This very simple one-story building has a basement which is mostly above ground, which makes it necessary to have a long staircase to get to the front door. A pediment over the front door, supported by two square brick columns, bears the Freemason symbol. On each side of the staircase up to the front door, stairs lead down to a basement door that is right under the front door. There is a small addition on the back of the building, and between the main portion of the building and the addition are more stairs leading to another basement door. All of the windows on the building appear to have been larger at one time: dents in the siding indicate that the windows have been made smaller.

In the early part of this century, a house used to be on this site, which was used as the Phillis Wheatley Community Center beginning in 1937. The Phillis Wheatley Center provided recreational activities and arts and crafts classes through the W.P.A. These programs were aimed towards both black and white children in an attempt to alleviate segregation. The building also housed a Girl Scout Troop and was used as a private residence. This house was burned down in 1940, and the current building replaced it. The new building also suffered a fire in 1947.

Description of Environment and Outbuildings (see #52)

This building faces a park dedicated to Martin Luther King Jr. Behind the building is a short gravel drive with room for several cars to park.

Sources of Information

Oberlin College Archives Files.
42. Further Description of Important Interior and Exterior Features (Continued from page 1)

43. History and Significance (Continued from page 1.)

In 1950, the Phillis Wheatley Center suffered financial problems, and the Board of Education took over their recreational programs. In 1951, the Prince Hall Free Masons, a fraternity of black masons, bought the building and have used it ever since. The Black Freemasons were founded in 1775 in Boston. After the American Revolution, Prince Hall, the first African American Mason, petitioned to charter his black masons into their own lodge.