



PRELIMINARY INFORMATION FORM (PIF) for INDIVIDUAL PROPERTIES

Note: PIFs are prepared by applicants and evaluated by DHR staff and the State Review Board based on information known at the time of preparation. Recommendations concerning PIFs are subject to change if new information becomes available.

DHR No. (to be completed by DHR staff) 114-0006-0006

1. General Property Information

Property name: Armstrong-Slater Memorial Trade School

Property address: Hampton University National Historic Landmark District

City or Town: City of Hampton

Zip code: 23668

Name of the Independent City or County where the property is located: City of Hampton

Category of Property (choose only one of the following):

Building x Site _____ Structure _____ Object _____

2. Physical Aspects

Acreage: 0.597

Setting (choose only one of the following):

Urban x Suburban _____ Town _____ Village _____ Hamlet _____ Rural _____

Briefly describe the property's overall location and setting, including any notable landscape features:

Armstrong-Slater Memorial Trade School (ASMTS) is a contributing site that spans 0.597 acres within the Hampton University National Historic Landmark District (the District) in Hampton, Virginia. The District's oldest buildings are clustered near the shoreline facing the mouth of the Hampton River, and they extend one to two blocks to the east. From the older shoreline core, ASMTS and other contributing sites extend across flat terrain, heading inland toward the north, northeast, and southeast. The District's street grid includes Armstrong Road, Emancipation Drive, Frissell Avenue, William R. Harvey Way, Norma B. Harvey Way, Shore Road, Indian Road, Huntington Avenue, East and West Tyler Streets, Orchard Road, Marshall Avenue, James Court, Johnson Court, Soldiers Home Road, College Place, East Queen Street, Hampton Harbor Avenue, Mariner's Cove Road, and Ferry Road. ASMTS spans an entire block, bounded by Marshall Avenue on its west elevation, by Orchard Road on its north elevation, by Bemis Lab on its east elevation, and by an unnamed service road that leads to the Vehicle Services and Transportation Office on its south elevation.

3. Architectural Description

Architectural Style(s): Beaux-Arts, Renaissance Revival, Romanesque Revival, Victorian Gothic If the property was designed by an architect, landscape architect, engineer, or other professional, please list here: ASMTS's design was influenced by architect William Robert Ware who was a student of Richard Morris Hunt If the builder is known, please list here: African American and American Indian students enrolled in ASMTS, under the supervision of Charles D. Cake who was a prominent 19th-century builder and superintendent of early construction at HU.

Date of construction (can be approximate): 1896

Narrative Description (Please do not exceed one page in describing the property): Briefly describe the property's general characteristics, such as its current use (and historic use if different), as well as the primary building or structure on the property (such as a house, store, mill, factory, depot, bridge, etc.). Include the materials and method(s) of construction; physical appearance and condition (exterior and interior); and any additions or other major alterations.

Built in 1896, ASMTS embodies the philosophy of Brevet Brigadier General Samuel Chapman Armstrong, Commander of the 8th and 9th Colored Infantry Regiments in the Union Army and a Freedmen's Bureau officer, who founded HU to educate freedmen and their descendants. General Armstrong favored campus architecture that was "plain, harmonious, finely appointed, very neat, and extremely well conducted" to "surround students with influences that stimulated their self-respect and that developed their higher and better nature by practical recognition of it" (Jones, 203). His philosophy is articulated through the design of ASMTS and through the craftsmanship of African American and American Indian students who constructed the building as a practicum, under the supervision of Charles D. Cake, a prominent 19th-century builder and superintendent of early construction at HU (Southern Workman, 1; "Hampton University: Visions of Our Past," 9; Lindsey, 125). ASMTS was constructed as a one-story, 26,000 square feet building divided into eleven rooms (Hartshorn, 318). The Shops supplied the building materials, except the galvanized iron roofing (Puryear, 54). ASMTS expresses the architectural influences of both Richard Morris Hunt and his student, William Robert Ware, who were actively supplying architectural plans to the District during HU's Trade School Era (1880s and 1890s), although Ware continued to do so after Hunt died in 1895. Moreover, Ware introduced vocational training curricula to black freedmen at Hampton and Tuskegee, and his method of teaching building construction and draftsmanship heavily influenced the technical and trade education at both institutions in the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Block, 25). The architectural style of ASMTS is eclectic, embodying elements of the Beaux-Arts, Renaissance Revival, Romanesque Revival, and Victorian Gothic architectural styles, the last of which was favored by Hunt and Ware. In 1882, Ware designed Winona Lodge (not extant), a dormitory for Indian girls, as a plain, cruciform, high Victorian, three-story brick building (Jones, 158). Like Winona Lodge, ASMTS was designed on a cruciform plan or quadruple cross layout wherein the building's footprint features a square central mass with four arms of equal length (Hartshorn, 318; "Greek-cross Plan," Illustrated Architecture Dictionary). ASMTS displays symmetry, institutional prominence, and massing, emblematic of the Beaux-Arts and Renaissance Revival styles, thereby, reflecting the importance of trades education at HU. Symmetry and massing are also exhibited by the District's Administration Building (A-Building) that Ware designed as a two-story brick structure in 1882 (Jones, 179). Like the A-Building, ASMTS contains a low-pitched hipped roof with brackets that may support the overhangs, or they may be primarily decorative. ASMTS's façade is dominated by large, wide windows that emitted abundant natural light to illuminate classrooms and shops. Large windows are a Hunt trademark derived from French studio buildings (Wilson et.al., Hampton University). Most of ASMTS's windows, the main entrance on the west elevation, and the south elevation entrance are arched and crowned with arched segmented brick, signatures of the Romanesque Revival architectural style. The arches contain decorative keystones. Brick laid in a herringbone pattern above the segmented arch of the main entrance lends a decorative effect that reflects the Victorian Gothic architectural style. Comparatively, Ware's A-Building also displays decorative segmented brick arches and as well as brick laid in a herringbone pattern above some windows. A band of rusticated, rough-cut stone decorates the lower half of the wall on all elevations of ASMTS. Characteristic of the Victorian Gothic architectural style, ASMTS's brick façade is polychromatic, with red and black brick arranged in square and rectangular shapes on all elevations. Comparatively, polychrome brickwork is a hallmark of Hunt's designs (Virginia-Cleveland Hall and second Academic Building) and Ware's designs (Winona Lodge and Administration Building) in the District. HU lore has it that the polychrome brickwork symbolizes the African American (black) and American Indian (red) racial composition of the student body. In 1909, students built ASMTS's second story, thereby, doubling its square footage (Puryear, 54). The primary building has preserved its architectural integrity with no other major alterations, although it faces critical interior and exterior preservation threats.

In a bullet list, include any outbuildings or secondary resources or major landscape features (such as barns, sheds, dam and mill pond, storage tanks, scales, railroad spurs, etc.), including their condition and their estimated construction dates.

To provide students with opportunities to apply classroom principles through hands-on training in commercial work, ASMTS contained the following technical shops (a.k.a. The Shops) that simultaneously served HU as support and service units:

- Automotive Shop
- Carpenters Shop
- Electricians Shop
- Machine Shop
- Paint Shop
- Plumbers Shop
- Print Shop
- Wheelwright Shop

Apart from the Machine Shop, Print Shop, and Wheelwright Shop, these technical shops continue to operate as service units. However, they need interior and exterior preservation work. Nestled in the ASMTS's north elevation, the Wheelwright Shop was remodeled (1930) and repurposed (1961) as the Maintenance Office for the Superintendent of Buildings (Puryear, 89). Currently, this structure serves as the Physical Plant Administrative Building. In 1962, a space for a new office for the Director of Vehicle Services and Transportation was provided (Ibid., 54). That office is still extant. ASMTS also contained offices for administrators and teachers. For 130 years, ASMTS has preserved its historical form and function as an educational facility. Contemporaneously, ASMTS houses the Department of Fine and Performing Arts, Military Science/ROTC Department, one modern classroom, and offices for teachers and administrators (e.g., Human Resources, International Studies, Student Support, and Student Counseling).

4. Property's History and Significance (Please do not exceed one page)

Briefly explain the property's historic importance, such as significant events, persons, and/or families associated with the property. If the property is important for its architecture, engineering, landscape architecture, or other aspects of design, please include a brief explanation of this aspect.

During the Trade School Era (1880s and 1890s), HU saw a dramatic increase in educational offerings and enrollment, creating a need for additional facilities. Several buildings were constructed during this ten-year span, including ASMTS (Wagner, 9). Opening ASMTS was an important milestone in HU's evolution because it demonstrated advancement towards higher education and training in the mechanic arts for African Americans and American Indians (John, 78). ASMTS is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criteria B because the resource is associated with significant persons of the American past. For example, ASMTS was named for Civil War General Armstrong who served as HU's first Principal. Under his leadership, HU became the first HBCU to create a formal American Indian education program, and American Indians were enrolled in ASMTS by 1881 (Lindsey, 95). General Armstrong defined HU's academic program as an 'Education for Life,' manifested in the institution's pedagogical approach that emphasized 'learning-by-doing' so that graduates would be self-reliant and self-sufficient. "It [academic department] is the leading department to which all others are subsidiary," said General Armstrong (Peabody, 249). This mandate was reenforced by General Armstrong's successor, Dr. Hollis B. Frissell, who said, "... the academic department is now made the stepping-stone to the industrial and trade work" (Ibid). As the greater society denied freedmen employment in the trades, and as American Indians lacked certain trade skills, ASMTS responded to those problems by training students to acquire and apply their trade skills for their own financial benefit and uplift (Walters, 53-54). ASMTS is also named for John Fox Slater, the successful 19th-century industrialist and philanthropist for whom Slatersville, Rhode Island, America's first planned mill community, is named (National Park Service, John Slater). The John F. Slater Fund for the Education of Freedmen, the first foundation in the U.S. to be devoted entirely to the educational uplift of former slaves, gave \$30,000 for the establishment of ASMTS through a joint Hampton Institute-Tuskegee Institute fundraising campaign (Walters, 53-54; Redclay, vii-viii). Washington left HU to become President of Tuskegee (Alabama) where he oversaw the building of the Slater-Armstrong Memorial Trade School (SAMTS) whose construction was funded by Slater and whose curriculum was modeled on ASMTS (Jenkins, 37). Thus, ASMTS is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion A because it is associated with a broad pattern of philanthropy and industrial trades training for blacks and American Indians in the South, funded largely by The John F. Slater Fund for the Education of Freedmen. Morris K. Jesup, the Fund's Treasurer, a banker, and President of the American Museum of Natural History, contributed an additional \$10,000 to the construction of ASMTS. When asked to describe the distinguishing characteristics of a financier and philanthropist, Jesup replied, "Ability to make money and the disposition to dispose of it in unostentatious benevolence" (Jesuplibrary.org). ASMTS, and the students who matriculated in its experiential academic program, benefitted tremendously from his and Slater's unostentatious benevolence.

Sources

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5. Property Ownership (Check as many categories as apply):

Private: x Public\Local Public\State Public\Federal

Current Legal Owner(s) of the Property (If the property has more than one owner, please list each below or on an additional sheet.)

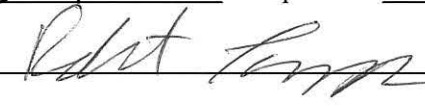
name/title: Robert Pompey, Chief Financial Officer/Senior V.P. for Business and Finance

organization: Hampton University

street & number: 200 William R. Harvey Way

city or town: Hampton state: VA zip code: 23668

e-mail: robert.pompey@hamptonu.edu telephone: 757-727-5213

Legal Owner's Signature: 

Date: 6/16/26

• • **Signature required for processing all applications.** • •

In the event of corporate ownership you must provide the name and title of the appropriate contact person.

Contact person: N/A

Daytime Telephone: N/A

Applicant Information (Individual completing form if other than legal owner of property)

name/title: Natalie S. Robertson, PhD National Register Consultant

organization: RFP Authority, LLC

street & number: 820 Headrow Terrace

city or town: Hampton state: Virginia zip code: 23666

e-mail: doc@rfpauthority.com telephone: 757-927-8006 Date: June 8, 2026

PLEASE DO NOT ATTACH CONTINUATION SHEETS TO THIS FORM. THANK YOU!



Armstrong-Slater Memorial Trade School
City of Hampton, Virginia
DHR ID: 114-0006-0006

 **PIF Boundary**



Created By: D. Bascone, 6/24/2026
Sources: VDHHR 2026, ESRI 2026, VDOT 2026, VGIN 2026
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