

# Maryland Historical Trust Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. PG: 75A-008

## 1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic Forestville Methodist Church and Cemetery

other

## 2. Location

street and number 3111 Forestville Road \_\_ not for publication

city, town Forestville \_\_ vicinity

county Prince George's

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

name Forest Memorial Methodist Church, Inc.

street and number 3111 Forestville Road, SE telephone

city, town Forestville state MD zip code 20747-4405

## 4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Prince George's County Courthouse liber 182 folio 158

city, town Upper Marlboro tax map 82 tax parcel 66 tax ID number 06 0487140

## 5. Primary Location of Additional Data

- Contributing Resource in National Register District
- Contributing Resource in Local Historic District
- Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
- Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
- Recorded by HABS/HAER
- Historic Structure Report or Research Report at MHT
- Other: Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, Prince George's County Planning Department

## 6. Classification

Category	Ownership	Current Function		Resource Count	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce/trade	<input type="checkbox"/> recreation/culture	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> defense	<input type="checkbox"/> religion	<u>1</u>	sites
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> site		<input type="checkbox"/> domestic	<input type="checkbox"/> social		structures
<input type="checkbox"/> object		<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation		objects
		<input type="checkbox"/> funerary	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u> Total
		<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> unknown		
		<input type="checkbox"/> health care	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> vacant/not in use		
		<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> other:		
					<b>Number of Contributing Resources previously listed in the Inventory</b>
					<u>2</u>

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## 7. Description

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### Condition

excellent       deteriorated  
 good             ruins  
 fair               altered

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

The Forestville Methodist Church and Cemetery is located at 3111 Forestville Road in Forestville, Maryland. This religious building is located to the southwest of the intersection of Forestville Road and Ritchie Road. The grassy lot slopes gently in all directions. Mature trees and shrubs outline the property, including the cemetery, to the north and east. Concrete walkways frame the building, providing pedestrian access from Ritchie Road and the asphalt parking lot to the south. A shed is located in the western corner of the property, along Ritchie Road. The cemetery appears to predate the current building, as the markers are set notably close to the structure on the east and west sides.

### CHURCH

Forestville Methodist Church was constructed c. 1922, utilizing available materials (possibly some reused) during the post-World War I period. The building is constructed of smooth concrete blocks that have been painted white. It is four bays wide and two bays deep; the one-story building rests on a raised foundation that is fully exposed on the south side due to the extreme slope of the site. The steeply gabled roof is covered with asphalt shingles and features overhanging eaves with an open cornice and exposed rafter ends. The upper-gable ends are clad in wavy-cut asbestos shingles, which was popular during the early twentieth century. A one-story entry bay projects from the eastern end of the north elevation. This entry bay appears to be original, although it may have been a later addition that has obscured the original entry opening. The variety of window sash and types suggests limited availability of buildings materials or the reuse of materials at the time of construction. For example, the basement openings have metal casements with fixed transoms, while the upper story has 6/6, double-hung, wood-sash windows with concrete lug sills and lintels. Further, the openings are not symmetrically placed, nor are they similarly aligned. This suggests the openings may have been cut to fit available sash. Entry openings hold a variety of doors as well, ranging from flush metal door with one light, wood door with eight recessed panels and transom, and double-leaf, six-paneled doors of wood.

The north elevation is composed of a partially below-grade mechanical wing, shed-roof storage, and one-story entry bay. The below-grade mechanical wing is constructed of concrete block and covered by a flat/slightly sloping roof of asphalt shingles with wood fascia board. A metal louvered vent pierces the east elevation, partially below grade. The wing abuts the one-story entry bay that projects from the eastern end of the north elevation. The entry bay has a side-gable roof that extends from the roof of the main block. The pitch of this roof and the asphalt-shingle roofing material are the same as the main block; however it has a raking wood cornice, while the main block merely has a plain fascia board. An exterior-end, concrete-block chimney rises from the north side of the entry bay. The west elevation of the entry bay contains a double-leaf, paneled wood door with three-light transom. It is sheltered by a shed-roof hood that extends beyond the side-gable roof. The gable ends of the hood, which features a plain wood fascia board, are clad in aluminum siding. The door opening is accessed via a poured concrete stoop with metal railing. A window opening with a projecting sill is located on the west elevation of the entry opening. This opening has been infilled with concrete blocks. The western end of the building's north elevation has a shed-roof storage bay. One bay square, the storage bay has a

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shed roof covered with asphalt shingles. The gable ends are clad in square-cut asbestos shingles. The north elevation contains a single-leaf, plywood door. It is possible this storage bay was an addition.

Beyond the entry bay, the west elevation of the main block is symmetrically pierced with four openings per story. The basement openings have paired, six-light, metal-sash casements topped by four-light transoms. The first-story windows, which are slightly varied in width and height, have 6/6, double-hung, wood-sash windows with concrete lug sills and lintels.

The south elevation is pierced on the lower basement story only, suggesting this portion of the building housed the altar. The westernmost bay has a narrow, single-leaf, flush metal door with a single light. The easternmost bay has a paired, 6-light, metal-sash casement window topped by four-light transom. The opening features a concrete lug sill. The upper story is marked by large black lettering that is painted onto the wall. It reads: [illegible] MEMORIAL / U.M.C. / ANNEX. The upper-gable end is clad in wavy-cut asbestos shingles.

The east elevation of the main block is asymmetrically pierced. The basement level has five openings, while the first story has four openings. The foundation level of the storage bay has a wide opening covered with plywood. The three northernmost basement windows of the main block have four-light metal sash that appears to be fixed. The central opening, under the metal stair, and the southernmost opening have paired, six-light, metal-sash casements topped by four-light transoms. The four first-story windows, which are slightly varied in width and height, have 6/6, double-hung, wood-sash windows with concrete lug sills and lintels. A single-leaf entry opening pierces the central bay of the second story. Reached by a metal stair, the entry holds a wood door with eight recessed panels and six-light transom. The opening has a wide, square-edge surround and wide concrete lintel.

### SHED

Based on its form and materials, it appears that this shed was constructed c. 1960. This one-story, one-bay wood-frame building is set on a concrete-block pier foundation. Asbestos shingles clads the building. The shed roof is covered with corrugated metal and includes a plain fascia board and overhanging eave along the façade (east elevation). The façade is pierced by a single-leaf, plywood door set in a narrow, square-edge wood surround. This narrow opening is served by a wooden stoop set on a concrete-block foundation. No other openings are located on this shed.

### CEMETERY

This cemetery is laid out in a rough grid pattern, with rows of markers aligned parallel to Forestville Road. There are approximately 75 individual grave markers, several located remarkably close to the present church building. The masonry markers are a mixture of tablet headstones, block markers, obelisks, ground-level

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headstones, and Latin crosses. The oldest headstone memorializes Francis Dareey, who was a Sergeant in the Maryland Militia in 1814 and died in 1840. The most recent interment has a marker memorializing Elsie C. Stanley, who died in 2000.

A knee-high metal fence outlines the Mangum family plot. The private plot is approximately twenty by ten feet, located along the north boundary of the property close to Ritchie Road. It contains four above-ground markers, one with both a headstone and footstone.

### INTEGRITY

The Forestville Methodist Church presents a high level of integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. The main block appears to be intact as originally constructed, retaining all of the original windows and possibly doors. The shed-roof storage bay appears to be an addition, but it does not diminish the main block's integrity of design. The building has lost its integrity of feeling and association as it is no longer serving as a church. Set prominently on a small knoll along a minor arterial road, the Forestville Methodist Church maintains its integrity of location. Integrity of setting however has been affected by the asphalt parking lot that dominates the landscape to the south, and the mid- to late-twentieth-century commercial buildings surrounding.

The shed maintains a low level of integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. The original door has been replaced and portions of the original cladding have peeled off. The shed presents a low level of integrity of setting, feeling, and association as the Forestville Methodist Church is vacant. The shed maintains its integrity of location, close to the church.

The cemetery presents a moderate level of integrity of design, materials, workmanship, and feeling. Although the Forestville Methodist Church is no longer holding services, this does not compromise the cemetery's integrity of association. Further, the cemetery clearly predates the current church and appears to continue to accept burials (the last interment was 2000). However, the integrity of setting is affected by the asphalt parking lot that dominates the landscape to the south, and the mid- to late-twentieth-century commercial buildings surrounding. Moreover, setting and location have been greatly diminished by the c. 1922 construction of the concrete-block church, which is set close to many of the historic markers.

Overall, the Forestville Methodist Church and Cemetery presents a moderate level of integrity.

## 8. Significance

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Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> health/medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> performing arts
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment/ recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 2000-	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/ settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> social history
	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning		<input type="checkbox"/> maritime history	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation		<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: <u>Local History</u>

<b>Specific dates</b>	1840; c. 1922	<b>Architect/Builder</b>	unknown
<b>Construction dates</b>	1840; c. 1922		

Evaluation for:

National Register

Maryland Register

not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance projects, complete evaluation on a DOE Form – see manual.)

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Forestville Methodist Church and Cemetery is located at 3111 Forestville Road in unincorporated Forestville, Maryland. Completed c. 1922, this masonry church is an example of post-World War I ecclesiastical construction that took place in Prince George's County. The use of concrete block as a primary building material and metal casement windows exemplifies the economic situation facing modest congregations following the Great War. Sited on a knoll near a local crossroads, this large white building is a local landmark. Although the building sits vacant, it retains sufficient integrity to convey its significance as a post-World War I church built for an existing congregation in Forestville. Further, the Forestville Methodist Cemetery, with interments dating from the 1840s, is representative of rural burial grounds of the mid- to late nineteenth century. Interments have continued throughout the twentieth century, yet the majority of the masonry markers illustrate the funerary customs and guidelines of the Landscape Lawn Movement, which brought a wider variety of markers and a more organized layout.<sup>1</sup>

### HISTORIC CONTEXT

The Forestville Methodist Church and Cemetery is located in the unincorporated community of Forestville, Maryland, in western Prince George's County. A large part of what is now Forestville was owned by David and Lowenia Sommers prior to the Civil War (1861-1865) and known first as Magruder's Plains. The area was later known as Long Old Field, which appears on *Martenet's 1861 Map of Prince George's County* along the route from Washington, DC to Upper Marlboro, Maryland.<sup>2</sup> This route, known as the Marlboro Turnpike or Old Stage Road, had a toll gate located at Forestville.<sup>3</sup> The small community supported several residences, a saw mill, post office, churches, and a blacksmith shop. This area did not experience the population growth seen in other areas of the county until World War II (1941-1945) because of a lack of sufficient transportation routes. Growth did accelerate in Forestville during the 1960s, thanks in large part to the completion of the Capital Beltway in 1964.

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The property where the Forestville Methodist Church and Cemetery are located was owned by Nimrod E. and Martha M. Farr in the early twentieth century. Farr, born 1861, was a truck farmer who grew a few fruit or vegetable crops on a large scale for transport to other markets. In 1922, the Farris conveyed the property to the trustees of the Forestville Methodist Episcopal Church.<sup>4</sup> The trustees were: Thomas J. Flowers, William H. Marr, George Brady, Charles Hayes, and Norman Beall. The present concrete-block church was constructed soon after the property was purchased by the trustees. However, it is possible a church building existed on this property prior to the early 1920s. More significant is the existence of the cemetery, which has above-ground markers dating from 1840. This suggests that Nimrod Farr was not using this portion of his property for farming, but may have been leasing it to a local congregation. It should be noted that the Epiphany Church and Cemetery (75A-006) is located nearby at 3111 Ritchie Road and may have used this site for burial purposes.

The Forestville Methodist Church was constructed shortly after the end of World War I (1914-1918). The readily available concrete blocks proved to be an economical and time-saving construction material for many buildings constructed after the war. Metal casement windows were inexpensive and readily available in a wide selection of styles and sizes. Their use in all forms of architecture became prolific, in keeping with the new fashions and demands for low-cost, light, airy and well ventilated buildings.<sup>5</sup> The use of wood-sash on the first story suggests that the congregation valued the intangible values of wood-sash windows.

Currently, the building is not used as a church and is vacant. Signage suggests that recently the building was used as a thrift shop and as an annex for the United Methodist Church to the south.

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<sup>1</sup> The Woodlawn Cemetery, "The Landscape Lawn Plan," <http://www.thewoodlawncemetery.org/landscape.html> (accessed March 31, 2009).

<sup>2</sup> Simon J. Martenet, "Atlas of Prince George's County, Maryland, 1861," Adapted from *Martenet's Map of Prince George's County, Maryland* (Baltimore: Simon J. Martenet C.E., 1861).

<sup>3</sup> The Forestville Citizens Association, "Forestville, A Bicentennial Look At Its Past," Prince George's County Planning Department Files.

<sup>4</sup> Nimrod E. Farr and Martha M. Farr to Thomas J. Flowers, William H. Marr, George Brady, Charles Hayes, and Norman Beall (Trustees of the Forestville Methodist Episcopal Church), Prince George's County Land Records, 182:158.

<sup>5</sup> Period Property UK, "History of Metal Windows," [http://directory.periodproperty.co.uk/article/history\\_of\\_metal\\_windows.html](http://directory.periodproperty.co.uk/article/history_of_metal_windows.html) (accessed February 24, 2009).

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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Prince George's County Land Records.

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## 10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of surveyed property	<u>1.10</u>	
Acreage of historical setting	<u>1.10</u>	
Quadrangle name	<u>Anacostia</u>	Quadrangle scale: <u>1:24,000</u>

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### Verbal boundary description and justification

Forestville Methodist Church and Cemetery is located in Forestville on a 1.10-acre parcel. Ritchie Road borders the property to the north and east. Forestville Road forms the southern boundary of the property. A large asphalt parking lot forms the western boundary of the Forestville Methodist Church, which has been associated with Parcel 66 as noted on Tax Map 82 since its construction c. 1922. The cemetery has been associated with this property since c. 1840.

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## 11. Form Prepared by

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name/title	Paul Weishar and Maria Dayton, Architectural Historian		
organization	EHT Traceries, Inc. for M-NCPPC	date	March 2009
street & number	1121 Fifth Street, NW	telephone	(202) 393-1199
city or town	Washington	state	DC

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties 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  
Maryland Department of Planning  
100 Community Place  
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023  
410-514-7600

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CHAIN OF TITLE  
PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY LAND RECORDS

Deed  
182:158  
June 22, 1922

Nimrod E. Farr and Martha M. Farr to Thomas J. Flowers, William H. Marr, George Brady, Charles Hayes, and Norman Beall, Trustees of the Forestville Methodist Episcopal Church.



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Photo: Forestville Methodist Church, Forestville, view of the façade (west elevation), looking southeast.  
(February 2009)



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Photo: Forestville Methodist Church, Forestville, view of the façade (west elevation), looking northeast.  
(February 2009)



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Photo: Forestville Methodist Church, Forestville, view of the east (rear) elevation, looking northwest. (February 2009)



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Photo: Forestville Methodist Church, Forestville, view of the north (side) elevation, looking southwest.  
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Photo: Forestville Methodist Church Cemetery, Forestville, view looking northwest. (February 2009)



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Photo: Shed, Forestville, looking west. (February 2009)