium has six bays divided by brick pilasters. All have banks of clerestory windows in three columns of five rectangular lights. At ground level, the third bay from the east has a masonry opening with a roll up door that appears to be a later addition. All other bays are blind.

The west elevation has a one story, flat roofed wing with two banks of four two-light metal ribbon windows. At its southeast corner are matching double leaf metal entry doors with transoms above sheltered by a portico with metal supports. Above and set back is the larger volume of space with a curved roof, four brick pilasters and a large square louvered vent centered under the arch of the roof.

The gymnasium interiors revolve around the large gym space. The low wing on the south side houses an office, a large multi-purpose room, kitchen, a weight room and storage. The wing to

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the west is also largely storage rooms accessed through the gym space. The low wing to the east houses a transverse hall and restrooms. All of these spaces are utilitarian in nature with recent fixtures and finishes though painted masonry walls remain in most. The gym retains its exposed bow string arch metal roof trusses and what appears to be its original vinyl tile flooring complete with shuffleboard court markings. The gym was rehabilitated in 1992 when the office and restrooms were created within the original building.

General Statement of Archaeological Potential

The district boundaries delineate an area that has been in continuous use by the Method community since 1873. Archaeological remains, such as trash pits, wells, and structural remains which may be present, can provide information valuable to the understanding and interpretation of the district. Information concerning African American material culture and institutional organization, social standing and mobility, as well as structural details and landscape use, can be obtained from the archaeological record. Therefore, archaeological remains may well be an important component of the significance of the district. At this time no investigation has been done to discover these remains, but it is likely that they exist, and this should be considered in any development of the property.

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.
-

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- 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 grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION

ETHNIC HERITAGE: AFRICAN AMERICAN

SOCIAL HISTORY

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

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1923-1966

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Significant Dates

1923
1928
1931
1966

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

O'Kelly, Berry

Cultural Affiliation

African American

Architect/Builder

n/a

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Berry O'Kelly Historic District constitutes the institutional core of the Method community, a settlement of free African Americans established shortly after the Civil War. The district is significant at the local level under Criterion A in the areas of African American ethnic heritage and education; Criterion B for its association with Berry O'Kelly; and Criterion C for architecture. The district comprises St. James African Methodist Episcopal Church; the last extant buildings associated with the Berry O'Kelly School, including the agricultural building constructed with assistance from the Rosenwald Fund; and the grave of Berry O'Kelly and a marker to his memory. O'Kelly was born in slavery, but through hard work and talent became a prominent businessman whose philanthropy was connected to both the church and school. The agriculture building was constructed according to a standard plan provided by the Rosenwald Fund. St. James African Methodist Episcopal Church is a good example of Gothic Revival architecture. The district meets Criteria Consideration A as the church derives its significance from architectural distinction. The district also meets Criteria Consideration C as O' Kelly's store,

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his commercial building in downtown Raleigh, and his home have all been demolished; thus the grave, which is on church property, along with the school and church are the only known extant sites or buildings directly associated with his productive life. The district's period of significance is from 1923, the year the church, the earliest resource in the district, was built, to 1966 when the school was closed.

"The Rosenwald School Building Program in North Carolina, 1915 -1932," on pages 3-51 in "Rosenwald Schools in North Carolina" (MPDF), provides historic context for Rosenwald Schools built in North Carolina. The associated property type description for vocational buildings is found on pages 59-60. The agricultural building, erected in 1926 with assistance from the Rosenwald Fund, retains its location and to some extent its setting, feeling and association. While alterations have diminished its integrity of design, workmanship, and materials, the building retains sufficient integrity to be nominated under Criterion A according to the registration requirements stated on page 60 of the MPDF.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Method

During the Civil War, as Union troops advanced into Southern communities, many enslaved African Americans took advantage of the opportunity to leave the homes and plantations where they had been held, and they created their own communities known variably as "freedman's villages," "freedman's communities," and/or "freedman's towns" throughout the southern states. These communities proliferated following the end of the war, often located on abandoned properties, or on the properties of white landowners who were willing to sell or give the land to those formerly enslaved.

The community now known as Method was established originally as a freedman's village in Wake County, North Carolina approximately three miles west of the city of Raleigh.³ In 1870 African American Lewis Mason, along with members of his family and his friends, pooled resources and purchased sixty-nine acres from William Ruffin Cox, a former Confederate officer who was willing to sell parcels of his land.⁴

In a manuscript of recollections, Lewis Mason recalled,

In the year of 1869, I ...got information from my brother that the late John O'Kelly who at that time was carriage driver for his master, that generous and high-tone gentleman, Gen. William R. Cox....that he, Gen. William R. Cox would sell him a home...I told my father

³ Method was not associated with the Freedman's Bureau, a U.S. Federal Government Agency which assisted freed slaves in the south during the Reconstruction Era.

⁴ Lewis M. Mason "A Historical Sketch of the beginning of the aggressive Negro town of Method" as quoted by Elizabeth Reid Murray, *Wake: Capital County of North Carolina*, p 645.

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of the chance to buy us a house...So my father came down and bought the tract of land, and from that he began to sell and settle it up with settlers in the spring of 1870...⁵

There are some discrepancies about dates, however, Wake County deed books show the sale of sixty-nine acres in the area now known as Method from Cox and his wife Penelope, to Isaac O'Kelly and Jesse Mason in 1872.⁶ O'Kelly and Mason were half-brothers and former slaves.⁷ They subdivided the land and sold off lots. According to historian Elizabeth Reid Murray, the village went by numerous names, Slabtown, Save Rent, Mason's Village, and Masonville, before acquiring the name Method with the institution of a post office in 1890.⁸

The Reconstruction era was a particularly dynamic period for African Americans. With their new found freedoms, opportunities for education, the franchise to vote, and the ability to live without having to answer to masters, many African American communities abounded with hope and promise. It was during this period when Mason's Village experienced steady growth in population and an expansion of services available for its residents. In 1873, a local store was cooperatively founded and eventually bought by C.H. Woods who had moved to the community from Chapel Hill in 1879⁹.

Method continued to grow. By 1880, according to research notes of Elizabeth Reid Murray located in the Olivia Raney Branch of the Wake County Public Library system, occupations in the village included "blacksmith, carpenter, pressman, tinner, grocer, farm laborer and railroad worker."¹⁰ The North Carolina Railroad and Southern Railways established stations at Method by 1894 and 1901 respectively. By 1916 Southern had a passenger stop there.

A temporary Army encampment was established at Method during World War I. In 1960, Method was annexed into the City of Raleigh, however it retained its distinct identity and sense of place. The civic league then procured water and sewage services from the City of Raleigh soon after annexation. In 1960, the northern portion of I-440 was built between Wade Avenue and Walnut Street which cut through the Method community and separated the majority of the area from surrounding fields and Oak Grove cemetery. This physically diminished the community and divided the cemetery from the bulk of the area.

The Method Civic League advocated for the retention of historic street names, and the continuation of a Method post office despite the fact that the "METHOD" postmark itself was eventually discontinued. In March of 1965, a new post office building was dedicated in the community and according to newspaper articles, the post office and former store, which was owned by Berry O'Kelly and was adjacent to it, was demolished.¹¹

⁵ IBID

⁶ Wake County Deed Book 33 page 755

⁷ Bertha Maye Edwards, *The Little Place and the Little Girl* (New York: Carlton Press, 1974), 11.

⁸ Elizabeth Reid. Murray, *Method (Mason's Village)* (unpublished manuscript 2005, Olivia Raney Library), 1.

⁹ Edwards, *The Little Place and the Little Girl*, 26.

¹⁰ Elizabeth Reid. Murray, *Method (Mason's Village)*, 2.

¹¹ Gertrude Harris, oral history interview

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Growth in the region led to the introduction of multifamily housing in Method. In 1969 The Raleigh Inter-church Housing Corporation developed RICH Park "a 100 unit, low-rent housing development" in Method, off Method Road.¹² The 9 acre site was once owned by Berry O'Kelly.¹³ The construction of these apartments inspired Bertha Maye Edwards, a former resident, to write her recollections of Method which were published as *The Little Place and the Little Girl* which recalls her formative years growing up in Method. Continued growth pressures in the mid-1980s led to a resurgence of local activism to resist zoning changes that would allow for additional multifamily housing.

Despite changes, the community continues to self-identify as Method and some residents have moved back to the community having worked and lived elsewhere. With the construction of the highway, demolition of the early store and post office, intrusion of multi-family housing, and alteration and demolition of some early churches, the character of the community has been compromised. However the proposed district continues to be a nexus of activity and a surviving historic institutional core of the Method community. The church continues to hold services and though the school has been closed, its extant buildings and fields continue to host athletic events and community meetings.

Berry O'Kelly

Berry O'Kelly was born ca. 1864 in Orange County, NC, near Chapel Hill to an enslaved woman, Frances Stroud. He was orphaned at an early age and moved at some point in his early life to what is now Method to live with his uncle and aunt, William and Adeline Patterson, early settlers in Method.¹⁴ As a young man, he worked for two school teachers, as a water carrier for the railroad and for Woods Store.¹⁵ He travelled to purchase produce to sell at the store. Having saved \$100, he purchased half interest in the store with a cash down payment and the remainder on installments. By 1889 he had bought out Woods' interest entirely and was the sole owner of the store. This store housed the first Method post office and was a social and commercial hub of the Method community.

O' Kelly's interests in Method were varied. According to a manuscript by Elizabeth Reid Murray, he owned 3 acres in Method in 1886 and by 1891 owned 331 acres.¹⁶ He raised cattle in the late nineteenth century and by the early twentieth century operated a cotton gin. Berry O'Kelly is credited with securing the post office for Method in 1890. He was the first postmaster and the post office was housed in his store.¹⁷

Under O' Kelly's ownership the store in Method expanded to "include shoes, clothing, fresh meats and oysters. The store served both black and white customers. O'Kelly eventually erected

¹² "Banker to Speak at RICH Meeting." *Raleigh Times* (January 23, 1969).

¹³ Edwards, *The Little Place and the Little Girl*, 47.

¹⁴ Needham Y. Gulley, "The History of Education in Wake County," *North Carolina Education* (September 1943), 61.

¹⁵ IBID, 61.

¹⁶ Elizabeth Reid. Murray, *Method (Mason's Village)* (unpublished manuscript 2005, Olivia Raney Library), 4.

¹⁷ IBID.

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a warehouse by the tracks near his store, enabling large shipments of rail-delivered grain, farm implements, fertilizers and other goods to be stored before distribution via his store and apparently some mail order business he engaged in." ¹⁸

Historian Murray also recounts O' Kelly's political acumen.

O'Kelly wielded strong political influence, demonstrating more than once his ability to secure black votes for bond elections and other causes. In 1911 Raleigh and Wake County leaders, with his assistance, were successful in having a major western highway from Raleigh routed through Cary rather than Leesville. In the mid-1910s he helped secure passage of a bond creating a new road district between Raleigh and Cary. He also persuaded the county commissioners to locate one section of the new pavement in such a way as to avoid bypassing Method and isolating its churches and school, as well as the O'Kelly store and warehouses.¹⁹

O' Kelly's rise to prominence within the Method community coincided with the increasing codification of racial segregation and the ascendancy of Jim Crow. Individuals like O'Kelly provided African American communities with the good and services that they needed, and allowed for less contact with potentially hostile white communities. The expansion of O'Kelly's store, the railroad connection, and the arrival of the post office were examples of the self-sufficiency of African American communities necessitated both by custom and law.

O'Kelly expanded his professional interests outside of the Method community into nearby Raleigh. Dates of his various ventures are unclear. However, he purchased a building in downtown Raleigh, the O'Kelly Building, at 134 1/2 South Wilmington Street, near Hargett Street, where he leased space to African American businesses. It housed the Acme Realty Company, of which O'Kelly was the president, and the Eagle Life Insurance Company, of which he was the chairman. He was an investor in the *Raleigh Independent*, an African American newspaper started by Dr. J. W. Love and Charles Hunter, among others. He also served as vice president of the Raleigh branch of the Mechanics and Farmers Bank, a Durham, North Carolina based African American banking institution, for which he helped to negotiate a Raleigh building. Together with John. H. Turner, he co-founded the Raleigh Shoe Company which operated on Hargett Street. O'Kelly founded and was president of the Peoples Investment Company.²⁰

He was a founding member of the National Negro Business League, and was listed among the delegates in attendance at the organization's first meeting in Boston in August 1900; O'Kelly was a featured speaker at the organization's fifteenth anniversary meeting in Boston in August 1915, where he spoke on the subject of "Wholesale Merchandising."²¹ He was the president of

¹⁸ IBID, 5.

¹⁹ Murray <http://ncpedia.org/biography/okelly-berry>

²⁰ IBID

²¹ "Proceedings of the National Negro Business League: Its First Meeting Held in Boston, Massachusetts, August 23 and 24, 1900 : National Negro Business League (U.S.) : Free Download & Streaming : Internet Archive." Internet Archive. Accessed April 14, 2016. https://archive.org/details/proceedingsofnat00nati_0.

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the Negro State Fair and served on the executive committee of the state interracial commission. He was a charter member of the Raleigh Branch of the NAACP, established in 1917.

O'Kelly died on March 14, 1931 and was buried on the campus of the school that bears his name. Upon his death his probate records listed close to thirty seven parcels of land including large holdings in Method.²²

O'Kelly rose from an orphan born in slavery, to become a successful businessman and philanthropist. His commitment to the Method community both in providing goods and services, and in securing land and resources for St James African Methodist Episcopal Church and the Berry O'Kelly School, inspired many including Bertha Mae Edwards who remarked,

The Berry O'Kelly store, field, warehouse, and particularly the Berry O'Kelly High School were symbols to the people of Method of the motivation given to a whole community and county and race of how "betterment" (one of Mr. O' Kelly's favorite words) can be brought about, of how the interest of one who was truly his brothers' keeper gave hope to hundreds of his fellowmen.²³

A tribute in the May 1931 edition of the *North Carolina Teachers Record* stated

The teachers of North Carolina may never know the vastness of the service rendered to their cause by the late Berry O'Kelly. With little formal education, he possessed an inordinate capacity for assimilating great of principles of conduct and setting about with fearless determination to achieve his goals. With him personalities were subordinated to the good of the whole. He sought opportunities to help where needed, and cared not who claimed credit for results....His remains lie interred at the school which took his name and grew to effectiveness under his watchful eye. His spirit lives in better buildings, better teachers, better salaries, better children, better community relations.²⁴

Berry O Kelly School

The Method community established African American educational institutions beginning soon after it was founded. A one room, gable -roofed log building housing a school which charged tuition and opened in 1871. A public school opened in 1873. It was a frame, gable-roofed building. The third school was built in 1883.²⁵ In 1894 Berry O'Kelly, who among the School Committee for House Creek Township District # 2, procured 1 acre of land for a school from Lewis and Isabella Atwater.²⁶ This was the beginning of the campus that housed the various incarnations of what became known as the Berry O'Kelly School. Although the school has been called various names throughout its history including the Method School, the County Training School, the Berry O'Kelly High School, the Berry O'Kelly County Training school, the Berry

²² Murray <http://ncpedia.org/biography/okelly-berry>

²³ Edwards, *The Little Place and the Little Girl*, 47.

²⁴ H. L. Trigg, "Berry O'Kelly," *North Carolina Teachers Record* v.2, no.3 (May 1931), 49.

²⁵ "Education in House Creek Township Before the County Training School," *The Students Guide*, February 1926.

²⁶ Wake County Deed book 135, page 10.

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O'Kelly Teacher Training and Industrial School, it is generally referred to as the Berry O'Kelly School.

According to *The Student's Guide*, a frame, gable-fronted school building was constructed here in 1895, replacing the earlier African American schools that were on other parcels. In 1915, a brick building with ten classrooms and an auditorium was built on the site. The school cost \$10,000 to construct and was given the name "Berry O' Kelly Training School" in honor of the school's largest individual donor, Berry O' Kelly.²⁷ It functioned as an elementary and high school, the result of the consolidation of three rural African American schools in Wake County. The 1895 frame school building was moved to another part of the campus and served as a boy's dormitory.²⁸ Other students stayed with families in private homes in Method.²⁹ In 1917, the school board acquired two acres of adjacent land. In 1921, 1922, and 1924 the school board acquired additional adjacent parcels, now consolidated in the current district, some through condemnation.³⁰

In many ways the evolution of the curriculum at the Berry O'Kelly School mirrors the trends of African American education in the twentieth century. The tension between an emphasis on a scholarly academic curriculum that would prepare students for college and/or teaching, versus an approach that emphasized job skills and self-sufficiency was a national issue that is seen in the curriculum at the Berry O'Kelly School. The "Industrial School" model established at Virginia's Hampton Institute (now Hampton University), directed secondary education to focus on training students in the various building trades, home economics, compartment and self-sufficiency, rather than providing students with a classical education of liberal arts, with advanced mathematics and foreign languages. Booker T. Washington, a friend and associate of Berry O'Kelly and an alumnus of Hampton, was the primary spokesman for this type of educational model for African Americans.

A 1917 article in *North Carolina Education* comments on the curriculum at the Berry O'Kelly School, showing an emphasis on a liberal arts approach.

Since the first time since its establishment, the Berry O'Kelly Training School for Negroes at Method will begin the work for which it was founded at this year's session when the education of future negro teachers will start with prospects of increasing attendance. Heretofore it has been classed as a regular seventh grade school....As soon as the students complete the work in the seventh grade of the schools they become eligible to take up the course in teacher training at Method.³¹

However, a 1918 article in *North Carolina Education* notes that the Berry O'Kelly Training School in Method was one of six schools in the state "approved to give special vocational

²⁷ Reed and Turco, *Historical Architectural Resources Report for I-440 Beltline Improvements*, 45.

²⁸ "Berry O'Kelly, The Merging Factor," *The Students Guide*, February 1926, 1.

²⁹ Reed and Turco, *Historical Architectural Resources Report for I-440 Beltline Improvements*, 45.

³⁰ "Berry O'Kelly, The Merging Factor," 1.

³¹ "Teacher Training in the Colored School at Method," *North Carolina Education* (October 1917), 18.

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agricultural instruction to the negro race."³² The other schools were the Orange County Training School, the Pamlico County Training School, the Martin County Training School, the Sampson County Training School and the Johnson County Training School.

Scholar Sarah Caroline Thuessen states "While many whites would continue to believe throughout the Jim Crow period that blacks were best suited for a less academic and more 'practical' course of study, state school officials in the 1920s were increasingly willing...to offer tacit approval for black high schools with the same curriculum found in white schools."³³ Thus the question as to whether education was intended merely to equip young people for the workforce or to give them the benefit of a liberal arts education teaching critical thinking skills through the exposure to a canon of knowledge, continued.

A 1920 article in *North Carolina Education* cites the school again as being funded under the federal Smith-Hughes National Vocational Education Act of 1917 for vocational training in Home Economics.

Historians have tended either to ignore the vocational movement in relation to black schools or to conflate it with the Hampton-Tuskegee philosophy of industrial education. While many black educators questioned the latter's seeming complicity with the socioeconomic status quo, the vocational curriculum of the 1930s and 1940s promised to pave the way to middle-class prosperity.³⁴

Indeed one argument against a traditional liberal arts education is that it gave African Americans the tools for jobs that the economy, dominated by whites, would not give them.

The Berry O'Kelly School was such a notable school that in 1919 their graduation speaker was Robert Russa Moton, a Hampton Institute graduate, who had succeeded Booker T. Washington as the principal of the Tuskegee Institute and had integrated liberal arts subjects into the curriculum there.

Principal's Reports submitted to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction for the Berry O'Kelly School starting in the 1920s show this juxtaposition of liberal arts and vocational training. Math through Algebra, foreign languages (Latin later supplanted by French), civics, chemistry, biology and history were taught along with cooking, sewing, and agriculture (which at times included animal husbandry, farm management, field crops, horticulture, and poultry study).

In 1921, the State of North Carolina established the Division of Negro Education. Sarah Thuessen notes, "Paternalistic duty and the exigencies of black unrest demanded that whites acknowledge black educational aspirations."³⁵ Nathan Carter Newbold, a white man, was its first director. He focused on basic issues such as attendance, teacher quality and adequate

³² "Schools that Receive Aid from the Smith-Hughes Bill," *North Carolina Education* (March 1918), 6.

³³ Sarah Caroline Thuessen, *Greater Than Equal: African American Struggles for Schools and Citizenship in North Carolina 1919-1965* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013) 49.

³⁴ IBID, 73.

³⁵ IBID, 24.

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facilities. Despite increased spending on education for African Americans around this time, it was woefully less than that spent on white children's education.

In the southern states, some relief came through private philanthropy. Julius Rosenwald, CEO of Sears, Roebuck and Company, through his association with Booker T. Washington, became a strong advocate for African American education, particularly in rural areas. Through the Rosenwald Fund, African American communities that donated land and/or money would receive matching funds and floor plans for schools.

Expansion of the Berry O'Kelly School campus was aided greatly by monies from the Julius Rosenwald Fund, and their records are instructive in trying to document the evolution of the campus. A ledger of Rosenwald expenses for 1921-1922 shows application 87-a, which was approved in February of 1922 and paid in March for \$1,000 for a teachers house at Berry O'Kelly School. In 1921-1922 a brick dormitory for girls, which included a co-ed dining facility, was added to the campus. Correspondence between Mr. W. F. Creedle, Supervisor of the Rosenwald Fund, and G. M. Ferguson of the North Carolina Department of Negro Education, concerning a dormitory at the school in Method, presumably the girls' dormitory just completed, indicates that the project was unusual though with no elaboration. Mr. Creedle writes, "I am forwarding the inspection reports on the Berry O'Kelly School to Mr. Smith [General Field Agent for Rural Schools the Julius Rosenwald Fund]. I was talking to him about this proposition the other day. It troubled him a great deal to think that he ever consented to giving aid in this undertaking. You may tell all who ask that no aid will be given on similar projects."³⁶ Despite the tenor of the correspondence, Rosenwald funding continued to support projects on the campus.

Two letters in September of 1923 from Creedle to S. L. Smith acknowledge the Rosenwald Fund's assistance of \$1,000 to build a dormitory that was hoped would include lodging for the principal. However, that plan was not feasible and Smith requested funds for a principal's house and acknowledged the need for a new classroom building. An application to the Rosenwald Fund (#40C) received in September of 1923 for a frame teachers home, perhaps to be used as the principal's home (plan 301), is annotated by Mr. Smith, "This school received aid for a teachers' house in 1921-22, and is not eligible for further aid."³⁷

In 1923, a classroom building for the high school was added. The Berry O'Kelly Training School was accredited as a high school in 1923 by the state of North Carolina, one of three rural African American high schools in the state overall to gain that status.³⁸ In June of 1927, Mr. Smith wrote to Mr. Creedle with comments on a proposed new classroom building, with minor suggestions about window levels. He concluded, "The building can be approved on a ten-teacher basis for the maximum if properly constructed."³⁹

³⁶ W.F. Creedle, Letter to G. H. Ferguson (April 29, 1922).

³⁷ Application for Aid from the Julius Rosenwald Fund, 40-C, September 1923.

³⁸ J. Henry Highsmith, "North Carolina School Notes," *The High School Journal*, Vol. 6, No. 6 (October, 1923), 172.

³⁹ S. L. Smith Letter to W. F. Creedle (June 6, 1927).

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Correspondence between Creedle and Smith in November of 1927 noted that the vocational building (also known as the Agricultural Building and the Pioneers Building) was complete and the new classroom building was substantially finished. Constructed from the Rosenwald "two room shop" plan, the Agricultural Building is a one story flat roofed masonry building with a ca. 1949-50 addition off the rear.⁴⁰ The building included shops, an agriculture laboratory, home economics rooms, and a poultry incubation room.⁴¹ West of the building is an athletic field that has been used as such since the 1950s, but originally was used as the school's crop field for the agriculture program.⁴²

A monograph of the school and issue of *The Students Guide* stated that by 1927 the campus contained eight buildings, three of which were brick.⁴³ Seven of these are described above. A description of the eighth has yet to be discovered. Of these eight, only the vocational/Pioneers building remains.

On April 4, 1928 there was a celebration at Berry O'Kelly School. The new two-story masonry, "11-teacher" classroom building was determined to be the 4,000th Rosenwald school building constructed in the southern United States. Julius Rosenwald attended the dedication, as did representatives of the Rosenwald Fund and school building program at the state and national level, along with county and state education officials. At the event, W.F. Creedle reported that to date, the Fund had contributed to 656 school buildings, 17 teachers' homes, and two shops in North Carolina and that the combined value of these educational institutions was \$3,606, 386. He described the Berry O'Kelly Training School as having an auditorium, library, office, and 11 classrooms on a 10 acre site in Method that he claimed was purchased from Berry O'Kelly. In addition to the new high school building, the campus had an elementary school building, a shop, a girls' dormitory, and some old frame buildings being used for boys' dormitories.⁴⁴

On April 12, Julius Rosenwald wrote N.C. Newbold "From the time I entered the state until I left it was a continuous triumphal march. I have heretofore experience (sic) Southern hospitality, but never in such a glorified form. The program at the Method School and the fine group, both white and colored, which played a part in it, will dwell in my memory for a long time. ...I find it difficult to properly express my appreciation, but you must have sensed it every moment of the time."⁴⁵

The practice of requiring the local African American community to contribute to the construction of Rosenwald Schools while insuring that they had a commitment and investment in the schools on some level constituted what is referred to as "double taxation." African Americans made contributions of land and/or money and/or sweat equity to secure Rosenwald funding while the white community received quality facilities for no contribution over and above tax revenues.

⁴⁰ Reed and Turco, *Historical Architectural Resources Report for I-440 Beltline Improvements*, 18.

⁴¹ "Agriculture Building of the Berry O'Kelly School," *Local Wiki: Raleigh*, Accessed Dec 12, 2016, https://localwiki.org/raleigh/Agricultural_Building_of_the_Berry_O'Kelly_School.

⁴² Reed and Turco, *Historical Architectural Resources Report for I-440 Beltline Improvements*, 18.

⁴³ "Berry O'Kelly, The Merging Factor," *The Students Guide* (February 1926), 1.

⁴⁴ W.F. Creedle, Draft Program for dedication of 4000th Rosenwald School, (1928).

⁴⁵ Julius Rosenwald, Smith Letter to N. C. Newbold, (April 12, 1928).

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Many charitable giving programs began to terminate their giving to African American education programs to cease enabling local white controlled governments from meeting requirements for equal schools at no cost to the white educational establishment.⁴⁶

By the late-1920s, the Berry O'Kelly Training School was noted to be the "best school for black children in the state," with students coming from across North Carolina to attend. Graduates of the school went on to enroll in some of the country's best black colleges and universities, including Hampton, Fisk, Shaw, and St. Augustine's.⁴⁷ In addition to those who sought out higher education, the school provided a sound vocational education and provided the community with skilled laborers, seamstresses, laundresses, and carpenters, among others.⁴⁸

As the number of schools for African Americans were established throughout the region surrounding Method, the number of students declined at the Berry O'Kelly School. It became more of a traditional community school once again. By 1941, the campus had only three brick buildings and one frame one.⁴⁹ Though the Supreme Court decision of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, which declared racial segregation in American schools unconstitutional, was issued in 1954, school desegregation in the South didn't begin in earnest until the 1960s. Indeed, throughout the 1950s, there was a division in philosophy about how to improve African American education--some pressed integration while others advocated for equalization, or improving the quality of facilities, faculty and curriculum in African American Schools. Indeed many segregated African American schools saw capital improvements during the 1950s. The construction of the gymnasium at Berry O'Kelly School during this period could have been an attempt to improve the physical plant and to placate those who sought integration.

The Gymnasium was constructed for the 1958-59 school year.⁵⁰ With the addition of this new, state-of-the-art gymnasium to the campus, the school's "Health and Physical education program was brought up to standard." Prior to the construction of the Gymnasium, the Berry O'Kelly Training School did offer Physical Education courses to ninth grade students, taught by a staff of two teachers. Activities included in the in the physical education program included "team games, individual games, relays, and calisthenics." The school also offered intermural basketball and softball.⁵¹

Although Method was not annexed by the City of Raleigh until 1960, legal battles over education and integration in neighboring Raleigh surely had some impact. The construction of John W. Ligon Junior-Senior High School, now John W. Ligon GT Magnet Middle School, in the predominantly African American Chavis Heights neighborhood was an attempt to equalize education. However, several African American families, particularly from the freedman's village

⁴⁶ Sarah Caroline Thuessen, *Greater Than Equal: African American Struggles for Schools and Citizenship in North Carolina 1919-1965*, 35.

⁴⁷ Reed and Turco, *Historical Architectural Resources Report for I-440 Beltline Improvements*, 46.

⁴⁸ "Berry O'Kelly School," *North Carolina Highway Historical Marker*, Accessed Dec. 12, 2016, <http://www.ncmarkers.com/Markers.aspx?MarkerId=H-77>.

⁴⁹ Needham Y. Gulley, "The History of Education in Wake County," 61.

⁵⁰ The Gymnasium was constructed on the site of the original 1915 Classroom Building.

⁵¹ North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, *Principal's Reports 1920-1960*, North Carolina State Archives.

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of Oberlin (now part of the City of Raleigh) sued to attend predominantly white schools that were closer to their homes. Their case was appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court in 1959. The court did not review it and the appellate court upheld the district court opinion that the plaintiffs, the Holt family, had not exhausted all their options within the act that governed school assignment. However, as civil rights activity increased across the state with the sit-in movement, and additional litigation, changes came. In 1961, then Governor Terry Sanford enrolled his children in integrated Raleigh schools, though by that point less than a dozen school districts across the state had begun to integrate.⁵²

The Berry O'Kelly School was affected by integration. Some of its students were sent to historically white schools primarily in the western parts of Wake County. As it was virtually unheard of for white students to integrate historically African American schools, there were no reports of white students being transferred to Berry O'Kelly. In 1964, the land was transferred from the County Board of Education to the City of Raleigh Board of Education. The high school division of the Berry O'Kelly Training School closed in 1966, and the building was demolished. The elementary division closed the following year.⁵³ Thus the unintended consequence of integration was the destruction of historically African American schools including the majority of the Berry O'Kelly campus.

The only buildings associated with the school that remain are the agricultural building also known as the Pioneers building and the gymnasium. After the Berry O'Kelly school closed, civic leader Harveleigh White pressed for the use of the remaining buildings as a community center which was opened in 1970 and operated by the City of Raleigh which acquired the site in 1982. In 1994 the Method Community Center was renamed the Berry O'Kelly/Harveleigh White Community Center. Both are part of Method Park, a unit of the Raleigh city Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department.

St. James African Methodist Episcopal Church

According to a manuscript of the church history, Berry O'Kelly was one of seven men who established St James African Methodist Episcopal Church, and the land was a gift from Berry O'Kelly.⁵⁴ The African American Episcopal denomination was established in the early nineteenth century, by former slave Richard Allen and has always operated independently of predominantly white denominations. It grew rapidly in the south in the antebellum period. As with the other early congregations in Method, St. James African American Methodist Church met the spiritual and social needs of the community. At times it housed graduation ceremonies for the neighboring Berry O'Kelly School.

St. James African American Methodist Church is one of three early African American congregations in Method. The Method Christian Church, built in 1872, was the first, and was

⁵² Sarah Caroline Thuessen, *Greater Than Equal: African American Struggles for Schools and Citizenship in North Carolina 1919-1965*, 229.

⁵³ Treva Jones, "Memories All that Remain at O'Kelly," *Raleigh Times* (September 12, 1981).

⁵⁴ Church History, St James African Methodist Episcopal Church, typescript, 1.

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demolished in 1961. Oak City Baptist Church of Masonville, later the Oak City Baptist Church, was organized in 1865 and a church building constructed in 1873. The original frame building was expanded and covered in brick veneer in a building campaign from 1945-1960. The original building was demolished ca. 2008. A new church was built in 2015. St James African Methodist Episcopal church, originally called the Mason Village African Methodist Episcopal Church, was built between 1873 and 1891. Originally a frame structure, it was re-built in the Gothic Revival style in 1923. As such, it is the only nineteenth-century congregation in Method that continues to worship in a historic building.

There are a few other African American, Gothic Revival churches in Raleigh, including Wilson Temple, First Baptist Church, and St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church. First Baptist and St Paul are churches in or near the core of downtown Raleigh and have their roots in white or biracial nineteenth-century congregations. First Baptist formed in 1868 as an African American parish from a biracial congregation of 1812. The church originally had a building on Salisbury Street and moved to the current Gothic revival building on Capitol Square in 1904. St Paul African Methodist Episcopal church has its roots in the slave membership of Edenton Street United Methodist church. The congregants adopted the name "St. Paul" in 1848 and in 1854, occupied a building that had been relocated to the location of the current church building. In 1865, the church aligned with the African Methodist Episcopal denomination and from 1884 to 1901, built their Gothic Revival church building, relying heavily on local African American brick masons.

First Baptist is a gable-fronted building on a corner lot on Capitol Square. It has a prominent corner tower with a slate-clad spire. The gable front is set back behind a brick entrance vestibule that spans the remainder of the facade. Buttresses and lancet windows with soldier course label molding continue the Gothic Revival styling.

St Paul African Methodist Episcopal is noteworthy for its masonry. The National Register nomination for St Paul African Methodist Episcopal describes it thus

The vertical rhythm of towers, buttresses and windows contrasts with the relatively smooth orange-red brick and mortar of the walls and the flat white wooden tracery and jambs of the stained glass windows. These also form a foil to the elaborate brick work..... The brick wall decoration takes many forms: for example, above the entry and flanking the deep base of the central window are panels of ten rows of brick laid sawtooth. Above the windows on either side of a louvered bent a diamond pattern is inlaid, and more sawtooth courses fill the top of the pediment. Substituting for the stonework tracery of traditional Gothic, the second stage of the tower has sawtooth panels around the rose windows, and the fourth stage has flat corbelled arches in two rows above and below open work grills.⁵⁵

Wilson Temple United Methodist Church is the most similar to St James African Methodist Episcopal in terms of origins. It was built in 1910-11 in the Oberlin community. Like St James

⁵⁵ Charlotte V. Brown and William Bushong. National Register Nomination for St Paul AME Church

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African Methodist Episcopal, it replaced an earlier frame church, in this case dating from 1873. Both it and St James were established as African American congregations ca. 1873 and were not previously associated with white or biracial congregations, and both were built in Freedman's Villages. Wilson Temple's architecture is a more austere Gothic Revival as compared with St. James African Methodist Episcopal. It has a central gable on the facade with cross-gabled side wings and rear additions. A crenellated tower on one side of the facade gable is balanced by a projecting entrance vestibule on the other. It has large lancet stained glass windows with soldier course label molding.

Though built later, St. James is more similar to St. Paul in terms of the exuberance of its brickwork and stylistic sophistication, but more similar to Wilson Temple in terms of its beginnings as African American in origin, built in a Freedman's Village.

St. James is significant as a good local example of Gothic Revival ecclesiastical architecture, particularly within the context of African American congregations. The Gothic Revival style gained prominence in church architecture in the latter part of the nineteenth and early part of the twentieth century as the influence of the Oxford Movement and the Ecclesiologist Movement promoted the style as opposed to earlier classical styles, along with an emphasis on ritual and ceremony. Books and periodicals disseminated stock plans and details that were adopted widely. Though no architect or stock plan is known for St. James, its asymmetry, buttresses, lancet windows, and elaborate brickwork are hallmarks of the style. The survival of the historic church building, the oldest in Method, reinforces its significance.

Berry O'Kelly Historic District
Name of Property

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): WA6529

Berry O'Kelly Historic District
Name of Property

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10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 8.4

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 35.793592° | Longitude: -78.695325° |
| 2. Latitude: 35.793574° | Longitude: -78.693759° |
| 3. Latitude: 35.791857° | Longitude: -78.693840° |
| 4. Latitude: 35.791874° | Longitude: -78.695458° |
| 5. Latitude: 35.791850° | Longitude: -78.695940° |

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Berry O'Kelly Historic District
Name of Property

Wake, North Carolina
County and State

The boundary of the Berry O'Kelly Historic District is shown as the red line on the accompanying map entitled " Berry O'Kelly Historic District."

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary includes the legal parcels that constitute St James AME Church and the Method Community Center which contain all of the extant resources associated with the district.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Mary Ruffin Hanbury with Jeffrey Harris
organization: Hanbury Preservation Consulting
street & number: 123 West Park Drive
city or town: Raleigh state: NC zip code: 27605
e-mail maryruffin@hanurypreservation.com
telephone: 919 828 1905
date: June 14, 2016

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Berry O'Kelly Historic District
Name of Property

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Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Berry O'Kelly Historic District

City or Vicinity: Raleigh

County: Wake

State: North Carolina

Photographer: Mary Ruffin Hanbury

Date Photographed: December 16, 2016

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Agriculture Building, view to SW.

1 of 11.

Name of Property: Berry O'Kelly Historic District

City or Vicinity: Raleigh

County: Wake

State: North Carolina

Photographer: Mary Ruffin Hanbury

Date Photographed: December 8, 2015

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: St. James AME Church, view to NW.

2 of 11.

Berry O'Kelly Historic District
Name of Property

Wake, North Carolina
County and State

Name of Property: Berry O'Kelly Historic District

City or Vicinity: Raleigh

County: Wake

State: North Carolina

Photographer: Mary Ruffin Hanbury

Date Photographed: March 1, 2016

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: St. James AME Church, interior, view to E.

3 of 11.

Name of Property: Berry O'Kelly Historic District

City or Vicinity: Raleigh

County: Wake

State: North Carolina

Photographer: Mary Ruffin Hanbury

Date Photographed: December 8, 2015

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Berry O'Kelly Monument, view to W.

4 of 11.

Name of Property: Berry O'Kelly Historic District

City or Vicinity: Raleigh

County: Wake

State: North Carolina

Photographer: Mary Ruffin Hanbury

Date Photographed: December 8, 2015

Berry O'Kelly Historic District
Name of Property

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County and State

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Berry O'Kelly Grave, view to W.

5 of 11.

Name of Property: Berry O'Kelly Historic District

City or Vicinity: Raleigh

County: Wake

State: North Carolina

Photographer: Mary Ruffin Hanbury

Date Photographed: December 8, 2015

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Gymnasium, view to NW.

6 of 11.

Name of Property: Berry O'Kelly Historic District

City or Vicinity: Raleigh

County: Wake

State: North Carolina

Photographer: Mary Ruffin Hanbury

Date Photographed: April 6, 2016

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Gymnasium, interior, view to SW.

7 of 11.

Name of Property: Berry O'Kelly Historic District

City or Vicinity: Raleigh

Berry O'Kelly Historic District
Name of Property

Wake, North Carolina
County and State

County: Wake

State: North Carolina

Photographer: Mary Ruffin Hanbury

Date Photographed: December 8, 2015

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Basketball Court, view to W.

8 of 11.

Name of Property: Berry O'Kelly Historic District

City or Vicinity: Raleigh

County: Wake

State: North Carolina

Photographer: Mary Ruffin Hanbury

Date Photographed: December 8, 2015

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Baseball Diamond, view to S

9 of 11.

Name of Property: Berry O'Kelly Historic District

City or Vicinity: Raleigh

County: Wake

State: North Carolina

Photographer: Mary Ruffin Hanbury

Date Photographed: December 8, 2015

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Athletic/Agriculture Field, view to W

10 of 11.

Berry O'Kelly Historic District
Name of Property

Wake, North Carolina
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Name of Property: Berry O'Kelly Historic District

City or Vicinity: Raleigh

County: Wake

State: North Carolina

Photographer: Mary Ruffin Hanbury

Date Photographed: December 8, 2015

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Pickleball Courts, view to N.

11 of 11.

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.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

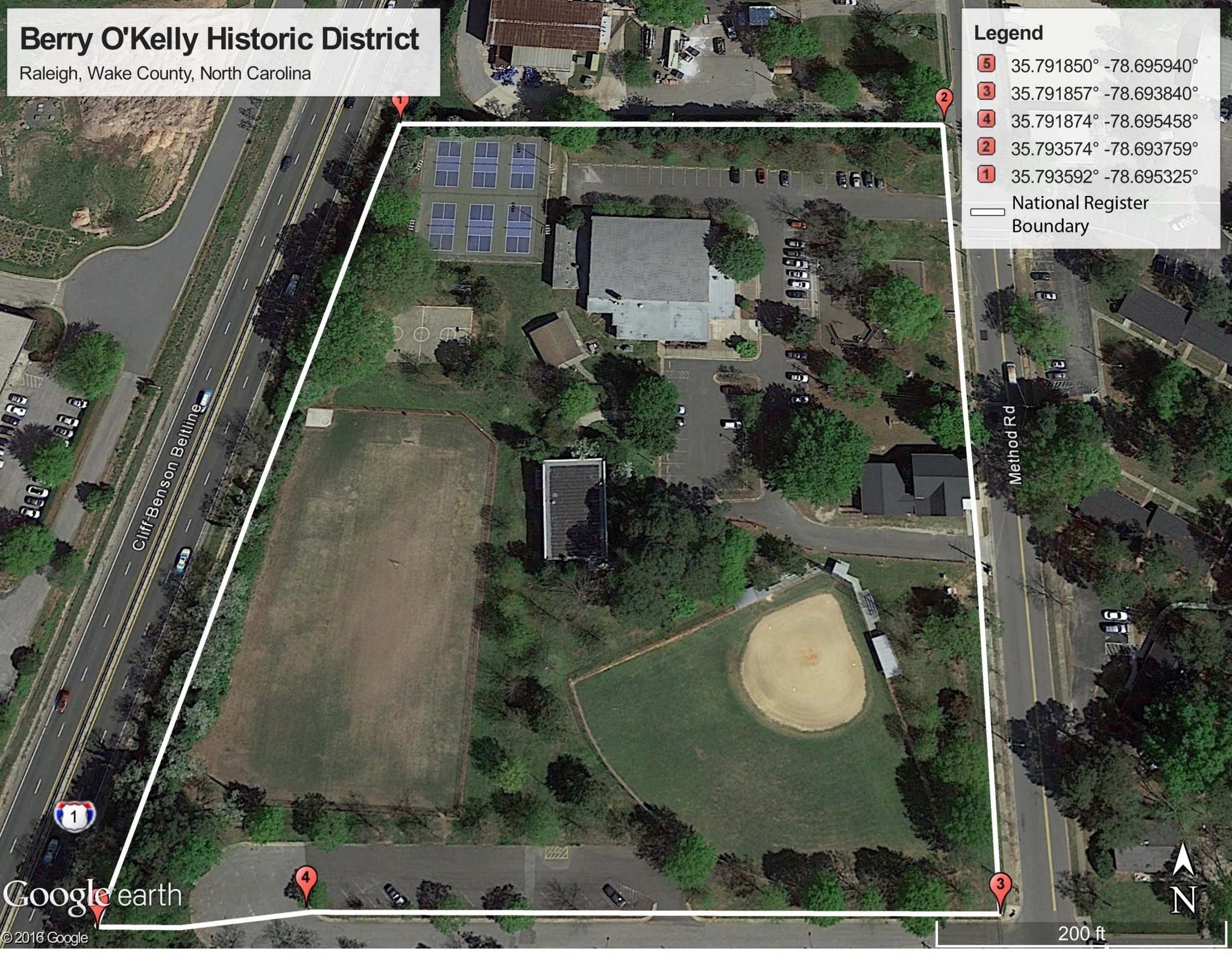
Berry O'Kelly Historic District

Raleigh, Wake County, North Carolina

Legend

- 5 35.791850° -78.695940°
- 3 35.791857° -78.693840°
- 4 35.791874° -78.695458°
- 2 35.793574° -78.693759°
- 1 35.793592° -78.695325°

□ National Register Boundary



Cliff-Benson Beltline

Method Rd

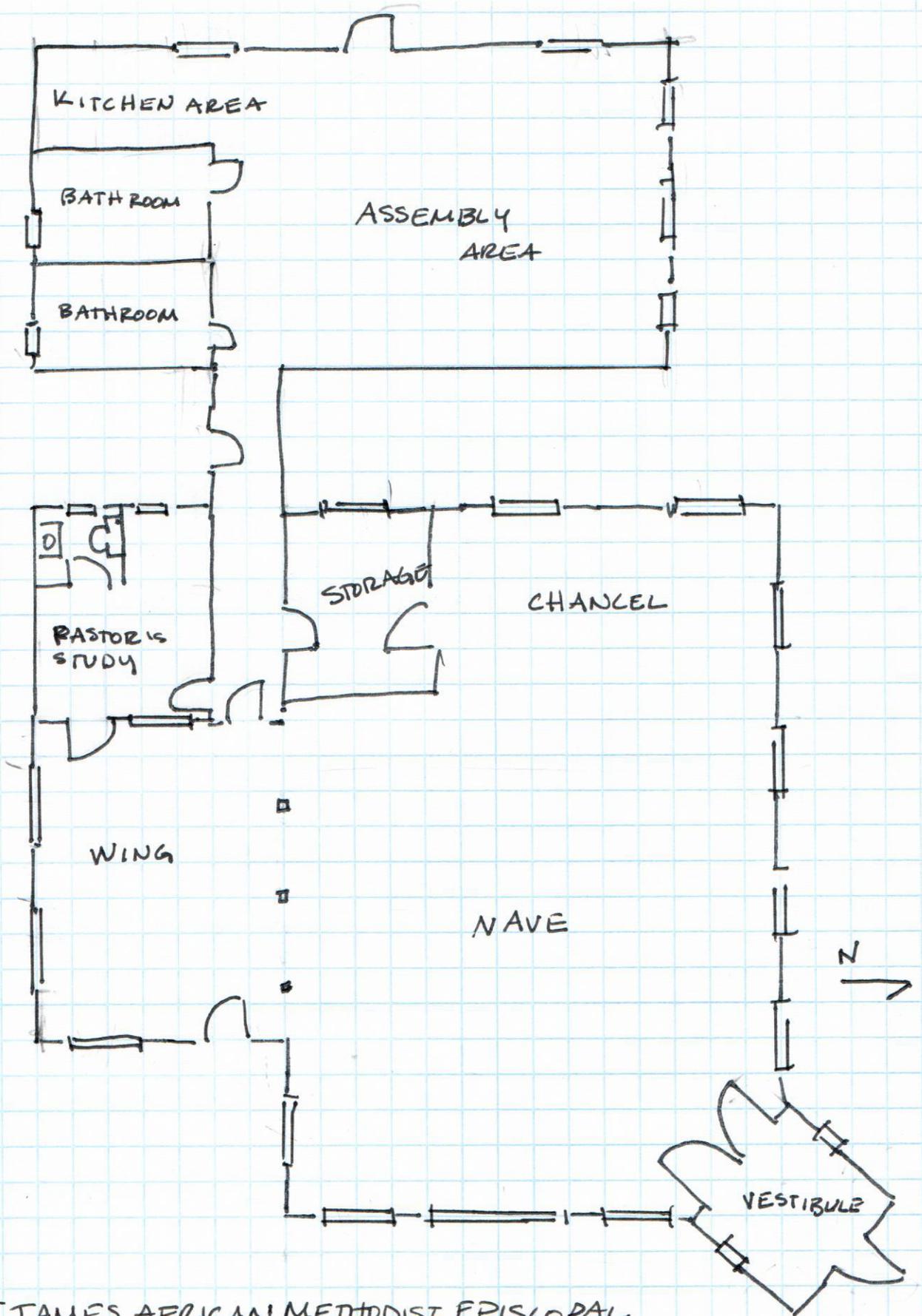


Google earth

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200 ft





ST JAMES AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

BERRY O'KELLY HISTORIC DISTRICT
RALEIGH WAKE COUNTY NC

NOT TO SCALE