



[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

Today's Date 04/14/2024

Is the nomination for multiple properties? If so, please attach the petition here.

In the space below (and in attached pages if necessary), summarize the general characteristics of the entire property. Describe its current use (and historic use if different) and the primary buildings and/or structures on the property (e.g., house, store, commercial building, bridge, etc.). Include information on the architectural style, materials and/or method(s) of construction, and exterior physical appearance and condition.

The existing building was constructed in 1923 as the Nelly Custis Elementary School in the simplified Classical Revival style and has been well preserved. It is a brick facade. It is currently being used for the Melwood program, but the site is being proposed to change from public / school / educational use to residential and the building is not intended to be preserved.

Briefly describe any outbuildings or secondary resources (e.g., garages, sheds, barns, storage tanks, walls, etc.), including their condition and estimated age. Also describe any notable natural and/or landscape features (e.g., mature trees, planned circulation paths, rock formations, creeks, etc.).

There is a mature, and possibly original evergreen tree in front of the building which has been the center of a community tree lighting for decades. Nelly Custis Park behind the school was once part of the school property before it became a public park. There is an old buried streambed that may run near / under the Melwood parking lot and empties into the Potomac at 4 Mile Run.

Are there any known threats to the property? If so, briefly describe.

Melwood Special GLUP Study proposes to tear down the building and / or build over it and at most only keep the facade of the building and possibly move the building facade. There is currently no protection for the building, facade, tree, etc.  
<https://www.arlingtonva.us/files/assets/public/v/1/melwood-study-document-updated-3.24.24.pdf>

Construction Dates TBD

Architect and/or builder TBD

Specific dates of importance (if known)

Planning Commission Vote on approval of additional density on 5/8/24 threatens the building. The scenarios being contemplated may or may not keep the historic landscaping and facade but will not keep the building or respect the scale of the neighborhood.

Provide a summary (four-paragraph maximum) of the property's overall history and significance. Please be sure to include all sources of information.

The Aurora Highlands National Register of Historic Places Historic District was approved in 2008; the existing building is a contributing resource to that Historic District. The neighborhood is significant as a residential commuter suburb of Washington, D.C.. The community grew during the first half of the twentieth century and illustrates the principles of neighborhood planning espoused by the Federal Housing Administration by providing accessibility to public transportation, employment, shopping, and incorporating schools, parks, and churches within a unified community. The school building was one of the few buildings constructed in the neighborhood that served a community function. Although the building has seen some alterations, it continues to

serve as a reminder of the community's developmental history and it serves as a buffer between nearby residential and commercial building types. Nelly Custis was the 3rd school in the County to be built, It is the last historic building left on the block in the historic neighborhood. In 1971, Nelly Custis was one of several elementary schools that integrated black students from Drew Elementary, completing integration, as Judge Oren Lewis when issuing the order stated "The Arlington County School Board has now fully complied with the Supreme Court decision in Brown...Arlington will have neither black nor white schools - just schools". On August 10, 1971, ONLY upon integration of the Arlington elementary schools including Nelly Custis, Arlington became the first county in Virginia to comply with the Brown vs the Board of Education ruling. Full integration was monumental as Virginia led the effort to resist integration in the south.

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**Please attach at least six (6) current images of the property, including visible exterior elevations/views, any relevant architectural details, any outbuildings, and the overall setting. Each photograph should be labeled with a description (e.g., "View of the north (front) elevation of the dwelling"). Historical maps and images also may be included, if available. Please indicate sources of all images provided.**

[Nelly Custis School Photos.pdf](#)

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**Please include any primary or secondary sources that may be helpful in continued research of this property, as well as any sources that are referenced in the narrative sections of this form.**

The Arlington Historical Society, the APS , County Government and the Arlington Library / Archives have more information and pictures of the original school. Please advise if more information is required.

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**The submitter of this form agrees all the information provided is accurate to the best of their knowledge.**

Yes

# Nelly Custis School Historic Preservation Nomination

# Current Photos

## April 2024



Northwest Corner of original Nelly Custis School (with historic evergreen in front). Mid-century addition to the right/west of the historic building.





Northeast corner and North Side of original Nelly Custis School – the historic main entrance is hidden by trees, but is visible on the roof line.





Detail of 1923 brickwork which has been well preserved.





Rear parapet of original Nelly Custis School (with Mid-century addition in front)

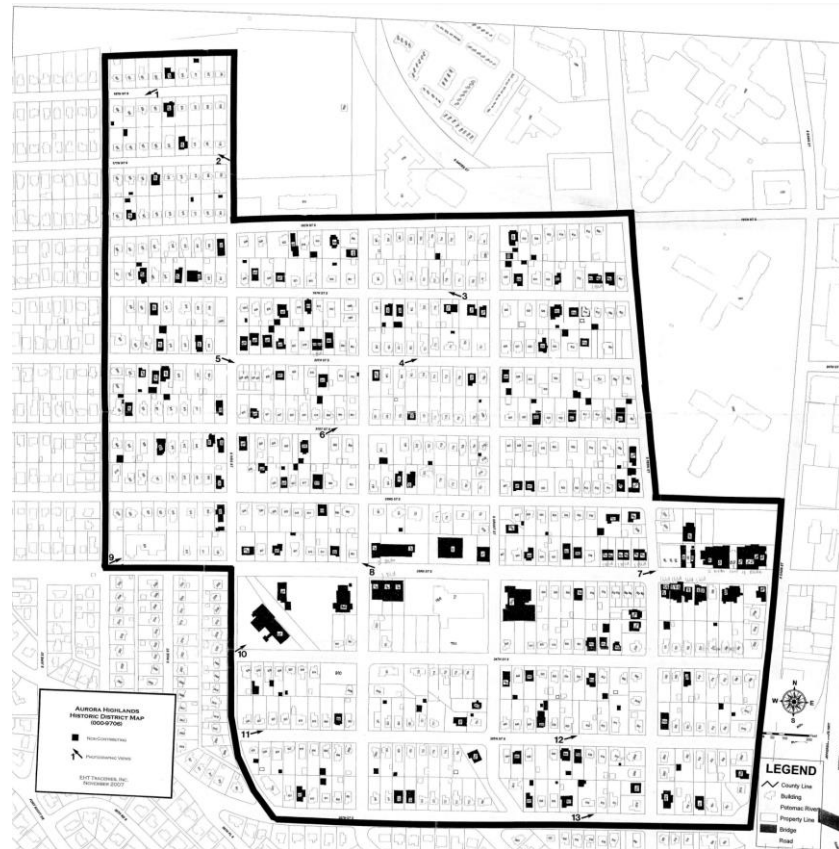




East Side of historic Nelly Custis School

# • Links & Historic Info

- [https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/000-9706\\_Aurora\\_Highlands\\_HD\\_2008\\_NRfinal.pdf](https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/000-9706_Aurora_Highlands_HD_2008_NRfinal.pdf)
- <https://library.arlingtonva.us/2018/01/11/the-desegregation-of-arlington-public-schools/#:~:text=Each%20January%2C%20the%20world%20remembers,Martin%20Luther%20King%2C%20Jr.&ext=One%20of%20those%20places%20was,culminated%20on%20February%202%2C%201959>









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