

A Case for Landmarking Rose Lees Hardy School: One Neighbor's Opinion
District of Columbia Historic Preservation Review Board, Case Number 18-10

By Ann Haas

March 28, 2019

Designed by Municipal Architect Albert Lewis Harris, Rose Lees Hardy School at Foxhall Road between Volta Place and Que Street opened in September 1933 just after the first floor of the building was completed. The year before, the School Board of the District of Columbia named what had originally been envisioned as "The Foxhall Village School" in memory of Rose Lees Hardy, a specialist in primary education.

In a statement on her death, Superintendent of Schools Dr. Frank W. Ballou honored Miss Hardy on her career. "As Assistant Superintendent in Charge of Instruction in the Elementary Schools, she contributed richly to the professional improvement of thousands of young teachers, and to the development of a technique of classroom instruction that has placed the schools of Washington in an enviable position among the school systems of the United States."

"... Thus, for more than 30 years teachers in training and teachers in service have had their professional experiences enriched under Miss Hardy's capable instruction and supervision. Probably no other school officer has had so many contacts and has thus exercised so wide an influence in the development of young teachers in the school service. Sound in her educational philosophy, strong in her professional opinions, high in her teaching ideals, Miss Hardy has contributed much to the program of public school education in the Capital of the Nation."¹

Foxhall Village residents were active in the initiative for a neighborhood elementary school and for a playground next to it. One newspaper article noted the concern of neighbors that selecting a different site from the one that had already been acquired could result in a delay in construction. A single neighbor opined that the building should be in the Tudor style to complement the adjacent community, newly-built. In defending his Colonial Revival design for schools in the Nation's Capital, Albert Harris referenced the endorsement of the National Capital Parks and Planning Commission; Dr. Ballou cited the Commission of Fine Arts.

Comprised of residences and a small commercial area, Foxhall Village was listed in 2007 as a Historic District under District of Columbia law as well as on the National Register of Historic Places. Hardy School provided the educational component of the community. Saint Patrick's Chapel initially provided the spiritual component but was razed in preparation for the 1935 widening of Foxhall Road. The next year, St. Patrick's built a church at Foxhall and Reservoir, restoring the spiritual element and providing, for many years, a meeting place for organizations including the Foxhall Village Citizens' Association.

Rose Lees Hardy taught at the Wilson Normal School here. "Miss Hardy was nationally known as an authority on the teaching of reading. She was author of a series of elementary reading texts and supplementary reading books which were adopted for use in a number of states and cities."²

From 1927 to 1931 she was a co-author of several books as guides for teachers—anthologies of stories and poems with goals at the beginning and questions at the end. The works were designed to inspire children to read, while imparting lessons such as ethics, health, thrift, kindness—especially to animals—safety, bravery and courtesy, “although they contain[ed] no semblance of preaching.” Clara Hickman was also a co-author with Rose Lees Hardy. Miss Hickman later was Assistant Principal at Reservoir, Hardy, and Key Schools, and in 1937 became Principal at Hardy and Key after the Reservoir School was deactivated.

Rose Lees Hardy earned a Bachelor’s Degree from George Washington University in 1918, just before she turned 50! She also took courses at Cornell, Columbia, and Chicago Universities and was a member of professional associations, including the National Council of Childhood Education.

In 1931, for \$48,250, District of Columbia Commissioners acquired land consisting of lots 822 and 823 in square 1363 for the “Foxhall Village School.” The 1933 District of Columbia budget for public schools, “slashed” by \$985,645 from the previous year, included an “estimated cost of \$100,000 for construction of a four-classroom building with additional space for four more classrooms in the vicinity of Foxhall Village.”³ On November 2, 1932, Commissioners awarded a construction contract for \$75,400 to A. Lloyd Goode of Charlotte, North Carolina, the low-bidder.⁴ On February 18, 1937, the second floor of Hardy was authorized to be occupied following approval by the Commissioners and inspection by the Building and Grounds Committee of the School Board.

Albert Harris also designed the Smithsonian’s Natural History Museum, the National Zoo’s Bird House and, after travelling to Europe to study the latest in zoo design, the Reptile House. At 4811 MacArthur Boulevard, less than a mile from Hardy School, he designed Engine Company 29, built in 1925 as Foxhall Village was under construction. The Fire House is also listed as historic under District of Columbia and federal law.

Landmarking Hardy School would extend the Foxhall Village Historic District and recognize an essential feature of the community. To borrow thoughts from a neighbor, the history of Hardy School is closely linked to the development of Foxhall Village. The school building is almost completely intact. It conveys the sentiment that inspiring architecture contributes to great learning.

1 Minutes of the November 2, 1932 meeting of the District of Columbia School Board, page 8

2 “Rose Lees Hardy Dies at Home Here: Assistant Superintendent in Charge of Primaries Succumbs,” *The Evening Star*, October 27, 1932, page A-4

3 “School Funds Cut is Almost Million: Less Building is Indicated in Estimates Submitted to Congress,” *The Washington Post*, December 10, 1931, page 2

4 “Contract is Awarded for Foxhall School,” *The Evening Star*, November 2, 1932, page A-6

Hardy School: Memories Of Fifty Years Ago

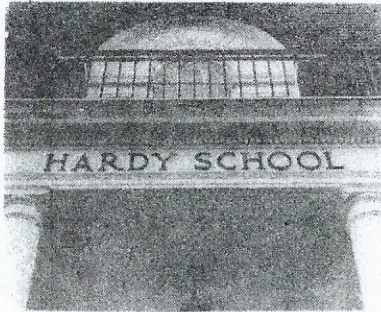
By Dan and Helen Dalrymple

Fifty years ago this month, Hardy Elementary School, located at the intersection of Fox Hall Road and Q Street, completed its first year of operation. Opened in the fall of 1933 and dedicated to the memory of Rose Lees Hardy, a recently deceased Assistant Superintendent of Schools for the District, Hardy served the Foxhall community as an elementary school until June, 1973.

At that time, in response to changes in the community and declining elementary school population throughout the city's public schools, Hardy reopened in the fall of 1974 as a middle school for grades 5-8 and as a part of the Six School Complex.

The neighborhood around Hardy Middle School has changed a lot in the intervening fifty years. Joe Brooks, now living in Arlington and recently retired from AT&T and the C&P Telephone Company, remembers starting out at Hardy as a first grader in 1933. "My first grade teacher was Ann Kelleher, and the principal's name was Miss Hickman. I remember, too," he said, "that the kindergarten class always had a beehive in the window of their classroom in the spring. 56

the kids could watch the bees fly in and out."



Brooks lived at 4441 Conduit Road (now MacArthur Boulevard) in those days. He moved to Arlington in 1939. Although his Conduit Road house is gone, replaced by new townhouses, he remarked that the little stone wall in front has somehow managed to survive.

Asked to comment on what Hardy was like fifty years ago when he knew it, Mr. Brooks said that Q Street was little more than a dirt path, and there were only two or three houses on 45th Street. He remarked that the grounds around the school have not changed a great deal, except that the playground area was mostly cinders instead of grass, and that the Hardy Recreation Center building had not yet been built.

Brooks had fond memories of learning to garden in the area where the tennis courts are now. "Each student had his own small plot," he said. "It was the first time I ever saw radishes growing."

He remembers also that the children often put on plays, using the unfinished second floor of the

school as an auditorium, and that every year at Thanksgiving time the whole school walked from Hardy to St. Patrick's Church for a special service. The second floor was finished and made into classes in the spring of 1937.

The pasture around a huge boulder known as Indian Rock (now the area of Indian Rock Terrace) was a favorite playground for neighborhood children, according to Mr. Brooks. He still has vivid memories of sledding there in the winter and playing baseball in the

summer - using dried cow leavings for bases!

Although Hardy Middle School has grown and changed with the times in the past fifty years, it is still serving children of the neighborhood as their local public school, as it was on the first day it opened its doors. Today it also serves students with special permission from other parts of the city who prefer a small, middle school environment to that of the more traditional junior high school.

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