

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

SEP 14 1990  
NATIONAL REGISTER

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This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Woodhull, Maxwell, House  
other names/site number George Washington University offices

### 2. Location

street & number 2033 G Street, N.W.  not for publication N/A  
city, town Washington,  vicinity N/A  
state District of Columbia code DC county District of Columbia code 001 zip code 20052

### 3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	_____ buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>1</u>	_____ objects
			_____ Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A  
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

### 4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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.  See continuation sheet.  
Carol P. Thompson 9/6/90  
Signature of certifying official SHPO Date  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.  
Signature of commenting or other official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

### 5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:  
 entered in the National Register. Patrick Ardus 4/12/91  
 See continuation sheet.  
 determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.  
 determined not eligible for the National Register.  
 removed from the National Register.  
 other, (explain:)

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling

EDUCATION/College

7. Description

Architectural Classification (enter categories from instructions)

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

MID-19th CENTURY/Italian Villa

foundation Brick

walls Brick

Wood

roof Metal

other Stone

Terra Cotta

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Woodhull House, located at 2033 G Street, N.W., on the northeast corner of 21st and G Streets, N.W., is an excellent example of an Italian Villa-style dwelling. Its brick construction, heavy projecting cornice, and wooden semi-hexagonal oriels are representative of this common architectural style of the mid-nineteenth century. The house further reflects the period when the West End was a fashionable residential neighborhood.

The two-story brick house, resting on a slightly raised foundation appears very cubic. The plan is approximately forty feet square, although there are projections on three sides. The projections and additions create a complex roof shape. The main roof has cross hips of shallow pitch, covered with sheets of metal, probably terne.

The main facade of the building faces south on G Street and is arranged in a tripartite composition. The central bay projects slightly from the main mass of the house and is capped by a low-pitched pediment. A string course separates the two stories of the projection. A circular arch leads to a recessed entrance area on the first floor. The outer double doors have elaborate panels and curved tops to follow the round-arched opening. In the entry area, niches flank the inner door. This door is not original to the building. Wooden semi-hexagonal oriels, one-story, with balcony above, flank the entrance.

The three second-floor windows are aligned above the entrance and oriels, set in slightly recessed panels with segmental-arched tops. The windows' stone lintels are also segmental arches, with a scroll-shaped keystone and floral brackets at each end. There are narrow windows on the sides of the front projection; those on the first floor are round-headed, and taller than those on the second floor. The windows in the first-floor oriels are paired casements set under semi-circular arched transoms. The second-floor windows were originally french doors under a four-light transom. Many of the windows on this facade and the other elevations have been altered by the installation of window air-conditioning units.

The west elevation at 21st Street, while less ornate, is similar to the front facade. This side elevation is arranged in two parts, with a curved bay of two stories on the south, balanced by a one-story oriel on the north. The

8. Statement of Significance

577 1000

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally  statewide  locally

Applicable National Register Criteria  A  B  C  D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)  A  B  C  D  E  F  G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

EDUCATION

Period of Significance

1855-1911

1911-1921

Significant Dates

1855

1921

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

Woodhull, Maxwell (Gen.)

Architect/Builder

Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Woodhull House, 2033 G Street, N.W., is significant for a number of reasons. This impressive Italian Villa-style house is an unusually fine example of a building type no longer common in the Foggy Bottom area. Built in 1855, the house was donated to The George Washington University in 1921 by General Maxwell Van Zandt Woodhull, son of the original owner. General Woodhull was a university trustee and benefactor who was greatly responsible for the relocation of the campus to Foggy Bottom. The house has a long association with this important figure and it stands as a symbol of the relocation of the university campus to the Foggy Bottom area. Woodhull House represents both the residential history of the neighborhood and its current institutional use.

Woodhull House is a fine Italian Villa-style house, embodying the distinctive characteristics of a significant architectural style and a building type (Criteria C). As the donation of this building was a critical factor in the establishment of the university at Foggy Bottom, Woodhull House is intimately associated with this significant event in the history of the university (Criteria A). The house has been associated with General Woodhull, a figure significant to the development of The George Washington University (Criteria B). It continues as a prominent visual element at the center of the campus, and retains integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. The significance of the building has been recognized by its listing as a Historic Landmark of the District of Columbia.

The George Washington University, by virtue of its academic ranking and its physical presence, stands as a significant institution in the District of Columbia. The history and development of the school, from its beginnings in the early nineteenth century to its current status as a major urban university, is inextricably linked to the history and development of Washington as the nation's capital. Woodhull House is especially noteworthy among the campus buildings, not only for its architectural excellence but also as a significant element in the university's history.

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Application to the Joint Committee on Landmarks of the National Capital for Designation of Woodhull House as a Historic Landmark. Submitted by The George Washington University and Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2A, April, 1987.

Application to the D.C. Historic Preservation Review Board for Designation of the George Washington University Campus Historic District. Prepared for the Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2A by Emily Eig, Traceries, Inc., Washington, D.C., December 12, 1984

Baist's Real Estate Atlas of Surveys of Washington, D.C., Vol. 1, plan 9, Philadelphia: G.W. Baist, 1965.

"The Campus Plan for the Year 1985 Through the Year 2000", The George Washington University, Office of the President, April 30, 1986.

Goode, James M., Capital Losses, Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1979.

See continuation sheet

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

Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property Less than 0.1 acre

UTM References

A 1 8 3 22 5 1 0 4 30 7 29 0  
Zone Easting Northing

C                              

B                                
Zone Easting Northing

D                              

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

In Square 102, a portion of former lots C and D, consisting of a 50-foot frontage on G Street, N.W., by a 40-foot frontage on 21st Street, N.W., as indicated on the supplemental map.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes that portion of Square 102 that has been associated historically with the building.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Anne H. Adams/Architectural Historian  
organization Wilkes, Artis, Hedrick & Lane date September, 1989  
street & number 1666 K Street, N.W., 11th Floor telephone 202-457-7800  
city or town Washington, state D.C. zip code 20006

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetWoodhull, Maxwell, House  
Washington, D.C.Section number 7 Page 2

oriel and window above are identical to those on the front facade. The first-floor windows in the curved bay have semi-circular surrounds of stone, while the lintels of the second-floor windows are identical to those on the second-floor of the front facade. The first-floor windows in the swelled bay are four-light double casement windows under two-light transoms. The second-floor windows have four-over-four double-hung sash, with a thin horizontal muntin on the lower sash. The other muntins are unusually wide. All the windows in the curved bay have lug sills of stone with decorative floral brackets. A narrow slot window is located on the second-floor wall between the rounded bay and the recessed panel.

The rear elevation of the building echoes the patterns of the front and side elevations. A two-story bay, approximately 8 feet deep and 15 feet wide, projects from the center of the main mass. This bay may have been a later addition as its flat-arched window lintels do not match the windows of the main portion. The shape of the bay is unusual, with one curved corner and one right-angled corner. The west corner curves toward 21st Street, providing visual continuity with the curved bay at the west elevation. The corbelled brick belt course which separates the second-floor windows of the bay from its cornice, creates an awkwardly proportioned division of the wall above the windows. The two windows on the west side of this facade are decorated with segmental-arch lintels and lug sills of the stone. The upper window is double hung, while the first floor has paired three-pane casement windows under a two-pane transom. Closed shutters cover two windows on this facade. A rear entrance is located in the projecting bay. A modern one-story brick addition to the east of the projecting bay provides additional space for the first floor; air-conditioning equipment sits on beams above its roof.

The property is partially enclosed by an iron fence of typical nineteenth-century design. The east side of Woodhull House was covered by the construction of Bell Hall in 1934.

The house features unusually rich and varied detailing. The circular arch at the front entrance is supported by engaged colonnettes with floral terra cotta capitals. Similar colonnettes of wood support the round-headed windows at the oriels. The projecting entrance bay is detailed on the second-floor by pilasters and other elaborate brickwork, as well as by a decorative terra cotta panel adorned with floral motifs and faces below the window. Heavy wooden brackets appear to support the oriels and decorative iron railings define the balconies above the oriels.

The interior of Woodhull is a double pile, central hall plan, with some of its original finishes still intact. The open, quarter-turn staircase dominates

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Woodhull, Maxwell, House  
Washington, D.C.

Section number 7 Page 3

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the first floor hall. A second service stairway is located at the rear of the house. Cornice molding, door surrounds, double arched panelled doors with frosted glazing, and much of the hardware reflect decorative motifs typical of the late-Victorian aesthetic. Unfortunately, there have been many alterations over the years which have compromised the integrity of the interior. Flourescent lighting fixtures, drop tile ceilings, and reconfigured rooms have replaced much of the original finishes. The building is currently used as offices for the campus security force.

The design of the Woodhull House reflects a sophisticated and experienced hand and it is unfortunate that the architect/designer is unknown. This handsome house, which dates from 1855, is a major example of Italian Villa design in the Foggy Bottom area. It embodies the characteristics of that style and continues to eloquently convey the feeling of its time.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

SEP 11 1988

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetWoodhull, Maxwell, House  
Washington, D.C.Section number 8 Page 2

The George Washington University began in 1821, as the Columbian College under a charter granted by President Monroe. The small school was located near Florida Avenue and Sixteenth Street in northwest Washington. By 1870, it had grown to include a medical school and law school. At the urging of William Corcoran, a noted philanthropist and Columbian College trustee, the school was renamed the Columbian University in 1873, and shortly thereafter it relocated to the city's financial district on H Street, between 13th and 15th Streets, N.W.

It was not until 1905 that the university adopted the name of our nation's first president. In 1904, the George Washington Memorial Foundation chose Columbian University to fulfill the first president's dreams for a national university, and the following year the school was renamed The George Washington University.

Operating now as a national university, the school grew ambitious and began its search for a location which would allow for a spacious, self-contained campus environment. The reality of the cost for such a plan, however, almost destroyed the university. In 1912, faced with serious financial troubles, the university was forced to reorganize and relocated to inexpensive rental property at 2023 G Street, N.W. From this modest new beginning, the school took hold in the Foggy Bottom neighborhood and developed into a leading university.

The history of The George Washington University can be traced through four major periods of development: the Needham years, the Harris Plan, the Marvin era, and the Elliott years.

Charles Needham was president of the university from 1902 through 1912, and was instrumental in transforming the school into a national university. His optimism and visions for the school outpaced financial realities, however, and his quest for a formal campus setting ultimately crippled the school.

Upon assuming the presidency in 1902, Needham set out to elevate the university to national standing. Universities around the country were designing, redesigning and relocating their campuses to meet the challenges of a new twentieth-century aesthetic, and Needham was determined to make his university a part of this movement. By 1904, the school had been selected as the university to fulfill George Washington's dream for a major academic center in the District of Columbia, and Needham developed plans to correspond to this new function. A site was selected at Van Ness Park, and an architectural competition was held for the new campus design. Percy Ash, the school's professor of architecture, invited six architectural firms to submit plans proposing a general scheme for the site and specific designs for a memorial

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetWoodhull, Maxwell, House  
Washington, D.C.Section number 8 Page 3

building. With the help of Charles Mikimo, Chairman of the Park Commission, and Bernard Green, Superintendent of the Library of Congress, Ash selected George B. Post and Son of New York for their classically inspired design based on the teachings of the Ecole des Beaux Arts. The five-acre site, however, proved too small for the needs of the university and a new search was launched for a more appropriate location.

This change, however, which would require an additional \$2,500,000, caused several of the earlier funding pledges for the Van Ness site to be voided and likewise marked the beginning of the school's financial crises. Bank notes became due on the Van Ness property, refinancing demanded more capital, and operating funds were used to cover the mounting debts. Compounded by the economic panic of 1907, the school found itself unable to pay its professors and on the verge of bankruptcy.

Drastic measures were needed to save the university from financial ruin and in 1908 Needham was swiftly replaced by Admiral Charles Herbert Stockton. After a long distinguished naval career, Stockton was called upon to exercise his strict discipline on the failing school. Costs were cut, realistic goals identified, and finally relocation achieved. In 1912, the school moved to its present Foggy Bottom location and purchased its first building at that site, the former St. Rose's Industrial School.

This step marked the beginning of a new era for the school. With its financial situation now stabilized, and adequate space secured, the school could now concentrate on developing an appropriate campus. Through the influence of newly elected trustee, Maxwell Woodhull, a neighbor to the school, the Board of Trustees was encouraged to expand its campus at the Foggy Bottom location. The once-fashionable neighborhood was in transition, and the lowering real estate prices gave the school the opportunity to acquire the property needed for a formal campus plan.

Between 1910 and 1920, and under the leadership of Stockton, his successor William Collier, and Woodhull, the university gradually acquired numerous lots in the south portion of Square 102, the city block bounded by 20th, 21st, G and H streets, N.W. In 1921, Woodhull bequeathed his house at the corner of 21st and G Street to the school, further establishing the university's stronghold in that block.

After World War I enrollment increased at the university, placing further space demands on the school. Washington developer and university trustee Harry Wardman encouraged the Board to purchase a building at 14th & K Streets for the Law School, but after some deliberation, the Board reaffirmed



**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**Woodhull, Maxwell, House  
Washington, D.C.Section number 8 Page 4

its commitment to Square 102, and acquired the building strictly for investment purposes. It was now official: The George Washington University would permanently develop its campus at Square 102 in the Foggy Bottom neighborhood of Washington.

Howard Lincoln Hodgkins became president pro tempore in 1921, and immediately set out to develop the formal campus that had been the dream of the school for so many years.

In 1922, Hodgkins proposed the purchase of 2014 H Street, the renovation of the G Street buildings, and finally the development of Square 102 into a formal campus. The plans were presented by Albert Harris, a professor of architecture at the university and the District of Columbia's newly-appointed Municipal Architect.

The Harris Plan proposed eight new buildings on the square, thus calling for the replacement of Woodhull House. The continued existence of this structure and several other buildings are testimony to the abandonment of the unified design concept of the Harris Plan after 1927. Other buildings on the campus chronicle the later eras of the university's history, constructed mostly under the leadership of university presidents, Cloyd Heck Marvin (1927-1959) or Lloyd H. Elliott (1965-1988).

The Woodhull House in Square 102 is particularly important, both as a testament to the commitment and spirit of past university leaders, and as one of the school's most outstanding examples of architecture. Today, Woodhull House stands as a symbol of the university's relocation to and development on its current site, marking an important stage in the institution's development.

Woodhull House was constructed in 1855 as the family residence for Maxwell Woodhull. One of the many substantial dwellings built during the mid-nineteenth century in Foggy Bottom, Woodhull House and others like it marked the area as a desirable place to live.

In 1921, Woodhull's son, General Maxwell Von Zandt Woodhull, bequeathed the house to The George Washington University. Woodhull, a long-time supporter of the university, was widely known for his astute business sense. He worked to help the university stabilize its financial base and was largely responsible for the relocation of the university to Foggy Bottom. After years of uncertainty over a permanent location for the school, this bequest established Foggy Bottom as the new home for the university. It marked the beginning of several decades of change instituted by the school which would transform the area from a residential neighborhood to an urban college campus.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

SEP

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetWoodhull, Maxwell, House  
Washington, D.C.Section number 8 Page 5

General Woodhull played an active role in George Washington University's history; the bequest of his home was just the last of a series of actions which affected the direction of the university's development. Elected as a trustee in 1911, General Woodhull was influential in relocating the school to 2033 G Street; N.W., when the rent for the university's downtown site proved prohibitively expensive. As demand for space grew, the university rented several houses in the G Street vicinity and for the last decade of Woodhull's life, the campus bordered his property. However, the university was not firmly established in the area until the Woodhull House was left to the school.

Woodhull's presence on the campus was frequent and his interest in the policies and development of the school was significant. In 1915 he organized a student artillery corps that was responsible for keeping the university's enrollment intact during World War I. The young men in this school-sponsored corps could matriculate while preparing for active duty. The expanded facilities required for this student group were less of a financial risk than a depleted student body.

The military induction that accompanied this type of activity also played a role in the evolution of the campus. The site chosen for the induction ceremonies was the large open space at the center of Square 102, now known as the University Yard. This formal use of that space set a precedent for the establishment of the Yard and its role in the ceremonial life of the school. University Yard has been the focal point of the campus and its large open space forms an important element in the fabric of the campus.

The Woodhull House has served as offices for various school services over the years and is currently used by the security force. This building anchors the southwest corner of Square 102, and stands as a visual reminder of both the residential past of Foggy Bottom and the university's beginnings in the neighborhood. A plaque on the house commemorates General Woodhull's association with the university. Elmer Kayser, writing in Bricks Without Straw, noted that "General Woodhull's place in the history of the university will always be recalled by Woodhull House ... because around the house has grown the great university of the present which he brought to G Street to be his neighbor."

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Woodhull, Maxwell, House  
Washington, D.C.

Section number 9 Page 2

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Gottfried, Herbert and Jan Jennings, American Vernacular Design, 1870-1940,  
New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Co., 1985.

Kayser, Elmer Louis, Bricks Without Straw, New York: Appelton-Century-  
Crofts/Meredith Corp., 1970.

H ST., N.W.

21st ST., N.W.

20th ST., N.W.

Square 102

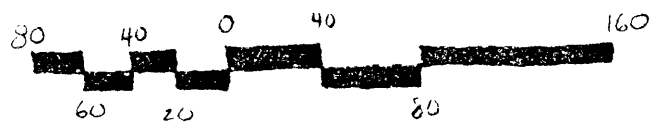
Woodhull House



40'

50'

G ST., N.W.



Numbers Keyed to photographs

Woodhull House  
The George Washington University  
Washington, D.C.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Woodhull House  
Washington, D.C.

1000

Section number            Photo             
Inventory            Page     1    

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1. Woodhull House  
The George Washington University  
Washington, D.C.  
Anne H. Adams, photographer  
November, 1986  
Wilkes, Artis, Hedrick & Lane (location of negative)  
1666 K Street, N.W., #1100  
Washington, D.C.  
View of G Street facade, looking north  
View No. 1
  
2. Woodhull House  
The George Washington University  
Washington, D.C.  
Anne H. Adams, photographer  
November, 1986  
Wilkes, Artis, Hedrick & Lane (location of negative)  
1666 K Street, N.W., #1100  
Washington, D.C.  
Detail of Entrance bay, looking north  
View No. 2

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

FEB 27

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Woodhull House  
Washington, D.C.

Photo  
Inventory

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page 2

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3. Woodhull House  
The George Washington University  
Washington, D.C.  
Mary Carolyn Brown, photographer  
December, 1990  
Wilkes, Artis, Hedrick & Lane (location of negative)  
1666 K Street, N.W., #1100  
Washington, D.C.  
Interior door, first floor hall  
View No. 3
  
4. Woodhull House  
The George Washington University  
Washington, D.C.  
Mary Carolyn Brown, photographer  
December, 1990  
Wilkes, Artis, Hedrick & Lane (location of negative)  
1666 K Street, N.W., #1100  
Washington, D.C.  
Stairway, first floor hall  
View No. 4