

PH0011657

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:	
COUNTY:	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	FEB 20 1972

1. NAME

COMMON:
Japanese Embassy

AND/OR HISTORIC:



2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
2520 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.

CITY OR TOWN:
Washington

STATE: District of Columbia

CODE: 11	COUNTY: District of Columbia	CODE: 001
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3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <u>Embassy</u>

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
The Government of Japan

STREET AND NUMBER:
2520 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.

CITY OR TOWN: Washington

STATE: District of Columbia

CODE: 11

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Recorder of Deeds

STREET AND NUMBER:
6th and D Streets, N.W.

CITY OR TOWN: Washington

STATE: District of Columbia

CODE: 11

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: Proposed District of Columbia Additions to the National Register of Historic Properties recommended by the Joint Committee on Landmarks

DATE OF SURVEY: March 7, 1968

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
National Capital Planning Commission

STREET AND NUMBER:
1325 G Street, N.W.

CITY OR TOWN: Washington

STATE: District of Columbia

CODE: 11

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:

COUNTY:

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

(Check One)

Excellent Good Fair Deteriorated Ruins Unexposed

(Check One)

Altered Unaltered

(Check One)

Moved Original Site

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The residence of the Japanese Ambassador faces northeast across a lawn and drive on the south side of Massachusetts Avenue near Rock Creek Park. The embassy was designed by the firm of Delano and Aldrich in 1931 in the ~~Neo-Georgian~~ style popular in the second and third decades of the 20th Century in America. The original plans by Delano and Aldrich for the residence and chancery buildings (located to the south of the residence) included landscaping in order to maintain a cohesive effect. In 1960 two additional buildings were erected: a chancery building similar in style and scale to that designed in 1932 and located to the north of the residence; and "Ippakutei", a teahouse located in back of the new chancery building on the north side of the residence and surrounded by a landscaped garden. Designed by a Japanese architectural scholar, Nahiko Emori, "Ippakutei" was prebuilt in Japan and re-erected on the Embassy grounds.

The modified colonial house is symmetrically ordered with a central entrance, and its exterior walls are completely surfaced in tan, ashlar masonry. The 7-bay front facade is 2-1/2 stories high on the Massachusetts Avenue facade and 3-1/2 stories on the rear facade which overlooks Rock Creek Park. Both the front and the rear facade measure approximately 92 feet in length. The east side is 80 feet deep including the main extension of the dining room. The west side is 64 feet deep.

The 7-bay north facade has a three-bay pavilion with pediment roof. The first floor windows rest upon a simple string course. Above the string course the corners have quoins while the central three-bay block gable is treated as a pediment. The entrance is a protruding block approached by a stoop of three limestone steps; over the door is a metal awning complete with tassels and finial rods. (The original plan, which was not carried out, called for a Doric semi-circular portico to complement the concave arch on the second floor.) On the second floor, the concave arch with its semi-circular casement window forms a false perspective background for a wrought-iron, bow-knot railing above the Tuscan entablature of the entry.

On the rear facade, French doors lead out onto a wide terrace of flagstone and iron railings. Above the dining room extension is a terrace with wrought-iron, bow-knot railings and iron awning braces.

The north front ground floor has 6/9 double-hung, tall rectangular windows, one to either side of the door and two in either wing. Their frames are simple except for a stone lintel with Greek-key terminals. This is consistent on the west, but not on the east where the north room has a single window with 6/9 sash, the service rooms have 6/6 sashes, and the dining room has 3 floor-length openings. All windows on the front facade have wooden shutters. On the rear are French doors leading out to the terrace.

The windows on the bedroom level, aside from the much larger aperture of the bowed stairhall, are 6/6 double-hung sash. The front gable, or pediment, has an oculus containing iron work in the form of an eight-pointed star.

The slate roof sits above a simple cyma cornice and is hipped with a gable in the center block and three gable dormer windows on the east and west elevations. There are four chimneys, two above either side of the central block, which are of masonry with cyma caps.

(Continued on Form 10-300a)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

3. SIGNIFICANCE

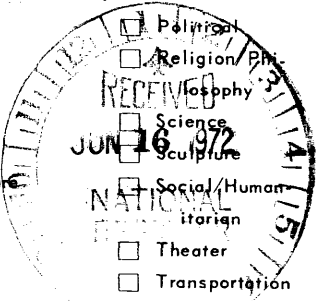
PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian | 16th Century | 18th Century | 20th Century
 15th Century | 17th Century | 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1931

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | <u>International</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | <u>Relations</u> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | _____ |



STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

The Joint Committee on Landmarks has designated the Japanese Embassy a Category II Landmark of importance which contributes significantly to the cultural heritage and visual beauty of the District of Columbia. The residence of the Japanese Ambassador was designed in 1931 in the Neo-Georgian style then popular in the second and third decades of 20th Century America. Designed by the prominent firm of Delano and Aldrich, the residence with its teahouse and subsidiary buildings sits among landscaped gardens and complements the scale and dignity of its Massachusetts Avenue neighbors. The embassy is an early example of a building designed especially to meet the needs of an embassy. During the Second World War, the building was taken into the custody of the U.S. Government, and there was no Japanese ambassador to the United States until 1952.

The firm of Delano and Aldrich was a popular firm in the early decades of the 20th century and designed such well-known buildings as the Colony and Knickerbocker Clubs in New York City, the School of Music at Smith College, and the 1934 Post Office Building in Washington.

Although emissaries of the Japanese government had been received since 1860, the Japanese legation was not raised to an embassy until 1906 at the suggestion of Theodore Roosevelt. The new residence, completed in 1932, marked a decade of unrest in Japanese-U.S. relations that began when Japan took over Manchuria in October of 1931 and ended in the severance of relations when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor in December, 1941. The Ambassador and other Japanese diplomats were sent to internment at Hot Springs, Virginia, and Washington did not have another Ambassador from Japan until 1952.

In 1960 the centennial of relations between the two countries was celebrated, and a teahouse, "Ippakutei," was constructed in commemoration of this event. "Ippakutei" is the name of a combination of characters whose primary meaning "virtue" complements its alternate meaning "one hundredth anniversary." The teahouse, designed by architectural scholar Nahiko Emori, was prebuilt in Japan, dismantled, shipped to the U.S., and reconstructed on its present site on Embassy grounds. The occasion commemorated was the formal opening of U.S.-Japanese relations in May 1860, when Japan's first legation arrived in Washington to exchange ratifications of a Treaty of Amity and Commerce.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Miller, Hope Ridings. Embassy Row. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston. 1969. Pp. 227-230.
 Information compiled by the Commission of Fine Arts, particularly the architectural description. Information now on file at the Commission of Fine Arts.
 Information from the files of the Washingtoniana Collection of the D.C. Public Library.
 Information from the staff of the Japanese Embassy.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		N38° 54' 54"	W77° 03' 22"	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **123,750 square feet**

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Suzanne Ganschinietz, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION: **National Capital Planning Commission** DATE: **11 April 1972**

STREET AND NUMBER:
1325 G Street, N.W.

CITY OR TOWN: **Washington** STATE: **District of Columbia** CODE: **11**

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name: *Stephen W. Watt*
 Title: Deputy Mayor-Commissioner
 Date: JUN 8 1972

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Robert M. Utley
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: 2/20/73

ATTEST:
W. J. Murty
 Keeper of The National Register

Date: 2-16-73

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
COUNTY	
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	FEB 20 1973

(Number all entries)

7. Description - Japanese Embassy

The most dramatic interior space is the main hall (with its arched ceiling supported by pilaster piers and columns-in-antis) which runs the entire length of the house from east to west. An entrance foyer flanked by powder rooms leads to the hall. At the east end is a reception room, service stair, and a pantry. On the rear of the house and opening off the main hall with views overlooking Rock Creek Park are the dining, drawing and sitting rooms en suite. An elliptical cantilevered staircase with an oval shell motif of plaster at the center is located at the west end, as is the Ambassador's office.



77°03'22" W. Long.

77°03'35" W. Long.

N 396,000

III F 2

II E 2

II E 48

II E 44

II C 17

T. B 8

II B 6

III E 1

II E 19

II E 24

II E 1

II F 6

III E 32

III E 31

III E 23

GARDEN

240

3054'54" N. Lat.

N 393,000

N 392,000
E 783,000

E 784,000

E 785,000

E 786,000

