

# Maryland Historical Trust Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. 32-31

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

historic Pinecrest Recreation Center<sup>1</sup>  
 other Pinecrest Recreation Building (preferred)

## 2. Location

street and number Pinecrest Local Park, 301 St. Lawrence Drive \_\_\_ not for publication  
 city, town Silver Spring \_\_\_ vicinity  
 county Montgomery

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

name M-NCPPC  
 street and number 8787 Georgia Avenue telephone 301-495-2595  
 city, town Silver Spring state MD zip code 20910

## 4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Montgomery County Land Records liber 943 folio 199  
 city, town Rockville tax map JP53 tax parcel N960 tax ID number 00968908

## 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: M-NCPPC

## 6. Classification

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

<sup>1</sup>Also may have been known as South Four Corners Recreation Center (see Footnote 2).

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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.

### SUMMARY

Located in Pinecrest Local Park in the Woodmoor community in Silver Spring, the Pinecrest Recreation Center was constructed in the mid-1940s, serving recreational needs during World War II. Its proximity to South Four Corners (now known as Pinecrest) Elementary School made it a popular playground.<sup>2</sup> The building still functions in its original role and retains most of its original fabric.

### SITE

Pinecrest Recreation Center is located off of St. Lawrence Drive, within the Pinecrest Local Park in Silver Spring, Maryland. The building sits on a small hill with concrete steps leading up from the parking lot, and in one area, a handicapped accessible ramp provides entry into the building. It is surrounded by a number of mature trees, a playground and parking lot, as well as a patio area, which was renovated in 1987. The five-acre park also includes picnic tables, basketball courts, football and softball fields, and tennis courts.

### EXTERIOR

It is a one-story, irregularly-shaped, cross-gabled structure, with a raised, poured concrete basement level. It spans approximately 2,175 square feet, it is of frame construction. The building was originally wood-sided, but the vinyl siding was added in 1987 to reflect a wave of minor renovations that the community thought necessary. The cross-gabled roof is shingled in asphalt. Security grating covers all of the windows.

The north façade measures approximately 44 feet wide and is the main entryway into the recreation building. The one-story, three-bay wide façade has a central doorway with a triple banked window to the east of the entry. Single and triple banked windows sit on the gabled end of the front wing of the elevation. Three windows in the lower level of the front wing have since been closed up. The metal entryway steps out onto a poured concrete landing. Five concrete steps leading down to a short concrete ramp and the parking lot complete the entryway. Concrete steps leading down to the playground sit to the west of the entry stairs.

The west elevation measures approximately 20 feet wide. A roughly seven-foot wide ashlar stone chimney is located on the main block of the elevation, supporting a bricked-in fireplace in the building's interior. The raised basement has its own entry on the main block of the building. The front wing of the elevation has a single banked window.

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<sup>2</sup>A July 1947 *Washington Post* article notes a "South Four Corners [Recreation] Center" (in addition to the North Four Corners Recreation Center) in the Silver Spring area. The South Four Corners Neighborhood Park (now known as Forest Glen-Dallas Avenue Neighborhood Park) contains 3.6 acres of land with a playground (no standing structures and was acquired in 1946. Hence, the article could have been referring to this park, and not to a recreation building.

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The two-bay wide rear wing of the south elevation measures 20 feet, while the one-bay wide south elevation of the main block measures 28 feet. The sloped grounds expose a part of the raised basement. The gabled end of the rear wing has two windows on the first level. The main block has one double banked window on the first level.

The east elevation is three bays wide, and measures approximately 38 feet. A handicapped-accessible ramp entry on the gabled end leads out to the parking lot. A single banked window sits to the side of the ramp wing, while another is on the rear wing of the building. A roughly four-foot wide ashlar stone chimney is tucked behind the bushes on the main block of the elevation.

The windows are now one-over-one, double-hung sash. The date at which the original eight-over-eight windows were replaced is not known.

### **INTERIOR**

Pinecrest is divided into a large, open meeting space, with smaller wings off to the sides. The interior features extensive knotty pine paneling throughout most of the large open recreation room. Where wood-paneling is absent, there are white-painted plaster walls. The ceiling is plastered. An ashlar stone fireplace and chimney breast sit on the west wall of the main block, flanked on either side by two wooden doors. The ashlar stone fireplace has been bricked in and is therefore nonfunctioning. The east chimney presumably serves a furnace. The floors are tiled in 9" x 9" tiles.

The basement level has its own exterior entry into the main block of the building and serves as a community recreation space. Still extant is an original five-panel wooden door, which apparently leads to the upper level. The basement also has a now-nonfunctioning bricked-in ashlar stone fireplace and chimney breast.

It has banked windows on its raised basement level and its first floor.

Pinecrest has only received minor interior cosmetic alterations. These 1987 renovations included upgrading the kitchen and bathroom facilities, improving insulation and renovating the floor surface.

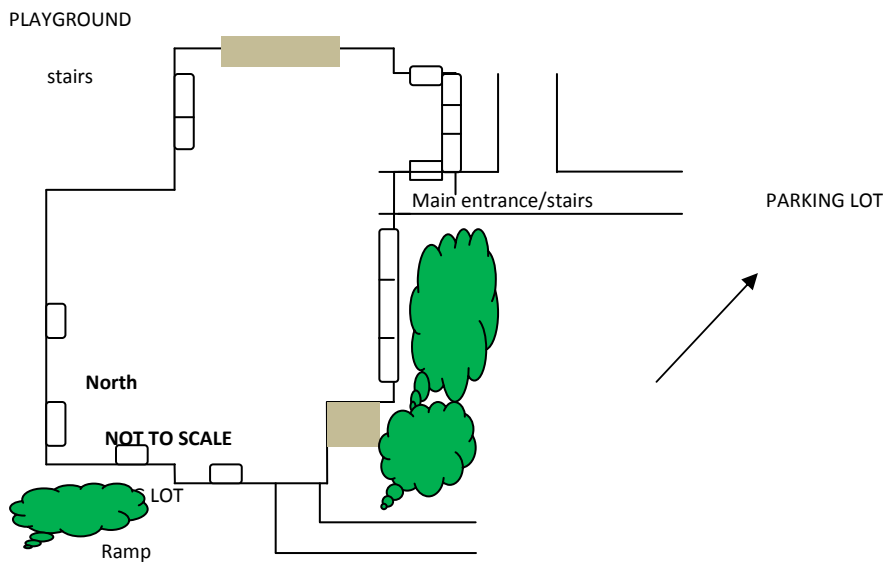
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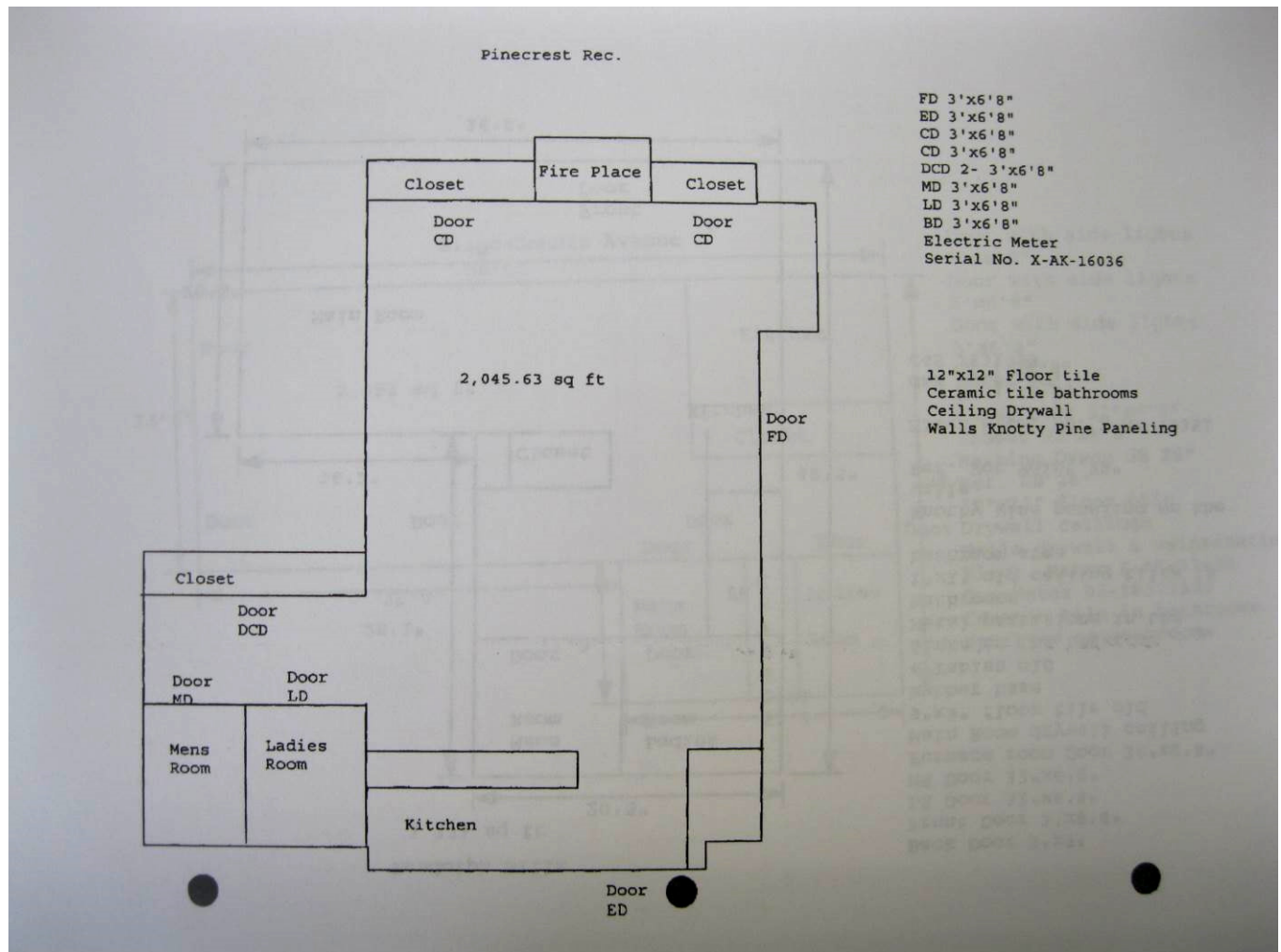
Pinecrest Recreation Center, Current Site Plan.

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Facilities Management Floor Plan of Pinecrest, 2002. Courtesy: M-NCPPC.

## 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entertainment/ recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input 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 type="checkbox"/> other: _____

Specific dates	Architect/Builder	M-NCPPC
<b>Construction dates</b> 1944-1946		

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.)

### SUMMARY

Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) was founded in 1927 as a stream-valley park system protecting the headwaters of the Anacostia and Potomac Rivers. In addition, the Commission's charge was to oversee subdivision review and the creation and maintenance of a recreational park system. Along the stream valleys and, later, in the neighborhood and regional parks, the Commission augmented the natural landscape with the construction of buildings to house indoor recreation activities, such as parties, club meetings, scouts, daycare, and summer camps.

As M-NCPPC approaches its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary and out of a mission to provide cultural resource stewardship, the Montgomery County Department of Parks has identified park recreation buildings worthy of preservation. Currently, there are 30 buildings that serve or have operated as recreation buildings (now termed park activity buildings) throughout the 35,000 acre park system.<sup>3</sup> Originally, there were at least 41 of these community facilities. Some of these structures were "purpose-built," while others were converted to recreational use. In order to show a history of the evolution of park activity buildings over the lifetime of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (1927 to present), the Department of Parks' Cultural Resources Stewardship Section proposes to preserve at least one building from each of the five respective park community/recreation building eras.<sup>4</sup>

**\*Era I: The Origins of the M-NCPPC Park System: 1927-1940**

**\*Era II: The World War II-Era Buildings: 1941-1946**

<sup>3</sup> 2007 M-NCPPC *Catalog of Recreation and Ancillary Buildings* defines recreation buildings as "operated for the benefit of the general public, rented by the hour with Fees set by the Park Commission, reserved through Park Permits, and maintained by the Department of Parks Central Maintenance Divisions."

<sup>4</sup> In addition to recognizing the recreation buildings still standing, it is worth identifying the (at least) eleven structures that have since been demolished or transferred to the Montgomery County Recreation Department: Cabin John Recreation Center (off MacArthur Blvd.), Garrett Park Estates Community Building, Jesup-Blair Cabin, Kensington Park Community Building (off Frederick Ave.), Long Branch Recreation Center, Randolph Hills Recreation Center, Rosemary Hills Recreation Center, Scotland Community Building, Sligo Avenue Recreation Center, Sligo Cabin, and Wheaton Woods Recreation Center.

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**\*Era III: Conversion of World War II Federal Surplus Buildings: 1953-1956**

**\*Era IV: Purpose-Built Community Recreation Centers during Cold War Suburbanization: 1950-1990**

**\*Era V: Repurposing Structures to Become Activity Buildings, 1937-1968**

Five recreation buildings are being nominated to the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*. Each is the best representative of each of the different eras. Pinecrest was selected to represent Era II.<sup>5</sup>

Built in the mid-1940s, the Pinecrest Recreation Building has served a vital community function for the Woodmoor section of Silver Spring for over a half century. Designed in a cottage style, this facility became a model for M-NCPPC recreational facilities in Montgomery County built from the late 1940s to the 1950s. The resource is located within a five-acre park with mature trees and open space. Pinecrest Recreation Building meets the following criteria of the Montgomery County Historic Preservation Ordinance, Section 24A-3: 1(a) has character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the County, State, or Nation; 1(d) exemplifies the cultural, economic, social, political, or historic heritage of the County and its communities; 2(a) embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction;

### **NARRATIVE HISTORY**

With increased wartime restrictions, particularly on gasoline, M-NCPPC recognized that local citizens, by necessity, would seek recreation close to home and that existing recreation facilities would be used for a variety of pursuits – physical fitness programs for schools, adult excursions, and children’s programming geared at inspiring young boys and girls to become more active. Understanding that the population growth in Montgomery County was directly correlated to the war effort centered in Washington, D.C., it was proposed that the Lanham Act be utilized to construct new recreation facilities in already acquired, but undeveloped areas, such as Woodmoor. These facilities were to accommodate the growing suburbs beyond the original stream valley parks. The 1944 M-NCPPC *Master Plan of Recreation*, which was formulated to address post-war recreational programming, was a formidable document developed to guide immediate land acquisition and development. Its specifications for neighborhood parks (now identified as local parks) called for sites of 2.5 to 20 acres in size.

### **Era II: The World War II-Era Buildings: 1941-1946**

*Representative Buildings: “Maturing Park Infrastructure”*

- Hillandale (1944, Original Section with Chimney/major renovation 1988)  
Address: Hillandale Local Park, 10615 New Hampshire Avenue, Hillandale

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<sup>5</sup> For further information on the various design periods, see MIHP nomination forms for Meadowbrook, Ken-Gar, Veirs Mill, and Norbeck.

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- Pinecrest (ca. 1944-1946)

Address: Pinecrest Local Park, 301 St. Lawrence Drive, Silver Spring

*Candidate(s) for Preservation:*

- Pinecrest: eligible for the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*

Both Pinecrest and Hillandale became a prototype of sorts for future community recreation buildings as referenced in a 1947 *Washington Post* article that claimed M-NCPPC had tentative plans to construct seven new community recreation centers, including Brookmont, Little Falls Branch, Long Branch Valley, and Kensington View (only the latter two were completed), that were similar to those already at Hillandale and Pinecrest.<sup>6</sup>

The Pinecrest neighborhood, part of the Woodmoor area, experienced substantial suburbanization during the 1940s. With the development of ever expanding neighborhoods, communities formed citizens' association groups that sought public amenities for their neighborhoods. The 5.6 acres that became Pinecrest Park were purchased July 19, 1944, four months after the *Master Plan of Recreation* was approved. This date establishes that this Commission-built structure was constructed between July 1944 and 8 April 1946. On the latter date, the Pinecrest Citizens' Association held a meeting in the "recreation building [on] St. Lawrence Dr., Silver Spring" where E. Merritt Douglas, then principal of Montgomery Blair High School, discussed the educational situation throughout the county.<sup>7</sup> His lecture, interestingly, was followed by a talk about the community recreation program, and certainly at the time, this structure provided the ideal setting for such a conversation. This center, along with others, provided a vital service to parents who both worked during the war years. Furthermore, as Commissioner E. Brooke Lee clearly understood, once the school year ended for summer vacation, the Commission could offer "wholesome, supervised activities" for their children.<sup>8</sup> Hence, Pinecrest was utilized for after school programming and summer activities.

In 1979, the Commission sought community input on the facility at Pinecrest. The majority of residents responding did not want the building replaced with a new structure.<sup>9</sup> The rationale for retention of this building was that it was in good condition and because it was not possible to build a similar sized structure with the available budget.<sup>10</sup> Both Pinecrest and Hillandale were affected by an internal recognition, by the early-to-mid 1980s, that "many of our older parks are in some state of deterioration and due to heavy use and age, [thus] there is a great need to repair and modernize these facilities."<sup>11</sup> In the case of Hillandale, the recreation center was rebuilt in part and essentially received a new exterior shell. Repairs involved replacing the original wood siding with vinyl, improving insulation, making the facility handicap accessible, and remodeling the kitchen and

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<sup>6</sup> "Montgomery Plans Tennis Courts in '48," *Washington Post* 9 June 1947.

<sup>7</sup> "Douglas to Address Pinecrest Citizens," *Washington Post* 8 April 1946.

<sup>8</sup> M-NCPPC Archives, Saddlebrook.

<sup>9</sup> M-NCPPC Park (Microfiche) Records, Parkside Map Room. Pinecrest Local Park File.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*



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bathrooms. Pinecrest received new siding and replacement windows. Interior changes included remodeling the kitchen space and bathrooms, improving insulation, and making the facility handicap accessible.<sup>12</sup> This work was completed in 1987.

The Pinecrest Recreation Center became one of the structural models for several future M-NCPPC recreational facilities in Montgomery County, emulated throughout the late 1940s and into the 1950s. During the war years, it served as a gathering place for after school programming and summer activities for children whose parents were a part of the war efforts. The resource has been a vital part of the Woodmoor community for over half a century, and continues to be used as a recreation facility for the park.

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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M-NCPPC Archives, Saddlebrook. Collection includes M-NCPPC *Annual Reports*.  
M-NCPPC Papers (Minutes/Proceedings), Maryland State Archives  
Pinecrest File, Parkside.

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## 10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of surveyed property	<u>5.051 acres</u>	
Acreage of historical setting	<u>5.051 acres</u>	
Quadrangle name	<u>Kensington</u>	Quadrangle scale: <u>1:24000</u>

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### Verbal boundary description and justification

The historic environmental setting includes that part of the parcel associated with the recreation building and its functions.

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## 11. Form Prepared by

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name/title	Jamie F. Kuhns, Senior Historian and Emma Byrnes, Cultural Resources Stewardship Section		
organization	M-NCPPC Montgomery Parks	date	15 August 2013
street & number	9500 Brunett Avenue	telephone	301-650-4362
city or town	Silver Spring	state	MD

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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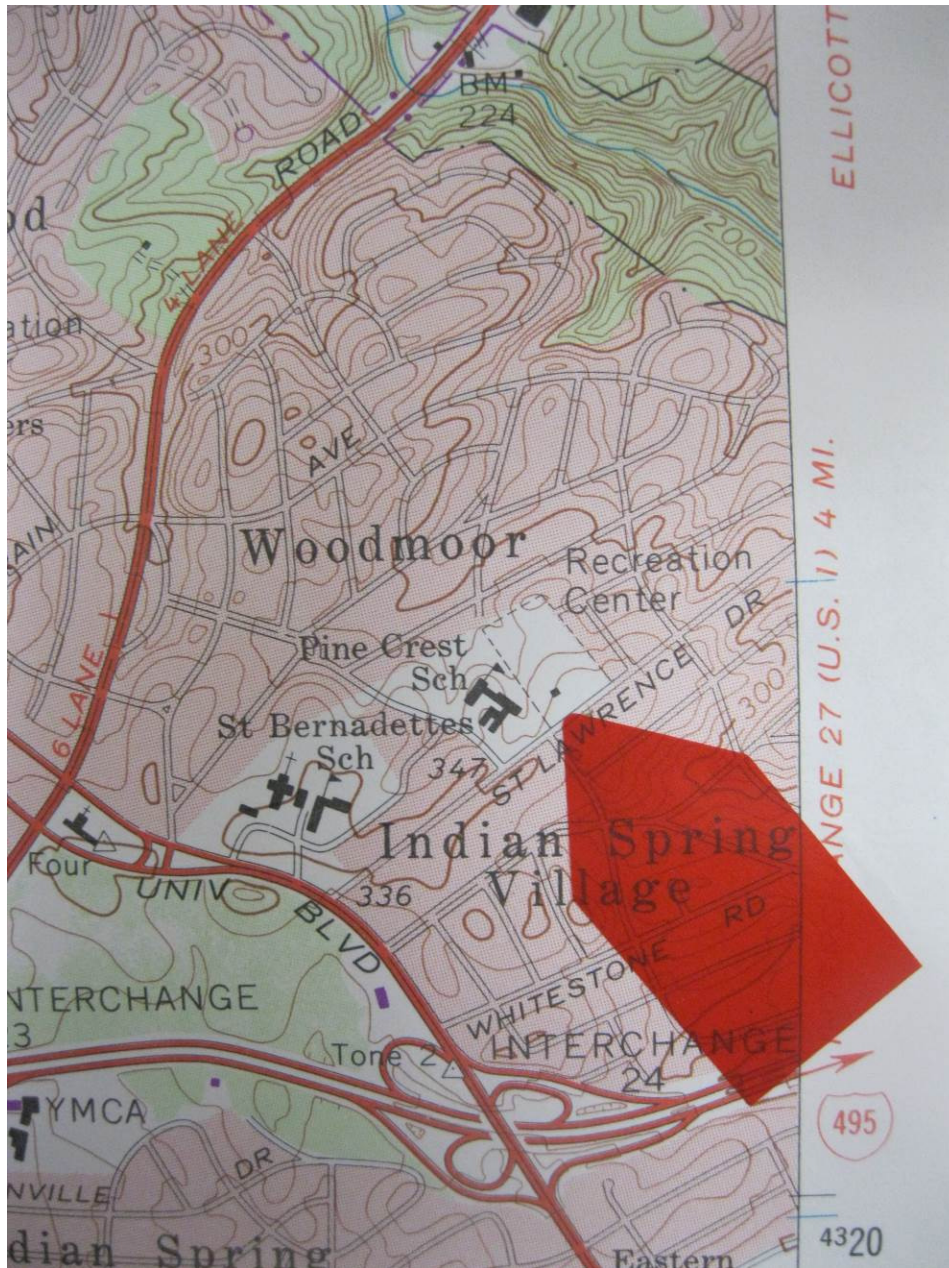


Figure 1. USGS Kensington Quad. Courtesy: M-NCPPC.

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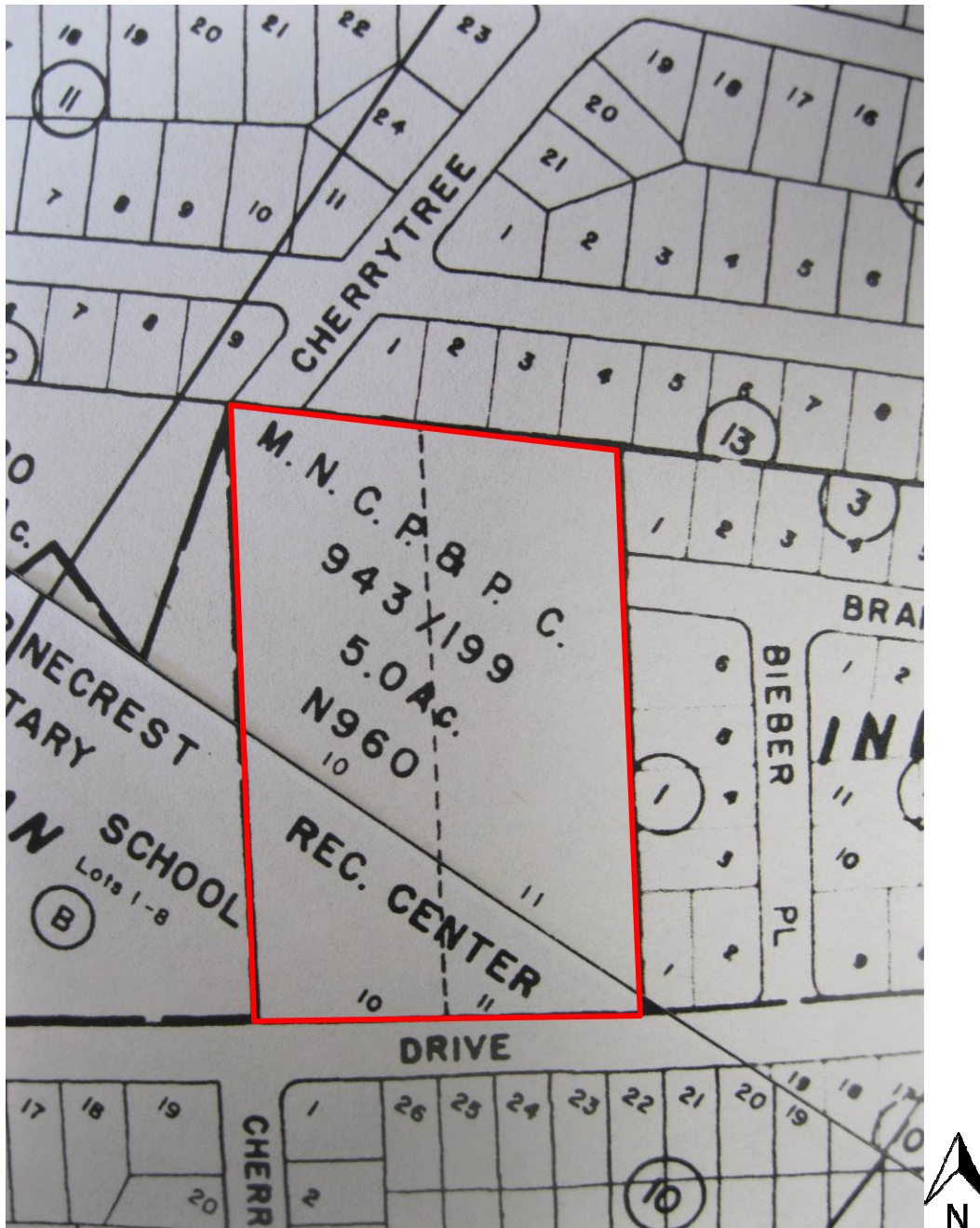


Figure 2. Tax Map: Property N960. Courtesy: M-NCPPC.

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Figure 3. Aerial view of Pinecrest Recreation Building at Pinecrest Local Park, 2008. Courtesy: M-NCPPC.

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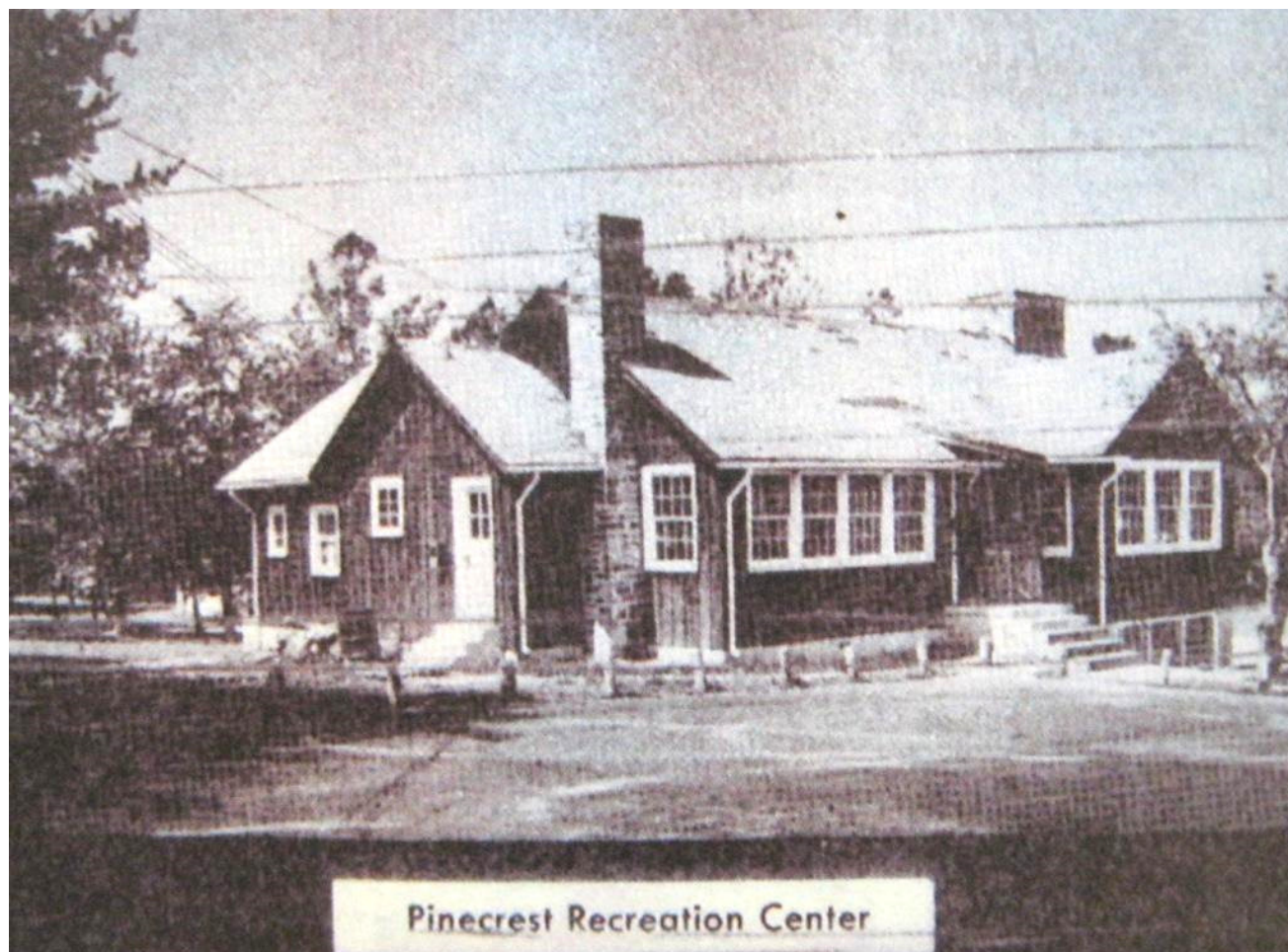


Figure 4. Pinecrest Recreation Center, M-NCPPCA *Annual Report 1954-1955*. Courtesy: M-NCPPC.

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**PINECREST  
RECREATION  
CENTER**  
St. Lawrence Drive  
and Cherry Tree Lane

Area Number 34

Map Number 2

Recreation Room — 22 x 36

Kitchen — Yes

Tables — 2

Folding Chairs — 75

Figure 5. Pinecrest Recreation Building, *Guide to M-NCPPC Recreation Centers* (1962). Courtesy: M-NCPPC.

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Figure 6. 1948 Kluge Map showing Pinecrest Recreation Building (circled). Courtesy: M-NCPPC, Montgomery County Department of Planning, Historic Preservation Office.



Figure 7. Kluge Map insert detail of the Pinecrest Recreation Building, 1950. Courtesy: M-NCPPC, Montgomery County Department of Planning, Historic Preservation Office.



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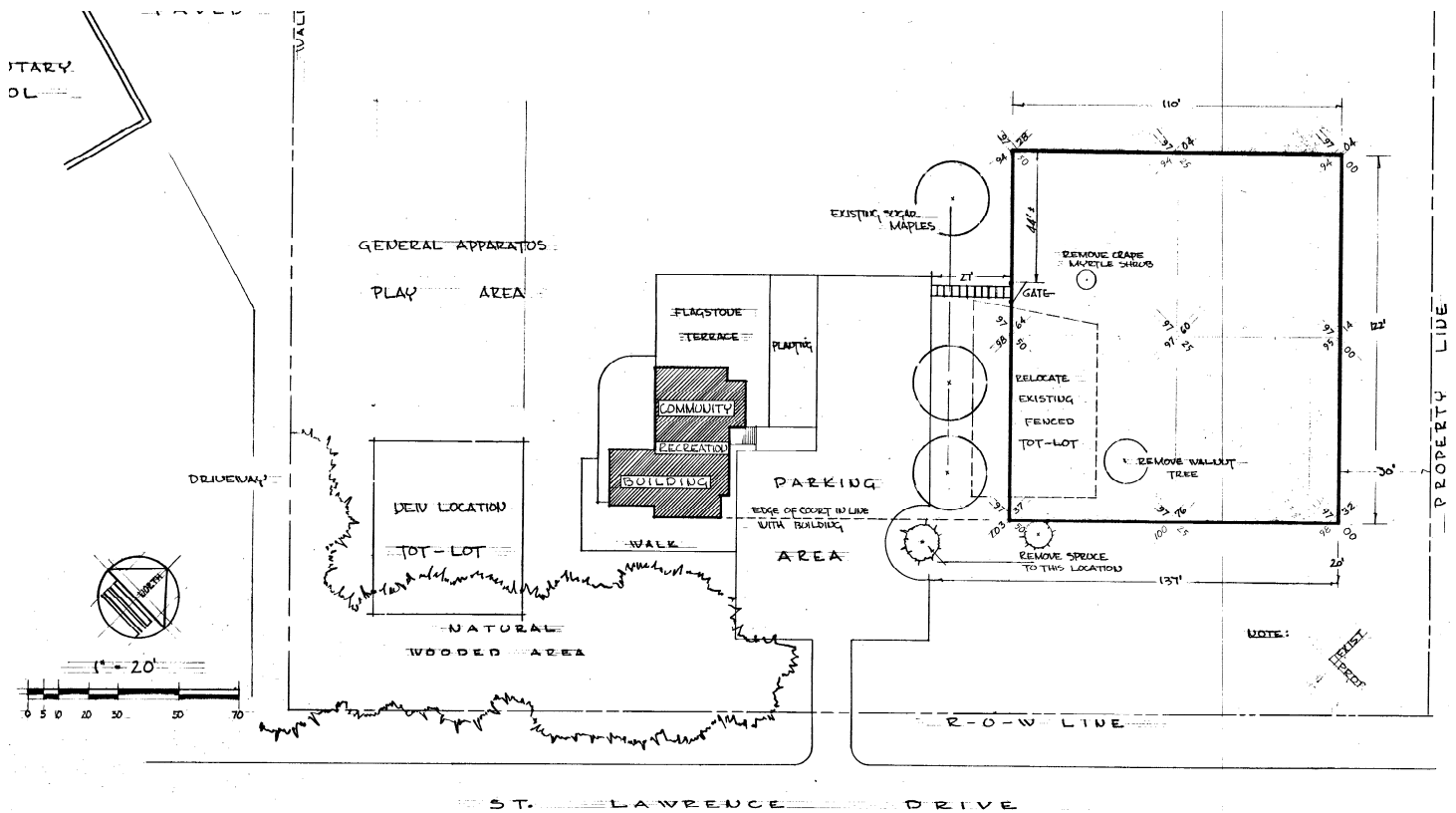


Figure 8. Pinecrest Site Plan showing proposed tennis courts, Landscape Architect Kempf, July 1962. M-NCPPC

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Figure 9. Pinecrest Recreation Building, front (north) façade.

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Figure 10. View of Pinecrest Recreation Building, east elevation.

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Figure 11. View of Pinecrest Recreation Building, south elevation.

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Figure 12. View of Pinecrest Recreation Building, west elevation.

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Figure 13. Interior detail of hearth, fireplace, and mantle on the first floor, Pinecrest Recreation Building.

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Figure 14. Interior view of open space on first floor of Pinecrest Recreation Building.

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Figure 15. Interior detail of hearth, fireplace (bricked in), and mantle in the basement floor of the Pinecrest Recreation Building.