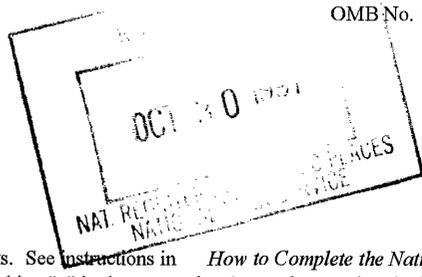


1469

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

### National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a).

#### 1. Name of Property

historic name United States Daughters of 1812, National Headquarters  
other names/site number Admiral John Henry Upshur House

#### 2. Location

street & number 1461 Rhode Island Avenue, N.W. not for publication N/A  
city or town Washington vicinity X  
state District of Columbia code DC zip code 20005 county N/A code N/A

#### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Stephen Lion Signature of certifying official Date 10/26/97

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register (See continuation sheet).
- determined eligible for National Register (See continuation sheet).
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

Patrick Andrews 12/26/97

**5. Classification**

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	buildings
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	structures
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Name of related multiple property N/A

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions

Cat: <u>Domestic</u>	Sub: <u>single dwelling</u>
<u>Social</u>	Sub: <u>meeting hall</u>

Current Functions

Cat: <u>Social</u>	Sub: <u>meeting hall</u>
<u>Culture</u>	Sub: <u>museum</u>
<u>Education</u>	Sub: <u>library</u>

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

LATE VICTORIAN:  
Queen Anne

Materials

foundation \_\_\_\_\_  
roof SLATE  
walls BRICK  
other METAL: Iron

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**8. Statement of Significance**

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

ARCHITECTURE  
SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance 1884-1947

Significant Dates 1884  
1928

Significant Person \_\_\_\_\_  
Cultural Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_

Architect/Builder Architect: Withers, Frederick  
Builder: Langley & Gettinger

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Location of Additional Data

- State Historic Preservation Office  
 Other State agency  
 Federal agency  
 Local government  
 University  
 Other

Name of repository: U.S.D. 1812 National Headquarters, 1461 Rhode Island Avenue, N.W.

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property less than one acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u>18</u>	<u>319700</u>	<u>4312900</u>	3	_____
2	_____	_____	4	_____	_____

\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Eve Barsoum / Architectural Historian  
organization D.C. Historic Preservation Division date August 1997  
street & number 614 H Street, NW, Room 305 telephone (202) 727-7360  
city or town Washington state D.C. zip code 20001

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name U.S. Daughters of 1812, National Chapter  
street & number 1461 Rhode Island Avenue, N.W. telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town Washington state DC zip code 20005

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013 -7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024 -0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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1461 Rhode Island Avenue, N.W. is a semi-detached rowhouse located on one of the major Avenues designed by Pierre L'Enfant within the original boundaries the city of Washington. The three-story building has a rectangular plan, with a projecting bay, and mansard and gable roofs. The front facade is not parallel with the Avenue, but instead stands at right angles to the adjacent alley. It was built in 1884 in the Queen Anne Style. The house features its bow-shaped bay surmounted by a large gable slate roof, a recessed arched entrance, dormers, decorative chimneys, multi-light over single-light double-hung windows on the front, and a variety of windows arranged in an irregular pattern on the side. The house was constructed of dark red pressed brick with sandstone trim. It is in good condition; a few windows on the side elevation have been replaced and a small one-story addition, faced with siding, has been added to the rear.

On February 23, 1884 a building permit was issued to John H. Upshur to build a single family dwelling at 1461 Rhode Island Avenue, N.W. at an estimated cost \$18,000. On June 2, 1920, a building permit was issued for extensive remodeling of the interior. It stated: "Install new hot water heating apparatus, wire for electric lights, repair plumbing and install new fixtures in three bathrooms...tile floors and walls in bathrooms, replace wood floors in basement with cement floor, repair and put down new floor, rear porch, new tin roof, spouting and other general repairs." The estimated cost of the improvements was \$6,000. On September 27, 1927 a building permit was issued to convert the residence into three apartments, one per floor. The permit also noted that "no increase in area of building or exterior structural work" would be involved.

The 1927 renovation was further described in a letter dated March 23, 1938 from Harry Blake, the owner, to Mrs. Sol Landsburg. He stated that in addition to the previously mentioned items the work included "heating (oil burner), rearrangement of rooms, new doors and trim throughout the first floor, new oak floors, new stair--connecting the first and third floors, new newel posts and turned balusters, paneled wainscot in the main hall and dining room--made from solid mahogany lumber salvaged from airplane propeller stock. The wood was purchased at the League Island Navy Yard, Philadelphia, left over after the world war." Blake noted that he spent \$20,800 on the renovations.

The United States Daughters of 1812, in need of a permanent location for its national headquarters, purchased the house for \$31,214.44 on January 4, 1928. The building has been continuously occupied by the Society and remains in good condition.

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1461 Rhode Island Avenue, N.W. qualifies under Criterion A for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places because it is the location of the national headquarters of the U.S. Daughters of 1812. The patriotic society was founded in New York in 1892 and operated for thirty-six years without a permanent location for its National Society. In 1928, the national headquarters was established at 1461 Rhode Island Avenue, N.W. in Washington, D.C. The building also qualifies under Criterion C for its architecture. The structure was designed as a residence in 1884 by Frederick C. Withers and remains a good example of the Queen Anne style of architecture as adapted for a semi-detached rowhouse.

The house at 1461 Rhode Island Avenue, N.W., which became the national headquarters of the Daughters of 1812, was commissioned by John Henry Upshur in 1884. Upshur was born on December 5, 1823 in Northampton County, Virginia into a prominent family with extensive ties to the military. He attended the Naval Academy and entered the U.S. Navy on November 4, 1841, as a midshipman. His illustrious naval career included active duty in the Mexican War and participation in Commodore Perry's expedition to Japan. From 1859 to 1861 he taught at the Naval Academy and was detailed to the U.S.S. Constitution. During the Civil War, Upshur served at sea and was recognized for meritorious service in the capture of forts at Hatteras Inlet, North Carolina. After the war he commanded many naval vessels before he retired on June 1, 1885 with the rank of rear admiral.

On February 5, 1851 John Upshur married Kate Alicia Williams, a great-granddaughter of Martha Washington. They had four children. Thereafter, he married Agnes Maxwell Kearny, widow of Civil War General Philip Kearny. In 1881, two years before Upshur retired, Agnes Upshur purchased lots 39, 40, and 41 in the George W. Riggs Subdivision in Washington for \$5,000. On February 23, 1884 a permit was issued to Upshur to build a single family dwelling on the property for an estimated cost of \$18,000. After the deaths of the Upshurs, Harry Blake purchased the residence at auction on June 1, 1920 for \$16,000. In 1927, one year before the Daughters of 1812 purchased the building, Blake converted the residence into three apartments.

1461 Rhode Island Avenue, N.W. was designed by Frederick C. Withers. Withers was an English architect who immigrated to the United States around 1852 to work with Andrew Downing. The latter began his career as a horticulturist, but quickly became the most articulate and prolific architectural critic of the mid nineteenth century. Because of Downing's accidental death in 1852, Withers ended up working for the landscape design and planning firm of Olmstead, Vaux and Company which had received the commission for Central Park in New York City. Coincidentally, Calvert Vaux, an architect, had come to the United States (from England) to form a partnership with Downing. In 1866, Withers formed an architectural firm with Vaux which lasted until 1871. Vaux, Withers and Company produced High Victorian Gothic Revival designs like the Jefferson Market Courthouse in New York City. In 1866, Olmstead, Vaux and Company

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was retained to design the master plan for the National Deaf Mute College (which became Gallaudet College) in Washington, D.C. The original buildings were the responsibility of the closely associated architectural firm of Vaux, Withers and Company. Withers employed the principals of High Victorian design for the College's four original buildings: Professor's House (1867), President's House (1867-68), Chapel Hall (1867-71), and College Hall (1874-77).

Withers translated his predisposition toward the High Victorian Gothic, seen in his work from the 1860s and 1870s, to the irregular massing and textural variations employed by the Queen Anne style in the 1880s. The Queen Anne style began in England in 1868 with Richard Norman Shaw's design for Leyswood. The style was brought to the United States in 1874 by H.H. Richardson with his Watts-Sherman House in Newport, Rhode Island. However, the popular success of the Queen Anne style in America did not begin until the British government erected two Queen Anne style buildings at the 1876 Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia. The style emphasized a-symmetrical massing, steeply pitched irregular roofs with dominant front facing gables, projecting bow fronts, porches, dormers, decorative chimneys, and molded brickwork.

Withers adopted these design principles in 1884 for the semi-attached rowhouse at 1461 Rhode Island Avenue, N.W. It features irregular massing, which is enhanced by the front facade that does not align with the street; an unusual siting scheme for structures along Washington's avenues. The steeply pitched gables and decorative chimney tops point to the style's English roots as promoted by Shaw. Although the Rhode Island Avenue rowhouse does not incorporate a porch, its bow-front features decorative ironwork and railings which suggest balconies and in turn porches. The second story ironwork incorporates abstract sunflowers reflective of the contemporary Aesthetic movement and its motto "Art for Arts sake" as well as the influence of stylized natural forms adopted from Japanese art. The Japanese predilection toward a-symmetry and its variety of detail and surfaces fused easily with the principles of the Queen Anne style.

On June 4, 1928 the United States Daughters of 1812, in need of a permanent location for its national headquarters, purchased 1461 Rhode Island Avenue, N.W. The acquisition of a Victorian house presents an inconsistency. One would think that an organization which focuses on Revolutionary history would have sought to establish its headquarters in a building constructed during the era of the New Republic. The period produced structures which emphasized symmetrical, refined and restrained designs derived from Roman classicism. Most of the Federal buildings that remained in Washington in the 1920s were located in Georgetown. At the time, Georgetown was inhabited by a mixture of classes and races and was officially classified as "industrial" by the city's first zoning ordinance (1920). It appears that when the USD 1812 was headquarters hunting in the late 1920s, it chose to establish itself on a L'Enfant avenue in a then-prestigious neighborhood comprised of exuberant Victorian buildings. By comparison, the Colonial Dames of America also purchased their national headquarters in 1928. The Dames acquired "Bellevue" which was built circa 1799 in Georgetown.

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The establishment of patriotic societies like the United States Daughters of 1812 was one outcome of the xenophobic and nationalistic disposition which began to emerge in the United States in the 1850s. In addition to the often discussed turn-of-the-century United States immigration policies, nationalism generated questions which focused on identification. For example: What is an American? How do we identify ourselves? The xenophobic impulses were accompanied by a proliferation of illustrated histories of English domestic architecture. As a result, a strong predisposition toward the Anglo-American heritage was established early on in the identification quest.

Manifestations of nationalism occurred in many arenas. For instance, an early example with regard to historic preservation was Anna Cunningham's establishment of the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association in 1853 to save George Washington's home. A major re-discovery in terms of history and architecture took place at the 1876 Centennial Exposition held in Philadelphia. The states contributed their interpretation of colonial life in an effort to further historical awareness, which had an overwhelmingly English bias. At the end of the nineteenth century, the prejudiced perception of history helped give rise to the Colonial Revival Movement which stylistically affected architecture, painting, sculpture, decorative arts, and furniture design. The end of the century also saw the establishment of the earliest country clubs, the first social registers, and a proliferation of elite social organizations for Mayflower descendants, daughters and sons of the Revolution, sons of Cincinnatus, daughters of the Confederacy and Union armies, as well as the daughters of the War of 1812.

There was early criticism of the patriotic societies. Many held that the groups sought to establish an American aristocracy. Moreover, the war-related societies appeared to be more interested in honoring descendants of officers than enlisted men. The societies countered by arguing that they were founded on service, not rank, and that they sought to arouse pride in heroic national ancestry and to honor the men who served their country. In short, they were promoters of patriotism. The organizations were based on family trees and an undying commitment to search for their forebears. Their enthusiasm for Revolutionary history and heroes helped to substantiate United States history in general.

The establishment of women's patriotic societies was the by-product of the Sons of the American Revolution's national convention held in the spring of 1890. Prior to this meeting, women had been affiliated with the SAR as "daughters" and "unofficial members." At the convention, an action was passed to formally exclude female descendants from the society. The Daughters of the American Revolution was founded the following fall. Its founders included Eugenia Washington (great-grand niece of the President), Mary Desha, Helen Walworth, and Mary Lockwood. The first two were government clerks, Mrs. Walworth was a woman of means, and the latter operated a private hotel in downtown Washington.

A fifth woman, Flora Adams Darling, was also involved with the nascent organization. Mrs. Darling, the dynamic widow of a Civil War general and the daughter of John Adams, was an author of Victorian

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romances, a prolific letter-writer, and the managing editor of *Adams Magazine*. She was elected Vice President and was in charge of organization, chapter establishment, and recruiting wealthy and prominent women. Shortly after its formation, Mrs. Darling claimed to be the sole founder of the DAR. This led to much dispute and she was stripped of her office in July 1891. Nonetheless, Mrs. Darling remained committed to patriotism which led her to organize the Daughters of 1812 and the Daughters of the Revolution.

The War of 1812 centered around maritime trading rights. It was fought against England but was not popular with all of the States. It came to be known as the Second War of Independence. The United States Daughters General Society of the War 1812 was founded on the anniversary of the Battle of New Orleans. The battle was led by Andrew Jackson and was the most devastating British defeat of the war; the deaths were particularly unfortunate as the peace treaty had been signed two weeks earlier in Ghent.

The founding of the United States Daughters of 1812 is representative of late nineteenth century nationalism. Flora Adams Darling established the organization in New York City along with Mrs. Stephan Adams, Mrs. A. Ramon Salas, and Mrs. Edward Irving Darling, Jr. on January 8, 1892. Their objectives were to unite the descendants of the men of 1812, foster pride in the descendants, and ensure that these soldiers had the same honors as the descendants of the men who fought in the Revolutionary War. Flora Adams Darling was elected as the president and served until 1897. On February 25, 1901, nine years after the society's inception, the National Society, United States Daughters of 1812 was incorporated by an Act of Congress and approved by President McKinley.

Since its beginning, the National Society has been concerned with membership, commemoration, a national headquarters building campaign and educational activities. The Society grew from 75 to 3,758 members between 1897 and 1915. By 1923, there were a total of 4,263 members. Society membership is open to any woman, over eighteen years of age who offers satisfactory proof of lineal descent from an ancestor who rendered civil or military service to the United States during the War of 1812.

In the early years, the society held its meetings in New York City. In 1906, however, it met in Detroit and between 1912 and 1914 it convened in Baltimore, Wilmington, and New Haven. On April 25, 1916 the society held its first meeting in Washington, D.C., at the Willard Hotel located on Pennsylvania Avenue two blocks east of the White House. At that time, the bylaws were amended so that all annual meetings thereafter would be held in Washington. In the mid 1920s, the National Society began a serious effort to collect funds for a headquarters. As a result, the USD 1812 purchased the house at 1461 Rhode Island Avenue, N.W. on June 4, 1928 for \$31,214.44. The National Society held its first meeting at the headquarters on January 28, 1929. The building was officially dedicated on April 28, 1931. The National Headquarters has historically served several functions, including meeting hall, a house museum, library, and archives--for society records and a list of known places of burial of soldiers and sailors of the War of 1812.

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The Society's commemorative activities have essentially remained the same over time. The first important achievement for the National Society occurred on June 1, 1910 when a memorial window was dedicated at St. Michael's Church, Dartmoor, Devonshire, England. The church had been built between 1813 and 1815 by American prisoners incarcerated at Dartmoor Prison. On May 30, 1928 the Society dedicated the Memorial Gateway to the American Cemetery at Princetown, Dartmoor, England for the prisoners interred in a secluded parcel of land overlooking the Devonshire moors. In the late 1920s, the Society funded the restoration of a doorway at St. Andrew's Church in Plymouth, England, the burial site of Captain William Allen and one of his midshipman. Both men died as a result of the battle between the U.S. brig Argus and the H.M. Pelican in 1813. The doorway was named "The Door of Unity" and symbolized the union which eventually was established between the two nations.

The National Society also supported the campaign to commemorate Francis Scott Key, one of the most notable heroes of the War of 1812. Key wrote the "Star Spangled Banner" at Fort McHenry outside of Baltimore during the war. The failure of the British to capture the fort and in turn Baltimore, was one of England's major setbacks. The Society commemorated the centennial of Key's writing of the lyrics on September 10, 1914 by presenting a tablet to the City of Baltimore. The plaque was placed on the front of City Hall. On April 21, 1924, the Society presented a tablet for the M Street approach to the Francis Scott Key Memorial Bridge in Washington, D.C.; the marker was rededicated in 1957. On September 12, 1928, Fort McHenry was dedicated as a National Shrine. The USD 1812 President National at the time, participated in the ceremony. Thereafter, the National Society helped fund the restoration project of the Star Fort. Following the persistent efforts of the National Society, the "Star Spangled Banner" became the national anthem of the United States by an Act of Congress on March 3, 1931.

In 1915, the National Society adopted its official grave marker. It was first used for General Andrew Jackson, to honor the hero of the Battle of New Orleans. During World War I, the Society encouraged all of its members to participate in the war effort and presented five altar vases to the George Washington Memorial Chapel in Valley Forge, Pennsylvania. In keeping with its grave marking tradition, a plaque was dedicated at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery and a ritual for marking graves was established in 1923. On February 28, 1924, a National Society committee dedicated a marker in Valparaiso, Chile to honor the 52 officers and seamen slain on board the U.S. Frigate Essex by the crew of the British Frigate Pheobe.

In the mid 1920s, the Society began a fund raising campaign to restore the Frigate Constitution, docked in Boston Harbor's Navy Yard. In 1931, Congress authorized the restoration of "Old Ironsides" but no funds were appropriated. Curtus D. Wilbur, Secretary of the Navy, was named the head of the financial campaign. He in turn appointed the USD 1812 to collect \$475,000 to restore the ship. In the mid 1930s, part of the

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mast from "Old Ironsides" was erected as a flag pole in the front yard of the national headquarters on Rhode Island Avenue.

The commemorative functions of the National Society were complemented by educational activities. The Society began funding educational opportunities for children in isolated regions of the South in the mid 1920s. Annual scholarships were established for Marysville College in Tennessee, Bacone College in Oklahoma, School of the Ozarks in Arkansas, Hindman Settlement School in Kentucky. In 1923, the Society began securing certified bound copies of the 1812 War Records for itself and the U.S. Government, as most of the records were destroyed when the British sacked the capitol. In 1931, the Society began its important program of collecting and purchasing books for the American Merchant Marine Library Association. The Society has presented an award to the midshipman graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy excelling in electrical engineering since the mid 1930s. In addition, the Society has annually committed funds to expand their National Headquarters Library and Archives which specializes in American history from the establishment of the Republic in 1784 through the War of 1812 which officially ended with the ratification of the Treaty of Ghent in 1815.

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“A Veteran Sea Fighter Passes,” *Sea Power*, July 1917, p.47-48.

Bachman, Robert, Mrs. “A Brief History of the Accomplishments of the National Society United States Daughters of 1812, 1892-1989.”

D.C. Permit to Build #1079. February 23, 1884.

D.C. Permit to Repair #6925. June 2, 1920.

D.C. Permit to Repair #2754. September 28, 1927.

*Dictionary of American Biography*. New York: Charles Scribner’s 1981, p.128.

Gallaudet College Historic District. National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form. 1974.

Strayer, Martha. *The DAR: An Informal History*. Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1958.

Additional Items located at: National Headquarters, U.S. Daughters of 1812  
Chronology of 1461 Rhode Island Avenue, N.W.  
Upshur family chart  
Biography of John Henry Upshur  
Photograph, Centennial Administration Officers National, U.S.D. 1812

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Verbal Boundary Description:

Square 210, Lots 39, 40, 41 (later changed to lot M-811) situated in the northwest quadrant of Washington, D.C.

Boundary Justification:

The boundary includes the original lots on which the house has historically stood and maintains historic integrity.